



Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC)
in cooperation with Development and Peace Foundation (SEF)

Symposium

“Peace on earth? – Initiatives for disarmament, non-violence and dialogue”

Cluster event in the framework of the
30th anniversary conference of the Right Livelihood Award (“Alternative Nobel
Prize”) “CHANGINGcourse–reclaiming our future,” Bonn

About the Laureates

www.rightlivelihood.org/laureates.html?&no_cache=1

Dekha Ibrahim Abdi (Laureate 2007)

In 1992, Dekha Ibrahim Abdi started a grassroots peace initiative, bringing together people from all clans, which later developed into the Wajir Peace Committee.

She is founding Member of the Global Peace Practitioners Network ACTION for conflict transformation and, since September 2000, has been a member of a consortium of African and international conflict transformation specialists working together on the development of a series of intensive, participatory workshops for the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA).

Dekha's religious and spiritual identity as a Muslim forms a strong foundation for her peace work. She encourages individuals and communities affected by conflict to critically analyze themselves using verses from the Qur'an, which she states will enable them to build their conflict transformation on a religious and spiritual base.

She has experience of comprehensive peacebuilding, linking peace theory and policy with pragmatic action, and private lobbying/advocacy with public mobilisation. Sometimes she expresses this through the acronym AFRICA: Analysis, Flexibility, Responsiveness, Innovation, Context-specific and awareness, and Action/learning-orientation.

Mauricio Hernandez, Representative ATCC (Laureate 1990)

The Asociación de Trabajadores Campesinos del Carare (ATCC) was founded in 1987 as a reply to dreadful violence inflicted on peasants in the Carare region of Colombia by guerrilla, military and paramilitary forces. Its tactics were simple: constant dialogue with all parties (military, paramilitary, guerrillas) and an unshakeable commitment to non-violence.

In 1988, the Association presented its Development Plan to the government, emphasising education, communications systems including roads, peasant and communal organisation and the maintenance of natural resources. This soon began to attract investment from the government's National Plan for Rehabilitation. Signs of a resurgence of guerrilla activity in 1989 led the ATCC to focus its efforts once again on peace-making.

Susanne Kjær, Representative IRCT (Laureate 1988)

In 1982, the Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims (RCT) was founded in Copenhagen, with Dr Inge Genefke as Medical Director.

In 1986, the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) was established by RCT as a private, humanitarian, non-political organization. The most important task of IRCT is to contribute to the establishment and operation of rehabilitation centers worldwide. Several times a year it hosts international training seminars for health professionals, both in Denmark and abroad.

Today, almost 100 centers and programs in 75 countries provide treatment for thousands of torture victims every year. RCT has assisted in supporting and setting up the majority of these centers, e.g. in Albania, Argentina, Bangladesh, Chile, Estonia, Equatorial Guinea, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Kenya, Kuwait, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Russia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Ukraine, Uganda and Uruguay. At the request of the European Union, IRCT has participated in the establishment of professional assistance to rape victims from the war in former Yugoslavia.

Katharina Kruhonja (Laureate 1998)

is one of the founders of the Centre for Peace, Non-Violence and Human Rights in Osijek in the East Slavonia region of Croatia making a major contribution to peacebuilding in the region.

She engages in the protection of human rights, peace education, organizing seminars and workshops for primary school teachers and children as well as post-war peacebuilding,

including psychosocial support to the wounded population and preparing the ground for the return of displaced persons and refugees.

Katharina Kruhonja cooperated with 2004 DOCUMENTA, a Centre for Dealing with the Past. The key reason for establishing this center was the experience of suppression and falsification of war crimes and other war events in the younger history of the Balkans.

René Ngongo (Laureate 2009)

is the founder and national coordinator of the Organisation Concertée des Ecologistes et Amis de la Nature (OCEAN).

The first focus of Ngongo's work was to promote sustainable land use models that would allow the local population to satisfy their need for food and fuelwood, and to receive a better income, without destroying the forest.

Throughout the wartime years of 1996 to 2002, he was actively monitoring the exploitation of natural resources by the different warring parties. Many international organisations and research institutes recognised OCEAN as a key source of information on illegal mining operations and irresponsible logging practices. Much of Ngongo's work is dedicated to capacity-building, strengthening the knowledge and capabilities of NGOs, politicians and local authorities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to effectively protect the forest.

Theo van Boven (Laureate 1985)

was Director of the UN Division of Human Rights from 1977 to 1982 and Expert Member of the UN Subcommission on Human Rights and Special Rapporteur on the Right to Reparation to Victims of Gross Violations of Human Rights.

He was the First Registrar of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. More recently he was the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture. As Director of the UN Division of Human Rights, Van Boven argued consistently that concern for human rights should not be a marginal activity within the UN system, but should become the core element of development strategies on all levels.

He contributed to the creation of fact-finding mechanisms in these areas, in order to bring pressure on defaulting authorities and to provide relief to victims. He was concerned also to identify the root causes of human rights violations in connection with the development process, patterns of economic and political domination, militarization of societies and racial discrimination.

Christopher Weeramantry (Laureate 2007)

is a highly renowned legal scholar and has always been particularly concerned about nuclear weapons. When the International Court of Justice made its decision on nuclear weapons in 1996, Weeramantry strongly disagreed with the majority's decision to leave undetermined the legality of one area of the use of nuclear weapons—nuclear weapons in self-defence when the survival of the state was at stake. His dissenting opinion recognized that this exception would in practice be widely used by the nuclear weapon states, and he categorically asserted their illegality "in any circumstances whatsoever."

He set up the Weeramantry International Centre for Peace Education and Research in Sri Lanka in 2001. It rests on the three pillars of Peace Education, Cross Cultural Understanding and International Law as an Instrument of Peace.

The fact that nuclear weapons states who, under the same Court ruling, are obliged to continue and to conclude negotiations leading to the abandonment of nuclear weapons do not follow their obligations, still occupies him today and he is currently working on another case to bring back various aspects of these issues to the International Court.