



In & Around the UN

An Update from the Quaker United Nations Office

July 2014

A Picture of Peace from Burundi

Sieneke Martin is a member of Australia Yearly Meeting and on the Quaker United Nations Committee (QUNC) in New York. Earlier this year, she gave a presentation on the work of the Quaker UN Office (QUNO) to a group of Australian Friends and was very surprised to hear from two Quakers, Samuel Nyakaboyi and Marceline Minani, originally from Burundi but now living in Melbourne, Australia, with their children, that they had lived in the village where a photo from the presentation had been taken. Sieneke shared this story with QUNO staff, who provided additional photographs and documents from the visit made to Burundi in 2012. The Burundi Friends in Australia were delighted with the additional information from their home village and hope to be in touch with the people there who are involved in local peace work. Below, Samuel shares his personal story and reflections:



QUNO staff member Camilla Campisi in Burundi © QUNO

There are things in a life that are extremely hard to be forgotten. My name is Samuel and I was born in Muramvya province but grew up in Kibimba village where I did my primary and secondary studies. I left this area for further studies and came back for my first job as a medical assistant in the Kibimba hospital of Evangelical Friends Church. I married there and we had children.

As is well known, Burundi had a history of civil war and genocide and also ethnic problems. I fled to Congo in 1972 and also to Tanzania, where we lived in refugee camps for many years. Now I am in Australia. I know the life in a refugee camp where I passed many years.

Being happy doesn't come from nothing and needs to be learnt, I say this trying to explain why I was happy after attending and watching the lecture on QUNO earlier this year delivered

by Sieneke Martin who showed the picture of the village where I grew up. In that picture were a group of people of my village (but I knew them), who are working hard to promote and improve solutions to long lasting issues that include peace and reconciliation. It gave me hope that my village and country in the whole will recover and become peaceful as they are trying things that had never been in place before.

Through the challenge that I have encountered, I have learnt that happiness is not quantified by what an individual possesses but by what he can do with his possessions. This long lasting philosophy of mine was awakened by attending the lecture delivered by Sieneke Martin. In this lecture I was shown my small town of Kibimba, I saw how people back there work to strive for excellence about peace and reconciliation.

I would recommend that the country works hard to reduce the corruption that is robbing the country and provide security for everyone by allowing the politics that would treat everyone the same way regardless of their possessions. In one word, respect between the people considering who they are and not what they are. ❖

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QUNO Hosts AFSC and Somali Partner in Peacebuilding

In late May, QUNO welcomed Alissa Wilson, who is the AFSC Public Education and Advocacy Coordinator for Africa, along with Hared Osman, Executive Director of SEDHURO. SEDHURO is an AFSC program partner that works to address peacebuilding, protection and livelihoods needs in Somalia. Hared spoke about the organization's work and offered insights on the roles that different actors can play in supporting civil society initiatives. Alissa spoke to the domestic implications of peacebuilding work in Somalia, in particular regarding the ways that US counterterrorism legislation is impacting civil society peacebuilding work and initiatives that people can support to ensure this type of work is protected.

In Somalia, AFSC works in close partnership with civil society organizations like SEDHURO to develop innovative and creative ideas for building lasting peace while ensuring inclusion of all people regardless of clan or ideology. In particular, vulnerable, dis-

abled, and clan minority youth are encouraged to participate. Local authorities, business leaders and traditional leaders play an essential role in the sustainability of these efforts. As a result of this work, young Somalis are supporting their families through income generating activities, and playing an active role in helping to building peaceful co-existence. AFSC recognizes that while the fragile and transitional situation in Somalia presents significant challenges and risks, it also holds high potential for achieving positive results.

The conversations hosted at Quaker



Quakers gather over dinner at Quaker House to learn about civil society peacebuilding efforts in Somalia. © QUNO

House welcomed Friends from across New York City for an informal dinner and presentation, and on the following day UN staff and NGO representatives were welcomed for a more UN focused discussion on the need for peacebuilding initiatives in Somalia. ❖

Third Annual “What’s Next in Peacebuilding” Discussion

The international community is thirsty for creative responses to conflict. Set against the all-too-familiar backdrop of a political landscape rife with instability, the Quaker United Nations Office in New York hosted its third consecutive “What’s Next in Peacebuilding Discussion” this March. The conversation was a welcome opportunity for collaboration, bringing together some of the leading peacebuilding policy organizations from around the world to discuss the latest peacebuilding policy thinking with the UN community.

The discussion began with brief presentations by the President and CEO of the Alliance for Peacebuilding, the Executive Coordinator of the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, and the Di-

rector of the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office. Additional leaders in the peacebuilding and policy field responded to the presenters before the floor was opened for a fruitful discussion on the future of peacebuilding with those in attendance. Among the themes discussed were: increasing the coordination of peacebuilding efforts, linkages between peacebuilding and development, and the importance of identifying room for creative peacebuilding structures within the UN system.

