



Geneva Reporter

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Supporting Children of Prisoners: Groundbreaking Recommendations

QUNO reflects as its three-year project on the mental health of children of prisoners draws to a close.



Diane Curry and Raheel, a youth speaker, at the COPING conference. Photo: Rebecca Cheung.

The research is complete, the recommendations made and now all that is left is to tell people about them. The three-year, pan-European, EU-funded COPING Project will finish at the end of 2012, having gathered huge amounts of information about the situation of children of prisoners around Europe and particularly in Germany, Romania, Sweden and the UK. A child-centred piece of research, it involved children throughout; as interviewees, when drawing up recommendations, and in disseminating the findings. Its rigorous academic approach has provided a major boost to what is known about children with parents in prison.

As one of the ten partner organisations conducting the research, QUNO coordinated the consultations with people outside the family, such as prison officials, NGOs and school staff, and has also been heavily involved in the

development of recommendations that have emerged from the study. COPING overturned existing assumptions when it found that children find it just as hard having a father in prison as a mother. It also highlighted the critical role of schools and grandparents in supporting children.

The COPING researchers, a mixture of academics and NGOs, launched the project results in Brussels on 6 November to an audience of practitioners and policymakers. Twelve key recommendations were presented, dealing with public awareness, child-friendly criminal justice systems, maintaining contact between children and imprisoned parents, supporting children's non-imprisoned carers and the role of schools (see COPING website at www.coping-project.eu).

The Brussels conference also saw the launch of the latest edition of the Scientific Annals of the University Alexandru Ioan Cuza, the academic journal published by the Romanian university that is one of the COPING partners. The journal included two articles by QUNO staff: an exploration of stakeholder perspectives on the needs of children of prisoners and a compilation of recommendations from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's Day of General Discussion 2011, which was on 'children of incarcerated parents'.



World Food Security: New Guidelines on Land, Forests and Fisheries

As part of its work on Food & Sustainability, QUNO attended the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), a global forum with a strong civil society presence.

FAO's Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

The CFS was established in 1974 as the UN's forum for reviewing and following up policies concerning world food security. After the 2008 food crisis, the CFS was reformed to broaden the voices being heard in global governance around food issues, making it one of the most participatory bodies within the UN. Farmers groups, indigenous peoples, fisherfolk, pastoralists and NGOs are represented through a civil society mechanism which is allowed to input alongside States throughout the negotiations.

The most recent CFS, held in October, facilitated discussions on many issues, including climate change, governance of tenure, responsible agricultural investment, and social protection.

Responsible Tenure and Investment in Land

At its previous session in May 2012, the CFS adopted voluntary guidelines on the governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests. These are the first international guidelines on the topic and were endorsed after two years of consultations with civil society groups across the world. To follow up and complement these, the CFS will now develop international guidelines on responsible agricultural investment. (These are not to be confused with the existing 'principles of responsible agricultural investment', which were initiated by the World Bank and developed without a similar level of consultation, giving rise to strong criticism from some civil society groups.)

The CFS consultations on agricultural investment will soon begin. QUNO hopes they will be inclusive and participatory enough to promote smallholder-sensitive investment as a central focus point for a coordinated UN approach to food security. Such

hopes are part of broader optimism that the CFS can take real steps towards agricultural governance that recognise smallholder farmers as critical to food and nutrition security.

These matters are of particular concern to QUNO in connection with our work on Food & Sustainability, in which we are, inter alia, exploring what a better international framework for governance of agricultural trade and investment would look like.



View of smallholder farms from Kakamega, Kenya.

Further Reading and Useful Links:

The CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure at www.fao.org/nr/tenure

Civil Society Mechanism for the Committee for Food Security at www.csm4cfs.org

Minority Rights Group International's 2012 Annual Review, focusing on land rights and natural resources at www.minorityrights.org



After the Millennium Development Goals

Violence and insecurity adversely affect a country or region's development prospects. QUNO has been working with others to ensure that this is addressed in the UN's Development Goals.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted by all United Nations Member States following the Millennium Declaration of 2000. They focused on health, poverty, hunger, education, and environmental sustainability, and set targets for achieving significant improvements in each of these areas by 2015.

The MDGs have been useful for highlighting issues, pointing to gaps or failures in policy approaches, recognising progress and indicating its unevenness. In short, despite the many limitations of the MDGs, they were significant in framing development assistance at the UN and beyond.



