



Building the youth GNRC together

Geneva, Switzerland

13-15 July 2006

An international workshop with representatives from Azerbaijan, Colombia, Honduras, India, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United Republic of Tanzania was organised as the first testing workshop of the first version of the complete material.

Young people from 14 to 16 years engaged in discussions about their own religious identity. By sharing their understanding of religion and religious rituals they engaged in intense dialogue that helped them connect with one another. **Interfaith visits** were organised, which gave the participants opportunities to put themselves in another's shoes.

When **Painting T-shirts**, participants reflected on their relationships with others and the situations they face. They expressed their desire to bring peace to the world, through unity, caring, love and respect. **Focus groups** about mutual respect in schools, family and neighbourhoods helped them analyse how respect can be practically applied.



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A cultural evening was organised with the participation of some young people from Geneva. Participants had the opportunity to share information about their own culture and religious beliefs. The youth representatives from Israel left a message of peace when talking about the activities they have been involved in to foster coexistence and mutual understanding in their community in Israel.

During the last day, participants learned about different types of conflicts and how these develop into violent situations. They reflected on the need for **attitudes of reconciliation** to be able to transform those conflicts. One of the youth challenged the group by asking them what they would do if they were made victims of violence by other youth.



Some of the participants recalled experiences where it had been very difficult to respond peacefully and noted that violence is sometimes hard to avoid. During the discussions, one of the participants from India pointed to how Gandhi brought peace to India through **peaceful resistance**. At the end, participants reflected on the need to nurture peace within to be able to respond to difficult situations.

At the end of the workshop, participants committed themselves to hold meetings at home with other young people to discuss the values explored during the workshop.

Learning and impact

Most of the participants thought the interfaith visits were very enriching and that they improved their awareness of other people's religious beliefs. The cultural evening helped them connect with each others' reality and acknowledge others' identities and cultures. After the workshop, the participants from Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania started Peace Clubs in their schools back home. The participants from Azerbaijan shared their learning with their youth group in Baku and the participants from Jordan and Lebanon shared their learning with the Fishers Programme in Jordan.

How did this workshop contribute to the development of the resource pack?

For the first time, the learning modules were tested in a multicultural and multi-religious environment. This allowed us to identify milestones and challenges in the implementation of the resource pack. Here are the main inputs incorporated in the resource pack:

- > Develop a smoother transition between the first and second module.
- > Separate sessions for adults to introduce them to the resource pack.
- > More space to nurture spirituality through introspective activities.
- > Give participants space to talk about their own culture and beliefs.
- > Need to relate activities to the local environment and social realities.
- > Use more pedagogical techniques to engage children and young people in reflection.

Description of the Workshop	
Venue	John Knox Center, Geneva
Number of participants/facilitators	16/4
Number of young people (15 – 19 years)	16
Working time	3 days
Language used	English/Spanish
Participants' countries of origin	Azerbaijan, Colombia, Honduras, India, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United Republic of Tanzania
Participants' beliefs	Buddhism, Christianity (Anglicans, Catholics, Orthodox), Hinduism, Islam and Judaism
Pedagogical techniques	Arts Experience sharing Focus groups Field trips Games