The “What’s Next in Peacebuilding” discussion was well timed, offering a forum for expert collaboration on peacebuilding policy as several upcoming peacebuilding projects are underway. The opportunity to discuss new sophistication in peacebuilding helps



Participants exchange ideas following the “What’s Next in Peacebuilding” discussion. © QUNO

to cultivate a culture of peacebuilding at the UN and provide insight into upcoming projects such as the review of the Peacebuilding Commission (2015), The Geneva White Paper (scheduled for release in 2015) and the effort to include peace in the Post-2015 Millennium Development Goals. ❖

Letter from the Director

Dear Friends:

The events of the last year have precipitated some soul-searching at the UN and in the international community more broadly. As we look at the human tragedies unfolding in situations such as the Central African Republic, in South Sudan, or in Syria and Iraq, the inevitable questions arise: why is it so hard for the policy community to anticipate these crises? Where attention has been paid (as in South Sudan) and resources applied, how can things go so wrong so quickly? And after decades of working at these problems, why is it still so difficult to

assist societies in building sustainable peace?

One reflection is that insufficient time and attention has been paid to prioritizing issues of inclusion and reconciliation. In both South Sudan and Iraq, two very different situations, it has been suggested that it might have been helpful had domestic and international efforts been more focused on efforts to address deep divisions in society, both at a national political level and in communities, and to correct patterns of exclusion and inequalities.

We also need to acknowledge that the international community has a relatively limited toolkit at its

disposal, particularly when there are significant disagreements among major powers, and when local actors see more advantage in continuing violence than in bringing it to an end.

In the final analysis, the most effective preventive approach that we have yet identified is the long term, sustained accompaniment of conflict-affected societies, providing assistance in building local capacities and resilience. This work doesn't make the headlines, but it provides the surest road to sustainable peace.

In Friendship,

Andrew Tomlinson

Highlights from QUNO Geneva

The Human Impacts of Climate Change (HICC) has furthered its engagement in quiet diplomacy at the UN climate change negotiations. In addition, HICC engages with Quaker and other organisations to highlight climate change as a peace and justice concern. The work is led by the newly appointed Representative on Climate Change, Lindsey

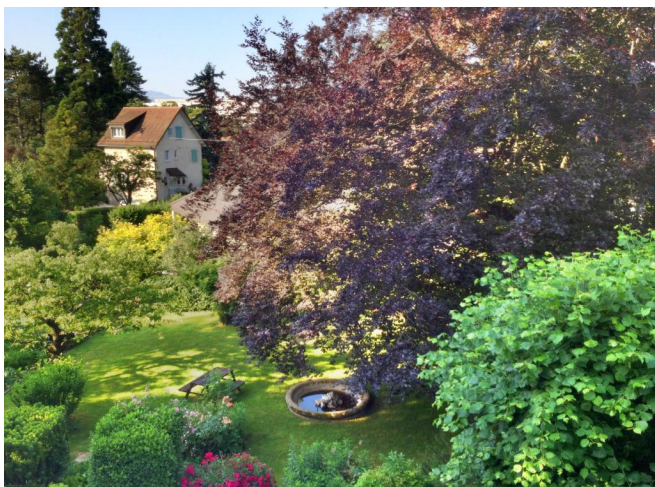
Fielder Cook.

The work on Natural Resources, Conflict & Cooperation has led to QUNO Geneva's growing engagement with the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention). This month, QUNO Geneva will attend the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention, to present a side-event addressing the use of peacebuilding approaches in successfully implementing access rights in environmental matters.

QUNO Geneva continues to raise awareness about children of parents sentenced to death through a recently launched video; a

new publication entitled Children of parents sentenced to the death penalty or executed: developments, good practices and next steps; and side-events at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) in March and at the UN Commission for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in May. On the Human Rights & Refugees programme, QUNO Geneva has also highlighted the implications of refusing military service for conscientious objectors at a side-event at the recent HRC session.

On the Food & Sustainability programme, Susan Bragdon joined us as Representative in February to lead this area. The work on the New Framework for Trade & Investment in Agriculture is moving fast. Two expert consultations were held in January and May and QUNO Geneva is working on tools to ensure that food security is supported and not undermined by the current rules. ❖



View of the garden at Quaker House, Geneva
© QUNO

Peace, Sustainability and Development

With the formal information gathering phase of the UN discussion around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) coming to an end, QUNO was asked to comment at the recent annual conference of the Alliance for Peacebuilding on the lessons learned about coordinated policy action

among international peacebuilding organizations.

This process, which brings together the two strands of discussion around what will replace the Millennium Development Goals (the 'post-2015 agenda') and the post-Rio conversation around sustainability, are among the broadest and most complex negotiations that the international community has yet attempted. The recently released 'zero draft', the basis for member state negotiations over the next 18 months, is hugely ambitious, listing seventeen proposed goals, starting with 'End poverty in all its forms everywhere' and going on to address food security, sustainable consumption, health, education, gender equality, climate change, and last but not least, 'Achieve peaceful and inclusive societies.' The inclusion of a proposed Peace goal is an achievement in itself, but the list will likely be reduced significantly, and many member states remain opposed to it.

So what has the peacebuilding community learned so far?

There have been many challenges.



