



training special issue



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Let's make **PEACE** the **HOTTEST TREND** this season!

by Sonja Knoche

In May, this year's Peace Messengers beginner's training was hosted by Útilapu and took place in Budapest with prep team and trainers from Hungary, France and Austria (from left to right: Karine, Jenny, Sonja and Bogi).



The participants practised facilitation, learned how to create and run their own workshops, discussed about peace in general and in their own countries, and fought the cold and rainy weather by creating a warm and creative atmosphere.



On the first day of the seminar the participants got an introduction into peace and also shared their ideas on peace in their life – to connect to the rather huge, complex and abstract looking term “peace”. The silent discussions, stimulated by peace quotes, were quite controversial, and created some nice new peace quotes as well (see page^{oooo})

A main topic of the seminar was migration and refugees. On the second day of the seminar there was a workshop about refugees and European borders, with a focus on the transit route Libya – Italy (Lampedusa). The participants learned more about this topic in the course of a simulation game which was based on a refugee role game by the UNHCR, but adapted to the real story of a refugee from Cameroon who was travelling for over a year in order to get into Europe.



Participants simulating a refugee's journey from Africa to Europe.

Of course, there was also time to explore Budapest. Bogi and Timi acted as tourist guides on the fourth day of the seminar and helped the participants to discover the wonders of Hungary's capital.



The fifth day was methodology-day – a step-by-step introduction on how to build a workshop was given and in the afternoon, the participants had time to create their own one-hour-sessions in groups of three and four. For some it took not more than two hours to prepare everything – some used half of the night. The results were amazing anyway and were presented on the sixth day: every group ran their workshop with the rest of the new peace messengers (and some guests who came for the camp leader training that started the following day) participating, discussing and giving (constructive ;-) feedback.



The topics introduced in the workshops showed all the variety of the term “peace” itself and ranged from discrimination, non-violent communication, gender, intercultural understanding, identity and gender to migration. All kinds of methods and materials were used and also produced – as, for example, a board-game about refugees and migration.

Role play in the workshop about gender and discrimination



After this intense and stimulating time together it was hard to say good-bye, but ideas were shared, future actions were planned and – friends were made.

Silent Discussion - Reacting on Peace quotes

“A war is a mean for reaching peace”

No, war only leads to more war or at least more conflicts

Bombing for peace is like screaming for silence

War is sooooo yesterday, But some of the people are still out-of-fashion

It depends on what kind of war you are thinking about, some conflicts cannot be overcome or escaped
why? People have a mouth to talk & two ears to listen!

No, peace is a mean for war exclusion

the theory is different from what they are thinking

war is a mean for the weapon industry to make big money
certainly, but not in a peace way :-)

a war leads nowhere but it doesn't begin spontaneously, there is always a reason

preliminary condition in some cases???

No! And it is not even possible to discuss. Peace is the aim, but at the same time peace needs to be a way
yes!!

no!

for what?
Peaceful World

Let's make peace the hottest trend this season.

what is peace anyway?!

Peace is the way!

but sometimes it really seems far away and then different strategies to reach it _ depending on different situations and experiences

“Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek but a means by which we arrive at this goal”

peace should be a state of existence, not a goal

like happiness, internal harmony...sounds very zen :-)

An answer: something which does not keep you away from your soul

tell me something about the goal

not only

life and experience

Practising that education cut theory, without practice it is not efficient

Real and lasting peace can only come out of education

Who defines education? Who educates?

unfortunately not accessible to everyone and not everyone is interested in education

if it is education about how to live happy & healthy without harming anyone & this education is accessible for everyone: yes!

education is necessary and is a good way to start...but we need so much more beside it

education is important but not only formal education. You should work with others structures not only with your head

but it is a far road on which you go in small steps!

we have to be aware of all aspects of peace

for sure, but education from school, family, friends and society, all of them involved and working together. Formal and informal education

It is what I call experiencing life...

It is always a good time for doing good things and acting in a peaceful way!

Out of clutter, find simplicity. From discomfort, find harmony. In the middle of difficulties lie opportunities

Not necessarily opportunity to do good(?)

reflecting is necessary to see the opportunities

it is a problem to find the middle", I agree!

Well the thing is if we are able to see the opportunity

it can be difficult but not impossible!

yes, I agree, because sometimes we can miss this opportunity. So how to find out?

