



2010

ACTIVITY REPORT

The Gambia Office



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The year 2010 has been a difficult financial year towards the facilitation of the program activities that have been implemented by Conscience International. Despite the constraints CI has experienced, the organization managed to carry out the activities to the best of its ability. We are very much pleased to share this report with many of you who remain in support to us during the implementation of the activities that we are going to share with you.

We are also grateful to the communities for the cooperation with us in the implementation of all the activities. More thanks to The Brother Shaka Foundation (BSF) for the high cooperation they have given to our Fund-Raising and Resource Mobilization Training for charity organizations. Also, we appreciate The Brother Shaka Foundation (BSF) for the provision of the learning and teaching materials for the adult literacy school at Kotu in the time we needed.

I would also like to thank the interns at CI, Ms. Mira Kremers, Ms. Jiyun Cathy Choi and Ms. Kelly Hollibaugh for the Gender Base Violence and Peace Building Training they conducted in schools within the Kombos.

Lastly I would like to thank all our committed volunteers, partner NGOs, supporters, trainers and CI team for all their hard work and dedication despite the financial difficulties we faced in 2010, in particular Mr. Lansana Jallow, Mrs. Rohey Jay-Jeng and Ms. Fatoumata Darboe.

We hope that this annual report will give you an interesting overview of how we have tried to promote positive social change in The Gambia in 2010.



Mr. Shaka Ceesay
Director

Some Quotes from Volunteers

During the 4 month internship here at Conscience International, I learned more than can be described in a few lines. First of all, getting to know Conscience International partner organizations and their projects gave me an impressive exposure to development projects in and around the Kombo area of The Gambia. Also, the issue of volunteering made me more aware of an individual's position in society and the responsibilities that one can choose to take. It inspired me to start volunteering in my own country too. I am glad to have been part of the Conscience International team and I would recommend anyone to immerse themselves into a culture that is completely different from their own and partake in various volunteering activities.

Kelly Hollibaugh, USA

It is a great learning experience and it also gives me great satisfaction as this is the first time I am associated with an NGO for a noble cause. I enjoyed understanding the various aspects of a small project – ranging from inventory management to marketing and people management. I also look forward for doing more of such projects with Conscience International.

Mira Kremers, Germany

Background

Conscience International (formally People Against Injustice) was born out of discussions initiated by a group of young and talented visionaries of peace, human rights and development, meeting in Banjul on July 24th, 2003. Conscience International, referred to as CI, is functioning as a legally registered International Non Governmental Organization and is registered under the NGO Degree of 1996 of the Republic of The Gambia. Since 2008, CI has been working as a registered Community Based Organization in Sierra Leone. CI has Observer Status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights of the African Union (AU).

CI works to maximize the knowledge, respect and observance of peace and human rights and to enhance the awareness of human rights, peace and development work through linkages with national, sub-regional, regional and international like-minded entities.

The promotional activities of CI stem from Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is one of the bases of CI's mandate i.e. to give meaning and actuality to this article which states that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and **conscience** and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood".

Visions of Peace and Human Rights

Quotes:

It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences.

Audre Lorde

(American novelist, poet, and peace activist, 1934-1992)

*If there is to be peace in the world,
There must be peace in the nations.
If there is to be peace in the nations,
There must be peace in the cities.
If there is to be peace in the cities,
There must be peace between neighbors.
If there is to be peace between neighbors,
There must be peace in the home.
If there is to be peace in the home,
There must be peace in the heart.*

Lao-tse

(Chinese philosopher, 6th century BCE)

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.

Preamble

(Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than it's opposite.

Nelson Mandela

(Civil rights activist, former President of South Africa

and Nobel Peace Prize winner, 1918–)

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Gender Based Violence and Peace Building Training

Recognizing the positive contributions made by the determined Interns at CI (Mira Kremers, Kelly Hollibaugh and Jiyun Cathy Choi) we were auspicious to continue the good work of the Gender Based Violence and Peace Building Training (GBVPBT) in schools from September 2010, which was first established in 2009. This year, however, due to the lack of funding CI could only reach out to the nearest schools in the Kombo Area of Gambia.



Training session at the St. Theresa Upper Basic Library

So far, we have successfully trained over 100 students from 3 different schools. Each school provided us with approximately 20 girls and 10 boys between Grade 9 and 12 for a two-day training session. The program contained lectures about the concept and various sources of Human Rights, as well as the social phenomenon of "Child Trafficking" and "Gender Base Violence".

