



In & Around the UN

An Update from the Quaker United Nations Office

QUNO convenes first-ever Program Assistant reunion in New York

September 2018

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QUNO staff and former PAs gather at Quaker House to form the QUNO Alumni Network © QUNO

This June, we hosted our first-ever gathering of past and present New York Program Assistants (PAs). As part of the American Friends Service Committee's centennial celebrations, this reunion provided an opportunity for past PAs to gather in person to launch the QUNO Alumni Network (QAN)!

The PA position provides an invaluable opportunity for Quakers and those in sympathy with Quaker ideals who have recently completed a degree to experience a year-long service with QUNO's offices in Geneva or New York. Over the exciting four days of our gathering, PAs from the UK, Ireland, the US, China, France, and Zimbabwe convened at the historic Quaker House in New York

to hear about the current state of the UN, learn of new QUNO program work on peacebuilding and prevention, and to share and reminisce about their time at QUNO. Program Assistants reflected upon how their experiences at QUNO impacted their professional career paths, with participants representing a wide array of careers, including law, diplomacy, policy campaigning and advocacy, leadership facilitation, and peacebuilding, to name a few. By the end of the weekend, the enthusiastic group officially launched QAN as a means to stay connected with QUNO and each other, to provide guidance and professional support to one another, and to

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What's at the heart of peacebuilding?



Peacebuilding leaders meet at Quaker House for “What’s Next in Peacebuilding?”

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Recent developments in global peacebuilding policy have given us new global commitments (such as the commitment to foster peaceful, just, and inclusive societies in the 2030 Agenda, and the Sustaining Peace resolutions). Yet these commitments are extremely broad.

This ‘big tent’ framing, while effective in consolidating political consensus, presents significant challenges in follow-up and implementation. If peace is everything, then how does a government, a civil society group, a donor, or an agency prioritize between different programmatic, budgetary, and policy alternatives?

Important pointers have emerged from several interesting new efforts to collect and analyze the current

evidence base (such as the UN World Bank “Pathways For Peace” report, and the Progress Study on Youth, Peace, and Security), which respectively stress the importance of inclusion as a central tenet for prevention, and the need to root our actions in supporting existing capacities for peace.

These themes echo early insights on peacebuilding, which often focused on the central role of people in contributing to sustainable peace, and the relationships between individuals, their communities, and society at large. These ideas also resonate with some faith-based perspectives, which have included an emphasis on just societies based on ‘right relationships’, including in economic, political, and social

matters, and on radical inclusion and equality, with human dignity as a central premise.

In June 2018, a group of peacebuilding leaders, including representatives from peacebuilding organizations, think tanks, and donors, met at Quaker House in New York for our annual “What’s Next in Peacebuilding?” gathering. This year the sessions were arranged to investigate this central question – What’s at the heart of peacebuilding? These questions were debated in a series of interactive sessions over three days. What emerged was a thought-provoking snapshot of current thinking from practitioners, donors, and academics. ❖

Letter from the Director

Dear Friends:

Greetings from a hot, wet summer in New York!

One of the ways in which QUNO seeks to help the UN become more responsive to the needs and aspirations of those impacted by violence and fragility is to make connections between those working with local communities and the policy world in New York. Recent months have seen several good examples of this, as QUNO staff welcomed colleagues from the AFSC Burundi country team to learn more about the local-level peacebuilding work being carried out in the country, contributed to a global workshop on election-related violence in Nairobi, and then hosted a selected group of peacebuilding experts at Quaker House in New York to engage with UN actors and

thought leaders to reflect on what really works in peacebuilding.

This year is the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The preamble to the declaration rings as true today as it did in 1948: “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world”. Human rights, including economic, social, and cultural rights, are the foundation of a world order based on equality and inclusion. Yet human rights are under threat around the world. QUNO, together with our colleagues in Geneva, is working to demonstrate the contribution of human rights tools and approaches to peacebuilding and prevention, as shown in the work on the Universal Periodic Review.

