



SGI Peace News

Activities of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI) to Promote a Culture of Peace

April 2018 (Vol. 22)

“It Starts with One!”—Seeds of Hope Exhibition Shown at FAO HQ in Rome

Rome, Italy, April 3–5, 2018

The exhibition titled “Seeds of Hope: Visions of Sustainability, Steps Toward Change,” a colorful display showing how one person’s actions can make a difference, was shown in the David Lubin Memorial Library at the Headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome, Italy, from April 3 to 5.



The 24-panel Seeds of Hope exhibition, a joint initiative of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI) and Earth Charter International (ECI), was shown as an official side event at the Second International Symposium on Agroecology.

The main speaker at the April 3 opening ceremony was FAO Deputy Director-General for Climate and Natural Resources Maria Helena Semedo, who commented, “Seeds of Hope is a very inspiring theme . . . we at FAO often focus on larger-scale actions, but this exhibition reminds us that many times scale starts at the individual level. I am inspired by the real-life testimonials in this exhibit.”

Other speakers included Apostolic Nuncio H.E. Silvano M. Tomás, ECI Council Member Alide Roerink and SGI Director General of Peace and Global Issues Hirotsugu Terasaki.

The Seeds of Hope exhibition has been seen by more than seven million people in 39 different countries and territories, and translated into 14 languages.

The panels can be viewed [here](#)

Faith-Based Group Launches Asia Pacific Faith-Based Coalition for Sustainable Development

Bangkok, Thailand, March 28, 2018

ACT Alliance, Arigatou International, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Soka Gakkai International and World Vision International launched the Asia Pacific Faith-Based Coalition for Sustainable Development during the Fifth Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development on March 28 in Bangkok, Thailand.

The coalition was formed to engage with the voices of faith communities in Asia Pacific to amplify them, and to focus on the contributions made by different faiths toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



At the launch event, representatives from member organizations highlighted the importance of bringing faith-based organizations (FBOs) together to

advance the development goals and to facilitate engagement with the goals at local, national and regional levels.

Hiro Sakurai, director of the SGI Office for UN Affairs, pointed out that FBOs have a distinct role and responsibility to play in making the SDG slogan "leave no one behind" real in light of the fact that FBOs uphold almost this same spirit in conducting their work on a daily basis.

Shinji Kubo, officer-in-charge of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Representation in Bangkok, expressed his expectation that FBOs would find a way to mobilize their communities to work together, particularly through sharing what the SDGs are about.

For more information click [here](#)

SGI Attends the Strategic Learning Exchange Held in Amman

Amman, Jordan, March 21, 2018

From March 21 to 23, the UN Regional Strategic Learning Exchange on Religion, Development and Humanitarian Work (SLE) was held in Amman, Jordan under the auspices of Prince Hassan bin Talal. About 60 participants from 13 countries had a discussion including SGI Director of Sustainable Development and Humanitarian Affairs Nobuyuki Asai, who attended the event.

The SLE was initiated by the UN Interagency Task Force on Religion and Development in collaboration with other UN agencies, aid agencies and NGOs, with the aim of bringing together representatives from UN agencies, as well as international, bilateral and religious organizations, in a common learning exchange focused primarily on the humanitarian work that happens on the ground.



In the opening speech Prince Hassan bin Talal reminded the participants that human dignity is at the core of humanitarian work, and emphasized how religions share this common value of human dignity and how they live up to this value by delivering essential services for those in need, regardless of status or affiliation.

Asai shared the Soka Gakkai and other Japanese FBO relief efforts that had taken place after a huge disaster.

For more information click [here](#)

SGI Attends a Side Event Hosted by the Working Group on Human Rights Education

Geneva, Switzerland, March 6, 2018

During the 37th session of the UN Human Rights Council on March 6 at the Palais de Nations in Geneva, the UNESCO Liaison Office in Geneva, working on the initiative of the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education (NGO WG on HREL)—of which the SGI is a part—organized a panel discussion titled "World programme for human rights education: what focus for the 4th phase" cosponsored by the States Platform on Human Rights Education and Training (comprised of Brazil, Costa Rica, Italy, Morocco, The Philippines, Senegal, Slovenia and Thailand).



The NGO WG on HREL is comprised of more than 50 NGOs and is aimed at ensuring civil society participation in the process of global-policy making on human rights education in relation to UN institutions, principally the UN Human Rights Council.

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At the panel, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations Office at Geneva Ambassador Mauricio Enrico Serra mentioned that it is important to firmly identify the relationship between sustainable development and human rights education. He also mentioned

that human rights education has a role in bridging the division that exists between generations.

Abdulaziz Almuzaini, director of the UNESCO Liaison Office in Geneva, expressed his appreciation to the NGO WG on HREL for playing an important role regarding these issues. He mentioned also that the achievements made over the past three phases needed to be further strengthened. He said that the world is always changing, and pointed out that education needs to meet the needs of the world today in order to solve global challenges.

In addition, Lydia Ruprecht, team leader of Education for Global Citizenship Education and Peace Education at UNESCO, Charline Thiery, chargée de mission of the Commission Nationale Consultative des Droits de l'Homme of Paris, and Patrice Meyer-Bisch, président de l'Observatoire de la Diversité et des Droits Culturels of Fribourg attended the panel and touched on the importance of the relationship between the SDGs and human rights education.

The NGO WG on HREL also submitted a joint written statement detailing proposals for the focus of the fourth phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education to the Human Rights Council during the session. SGI's proposal that the fourth phase of the World Programme should address youth was included in the statement.

New Mapping Version 2.0 Launched

Rome, Italy, April 3, 2018

The launch of the new version of Mapping 2.0 was announced at an event held at the Headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome on April 3.

[Mapping](#) is a free tool that invites users to look for everyday actions that people can take to help to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While learning more about the SDGs users can find out which Earth Charter Principles are linked to each SDG. Mapping was officially launched at an event called "Youth Boosting the Promotion and Implementation of the SDGs" held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on November 10, 2016.



With this new version, users can now sign up as either an individual or as an institution, to showcase and track their work as an NGO, institution, organization, or school. In addition, users can now click on other users' profile pictures to send a private message in order to find out more about their project. Spanish descriptions have also been added to the new version. For more information click [here](#)

Taiwan Soka Association Conducts Relief Activities

Taiwan and Japan, March 11, 2018

On February 6, 2018 a magnitude 6.4 earthquake hit Hualien City in Taiwan. Taiwan Soka Association (TSA) immediately set up a relief control center at TSA's community center in the city and started to provide general volunteers and media people with meals and relief goods in coordination with the municipal government. It was aimed at the government's



dedication to its own mission. On March 4, one month after the quake, TSA co-organized a seminar on the mitigation of survivors' stress together with the municipal government and with invitees that included a medical doctor.

In Japan, meanwhile, commemorating the seventh anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake, Soka Gakkai choir group and brass band organized several "Bonds of Hope" concerts in the Tohoku area, Northeastern Japan. Over one hundred of such concerts have now taken place since March.

One of the participants at a concert in Ofunato City commented, "It took seven years for me to recover enough emotional leeway to enjoy music. The strong singing voices have greatly encouraged me to continue on in the efforts for restoration."

In response to a request from Tagajo City's municipal office on March 18, an evacuation drill was conducted during the concert held in the city. The audience practiced an evacuation to the outside of the venue following the announcement.

For more information click [here](#)

SGI Peace News is a bimonthly publication highlighting the public education activities carried out by SGI. These activities help to raise awareness of issues such as nuclear disarmament, human rights, gender equality, sustainable development, interfaith cooperation and humanitarian support.

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