In order to make the training more interactive and lively for the students, they had to come up with their own drama plays and presentations, which they have handled extraordinarily well.



Participants at the Greater Banjul Junior Sec School

Furthermore, the students were taught on some important mediation and peace building skills which will help them to solve conflicts for themselves and among their peers in the form of peace clubs at their schools. After the training, the students were able to repeat the given presentations in their own words, which showed that they have fully captivated the idea of Human Rights – Gender Based Violence and are now empowered to conduct step down training for their entire school.

Therefore, CI has made a great impact on the lives of these students and their communities. In this vein, CI wishes to continue to raise resources to expand the reach of this training programme to benefit more schools and communities.

Adult Literacy Programme (ALP)

Conscience International (CI) and the Brother Shaka Foundation (BSF) have strongly examined how adult education can contribute towards the alleviation of poverty in not only The Gambia, but in other African countries.



The Gambia is battling with the high rate of illiteracy among adults especially the women folk in the rural Gambia, where few women were lucky to go to school, the rest, especially the girl child or women folk are regarded as domestic chores executors or house wives. Some of these local communities have observed deeply rooted cultures restricting the girl child from enrolling in school. These cultural, religious or traditional beliefs have rendered these remote and typical rural communities less literate to enable them fully participate in the community development activities of their various villages. However, The Gambia Government has given top

priority for the education of the girl child at all levels.

Illiteracy has continued to limit people's capabilities to take part in or benefit from development. Therefore, the promotion of adult literacy is instrumental in development and in the reduction of poverty. Literacy programs, when properly, planned and introduced, bring many benefits to the people.

CI in collaboration with the Brother Shaka Foundation (BSF) is implementing an adult literacy program for adults that never had the opportunity to learn how to read and write.



A student identifying letters on the blackboard

Teaching adults in Kotu has so far been a worthwhile and rewarding endeavor that presents challenges not found in teaching the child or adolescent reader. The teachers have made the material applicable to daily life. It is important that the students try to carry their knowledge into everyday life and to continue

practicing their letters and numbers, even outside of class. For instance, the teachers will ask the students to repeatedly identify letters and numbers throughout each class session to see if they have been applying their knowledge in their daily lives.

Overall, the adult literacy program has turned out to be a success, despite the lack of resources that we are unable to accommodate. The staff at CI and the BSF has established that we should just deal with the resources we have until the next adult-literacy class enrollment.

Fundraising and Resource Mobilization Training

On Tuesday, November 30th, a training titled, "Fundraising and Resource Mobilization", was conducted at Conscience International in Fajara, The Gambia. The training was supported by Conscience International and the Brother Shaka Foundation (BSF).

All of the participants that attended the training came from very diverse fields of expertise in the area of community development, youth, peace building and human rights. The training was specifically intended to broaden the knowledge of emerging leaders from various smaller NGO's about the problem in fundraising and resource mobilization in Gambia.

The staff at Conscience International and BSF was able to ingrain the knowledge of what actions these participants should take in order to successfully build up their credibility and raise funds.



Training session at Conscience International Library

The training which was theoretical was made specific to the participants on the following topics:

1. The Problem: lack of funding
2. Fundraising: Some things you should never do
3. Fundraising-First Step- Networking and Establishing Credibility
4. Even more Credibility-Building
5. The Absolute Essential Preparations to Solicit Donations
6. Details Ready to Share
7. Before Making a Funding Request
8. Finding Donors and Making Contact
9. Essential-Respect the Organization's Granting Guidelines

10. Online Resources For Further Information
11. Online Resources for Detailed Tips on Writing Funding Proposals

The participants learned a very specific step-by-step process that they need to carry out in order to successfully become more familiar to larger organizations, such as the United Nations.



Participants of the Fund Raising and Resource Mobilization Training

We pointed out that it's a very painstaking and tedious gradual process in order to build up that credibility for their organizations. The biggest tip that we ingrained into the minds of these emerging leaders that participated at the training was to learn how to build up a network/partnership with other organizations. We mentioned that it is very important to also participate in the activities conducted by other organizations in their geographical area because that will also build up

their name recognition. In addition, they should look into "donor mapping" to see what organizations in their geographical area are allocating funds towards what projects/activities. Participants were also provided with very specific information as to what organizations they should submit their project proposals to and how. We mentioned that the participants should look into the granting guidelines on the donor's websites before they submit their proposal.