Since its founding, QUNO has benefitted greatly from the talents and enthusiasm of our Program Assistants. For seventy years, this program has provided an exceptional opportunity for a small number of recent graduates to experience the joys, sorrows, and sheer hard work of multilateral policy making at the United Nations in New York – and occasionally have some fun too! We were delighted to host a group of former PAs last month at the launch of a new network – the QUNO Alumni Network (QAN) – for former staff and friends of QUNO. Please spread the news!

Thank you for your support.



Andrew Tomlinson

Shared security, shared elections

By Rachel Madenyika, Quaker UN Representative

I recently had the opportunity to plan and attend the AFSC’s Global Dialogue and Exchange Program on the prevention of electoral violence. In July, I found myself back in Nairobi, Kenya, and surrounded by the African air. The three-day conference convened 57 civil society actors from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and the United States. All were experts in their areas, which included: peacebuilding and conflict resolution; civic education; election monitoring; media; and gender empowerment. The conference adopted the theme “Shared Security, Shared Elections,”



QUNO’s UN-Representative with participants of the AFSC Dialogue and Exchange Program in Nairobi.

© Sanjay Kumar

and achieved three outcomes: the launch of the AFSC’s Prevention of Electoral Violence Study; sharing

of best practices and lessons learned among the diverse participants; and

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Integrating human rights and sustaining peace – The role of the Universal Periodic Review

Shared security

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Florence Foster (QUNO Geneva) and Andrew Tomlinson (QUNO New York) speaking on high-level panel concerning the integration of human rights and sustaining peace. © QUNO

This summer, in collaboration with the Permanent Missions of Germany and Switzerland and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), QUNO co-hosted a discussion on “Integrating Human Rights and Sustaining Peace – The Role of the Universal Periodic Review” at UN Headquarters. This high-level meeting began with a presentation by Florence Foster from our Geneva office on a recent study entitled “Integrating Human Rights and Sustaining Peace”. The study explores how the UPR is inclusive, universal, and the least contentious Human Rights Council process, and how its recommendations can be developed and implemented to prevent human rights violations that, if left unaddressed, could lead to conflict. QUNO representatives Andrew Tomlinson and Florence Foster sat on a panel alongside Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) Andrew Gilmour, Head of the OHCHR Office in New York; ASG Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Head of the Peacebuilding Support

Office; Katy Thompson, Governance & Peace Building, Conflict Prevention Team Leader at the UN Development Programme; and the Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the United Nations, Ambassador Jorge Skinner-Klee.

This high-level meeting was followed by an informal, off-the-record discussion at Quaker House which aimed at highlighting the role of the Universal Periodic Review in contributing to sustaining peace. This conversation provided a timely opportunity to hear about collective work on this issue, and to explore how civil society, UN bodies, and Member States can move forward in practice to support the human rights dimension of peacebuilding. This event was important because it provided for an off-the-record, impartial, and reflective space to carry on from the previous conversation at UN Headquarters, and an opportunity to discuss the potential for human rights mechanisms to contribute to sustaining peace in an informal space. ❖

the review of preventive efforts and shortcomings when engaging with political parties, the security sector, and marginalized communities.

The study, titled “*Shared Security, Shared Elections: Best Practices for the Prevention of Electoral Violence*,” was conducted in four countries (Kenya, Malawi, Sierra Leone, and Sri Lanka) between October 2017 and July 2018. It highlighted that major causes of electoral violence related to factors such as patronage and clientelism, weak election institutions, semi-democratic regimes, and that men and women experience election violence differently.

The conference showed the wealth of participant knowledge and the similarities across the different countries in efforts towards the prevention of electoral violence. I was amazed by the expertise in the room and enjoyed my time getting to know such a diverse group of practitioners. It was a wonderful trip and I hope to continue engaging with all the colleagues I met. ❖

QUNO Alumni Network

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spread the word of QUNO’s work.

