

United Nations International Day of Peace 2013 - "Education for Peace"

Bonn, Germany, 22. September 2013

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This year's International Day of Peace (IDP) did not receive too much public attention in Germany due to the crucial Federal Election held on September 22. However, the Bonn chapter of the Universal Peace Federation in cooperation with the Women's Federation for Peace invited on that day to what turned out to be a deeply moving and inspiring afternoon on the topic "Education for Peace".

First, the participants were introduced to the history of IDP and heard UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon's message for the day.



Then, Francesco Conidi, M.A. phil. and board member of UPF, gave a thought-provoking talk on the principles of education for peace. Several times he referred to the great philosopher Immanuel Kant. One of his quotes reads: "human beings can become human only through education". Conidi addressed the most important elements of education. He agreed with the statement of Pestalozzi, the Swiss pedagogue and educational reformer: "You must love people if you want to change them." Conidi also touched on UPF's Five Principles of Peace and emphasized that we all have our personal responsibility for peace. We cannot

delegate peace. There is no one who can do your part. Learning to love in one's family and living for the sake of others are vital elements of a peaceful society and a peaceful world. Forgiveness and reconciliation are vital for the solution of existing conflicts.

Thirdly, three representatives from the "Vacation from War" campaign gave first and information from their practical work with young adults and children from hostile and warring societies and nations – particularly from the Balkans and from Israel and Palestine. Those young people are given the chance – away from their everyday environment – to share their personal hurt and grievances and to get to know "their enemies". The latest project had just been concluded near Bonn, where 140 young people from the Middle East had been together for 2 very intense weeks. The audience was really captured by the profound presentations from Barbara Esser, Rose Kasabre-Bauer and Muhammad Khaskeia and asked many questions and gave comments.

Additionally, a video showed how participants of a previous "vacation" dealt with their feelings and prejudices and really changed their attitude step by step - even a young lady whose father was killed by soldiers from the other side.

The following question and answer session was very lively. Discussions went on for a long time. Brochures and books were available for purchase and many participants donated to the noble cause of "Vacation from War".

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