

WFP Vienna, Austria: UN Commission of Crime Prevention and Justice

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"The responsibility of effective, fair, humane and accountable criminal justice systems in preventing and countering crime motivated by intolerance or discrimination of any kind"

In response, we choose the following topic for our side event:

"The GOLDEN RULE in daily life education preventing crime resulting from intolerance and discrimination"

Report

Dr. Maria Riehl, Director of WFP - UN Vienna Office, offered the welcoming remarks.

Dr. Riehl commenced by explaining WFP attempts to move forward through friendship and exchange among women of all cultures and religious backgrounds.

She further described how the family, particularly the three-generational family, introduces a model to the child /young person for relationships beyond the family to the society, which resembles an extended family. Thus, the child can learn to contribute to goodness in the world.

H.E. Mr. Ortiz, Ambassador of Costa Rica to Austria, opened the event, presenting the topic as a source of inspiration.

H.E. Mr. Ortiz stated that Costa Rica is the most stable and peaceful country in Central America. Education is of high importance in the country, which has existed without military since 1967. When the military was dissolved, all resources were invested in the education of its citizens.

He emphasised the importance of a society embracing all areas of Human Rights and stressed Art. 2 of the HR. declaration, stating that action needs to be taken to counter discrimination at all levels worldwide among individuals, groups and societies, to promote an inclusive society.

He listed four key elements necessary for an inclusive society:

1. Education: Education plays the key role. Costa Rica has been part of the human rights council for a decade. 'In this context it has emphasised that everyone holds responsibility to support a society where each person is valued and respected.
2. Legal framework: Second it is essential to build the legal framework to protect the human rights standard.
3. Civil society: as a critical voice against human indignity. Our responsibility is to promote human rights.
4. Generation of light, a generation of enlightened people is needed.

He reiterated the motto of the 2030 SDGs 'Leave no one behind', which he believes can be fulfilled if everyone takes responsibility.

The first speaker, Mag. Ursula Gamauf –Eberhard, comes from the Austrian study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR) www.aspr.ac.at.

Mag. Gamauf, who has been working on peace education since 2007, believes in the power of this generation. She introduced "Peace Weeks", a programme for children aged 6 to 19 in the beautiful surroundings of "Burg Schleining". The programme aims to strengthen skills in dealing with violent behaviour as frequently experienced in the classroom or the home. Additionally, training courses are offered to teachers and multipliers. Further activities include an annual conference on Peace Education and the Holocaust History Project. The trainer's family background provides an interesting backdrop as her father's family suffered at the hand of the Nazis, while her mother's family cooperated with them.



The second speaker, Ms. Elisabeth Stanners, Principal of the VIS secondary school, gave her presentation on 'The prevention of intolerance and discrimination in the education of pupils and students at the Vienna International School'.

Dir. Stanners referred to the statutes of VIS, which provide a guideline for teaching in an intercultural/ interreligious context:

The school does not provide a platform for the promotion of a particular religious or political affiliation. However, this does not preclude the use of school facilities for extra-curricular religious instruction, subject to the agreement of the Director.

The curriculum will nurture and promote a balanced and sensitive understanding of a broad range of religious and political beliefs. Through this process, it is expected that students will develop the capacity to make personal informed choices. (Statutes of VIS)

Dir. Stanners firmly believes in universal values, and feels called to guide the students to such an understanding, while questioning and discussing their religious beliefs and personal convictions. She expressed the need to develop a faith apart from the personal religious beliefs, which extends beyond religious boundaries - a faith in universal values. The "Golden Rule" is as much part of this as the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights".

The third speaker, Dipl. Ped. Sigrid Grill Senior Primary School Teacher in VS Bernhardtts tal offered her insight into the ingredients for success in classrooms with a wide range of cultural and social backgrounds. This school is marked as a 'Hot Spot' school since many pupils come from difficult homes and lack parental support, resulting in behavioural difficulties. Ms. Grill approaches the situation with the attitude to first love the children and allow them to feel valued through being listened to and taken serious, which opens them up to listen and learn; this enables the stronger to help the weaker to complete the tasks.. Occasionally, she guides the pupils through meditation.

Ms. Grill was accompanied by the Muslim religious education teacher. As a sign of interfaith cooperation and respect, pupils of different faiths fundraised together to support "St. Anna-Kinderkrebshilfe"- a child cancer treatment and research institute.

The school director, who was unable to attend, sent a video message expressing support.

The fourth speaker, Ms. Giovanna Campello, Officer-in-Charge Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Section UNODC introduced the "UNODC – Strong Families".



Ms. Campello presented activities with families involving parents and children. Research has shown that short low-cost interventions make a difference. The programme consists of training in parenting and family skills conveyed in "fun ways" with full participation. The activities aim to strengthen the bonds between parents and children through weekly fun gatherings in "Family Time". The purpose is to reinforce positive behaviour through praise and encouragement for small accomplishments, while minimizing correction for wrong behaviour. The application of these simple rules, where limits are set with love, has a positive effect on families worldwide.

Mamadou Kone, Honorary Consul of Mali to Austria, offered the closing remarks.

Mr. Kone expressed the need for families to take a proactive approach to create a better world, while stressing the importance of being mindful of our children's observance of our behaviour, which they will resonate. He mentioned his mother with great respect and referred to healthy families as an indispensable contribution to a functioning society.

The work of WFPW, whose values and vision he shares, has earned his unwavering support.

The talks were followed by enriching discussions among the participants which stimulated all to continue their work in their respective fields and support each other.

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