I always try. I think it is the good way

I agree that even 'small people' can disturb to express their disagreement but I would prefer a quote that explains how 'small people' can build a better World

it is a question of perspective
everything is!

If you think you are too small to make an impact, try going to bed with a mosquito in the room

silence is not an option

the mosquito just leads to me not being peaceful!

see, it is so simple getting angry & frustrated!

but you are aware it is existing!

I am tall anyway!

Doing small things with a great love and commitment means doing BIG THINGS!

Lots of small things can be BIG!

I agree!

I agree coz' people make conflict and people can make an impact to peace!

every look and gestures make. And may be we should start in our own LITTLE LIFE and not in the real war conflict areas in the World

also just one word can make an impact!

we should be careful with our words because we can hurt others even not noticing it

mosquitoes do not do anything relevant / important and are so easy to avoid

I do not like the example with the mosquito _ it is kind of 'unpeaceful' because we usually kill them to get rid of them and it is not a peaceful way

and thinking that mosquitoes are part of our World, does it make them irrelevant and unimportant?

catch it & throw it out of the window

more information about the Budapest seminar in a special Peace Messengers Newsletter in September!

Peace Messengers Online Training - June '10

In June 2010, during four weeks, 10 participants and 3 facilitators took part to an online training course. After an introduction week, they worked on the following topics: 'What is peace for me (week1)', 'Peace in action in SCI (week 2)', 'Roles and tasks of Peace Messengers (week 3)'.

Each week, participants were given material to read and assignment to complete, alone or in pairs. And every week, we tried to all join Skype meetings. Not everybody could always participate, but every time interesting and stimulating discussions took place, which gave us food for thought, as SCI activists or maybe future Peace Messengers? We share with you the result of our discussions on what is a Peace Messenger and what are her/his roles and tasks...and the participants will be the collective '(Aspiring) Peace Messengers of the Month'.

Anyway, we will probably run the course again this Autumn, and we would also like to start a Peace Messengers Online Academy... a fancy word to talk about occasional one-week seminars on themes related to peace and peace activism, to which anybody would be welcome. More on this after the Summer break!



ALL YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT PEACE MESSENGERS WITHOUT DARING TO ASK

The Peace Messengers online course group worked the last week on what is a PM, his role, responsibilities, approach.. This is the summarized outcome of individual assignments and two skype discussions held that week, based on a questionnaire.

The first thing to stress is that there are **no rules about Peace Messenger-ing**, just one objective : raise awareness about peace, the fundamental value of SCI and how we can contribute to build it. So what is done in the context of a branch is different from happens in next branch. However there are **lessons learned** and **things to be considered** by all PM, and this was what we discussed that week.

BUT JUST WHO ARE THOSE PEACE MESSENGERS ?

Often, workcamps participants are not aware of the central value of peace for SCI, or do not understand how it relates to their lives. Peace Messengers are thus needed because they respond to a need: a need to go back to the roots, to carry a message to workcamp participants; to mediate between SCI as an organisation and its values and workcamp participants; to provide a structured, systematic and informed approach and understanding of peace to workcamp participants, and to educate workcamps participants about what can be done differently in this world as a volunteer. As an outsider (in most of cases), it also somehow identifies the movement to participants. It's also a good way to bring a new dynamics to the work camp, something fresh.

The mission of a Peace Messenger is also to make people reflect on their workcamp experience. Some volunteers join workcamps because they want to do 'something good': help people, or share liberating values or ideas. Sonja shared this story about a participant who was eager to 'democratize' in two weeks the Serbian village in which her workcamp was taking place- needless to say, she completely failed. Therefore Peace messengers should also remind workcamps participants that you come to a local community to listen and learn and maybe discuss and share, in a sensitive and respectful way, but not to change spectacularly the situation, especially not in two weeks. That you do not participate to a workcamp to change the world in two weeks, but that you do a workcamp as part of a peace education process. Therefore Peace Messengers should try to make a connection between the workcamp experience, peace, and the topic of the Peace Messenger session.

Peace Messengers are equipped with special knowledge and skills gained from specific training, which enables them to disseminate ideas to others. However, Peace Messengers are no teachers, and they do not deliver a ready-made message. They are rather catalysts, hopefully bringing a moment of enlightenment to participants. Therefore they also have a open and listening attitude to the group, give their best to understand people, be open-minded and ready to accept different points of view, to receive as much as to give and share with them ideas, or rather, the wonderful and beautiful process of building peace. The PM is really primus inter pares, first among equals- 'I am one of you but I have something to share with you, to tell you'.