A view of the Trusteeship Council Chamber during the General Assembly's high-level event on "Contributions of North-South, South-South, Triangular Cooperation, and ICT (Information and Communications Technology) for Development to the Implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda"

© United Nations

The peacebuilding policy community is a small, under-resourced and only moderately well coordinated group of organizations compared to many others. The topic of peace and development is a complex one (as well as being politically sensitive), and many member state negotiators are poorly informed on the related issues. Peacebuilding encompasses a range of topics, and finding agreement on how to prioritize those within a segmented, goal-based framework has been challenging.

There have also been many achievements. In April, in an unprecedented piece of collaboration, a group of 33 peacebuilding organizations worked together and agreed a list of sixteen effective targets to promote sustainable peace within the SDG framework, which was sent to all UN member states. Peacebuilding NGOs have worked together on a sustained basis to host a series of public and private meetings at the UN over 18 months, and have grasped the opportunity to engage with many of our colleagues in the adjacent fields of development, humanitarian action and disaster

How to Support QUNO

QUNO welcomes donations to help cover the cost of its work. We are happy to accept contributions towards two areas of our work:

The Fund for Quaker House: the endowment supports the maintenance and operation of Quaker House.

QUNO Operating and Program Expenses: contributions can be made toward the cost of our annual budget.

Please make your check payable to "QUNO." If you'd like your gift to go towards Quaker House, please write "Quaker House" in the memo portion of the check. For credit card gifts, call toll free 1-888-588-2372 ext. 1, or click the ["Donations" button](#) on our web site and follow the instructions provided.

Please send checks to:
Quaker UN Office
777 United Nations Plaza, 5th Fl.
New York, NY 10017

Gifts made to QUNO within the United States are deductible for federal income tax purposes.

relief. And the peacebuilding community has risen to the challenge of articulating core messages, such as the universality of violence as a fundamental dimension of human suffering.

The work continues, and whether or not a peace goal emerges from what has been described as the 'meat-grinder' of negotiations, the peacebuilding community has learned a great deal about how to make the most of its knowledge and experience, despite its limited resources. ❖

Quakers at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

As we have done for many years now, QUNO recently hosted the Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC) at Quaker House while they continued their dedicated work at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII). CFSC has been attending the UNPFII for 13 years with the support of QUNO, and have over time contributed to the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2007, the ongoing work towards implementation of the UNDRIP, among other activities. This year CFSC, represented by staff Jennifer Preston and Associate Member Monica Walters-Field, worked in partnership to deliver two statements, one on Good Governance and the other on Human Rights and the UNDRIP.

QUNO and CFSC hosted a joint dinner during the UNPFII at

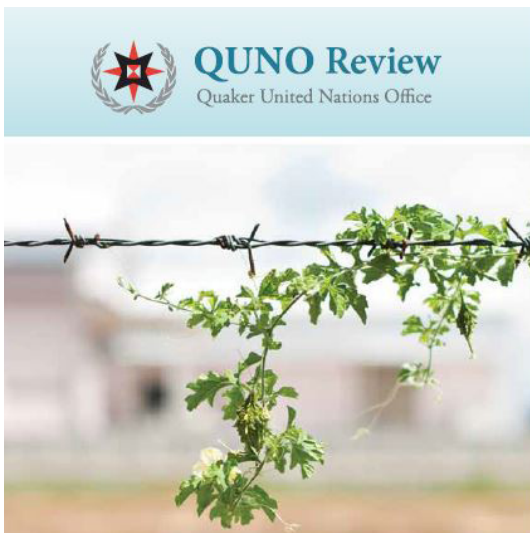
Quaker House attended by UN staff, Member States, Indigenous Peoples, and representatives from NGOs on the topic of Discovery, Redress, and the Opportunities for the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. The dinner focused on the study to the Permanent Forum on the Doctrine of Discovery. Permanent Forum member Grand Chief Edward John chaired the dinner, which led to engaged and enlightening conversation on issues of pressing importance



Jennifer Preston, Monica Walters-Field and QUNO Program Assistant Rachel Singleton-Polster. © QUNO

to Indigenous Peoples worldwide, in particular the upcoming World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, a High-level Meeting of the General Assembly. ❖

QUNO Review



Our new 2014 edition of QUNO Review is now available for download on our website, www.quno.org. The publication provides a brief introduction to QUNO and our way of working, as well as an overview of each of our program areas.

Learn more about our past year's work and see where we are headed in 2014. If you would like a hard copy of the QUNO Review please send us an email: qunony@afsc.org.

QUNO Fellows

We are pleased to announce a one-year Fellow position at QUNO, with a start date of October 1st, 2014. The Fellow will assist QUNO senior staff to develop QUNO programs and implement program activities. In particular, the Fellow will work on one or more focused projects with a particular focus on ongoing QUNO activities that bridge UN efforts in the areas of social and economic development. These will include the exploration of creative responses to international conflict for QUNO, including non-violent policy alternatives, as well as supporting QUNO's work on the UN's post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

The application deadline is the end of the day July 20th, Eastern Standard Time. The application can be found through our website: www.quno.org.