The biggest problem with fundraising in the developing world, for example, is that many smaller charities only recognize themselves as a one-person organization. In order to promote the visions of these organizations, it would be a very effective action for these organizations to link together under one umbrella in order to further build up their credibility/reputation.

The participants were very appreciative towards the knowledge they gained at the training. At the end of the training, we conducted a questioning/answering session, which was very effective for the staff at CI and BSF to understand the gaps that the participants weren't fully able to grasp about the information that we provided to them. It was really interesting when the participants shared their own experiences that they have endured at their organizations and the fund-raising/financial problems

they're currently facing. This training was a continuation of academic education for most of these participants because fundraising and resource mobilization is a really critical area that most emerging leaders should be familiar with, especially if they're going to establish their own NGO/charity organization. We have concluded at the end of the training that the lack of knowledge towards fundraising and resource mobilization was another critical problem. It's really important that these participants take the manuals that we have given them and use them wisely in order to build up their credibility.

By the end of the training, despite the cultural barriers, all the participants agreed that we should unite together into one networking/partnership alliance. All of the participants and the staff at CI and BSF have all agreed to meet once every two weeks to discuss the plan of action on how we should move forward with the initiative.

African Human Rights Day

On the 21st of October 2010 staff of CI and other organizations as well as students from various schools assembled at the July 22nd Square to join the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights celebrate the African Human Rights Day. T-shirts and caps were shared among students and NGOs that were invited for the program. There was a march pass with

the Gambian police band, students, NGO staffs and other cultural groups who marched through the main street of Banjul with their banners to the Arch 22nd Square.

Before the beginning of the celebration, a welcome speech was given by the Mayor of Banjul in which he made a few remarks about human rights violations on the African continent and the world at large. He also advised the students to be self conscious about their fundamental Human Rights.

Further speeches and statements were made by well-known representatives of the African Commission. Cash prizes and certificates were also awarded to the students for their inspiring art and craft exhibition depicting Human Rights.

The celebration was ended by a cultural performance by various cultural groups and; with a strong message to upholding the principles of Human Rights in Africa.

Human Rights NGO Forum

The Forum on the Participation of NGOs preceding the 48th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights is one of the main advocacy tools that the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies uses to promote networking among Human Rights

NGO's, for the promotion and protection of human rights in Africa.

In collaboration with the African Commission and other human rights organizations, the African Centre has facilitated the participation of civil society organizations, academicians and other professionals from Africa and beyond in the African Commission's Sessions. The NGO Forum was held on 7-9 November, 2010 at Kairaba Beach Hotel, Banjul, The Gambia

Since its establishment in 2004, Conscience International (CI) has continued to participate in the NGO forum both in The Gambia and abroad. Diplomats and human rights defenders come from all over the world under one umbrella to discuss the wide array of human rights abuses that are happening in the international community, Africa in particular. It was really interesting to hear from other human rights defenders about what sort of action they're taking in tackling various human rights violations in their own countries. Many of the topics that were discussed at the NGO forum include:

- The Refugee/IDP's crisis
- HIV/AIDS epidemic
- Gay/Lesbian rights
- Women's Rights
- The Death Penalty on the African Continent
- Environmental Rights
- Cultural Rights

- Political Rights
- Human Right's Defenders

While at the NGO forum, we also had the opportunity to build up a network/partnership with other NGO's not only in The Gambia, but in many other African countries.

We have also provided Contact information about CI to all colleagues during and after the forum, participated in preliminary sessions and group discussions in order to build networks and share relevant information with colleagues in the human rights and development arena of Africa.

STAFF CAPACITY BUILDING

Workshop on International Humanitarian Law

The Sierra Leone Institute of International Law with support from the Commonwealth Secretariat held a three-day workshop on International Humanitarian Law in Freetown, Sierra Leone from 28th to 30th July, 2010.

The Director of Conscience International – Mr. Shaka Ceesay participated in this very important workshop.

Presentations ranging from the definition of International Humanitarian Law, Implementing

International Humanitarian Law, Similarities and Differences in International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law, the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions of 1945, The role of Lawyers, Judges and Civil Societies in the furtherance of International Humanitarian Law, Punishing Violations of International Humanitarian Law and International Criminal Tribunals were made by eminent jurists and legal practitioners.

