



EDUCATION

IYCP - International Year for the Culture of Peace

The approach of the new millennium is an occasion for the world to reflect on its destructive and violent past, predict what might be in store for the next century, and plan for the future while trying to avoid past mistakes. In short, to take stock of the achievements and failures of the past to prepare for a new beginning.

In the spirit of building a better global future, the United Nations proclaimed the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace (IYCP) to promote peace and non-violence as part of the daily life of each and every person. This international year holds special significance for the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), which has been committed for more than forty-five years to the ideals of UNESCO and the construction of peace and mutual understanding through education. But what can you, as ASP students and teachers, do in your classrooms, schools, homes and communities to contribute and participate in this international year?

For a start, you can make known widely the official symbol, logo and slogan of the International Year for the Culture of Peace. According to the resources within your means, you might reproduce them on stickers, posters, banners, tee-shirts, pens, etc. and distribute them in the school, to parents, and the community or display them in a prominent place on the school premises. Create your own peace logo and organize competitions to select one for your school or town.

Symbol and slogan of IYCP

The two hands that are interlaced can be seen to represent exchange and agreement. They can also be seen as continents that are embracing and within which two islands, symbolized by the spots, are incorporated. One can also interpret the symbol as two people, or two groups of people - two villages - which share a common head and are merged one with the other. Or as a union between the North and the South, represented by the two thumbs pointing up and down, and achieved by the integration of various cultures, represented by the fingers that are interlocked. This slogan "Peace is in Our Hands" is the message that reflects the objectives laid down for the IYCP: let us cultivate peace around us.

Manifesto 2000

The Manifesto 2000, written by Nobel Peace Laureates, is an easy and concrete way to involve individuals in the international year and it can provide the basis for all activities throughout the year. The aim is to collect 100 million signatures for the Manifesto by September 2000. Please send the signatures of your school to:

International Year for the Culture of Peace

UNESCO
7 place de Fontenoy
75352 Paris 07 SP France
E-mail: iycp@unesco.org
URL: <http://www.unesco.org/manifesto2000>.

If you are interested to join the global movement to promote a culture of peace and non-violence, you can find out more about becoming an official Messenger of the Manifesto 2000 in ASPnet Wired section of this newsletter.

Peace Pillar Awards

UNESCO plans to grant some special Peace Pillar Awards to schools which have conducted particularly meaningful and original projects devoted to promoting a culture of peace. Associated Schools are encouraged to focus on one of the four main themes for their activities: non-violent resolution of conflict, human rights and democracy, intercultural learning and solidarity action. For more information, contact the ASP National Co-ordinator in your country.

Peace Pillar

Media involvement

An essential aspect in raising awareness for the aim of the international year will be the involvement of the media (press, radio, television) and the community in all activities you initiate. So, you might want to invite people from the media and community leaders to the events organized by your school. Preparing of press releases and establishing links with reporters, journalists and leaders of the local community could be part of all project planning.

ASPnet and IYCP

The following are some examples of activities conducted for the launch of IYCP (14 September 1999) and those planned by ASP Networks to take place during this year at the national and regional level.

In South Africa, at the request of the Minister of Education, the launch of IYCP took the form of discussions on peace between himself, the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology. Also present were the Chairpersons of the Human Rights Commission, the Commission for Gender Equality, the National Youth Commission and 20 high school students.

The South African Youth Manifesto, drafted by the five ASPnet schools for the World Parliament of Children held in France (see article in the International Events section), was used as the basis for discussions. Consequently, the two ASP delegates to the World Parliament also took part in the discussions at the National Parliament.

Australia has initiated a Pacific-wide ASPnet Culture of Peace project that combines two components - the production of a global anthology of student writing on the themes associated with the international year and the development of a special web site dedicated to it. The project is designed to involve schools with a varying range of resources. Those schools with minimal access to technology can participate in the anthology of student writing and receive a hardcopy publication of theirs and other participants' work. Others who are better equipped will be encouraged to submit a range of electronic items for inclusion on the project web site : [<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/gc/asp>] and participate in the online activities. The students will be invited to write on the following themes: - Culture of Peace: human rights, non-discrimination, prevention of violence, democracy, cultural rights, racism, intolerance, citizenship, etc.
- Peace in the family - Peace at school - Peace of mind - Peace in the community and the world - The history of peace

In Bosnia Herzegovina, all ASP schools devoted one whole day (14 September 1999) to the celebration of the launch of IYCP. They held sports competitions, co-operated with local radio stations to broadcast a quiz on the international year, launched essay contests on peace, non-violence and human rights with the best ones published in school newspapers and organized a series of lectures on tolerance, conflict resolution, dialogue, sports and culture. The signing of the Manifesto 2000 was included in all these events and the schools succeeded in getting some three thousand signatures during the one day.

ASP schools in Brazil will explore the intricacies of relationships at all levels - personal, social and environmental - in building peace in the minds of the students and teachers. The project will be conducted in four phases, each lasting two months and linked to the four pillars of learning of the Delors Report. Work will begin with a focus on "Living in peace with oneself" (learning to be), followed by "Living in peace with others" (learning to live together) and "Living in peace with nature" (learning to know). The first three will culminate in a festival of music, art and poetry (learning to do).

Cambodia organized a National Conference on the Culture of Peace, with the participation of students, teachers and political leaders in Phnom Penh, 10-11 December 1999. Workshops on education for a Culture of Peace; the role of women and youth and their contribution to peace; good governance and peace; and human rights and peace were conducted during the conference. There was an official signing ceremony of the Manifesto 2000 and participants adopted a declaration for a Culture of Peace at the closing of the Conference.

In preparation of IYCP, the UNESCO Santiago Office in Chile convoked a contest for the Latin American region in 1999 entitled "Culture of Peace in an ASP School: Best Practices for the Prevention and Treatment of School Violence". Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico and Uruguay have submitted in total more than 50 examples of best practices conducted by their schools. Two best initiatives will be selected from each country to be published and disseminated to schools in the region. This will also contribute to the creation of national and regional networks of "Partnership for Non-Violence in Schools" to facilitate the exchange of views and experiences as well as collaboration among schools.

Philippines organized an Asia-Pacific Conference on Peace Education in February 2000 in Cebu City. A special UNESCO ASP Journal featuring professional articles written by peace educators as well as peace modules for elementary and high school leaders will be published in time for the school year June 2000. The modules include a monthly theme focus on a specific dimension of peace - personal peace, care for the earth, cultural solidarity, non-violent conflict resolution, justice and human rights, etc. A nationwide poster contest on "peace and tolerance" will be conducted and awards will be presented on 16 November 2000 (International Day for Tolerance).

In Qatar, the UNESCO Doha Office and the Qatar National Commission for UNESCO have joined forces in organizing a peace festival in January 2000. Dances and songs on the theme of peace were performed by students of both ASP and non-ASP schools and the evening of festivities ended with the participants and the public signing the Manifesto 2000. More similar events are foreseen for the rest of the year.

Children welcome guests and participants to the peace festival in Qatar

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