



Partnership for Global Justice

November 2015

Partnership For Global Justice Monthly Newsletter

Welcome to the Partnership for Global Justice Monthly – a newsletter about PGJ programs, news from the United Nations and its briefings, and information about the activities of our participating membership. With this Monthly, we invite our members to provide updates of their social justice initiatives and share their related experiences. Please respond to this posting with a comment on our blog or send your thoughts to partnershipforglobaljustice@gmail.com.

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LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Reader,

At this Thanksgiving time I express thanks to each of you for your past and your present support of the Partnership for Global Justice. Your membership and participation are what makes the Partnership. Without you this organization would not exist. That would be a loss to the UN and the global community.

The 2016 NGO/DPI Conference will be in Seoul, Korea from May 30- June 1 and will focus on education. Since educating is one of the three ways in which PGJ interacts with others. I am going to use this letter to reflect on education.

In Chapter Six, Section II of *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis emphasizes the importance of education, saying, “We are faced with an educational challenge.” I encourage you to reread that section in light of your membership in PGJ, since we are committed to *Educating, Advocating and Participating*. According to Pope Francis, “Environmental education should facilitate making the leap towards the transcendent which gives ecological ethics its deepest meaning.” Speakers at the UN repeatedly emphasize that caring for the environment is a “moral issue.”

In a recent meeting with Bruce Knotts, Chair of NGO/DPI Executive Committee, he mentioned that achievement of any one of the Sustainable Development Goals involves education and that Goal 4 speaks directly to education. He also mentioned that education occurs in many settings and in many formats. This echoes the Pope’s words in paragraph #213 of *Laudato Si*, “Ecological education can take place in a variety of settings: at school, in families, in the media, in catechesis and elsewhere.”

The United Nations is also celebrating the fifth anniversary of UNAI, United Nations Academic Impact. The special celebration held November 10, 2015 focused on the Next Generation of Global Citizens. Many memorable ideas were shared such as that education is necessary to provide a better life for girls in developing countries, educating more people and educating them better seems to be the best bet, the global baton is being handed to the younger generation, technology has caused an educational revolution, the only path to peace is education and dialogue, each student should ask “What is the UN doing in my area of study?”, global citizens need knowledge, skills and attitudes, each of us must find ways to step out of the island in our minds, we need to desire to connect with those different from us, universities need to provide high quality content on each of the SDGs, and play or unexpected actions cause the brains to reconfigure and this is needed.

The ideas shared here and many others affirm the need for PGJ to continue its efforts to provide education on the UN and global issues. The tendency to oversimplify issues and the desire to have clear black-and-white answers to challenges facing the world community are not helpful and need to be counteracted with education. Youth are our key to a sustainable and peaceful future. It is our responsibility to provide them with the knowledge, the skills and the attitudes needed. There is much more that the Partnership can do, but at this season I am grateful for all that has been, all that is now, and all that will be in the future.

Happy Thanksgiving,

JoAnn Mark, ASC
Executive Director



AT THE UN IN NOVEMBER

United Nations Academic Impact J. Michael Adams Lecture And Conversation Series “The United Nations At Seventy: Some Reflections”

Report by JoAnn Mark, ASC

Keynote Speaker: Ambassador Thomas Pickering, Former United States Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

Ambassador Pickering began by noting that academics is immensely important in the work of the UN. He then shared issues that he thinks are of consequence for the UN. They are

1. globalization of technology which constantly brings world events to the UN
2. economics which is now one of the most significant issues
3. realization that military action is not a shortcut to diplomacy; that is, diplomacy must be back in all actions

the need to think strategically even if one must act narrowly so as to avoid unintended consequences and to broaden issues

He then mentioned briefly **seven sets of interests**: The Middle East; continental countries; weapons of mass destruction including cyber; poverty, growth and development or food, health and water; the need for more international cooperation; the issue of energy and the upcoming meeting in Paris; the butterfly effect and the consequential requirement that the international community be placed at the center of issues; and the fact/question about the readiness of the UN. He indicated that he felt his own country (the USA) did not have in place the means to deal with all these issues.

Finally, Ambassador Pickering gave thoughts on how to move forward key issues: Syria, Israel and Pakistan, and the future structure of the UN. These thoughts give hope that a solution for these thorny issues can be developed.