This training was very beneficial to the work of CI. A further step-down training was conducted by Mr. Shaka Ceesay for the staff and volunteers of CI in Sierra Leone and The Gambia office as respectively.

The Director of Conscience International (Shaka Ceesay) and one of his Interns (Mira Kremers) were fortunate to participate in a three day workshop on the Determination of Refugee Status and the Role of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), which took place at the Piscine Olympique Hall in Dakar from the 26th to the 28th of October this year.

Workshop on the Determination of Refugee Status and the Role of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)

The first day started with an inspiring opening speech by Sadikh Niass, the Coordinator of Waripnet (West African Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Network), in which Conscience International functions as an NGO member, representing Refugee related Issues in the Gambia since early 2010.

The program continued with an overall introduction on the Rights of Refugees, which further led into a discussion about the current African system on the protection of Refugees. It became more than obvious that there is still a lot of work to do in order to protect the Rights of Refugees and simplify the process of granting Refugee Status. It was also highlighted that in most of the countries there is no particular legislation for Internally Displaced Persons, which leads to various problems. Waripnet serves here as an established network for most of the West African countries to share their experiences and expertise in order to improve the situation of Refugees and

Internally Displaced Persons in the near future.

To further illustrate some of the major problems such as the too-long procedure of getting Refugee Status and the intolerance and resentment among the public, the second part of the program started with a speech on the Determination of Refugee Status in Senegal - one of the biggest welcoming States for Refugees in West Africa. Two of the participants were Refugees from Rwanda and provided very useful first hand information. The speaker concluded that without the ratification and the implementation of the Kampala convention from 2009, the situation of Refugees will not improve.

The second day focused more on the Determination of Refugee Status in other West African Countries, such as Sierra Leone, Guinea and The Gambia. After discussing some specific difficulties faced by these countries, all participants received a copy of a manual dealing with the standard procedure on the Determination of Refugee Status, which handled the topic from a legal and administrative point of view. Participants were split into working groups and concluded

with a large variety of recommendations for the African States, the UNHCR and concerned NGO's as well as recommendations for Refugees, the population at large and the media.

On the last day each group held a final presentation on their topic and answered last questions. The results of that work were used to define the final resolution paper, called "Déclaration de Dakar du 28 October 2010", in which all recommendations is listed.

CI has figured to incorporate a Refugee and Asylum Seekers program in its work and is very ready to promote and protect the Rights of Refugees in the Gambia late next year.

TRAINING MANUAL

Some of the frequently asked questions (FAQs) to forums for community-based organizations (CBOs) in developing countries, whatever the subject, are regarding funding.

In addition, the first impulse of many such organizations seeking funding is to request the contact information for possible funders, and once such information is received, these organizations often write immediately to the potential funder stressing how

desperately funds are needed. Sadly, this approach often does harm to the NGO, rather than gaining support. Not only does it rarely attract funding, it can turn funding organizations against the organization altogether.

The training manual is meant to provide very basic guidelines for small organizations in The Gambia and the developing world regarding fund raising, and to point to other, more extensive resources; it should not, however, nor be taken as a guarantee of success for funding.

The information contained in this training manual is specifically intended to broaden the knowledge of emerging leaders in the charity and small NGO sector. This manual will be helpful to individuals who work in both charity and small NGOs.

In order to ensure wider application of this manual to persons working with charities/small NGOs who have special funding needs, it is hoped that it will be put into different accessible formats. The manual will make a positive contribution not only to charities/small NGOs but also to the general population.

STAFF

CI has continued to witness experienced, sincere, dedicated, trained and qualified staff. However,

the year 2010 was a difficult financial year and this has caused a setback to the development and remuneration of all the staff.

The core staff volunteered free services during this time of financial difficulties. They were allowed to do limited jobs outside of the organization to augment their remuneration.

WEBSITE

In August the new CI website (www.conscience-international.net) was launched with many additional pages, including additional information for volunteers and interns, more resources for our partners as well as the availability of copies of conscience International reports. We believe that this fresher look and navigation serve to illustrate in more depth the work of Conscience International as well as acting as even better electronic resource for prospective partners, volunteers and interns.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

In 2010 the Internship Programme showed a significant expansion.

This year we received 4 interns, representing a rise from the previous year. We are delighted with this increase in intern numbers that not

only represents that CI is continuing to be regarded as a perfect host for interns but also the growing recognition of CI as high quality placement for interns from around the world.

