International Human Rights Day

December 10th is celebrated as International Day of Human Rights, commemorating the day in Paris in 1948 when the UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as Resolution 217! The commemoration included celebrating young human rights defenders who “are not just the future, but the present”. Among the panelists were Fatou Toufah Jallow, an activist against sexual violence from Gambia, Carl Smith a Climate activist from the indigenous Yupiaq tribe in Alaska and Alexus Lawrence from New York who is engaged in activism for youth and children facing homelessness. Each of these young activists dynamically told their stories as well as leading a rallying cry for the UN and other national and international bodies to listen to youth Human Rights Defenders now before it is too late. All of this followed a lively game of UDHR 'Kahoot!', in which our RSHM intern took 5th place out of a room of around 200 players! Well done, Dejah!

Women in Peace-building

How are women being engaged in Peacebuilding, conflict mediation and the prevention of violent extremism? In December, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) sponsored several panels comprised of UNAOC Fellows from 13 different countries, who spoke about grassroots programs and best practices to engage women and youth in peacebuilding. Speakers were young professionals, civil society leaders, lawyers, and NGO founders who are creating innovative programming for communities which are vulnerable to radicalization. For instance, Marwa Shabbar is a young civil society leader from Iraq who established a program helping young Muslim women engage in spaces that were historically exclusive of them. Participants also shared best practices for achieving the goals of UN resolutions 1325 and 2250 relating to women, peace and security. These included unrestricted funding opportunities for programming and engaging women in decision making processes by implementing binding national commitments on meaningful participation and quotas for women and youth. Read more......

Youth Leaders for Peace

“Youth are not the leaders of tomorrow but the leaders of today.” This is an ideal that drives Rondine Cittadella della Pace, a civil society association in Italy that is active in peacebuilding. Rondine provides its participants, young people from conflict-torn nations, with the education on peacebuilding necessary for them to be change agents in their post-conflict societies. It is just one year since the Global Leaders for Peace campaign was launched on the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In December, Rondine brought many of their peace ambassadors from Sierra Leone, Mali, and Columbia to the UN. They spoke about the Rondine way of peace, reconciliation and intercultural dialogue. The belief espoused is that giving young people the opportunity to learn about peacebuilding and leadership is crucial in allowing them to take their place on the world stage. Peace education can change the physical, mental, and emotional status of future world leaders creating situations for optimal performance and contribution toward a culture of peace. We were happy to learn from Georges, a young Malian leader who shared his testimony, that a young woman from Kimparana Village, Mali, is among the young leaders being prepared to return home from Italy as a youth leader for peace. Learn more.....

“Youth are our future, and we must have a dialogue. This dialogue between the past and the future is important”. Pope Francis, Address to the UN 25 September 2015
Hate speech encourages the as various member states while the spirituality of "Eco-", where workshop promote the sustainability of the planet the environment continue educating for strengthened (Green Flag) receive their planet behavior change and a more sustainable environmental the criteria each year fulfilling the requirements and meeting pr
member of the "Fatima, Colegio Sacro Cuore de Maria

Did you know that:

- More than 300 human rights defenders were assassinated in 31 countries in 2019. 40% of them were working on land, indigenous peoples' rights and environmental rights.
- In 2019 121 member states contributed 97,620 peace-keeping personnel to staff 13 peace-keeping operations globally.
- UN Peacekeeping is the second largest deployment in the world, yet it accounts for less than 0.5% of the world’s military expenditure.
- Despite the fact that peace agreements with women signatories are associated with durable peace, between 1992 and 2018 women constituted only 13% of negotiators, 3% of mediators and only 4% of signatories.

Holocaust Remembrance Week

Holocaust Remembrance week is celebrated at the UN during the last week of January each year. Since 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, the ending of the Second World War and the establishment of the United Nations in response to these atrocities there was a special tone to this year’s commemoration. The theme chosen for Holocaust education and remembrance this year highlighted the continued importance of collective action against antisemitism and other forms of bias and discrimination in order to ensure respect for the dignity and human rights of all people everywhere. Exhibits, films, panels and the official commemoration in the General Assembly all developed this theme. As Melissa Flemming, the Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications noted at the Civil Society briefing on 30 January, “Hate speech encourages the de-humanization of peoples and groups and is used to justify discrimination and other acts of violence...The same anti-Semitism that fueled the Holocaust fuels hate speech today....” Challenging the denial of history matters, if we want to build a peaceful and just world!

International Day of Disability.

December 3rd was the International Day of Persons With Disabilities! Robert Hansel said, “Determination has no disability.” Thomas Iland, an advocate for persons with disabilities echoed it today during a DESA event RSHM NGO had the opportunity to attend at the UN. Iland, other persons with disabilities, as well as various member states, all came together to emphasize that persons with disabilities need more opportunities for personal and professional growth and that the SDGs cannot be achieved without giving persons with disabilities a seat at the table!

RSHM News Briefs

Colegio Sacro Cuore de Maria in Fatima, Portugal, has been an active member of the “Eco-Schools” programme in Portugal since 2009, fulfilling the requirements and meeting the criteria each year by undertaking environmental activities to bring about behavior change and a more sustainable planet. This year they were happy to receive their 12th “Bandeira Verde” (Green Flag), something that strengthened their commitment to continue educating for the protection of the environment and working to promote the sustainability of the planet.

From 2 – 6 December, two of the new RSHM General Leadership team, Srs. Ana Luisa Pinto and Sipiwe Phiri RSHM, participated in the JPIC Promoters’ Formation Workshop held in Rome while Sr. Mary Jo McElroy RSHM participated online. Among the many themes treated were an overview of congregational and JPIC structures, the spirituality of JPIC/religious vows. the role of a J PIC promoter, Networking, Working Groups and Planning.

As an activity linked to their Global programme, the entire 9th grade class of Marymount School of New York visited the United Nations Headquarters in NY on 16th January. The day started with learning a little about the history of the UN with their history teacher. They then did group tour of the UN. This was followed with a session on the RSHM NGO ministry at the UN, where Veronica RSHM shared some of the main ways in which we engage with others in collaborating, networking and advocacy on global issues at the UN.

Please follow us on Twitter @RSHMNGO and like us on Facebook RSHM NGO.

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