Syria: For the first time all the players were at the table that weekend in Geneva; in the future Syria in some way also needs to be present. The first forward step might be to build on the few cease fires that have been negotiated in the past. There are two areas of critical importance: the north and the Damascus area. Next, a transitional government could be developed. There is no clear map for this and it will take time, but it is possible since all parties agree that military action is not the answer.



AT THE UN IN NOVEMBER CONTINUED...

Israel and Palestine: The new violence is, in his view, an indication that hope is not present in the area. For the past 30 years the parties have been expected to produce the outcome. Clearly they are not able to do this and so it may be time for the outcomes to produce the parties. Those concerned, such as the U.S., put forth the key elements that have to be part of the agreement. All can negotiate but each country represented must commit to whatever is agreed upon.

Security Council and Veto: There are several proposals regarding the veto: 1) it cannot be used in case of action against genocide, 2) the Security Council could join the General Assembly on an issue if two-thirds of the General Assembly agreed. The question of the Secretary General's term is also being debated since Ban Ki Moon's term is coming to an end. Should the Secretary General have one term of 7 years or two terms of 3 or 4 years? If the Secretary General is capable, one seven-year term is best, but if the person selected is not capable, then two terms are better.

In response to questions, Ambassador Pickering noted the importance of education for global citizenship, education that goes well beyond traditional subjects. Scientists need to engage with social issues and learn the leadership skills needed to support survival. Students should bring things they care passionately about to the global table.

In regard to a transitional government in Syria, Ambassador Pickering said that Assad needs to have a voice in the transition, but the government needs to be one that governs where it can, brokers cease fires where it can, engages as many parties as possible, and looks at the long term survival of Syria. Anything developed by the transitional government must go back to the people for ratification. The immediate question is how can we stop the killing and find a way to care for people.



MORE AT THE UN IN NOVEMBER

Youth Create Solutions: New Tech, Educate for Change, Sue the US Government!

Youth-led Briefing: *Youth at the Forefront: Bridging the Gap between Climate Change and Climate Awareness,* November 12, 2015. Youth-Led Briefings are part of the UN's effort to involve more younger people in the decisions about their future.

This briefing was a lively session of ideas for making change happen, not just theorizing on what might be done. Topics ranged from technology and youth training to an astonishing lawsuit that a group young people have filed against the United States government for violating their rights to life, liberty and property!

The first speaker, **Dave Gonzalez**, Partner Development Manager of Skybox Agriculture at Google, described his work on satellite imaging. He cited the need for smaller and more affordable technology (satellites, mostly) and simpler analyses of data to make now-expensive data available to a wider range of countries, local groups and organizations to help them make more informed decisions. Such technology might monitor available water sources, ensure that companies are adhering to environmental regulations, help manage traffic in ports, and provide weather data to help farmers plan their crops. It would also be valuable for responding to a crisis in a place that is difficult to reach or dangerous to approach, as well as enable consumers to make more informed choices and to pressure violators to change their practices.

Jada Monica Drew, CEO of [Social Designs](#), is an impressive young woman who mobilizes young people aged 10 to 35 to create solutions. Social Designs educates the young people in skills they need to enact change and create projects that make major differences, all based on the premise that “revolution is imperative” and “global citizenship a requirement” for the present and the future.

One project, [So Fresh and So Green](#), engages elementary students in learning about the environment, actively promoting (and doing) recycling in their homes and community, and using trash to make useful and artistic creations.

Partnering with a friend from Barbados, Ms. Drew and other young people involve the people of Barbados in projects to improve their conditions. Social designs always begins by asking, “What do you want to do?” The projects then develop, teaching young people that they have a responsibility for the changes they want and also that they have or can learn the skills to make them happen. The young people then work with their communities and local businesses.

Kelly Matheson, Board president of [Our Children's Trust](#), believes that the younger generation are best fitted to lead us out of the current crisis. Her fear for the Paris Conference is that countries will not offer solutions sufficient to meet the limits science says we need. While politicians flourish on compromise, Ms. Matheson noted, “You can't compromise with science or nature.”

She led us through a history of inaction by the United States government, beginning with 1965, when President Lyndon Johnson outlined an environmental future if no changes were made. His outline mirrors current sea level rise, ice cap melting, ocean acidification and other indicators, as well as increased pollution from coal, oil, and natural gas. Federal policies and programs have since escalated the rate of pollution causing climate change.

To spur the government to take serious action, Our Children's Trust partnered with climate scientist Jim Henson in August 2015 to develop a climate recovery plan. As a result, twenty-one young people have filed a [lawsuit against the United States](#) government, the president and eight federal agencies. (Other state and local lawsuits have also been filed by young people, to demand action on climate change. See the link for cases and updates.)