UN staff in Bonn raising awareness of the MDG deadline in 2015. Photo: MT_bulli www.flickr.com/photos/mtbulli/

Peace, security and disarmament, while present in the Millennium Declaration, were not considered specifically as factors in development and therefore were not reflected in the MDGs. The creation of a new development framework for post-2015 has stimulated efforts to include this important dimension, encouraged by the wide recognition at UN level achieved by the World Development Report 2011. The WDR pointed out that no low income fragile or conflict-affected country had yet achieved a single Millennium Development

Goal and that people living in countries currently affected by violence are twice as likely to be undernourished and 50 percent more likely to be impoverished, with their children three times as likely to be out of school.

QUNO has been working with others to raise this issue within the discussions on the MDGs' successor goals. One of the key criteria for inclusion in the post-2015 goals is likely to be whether it is possible to set targets against which progress can be measured. QUNO Geneva has helped to channel expertise in this area into contributions to the High Level Panel (HLP) on the Post-2015 Agenda (appointed by the UN Secretary General), whose report will feed into the final deliberations. In addition to the HLP report the UN is co-ordinating consultations in more than 50 developing countries and a number of thematic consultations, and has set up a website inviting contributions from civil society (www.worldwewant2015.org).

The goals that emerge from this process will determine the way in which development is understood and pursued over the next fifteen years or more and consequently whether peace and security are recognised as an integral part of development processes in all countries, with all that implies in terms of resource flows.

Further Reading:

Read more about the post-2015 Goals at www.un.org/millenniumgoals/beyond2015.shtml

The World Development Report 2011 is at www.worldbank.org/wdr2011



Highlights from QUNO New York



Mary Harper and Ken Menkhaus at the book launch for 'Getting Somalia Wrong'.

Mid-September is always an exciting time for QUNO New York as the world's leaders converge on the United Nations for the opening of the General Assembly (GA). This year the process surrounding the Post-2015 Development Agenda created a large amount of buzz during the GA, resulting in several side events. One such event was hosted by QUNO New York in collaboration with several peace-

building organisations. In addition to this event, Quaker House served as a strategy hub around discussions of peacebuilding and the Post-2015 Agenda throughout the week. This year we were excited to hear our areas of work reflected in many of the opening statements made by Member States. Somalia was lauded for progress made in its parliamentary transition and most Member States also made passing mentions to the right of the Palestinian Authority to self-determination. These topics are directly related to several recent efforts undertaken by QUNO New York including a book launch with Mary Harper, the author of 'Getting Somalia Wrong', and the release of an updated version of QUNO's [Palestine Resource](#), which tracks the progress of Palestine's bid for statehood. The work of QUNO New York continues to be guided by our commitment to engaging civil society and affecting wider UN policy for peace.

News in Brief and Recent Publications

QUNO welcomes the arrival of two new Programme Assistants: **Haifa Rashed** (Human Rights and Refugees) and **Ellie Roberts** (Human Impacts of Climate Change). If you would like to learn more about the work of our two new Programme Assistants, as well as the QPSW peaceworkers in London and Bujumbura, please visit the peacemaker blog at www.poboxpeace.wordpress.com.

QUNO said goodbye to **Steven Heywood** (Programme Assistant, Human Impacts of Climate Change) and **Helen Kearney** (Project Officer, Human Rights and Refugees). We thank them for their lasting contributions to QUNO.

QUNO participated in the first-ever Human Rights Committee General Discussion on deprivation of liberty. It also organised a panel discussion on intellectual property and farmers' needs during the World Trade Organisation public forum in September. During the September Human Rights

Council, QUNO held a side event on natural resources, conflict and cooperation, which was co-sponsored by the Ethiopian mission to the UN in Geneva.

For more information on these events and other news updates please contact us or visit our website at www.quno.org.

Recent Publications

Diverting the Flow: Cooperation over International Water Resources, Steven Heywood.

TRIPS - Related Patent Flexibilities and Food Security, Carlos M. Correa, available in English, French and Spanish.

Children of Parents Sentenced to Death, Helen Kearney, now available in Arabic.

All available from www.quno.org. Please contact us if you would like to receive any of these publications by post (contact details on page 1).

If you would like to donate to QUNO's work, please visit our website at www.quno.org for our bank details or to make a donation by credit card. Many thanks!