QUNO is excited to work with the QUNO Alumni Network as it goes forward in its work, and encourages all those who may have a connection with QUNO’s NY office as a past Program Assistant or Fellow to reach out to learn more at quno@afsc.org. Also, please visit our website to learn more about the annual PA position! ❖

Staff comings and goings



QUNO PAs Louice, Evie, Grace, and Mireille at the UN in New York.

© QUNO

Recently QUNO welcomed two new Program Assistants, Louice Widfledt Lomas and Mireille Evagora-Campbell, and said goodbye to our outgoing PAs, Evie McCullough and Grace Ishimwe.

Louice joins us after completing her MA in International Relations and Language and Linguistics from University of Aberdeen. She spent one year in Istanbul, Turkey, on exchange where she studied conflict management and Arabic. Louice was introduced to the Quakers through her grandfather only a year ago. Having spent time with Scandinavian Quakers, Louice wrote her thesis on Quaker mediation and reconciliation techniques. She is honored to be working with QUNO and to have the opportunity to better understand how these

techniques can help facilitate the work of the United Nations.

Mireille joins us after graduating with a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy from the University of Cambridge, where she specialized in Political Philosophy and International Justice. Since graduating, Mireille interned at the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS and the World Health Organization in Geneva. Mireille also has experience working for the UK-based peacebuilding NGO Concordis International and was a Researcher at Global Health 50/50. From the UK, Mireille grew up a Quaker. She is delighted to have the opportunity to learn about how Quaker values and methods can influence the UN's work on peacebuilding and the prevention of violent conflict.

It is with some sadness that we say farewell and good luck to our outgoing Program Assistants, Evie McCullough and Grace Ishimwe. Evie worked on QUNO's prevention program and leaves us to pursue an MPhil in History at Oxford University where she will be studying Modern British History from 1850 to the present day, with a focus on Irish history. Grace, who focused on QUNO's peacebuilding program, is now based in Washington, DC, where she works as an Associate at Chemonics on the Eastern and Southern Africa program. We wish Evie and Grace all the best in their future endeavors and thank them for their invaluable contribution to QUNO's work! ❖

Linking field experience with strategic discussions to support peacebuilding efforts



A peace circle in Burundi.

© AFSC

Earlier this summer, QUNO had the great pleasure of welcoming the American Friends Service Committee's (AFSC) Burundi office to New York. The trip provided an opportunity for the continued strengthening of QUNO and AFSC's peace work in Burundi, and for new QUNO staff to learn more about Quaker peacebuilding efforts in the country.

Since 2004, AFSC has carried out dynamic programming in Burundi to support local and national efforts for recovery and peace in the aftermath of conflict, including projects to accompany and strengthen civil society and local faith-based organizations; helping young people through self-employment opportunities; and engaging with decision-makers to create an open environment to discuss and develop ways to address critical issues on peace.

QUNO has worked hand in hand with AFSC's Burundi office to bring the peacebuilding knowledge and

experience from the country level to UN policy discussions so that together we can support the UN in its peacebuilding approaches on Burundi. For QUNO, a key focus of our Burundi work centers on the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) which, since 2006, has had a specific focus on the country. We find that bringing practical experience on issues like building bridges across communities through reconciliation projects and supporting trauma healing and economic skills development through local peacebuilding programs can inform UN policy makers of lived experiences, and the true impact of peace work at the local level. This field perspective is all too often limited from conversations led at the UN in New York, and QUNO continues to appreciate the opportunity to work with AFSC's Burundi office so that together we can impact peace policies and practice at the UN and country levels. ❖



How to Support QUNO

QUNO welcomes donations to help cover the cost of its work. We are happy to accept contributions towards two areas of our work:

The Fund for Quaker House: the endowment supports the maintenance and operation of Quaker House.

QUNO Operating and Program Expenses: contributions can be made toward the cost of our annual budget.

Please make your check payable to "QUNO." If you'd like your gift to go towards Quaker House, please write "Quaker House" in the memo portion of the check.

For credit card gifts, call toll free 1-888-588-2372 ext. 1, or click the "[Donations](#)" button on our web site and follow the instructions provided.

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