The lawsuit charges that the federal government has violated the rights of the younger generation to life, liberty, and property by allowing the environment to become sick. Climate change, they claim, is infringing on people's human rights. The suit asks that the government be commanded to base its planning on science data, not political compromises. Of course, the fossil fuel industry has entered a plea to block this lawsuit.

MORE AT THE UN IN NOVEMBER CONTINUED...

Victoria Barrett, a sixteen-year-old student of Notre Dame School in Manhattan, admitted that it felt “a bit strange to be suing the federal government,” but, in spite of her mother’s nervousness about Victoria’s participation in the suit, Victoria says it is “important” for her “to take responsibility.”

The big question right now, according to Ms. Matheson, is: “Will President Obama go to Paris for the young people or the industry?”

Sr. JoAnn Mark reports that the first speaker at the **Luncheon** following the Briefing was a French representative at the UN. He noted that Paris is only a starting point” and shared four reasons the world needs the commitment of youth.

1. The challenge of Global Warming is huge and time is short.
2. Climate Warming is not only an environmental, economic, and social issue, it is also a moral issue.
3. Representatives to Paris have to “make it.” If not, skepticism will grow and it will be next to impossible to gather for another world conference.
4. The Paris agreement is a very specific agreement, one that is legally binding and opens a space outside government.

Discussion focused on the ideas presented at the Briefing and other ideas for getting involved and truly moving to Climate Action. All were encouraged to use art to engage people and then cultivate them so they will engage in action.



ART AS A TOOL FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RECONCILIATION

Thursday Briefing November 5, 2015



This is one of the most deeply moving briefings I have attended! Each of the speakers described the way he or she uses art to heal and create communities among some of the

most traumatized groups on in conflict areas. What a wide variety of approaches! All of the five presenters were impressive, but I will describe the work of just three of them here.

Joanna Sherman, Artistic Director of the [Bond Street Theatre](#), spoke of their work as “theater for social justice,” offering the refugees “food for their souls” and “restoring their humanity.” (Use the link for pictures of their work – I would love to know more about this show with actors standing on their heads in buckets!)

When she began working in Afghanistan in the early 2000s, Ms. Sherman was amazed that, in spite of Taliban rule, small theatre groups were popping up all over. These people had never seen live theater or television. However, there were no women in the shows.

Working with women in refugee camps in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Theatre invites women to write and perform their own shows, usually in homes, so that women can attend freely. The mostly young women performers are amazed to see the impact they have on others. Even local imams are often invited and come away impressed.

One show told of a girl who was going to be sold for \$20,000 to an older man. Her mother goes to the imam, who informs her that Islam forbids both selling a daughter and forced marriage. The shows provide a voice for both writers/actors and the audiences, as well as giving information that many do not know – such as what the Koran actually says about issues that the Taliban misrepresent.

Ms. Sherman showed us a video clip of a very clever show: The action takes place in front of two “pictures” of ancestors (actors holding picture frames). The young wife is cleaning house and then pauses to read. Her husband comes in and yells at her for reading and hits her. The ancestors come alive and argue over her right to read and learn. The audience is invited to offer their opinions and suggestions.

Nicholas Ledner, a member of UNICEF’s Communications Office’s Social Media Team, described amazing digital projects to get people knowledgeable and interested in combatting violence. You can see a few one-minute videos conceived by young people [here](#).

He began with a short music video (all graphics and music, no spoken words) about Chad. The information: *Girls in Chad are more likely to die in childbirth than attend high school, and seven out of ten are married by age eighteen.* The video includes pictures of a young girl’s marriage.

Mr. Ladner explained that such clips are extremely effective because they are easily shared through social media for a young adult audience.



He described the UNICEF method of producing short, high-quality videos in collaboration with well-known artists, musicians, and media, which gives the videos immediate appeal and wide publicity. The magazine *Mother Jones* partnered on the video we saw; this increased publicity to over a million Facebook shares! A famous actress and well-known musicians collaborated on another, which gave the project immediate TV coverage in Tanzania and Liberia.

He cited changes that these videos have assisted. One project on ending violence in Paraguay was so well received that the Paraguayan House of Representatives commended it. The First Lady of Chad was so impressed by a video made for her country that she showed the video at the African Union Summit.

