

**CONSCIENCE**

**INTERNATIONAL**

**ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT  
OF  
CONSCIENCE INTERNATIONAL  
EDITION 2009**



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to the American Bar Association (ABA) through its World Justice Project (WJP) for funding the Gender Based Violence and Peace Building Training Project, and all those who made the project a success. Particular thanks to the Department of State for Education and the Department for Community Development of the Republic of The Gambia for their support in implementing the project in schools and communities.

Finally CI would like to express its gratitude to each of the individuals and organizations who participated in all our projects. The process of planning and carrying out the projects required considerable self-reflection and would not have been possible without the commitment, enthusiasm, and dedication brought by CI Staff.

## INTRODUCTION

Human rights are at the heart of the work of Conscience International (CI) and of creating the space of cooperation, peace, democracy and the rule of law that is the principal aim of the organization. The protection and promotion of human rights, however, can not be pursued only by regional or international legal instruments, such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights. Human rights need to be understood, cherished and promoted by everyone that they have been created and can benefit from them. Furthermore, human rights, as the consequence of universal needs and a reflection of certain values for organizing life together, must also be at the centre of human activity, whether political, economical or cultural and should influence public as well as private spheres of life.

Human rights education is understood as educational programmes and activities that focus on promoting equality in human dignity - is therefore of incalculable value in the shaping of an African dimension of citizenship meaningful to all Africans, as well as in the shaping of a global conscience that regards everyone as equal in dignity. It is also a very efficient way to prevent violations and develop a culture based on human dignity. Those involved in non-formal education in youth work should also consider the evolution, practice and challenges of human rights, with regard to their universality, indivisibility and inalienability, and what they mean to the young people of today. Human rights education is more than learning about rights and duties. It is about the way in which learning is shaped and the purpose of learning: learning for human rights is as important as learning through human rights and learning in human rights. This is equally relevant to formal and non-formal contexts of human rights education.

The Training Unit of Conscience International (CI) has acquired an undisputed reputation for and expertise in developing educational approaches and materials suitable to both formal and non-formal contexts as well as to different cultural environments. Its work with multipliers, the impact of projects such as the “Gender Based Violence and Peace Building Training” for youth, and its long-term training courses have all contributed to the development of projects that make their impact first and foremost at grass-roots level while being pre-eminently in The Gambia.

We have also monitored and recorded flagrant human rights violations in countries of civil unrest, upheavals and wars on the African continent. The aim of this research has always been the finding and assessing information related to human rights violations, recording and processing them in a report, and identifying possible strategies and actions to address the violations.

In summary, the past year was a period of significant strategic growth. I thank those of you who have contributed to CI’s success over the past year and hope that you find this year’s annual report interesting and informative.



**Shaka Ceesay**  
**Director**

## ABOUT CONSCIENCE INTERNATIONAL (CI)

CI is independent, non-partisan and non-profit human rights organization working in The Gambia and Sierra Leone.

CI works to maximize the knowledge, respect and observance of human rights and to enhance the awareness of human rights and development work through linkages with national, 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".

Advocacy and networking is crucial to support CI's work to become a specialist in human rights and peace building education in The Gambia and Sierra Leone, hence, it plays the main role to involve and advocate diverse stakeholders and concerned Government departments in the country to support the implementation of CI's projects

CI is a recognized NGO registered in conformity with the Laws of The Gambia and Sierra Leone; and has Observer Status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights of the African Union (AU). It has membership status with the International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR-Net), Member of The NGO Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC), The Darfur Consortium, a partner to the Special Court in Sierra Leone; and amongst others.



## ACHIEVEMENTS

### 1. GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND PEACE BUILDING TRAINING

CI was proudly acknowledged for successfully implementing the Gender Based Violence and Peace Building Training Program (GBVPBP) in rural and urban communities of The Gambia. In 2009, CI actively collaborated with schools, community groups and with the Ministry of Education and the Department of Community Development of the Republic of The Gambia in the organization of the training activities of the GBVPBP in schools and communities. The objective of the GBVPBP is to empower the students and community folks with redress seeking skills on gender based violence through advocacy, legislation and litigation; and to develop their capacity as to how they can participate in promoting peace as a national obligation. During the Gender Based Violence and Peace Building Training Program it was good indication of the participation from the Government and other development partners.



**Students from different schools participating in The training at Nasir Ahmadiya Muslim Senior Secondary School in Basse (URR)**



**The Chief and the Community Development Officer of Central River Region addressing training participants in Janjanbureh Town**

### 2. World Justice Project Cape Town Conference 2009

CI participated in the Africa-focused gathering of leaders from all disciplines, hosted by the World Justice Project (WJP), on May 6 and 7, 2009, in Cape Town, South Africa, to develop action plans to strengthen the Rule of Law in communities throughout Africa.