FUNDING

CI has no regular funding partner. In all these years of operation it depended on occasional donations from individuals and funding partners and project implementation overheads for expansion. The success with many small-scale projects has kept CI in business to date. The expansion of CI for now depends on the successes of projects acquired.

CHALLENGES

During the implementation of the program the organization faced some challenges as here.

1. Lack of funds to facilitate the necessary programs.
2. Inadequate stationeries needed for the daily running of the office.
3. Lack of information and communication technology such as internet facility and land phones
4. The organization is constrained by the lack of adequate essential materials and office equipments such as Computers, Photocopy Machines, Printers, and Cameras etc. in this vain the office implementation of the proposed

plan of action will however not be the task of CI alone.

PLANS FOR 2011

Volunteer and Internship Programme

The year 2011 will bring exciting new changes to our volunteer and internship programme. Worldwide, many people believe in their ability to be part of a positive social change and feel the need to contribute their time and expertise to the development of underprivileged groups in development or developing countries. Since it's not always easy to find trustworthy organizations from abroad, CI will identify reputable and prospective organizations for the volunteer/intern candidates and makes sure that the placements are matching their wishes and expectations as much as possible.

A more complete service will now be provided, taking volunteers and interns through every step of the placement process. After a thorough interview to asses the needs, interest and skills of the volunteers and interns have been conducted, the most appropriate placement will then be effected.

Another development for our volunteer and internship service will be the drawing up of a volunteer and internship policy template which can be used by charity organizations or smaller NGOs. Although many organizations desire volunteers and interns, often the resources to manage

them or the frameworks to provide a meaningful experience for both the organization and volunteer/intern are unfortunately sometimes lacking. Through assessment visits to many more of our partners we aim to work more closely with some of our smaller registered organizations in the planning, preparation and implementing a volunteer and internship policy which can be used and adapted to each individual organization.

Included in this process will be visits to smaller organizations with no experience on volunteer and intern management, organizing a workshop planned for February or March on working with volunteers and interns as well as continuing communication with CI. By focusing on some of our smaller partner organizations we believe we can significantly improve institutional capacity for these grassroots organizations most in need of assistance as well as offering volunteers and interns a more valuable experience.

Capacity Building

In 2011 we aim to build on the success of the first Fund Raising and Resource Mobilization Training for charitable organizations or smaller NGOs that took place in November of 2010. Similar trainings on this subject will be conducted to benefit charitable

organizations in the Western Region and the North Bank Region respectively.

We also plan to secure the needed resources to organize more Gender Base Violence and Peace Building trainings at schools and communities. This program will be extended to benefit students and community women groups in the Kombos, Western Region and the North Bank Region of The Gambia. Whilst conducting the previous trainings we noticed that every girl (student) and community woman wanted to participate but this proved difficult because of limited resources. For this reason, we wish to increase the number of participants in our next trainings.

One such important training scheduled for early next year is to be on the subject of Volunteer and Intern Management due to the interest shown to it in our first workshop on Fund Raising and Resource Mobilization.

We will also conduct training on volunteer development for students and individuals. This is an effort to enhance the volunteer's commitment and motivation by fostering an attitude of sustained and result oriented volunteering. These trainings will aim to bringing about an attitudinal change towards volunteering and to develop an attitude of ownership towards effective contribution to the development sector.

However, other important trainings are still to be decided as it remains our wish to keep our partners involved as much as possible in the planning process so as to be able to react to their changing demands and needs.

The Adult Literacy Programme

We are delighted to announce that by February 2011 we will increase the number of adult literacy centers and more adults will be encouraged to enroll to the programme. A three month pilot scheme for this programme was implemented from October to December 2010. Based on

the information and feedback received from this pilot project as well as the Teachers' Report, we will be compiling our instruction content into modules for effective learning and soliciting support for the programme.

With the importance of reading and writing, the need for such a programme for many illiterate communities has never been higher. By teaching adults, the opportunities that open out to them in all aspect of their development are vast.

The Office

CI will continue to raise funds to pay the rent for the building that house its offices at Fajara in The Gambia. The renting of the building from the year 2004 has enabled the organization to manage its activities in a friendly environment. This has continued to service CI with a financial burden – securing funds to maintain and enhance it operations. We will raise funds and resources for the provision of adequate essential materials and office equipments such as Computers, Photocopy Machines, Printers, Cameras, stationeries and information and communication technology facilities (internet, phones etc.) for the daily functioning of the office.