Another successful project was a Snapchat post for the anniversary of the Boko Haram kidnapping of Nigerian schoolgirls. The post incorporated drawings by children from various countries of what refugee children miss most from home. The Snapchat format allowed them to involve children around the world, by inviting them to submit pictures and statements about what they would miss, if they were forced from their homes.

Still another program pitched its video as a video game about a girl in South Sudan escaping from terrorists. At the end, a South Sudanese person described the situation in real South Sudan.

Lily Yeh, Founding Director of [Barefoot Artists](#), described the beginnings of her work in her distress about a devastated Philadelphia, thirty-nine years ago. Since her small neighborhood start, she has created projects on all five continents, working with some of the most disadvantaged and injured communities. You can view many of them through the link.

Her first project was to create a neighborhood park from an abandoned, junk-filled space in Philly. Neighborhood children soon joined her in creating mosaics from discarded items. Then a down-and-out drug lord who had no place to go came along; she got him to help her create angels for the park. He in turn over the next few years brought in former drug addicts to take part.

One amazing project brought tears to my eyes. In Rwanda, a community showed her a mass grave and asked her to help them construct a Bone Chamber as a memorial, “so that our people can come home.” Designing and building the memorial created a healing community recovering from the brutal massacres.



Also in Rwanda, she worked with children in another community create Rugerero Survivors Village. In a place that mirrored their lack of hope and jobs, the children were encouraged to create picture of what they dream. They then transferred their pictures to house exterior walls and other public spaces. People in Ms. Yeh’s home town, Philadelphia, were so touched by the village that they donated goats. The villagers now have cows; Engineers Without Borders came to build rain reservoirs and provide latrines. Now they are educating the villagers to make solar panels, and the women have been learning traditional weaving. The art project has transformed the village of despair into a vibrant, living place for the people.

This painting began as a two-inch drawing by one of the village children.



ON INVOLVING NGOS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POST-2015 AGENDA

Second Committee Meeting October 24, 2015

The Second Committee is one of the six committees of the General Assembly. It oversees Economic and Financial matters for the Assembly. JoAnn and I missed part of this presentation, so here are a few highlights of the Second Panel of the session.

This panel addressed lessons learned from implementing the MDGs, in light of preparing to implement the Post-2015 Agenda.

Fr. Joe Donnelly, of Caritas International, spoke of the need for durable partnerships that act on the principle that all we do affects everyone. All our actions on SDGs must eradicate poverty. We don't need duplication but do need repetition of successful programs and policies.

Citing Pope Francis' address to the General Assembly and *Laudato Si'*, Fr. Donnelly reiterated that the "globalization of indifference" must be overcome. Only solidarity will ensure that no one is left behind. To achieve this, we have to keep listening to voices from around the world, and put people and their most basic needs first.

Recognizing that all the problems are integrated is also essential if we are to succeed. Poverty is not just financial; solutions must involve social, educational and health elements, as well as being sustainable. Answering the question of how we feed each other will lead to our working on water, and then on many of the other SDGs.

David Dudis, representative of another NGO, addressed corruption and its impact on all the goals. Experience shows that the more public corruption, the fewer children in school, the less health care, the greater child mortality, the less access to water, to name a few consequences.

Goal 16, therefore, is important. Corruption was not addressed in the MDGs, which held back progress. People are beginning to move against corruption, for instance, the Arab Spring.

To achieve the SDGs, we will need to monitor corruption, emphasizing the Rule of Law, strengthening justice systems, and promoting participation in government. The UN has to set up standards for this. Broadening Civil Society involvement in UN work outside of NYC can help, for instance, by monitoring government corruption.

Frank Goldsmith, of the World Federation of Trade Unions, cited the large number of NGOs associated with the UN and urged increased collaboration with NGOs in implementing the SDGs. In planning action, Mr. Goldsmith recommends dividing issues into acute and chronic – for instance, the current migration crisis is acute; the Palestinian situation is chronic.

To ensure progress, he recommends yearly reviews and five-year reports by ECOSOC for the Second Committee. Even more frequent reports would be useful. He further recommends that when the Second Committee considers each review for renewal, the basic criterion should be, "What are you doing to further the 2030 Agenda?"



ON INVOLVING NGOS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POST-2015 AGENDA

CONTINUED.....

Two points addressed by other speakers:

– The Second Committee needs to facilitate the development of principles on transparency, ownership, etc., for international cooperation with corporations. Although only the UN has sufficient status to foster the kind of consensus needed, NGOs can help gather data and define principles and rules for corporate involvement. This will facilitate developing new forms of financing and deal with private and public corruption, for instance, to ensure international companies pay a fair share of taxes.