They can share information and success stories, but emphasizing that each situation requires a fresh approach and creative thinking. Peace is a process, a wish-list, and there are many Roads to it.

This is why the Peace Messengers should deeply feel what s/he is discussing: deeply believe in an idea of peace, and be firmly committed to SCI and its values. S/he should really feel about

her/his mission, not do it out of idleness. If s/he is not true, the group will feel it

Peace Messengers hope their sessions will mean something to participants, they will remember it with fondness and they can apply whatever good lessons they learnt.

OK- BUT CONCRETELY, WHAT DO THEY DO?

We discussed a list of tasks to decide whether or not Peace messengers are expected to carry them out.

We all agreed that the following are typical Peace Messengers tasks:

- To present SCI as an organisation and its values
- To give workcamps participants information about peace
- To run energizers and team-building activities
- To organize a activity about peace

We had more mixed opinions about the three following:

- To evaluate the workcamps
- To solve conflicts that took place on the workcamp
- To involve the local community

To evaluate the workcamp

Here we became aware that there are different levels of involvement of Peace Messengers on camps: they can be central components of the workcamp (as in Malaysia, where workcamps are focussed on peace), they can be at the same time participants to the workcamp, or they can be visitors. Also, branches may or may not be able to send another representative (staff or volunteer) to visit the work camp and the PM might be the only outsider visiting the workcamp. Therefore while it is not the primary task of the PM, the branch may ask him to take advantage of his visit to evaluate the camp; the important thing is that it should be decided in advance and the PM should be given adequate tools (a questionnaire, a grid, any other tool) to conduct the evaluation.

To solve conflict that took place on the workcamp

This was also a contentious issue. Peace Messengers are not always trained in conflict resolution and able to handle a conflict, but then it would be strange to lead a session about, say, peace and human rights with a group going through a conflict.

We had a side discussion whether all SCI volunteers should be trained in conflict resolution, since SCI is a peace organisation (like all scouts learn to make knots)... we came to the conclusion that it is sure a good thing that as many SCI volunteers are trained in that topic, but that the way SCI brings peace is mainly by connecting people.

But anyway, what Peace Messengers can do is not refuse involvement, but at least take the time to listen to all, if invited. Its outsider position might result in lack of trust from the group, but also its neutral position and fresh ear might enable him/her to listen to everybody and consider all positions, and be seen as objective. Then, while remembering that sometimes trying to solve a conflict only makes it worse, Peace Messengers can decide whether they can propose a way to solve the conflict, or refer to their branch.

To involve the local community

Here it depends at which point the local community is involved in the project, whether there is a language barrier or not, whether they are interested in discussing about peace or not... and it's probably more the role of the camp leader/local organisation to organise the local community participation.

We also considered the following list of verbs, which describe Peace Messengers in action:

Inform
Mobilize
Raise awareness
Question
Facilitate
Solve
Share
Listen
Build
Dream
Inspire
Laugh
Stimulate
Enlighten

and one was added: **motivate**

We chose the following:

Raise awareness- because it can make people consider some things which they haven't before, to destroy some taboos and free someone's mind. When you really understand something, you can't judge it anymore.

- about peace issues
- each good session helps to it

Share- PM shares the knowledge, the information, positive attitude, time patience...

- knowledge
- you share something with a group and a group shares with you

Inspire- It should inspire everyone to be more tolerant and more active, especially in a team building

- inspire new members to be inspired with what they do because they are doing something good
- you can be inspired by a group and, if it is a good session, group can be inspired by it to become a better team for example.

-

Enlighten- the people to want to do and learn more

Listen

Build

Stimulate

AND HOW DO YOU PREPARE YOUR SESSION?

Before the session, the Peace Messenger discusses with the branch and also gets in touch with the camp leader.

From the branch, the Peace Messenger gets basic information about the camp, where it is, what is it about, links with the local community, type of work, theme of the study part, etc.. S/he can also discuss about her/his abilities, the tools s/he can use, if the branch asks her/him to evaluate the camp, feedback after the session, etc.. S/he can also discuss with the branch how to embed the value of peace in the whole workcamp, if s/he feels up to it.