**Cape Town Conference**

The WJP is a multinational, multidisciplinary initiative to strengthen the Rule of Law and access to justice worldwide. The WJP's founding principles are that the Rule of Law is the foundation for communities of opportunity and equity; and that multidisciplinary collaboration is the most effective way to advance the Rule of Law.

The Cape Town Conference continued the WJP's progress in stimulating multidisciplinary programs to strengthen the Rule of Law; building new partnerships; and exploring how the Rule of Law affects the work of all disciplines. The Conference reviewed the WJP's achievements; ask for participants' feedback; and generate new programs to strengthen the Rule of Law. A new Rule of Law Index Report was presented, along with selected grant programs under the WJP's Opportunity Fund and plans for action committed to at the November 2008 World Justice Forum in Vienna, Austria.

### 3. NGO FORUM

Since its establishment in 2004, CI has continued to participate in this forum both in The Gambia and abroad. We have also provided Contact information about CI to all colleagues during and after the forum, 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.

The African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS) is an independent non-governmental pan-African organization, established in The Gambia since 1989. Since its inception, the Centre has been playing a central role in promoting and protecting human rights and democracy in Africa, through the media of capacity building, networking, action oriented research, publication and documentation.



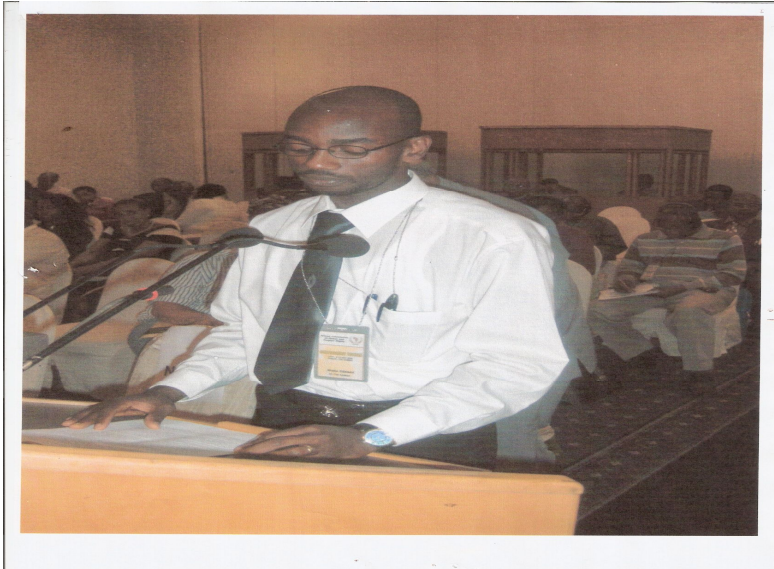
(r-l) Mr. Lansana Jallow, Mr. Jonathan Johnson & Mr. Shaka Ceesay  
all of CI staff witnessing the NGO Forum

The Forum on the Participation of NGOs in the Ordinary Sessions of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights is one of the main advocacy tools that the Centre uses to promote networking among Human Rights NGOs, 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.



## 4. ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION

CI has Observer Status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and has continued to give unstinted support to the work of the Commission. Since 2004, staff of CI has continued to attend the Ordinary Session of The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights both at home and abroad. CI is pursuing communications before the African Commission filed against State parties to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and calls on partners to support these matters. During the session CI built links with other NGOs that are working in the field of human rights in Africa and beyond.



Mr. Shaka Ceesay (CI Director) submitting on “The situation of Human Rights Defenders in Sudan” to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights at its 45<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session, May 2009, in Banjul - The Gambia

## 5. AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

CI was involved in the event of the African Human Rights Day celebration through supporting the organizer - the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights in marching and wearing printed T-shirts and caps in the event of the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2009, in The Gambia. The Director and staff of CI participated in the event. The objective of this involvement is to contribute to the needs and to promote human rights of all Africans especially the marginalized and vulnerable groups.

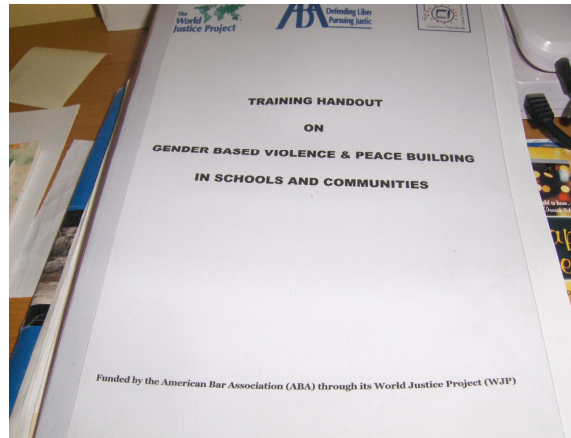


African Human Rights Day celebration 2009



## 6. GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND PEACE BUILDING TRAINING MANUAL

CI has developed a Gender Based Violence and Peace Building Training Manual. The manual was developed base on the American Bar Association (ABA) through its World Justice Project (WJP) funded “Gender Based Violence and Peace Building Program” for schools and communities in The Gambia and other references and documents. This manual consists of two main parts which discussed more on Gender Based Violence and Peace Building Skills. The manual provides basic information for the facilitators as well as trainer of what they should do during conducting a Gender Based Violence and Peace Building training workshop in schools and communities.