– The Second Committee will be strengthened by the adoption of the SDGs and the outcomes of the Financing For Development conference. The Second Committee could foster implementation by setting priorities and encouraging implementation. Two ways it can do this are by following up on tax integration and by ensuring that all partnerships are accountable to the countries in which they operate.

Comments from the floor included ways some nations are already incorporating the SDGs into their national agendas (Japan, e .g.); continuing the High-Level Political Forum as a process for sharing progress and ideas; the need for high-quality reports to ensure progress and understand obstacles; the need to foster coordination of efforts within and among countries, especially where there are competing priorities; and the need to invite many people with expertise into the process of implementing the SDGs.

One interesting idea for promoting the SDGs came from a Russian NGO representative, who suggested establishing a “**Supporting Angel**” World Award for NGOs, governments and businesses that achieve, say, eleven of the Goals. There might be an “Industrial Angel,” an “Environmental Angel,” etc. Moving from the opposite approach, a psychiatrists’ NGO asked if there are sanctions for countries that don’t cooperate or fail to do what they commit to do. (There are none planned at present.)



DPI/NGO BRIEFING—TOWN HALL MEETING ON THE 2016 CONFERENCE

October 29, 2015

The 66th PDI/NGO Conference will be held in Seoul, Korea, from May 30 to June 1, 2016, Jeff Brez, Director of Outreach of the Department of Public Information (DPI) announced at a Town Hall Meeting for NGOs on October 29.

Conferences held off the New York City UN campus must be confirmed and supported by the national government of the site. Korea has confirmed its support, and due to Korea's outstanding advances in education, the theme for the conference will be Education. Sub-themes are: What is the role of Civil Society in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)? How can we support the SDGs and deal with the impact of climate change?

As Sr. JoAnn noted in her letter above, "Education" here is not just formal education but all ways to impart knowledge, including education for global citizenship, through schools, NGOs, and many other ways to get people to care about wider issues as much as about personal and neighborhood ones.

Parallel committees are being established in New York and Korea to prepare the site and program for the conference. Some ideas for topics that have emerged are educating migrant children, how NGOs might help their country develop plans to implement the SDGs. (Since the SDGs do not have accountability built into them, NGOs will have to call their governments to accountability.)

In answer to concerns from NGOs present, the moderators assured us that Korea has extensive expertise and many superb venues for conferences of our size, as well as expertise in providing technological support for the conference.



PARTICIPATE IN UN ACTIVITIES

Orange The World



The Orange Day campaign to end violence against women and girls is exploding this November into a sixteen-day project called "[Orange the World](#)." See the Orange the World website for many events and suggestions. We also have a new Logo.

Remember to wear **Orange** on the 25th of each month, to spread the word about ending violence against women and girls!

Please let us know of any events you do related to ending violence against women and girls (and include a picture or two, if you have them). Let's share our expertise with each other.

Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

Don't forget that the Sixtieth Session of the [Commission on the Status of Women](#) will be held in New York from March 14 to 24, 2016. The Priority theme for CSW60 is: "Women's empowerment and its link to sustainable development."

You are invited to attend this and the parallel [CSW60 Forum](#) – and to create a Parallel Event on your work empowering women.

Please contact Sr. JoAnn if you are interested at partnershipforglobaljustice@gmail.com

What is a Parallel Event? UN Commissions operate on several levels: Official events of the Commission, Side Events by UN organizations and larger NGOs. Both of these are held in the UN buildings. Parallel Events are organized by NGOs, off the UN campus (but nearby).

Presenters and Participants from around the world make all of these events informative and interesting. They also provide wonderful opportunities to network!

As always, you can **watch live coverage** (and often stored videos) of major UN events at the UN [WebTV](#) channel. The **Paris Climate talks** are also live on this channel. (Click the language button to hear them in English). A list of daily events are listed in the [UN Journal](#) at 11pm the

day before. Webcasts are indicated by a small red icon of a camera.

Participate in Partnership Activity

Save the Date

The 2016 **PGJ Annual Meeting** will be held in **New York** on **October 15, 2016**
More details will follow.

Advocacy

The Partnership signed on to the letter from U. S. Catholic Conference of Bishops to members of Congress, urging our Senators and Representatives to welcome Syrian refugees to the United States