With the camp leader, the PM can discuss about the timing of the session- during working time (but the local organisation might object), or during free time (but volunteers might object to), how is the group, whether there might be language problems (in this case, focus on non-verbal activities). The respective roles of the camp leader and Peace Messenger during the session should be considered; the PM can even ask the Camp leader to do preparatory activities to the session (put posters/messages on the wall, give material to read, etc.). If s/he can, the Peace Messengers can consider spend a day or two working with the group to develop a relation with it. Here also the Peace Messenger could encourage the Camp leader to reflect on how to make peace-building a central element of everyday life in the workcamp.

As said before, the PM is not here to teach or deliver information, but yet, it is better to have an informed approach about the topic considered, so it is good to take some time to research the topic or refresh your knowledge about it.

(ASPIRING) PEACE MESSENGER(S) OF THE MONTH



Thanks to Rosario, Sonja, Stephen, Katerina, Faruque, and Nurul for their contributions!

If Peace Messengers were...

A noun:

Catalyst: to broaden their scope and understanding of Peace
(for new members)

Light: PM makes things clearer, gives demystification in some-way, makes people open their eyes, see things the way they are, accept them, understand them and try to make them better. S/he shows some critical and some important points that are invisible in the darkness.

Enlightenment: because this is a mission of sharing the light of peace.

*Blanket-*sharing an information and hopefully in the future the information can be implemented one day J

Builder- to change in better a situation

An adjective:

Interesting: all PM activities are very educating and interesting

Loving: as this is the way to a human heart and mind

Hard: PM first has to work hard to understand discrepancies in his/her own personality and to make inner balance. After that s/he has to learn permanently from and about other people.

Beautiful: It acts like a bridge to enlightenment

Tolerant: To have always consideration towards the others

A verb:

Motivate: as a PM, s/he must be an active and motivated on the topic presented

Feel and deal: A PM has to be very sensitive and feel the group and the deal with it in a very human, non-teaching, but sharing manner.

Digging: There is always something new to learn and to find out: new people, new problems, new solutions, new points of view, new expectations... There is a curiosity, researching and hard working. We should all the time look for long-term peace solutions, that are not superficial.

Bridge: linking from one to another.

Facilitate: to have always consideration towards the others

And an animal:

An Elephant: a peaceful animal, easy going, non offensive, helpful, useful, calming, can be dependable

A Rabbit: ..in short, a very likeable person according to Chinese horoscope :-)

A Spider: useful animals that makes network. Sometimes it can seem strange and scary, but it can teach us that things are not always s they look at the first sight.

A Human: with the determination to block the animality (that comes within), and look forward to play my small but determined role to disseminate ideas, knowledge and help to establish a peaceful atmosphere within my reach.

A Bear (a polar bear, teddy bear)... because of its soft and adorable character yet aggressive.

A Snake, that gives the fruit of knowledge to the people :-) (my idea is not according to the Bible, the snake here is wise and good).

A Castor, (social animal, big worker that build dams). Also the Peace Messenger must build 'dams' in the world to orient the problems toward a peaceful solution

No More War Campaign and Toolkit



Linked to the 90th anniversary of SCI International, the Anti-War action has been launched this year by SCI activists and branches. It is a worldwide action/campaign to highlight SCI's values like anti-militarism and non-violence, which have been a common thread in all the movement's activities since 90 years of existence.

The basis of the anti-war action will be formed by so called no-more-war camps, which are special workcamps with a focus on themes as anti-militarism, non-violence and the history of SCI. At least one third of the camp will be filled by a study theme in which the participants explore ideas about war and peace. There will be questions as: Are wars inevitable? What are the deeper causes of war and how can they be diminished? Why is peace more than just the absence of war? What are the principles of non-violence and how can one bring this in practice? It is also in the planning that such workcamps will be visited by a volunteer/guest speaker, who actually served in a war zone or a conflict area.

A training seminar has been organised in May for no-more-war camps camp leaders. One of its outcomes has been a blog, which is of interest for Peace Messengers and peace activists at large:

<http://www.no-more-war.net/>

The No More War team has also developed a toolkit, also very interesting for Peace Messengers, which can be downloaded here:

<http://www.spaceforpeace.net/no-more-war-toolkit-2010.phtml>

For more information on the Anti-War action, check www.spaceforpeace.net