**The Training Manual**

The purpose of this manual is to provide guidance for all facilitators or trainers before and during conducting a Gender Based Violence and Peace Building training workshop. CI - The Gambia and Sierra Leone will continue to use this manual for its training programs on Gender Based Violence and Peace Building training for schools and communities in order to get feedback for the improvement of the manual.

The manual for the Gender Based Violence and Peace Building training was already developed as a final draft and will be reviewed step by step for content improvement.

## 7. HUMAN RIGHTS RESEARCH AND MONITORING PROGRAM

Our focus at CI has been, among others, the protection and promotion of human rights in Africa. This is pursued through various projects and undertakings that involve various activities such as training, public awareness campaign and programs. It is our belief that the implementation of human rights in Africa is only achievable through the incorporation and application of human rights principles in the day-to-day working of the system.

In 2009, CI with the help of interns made researches and monitored certain troubled countries on the African continent. The outcome of the research and monitoring program is the compilation of a “Human Rights and Rule of Law Report” focusing on a number of human rights issues that calls for the attention of the international community. It is aimed at making sure that activists and concerned bodies are aware of the current human rights situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Uganda and Guinea Bissau. It is expected that in being aware, will be able to intervene consciously and in a timely manner in addressing issues of concern.

## **8. EXTERNAL NETWORKING**

CI fosters effective and appropriate networking through building of strategic partnerships, establishing thematic alliances, membership of appropriate platforms and umbrella organizations.

## **9. STAFF**

CI has experienced sincere, dedicated, trained and qualified staff. The entire staff is very dedicated and alive to their official duties. They are very cooperative and helpful and the entire credit of success goes to our dedicated staff.

## **10. INTERNSHIP**

CI's internship program has continued to attract individuals from around the world who have interest in the work we do. The program provides interns the opportunity to gain practical experience and support the work of CI during their internship.

## **11. FUNDING**

CI relies on outside cooperation's in the past years. However a resource mobilization and fundraising team has been created, more projects and sustainable programs have been designed and are submitted to donor partners for funding. We deeply acknowledge the generous assistance we have received from our sponsors and supporters.

## **12. THE SECRETARIAT**

The Secretariat was established in The Gambia in 2004 and coordinates CI's programs. It serves as liaison between international organizations, NGOs and donors.

In 2008, CI opened a Chapter Office in Freetown, following the granting of a certificate with the Freetown City Council of Sierra Leone, in order to better coordinate its activities in Africa and to work in close collaboration with its network of NGOs and partner organizations.



**The Secretariat in The Gambia**

## IMPACT

- ❖ Through the networking activities with many local and international organizations, CI is seen as an active NGO working in the field of human rights education in The Gambia as well as in Sierra Leone, for example a sign of good collaboration with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the networking with human rights network etc.
- ❖ The Government officials supported and recognized the activities of CI, for example: Government officials from the Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education and Department for Community Development participated in the Gender Based Violence and Peace Building training for schools and communities and other events organized by CI and partners;
- ❖ Great number of Local and International NGOs working on human rights and development know CI through meetings (NGO Forum, World Justice Forum, Ordinary Session of the African Commission etc.);
- ❖ Good link with all partner organizations and NGOs working in the field of human rights and development, for example, NGOs of the Darfur Consortium members and other civil society organizations in Africa and beyond know CI well; and
- ❖ Government recognized the work of CI and has invited CI to participate in the event/meeting/workshop organized by Government; for example invitation to the workshop on the promotion and protection of the rights of women in The Gambia jointly organized by the Women's Bureau and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights etc.

## CONCLUSION

There is a good sign of education and networking activities with the Government and NGOs working in the field of human rights and development in The Gambia. It is noted that CI in each country was able to implement project related to human rights and peace building education and has also good opportunity to accomplish the work.

CI is also able to participate in the event; training and workshop organized by the Government and NGO partners. CI has a good collaboration with the Government - Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education and Department of Community Development such as the Gender Based Violence and Peace Building training in schools and communities etc. Most of the NGOs working in the field of human rights recognized the work of human rights for example; NGOs often inform and coordinated with CI some events and campaigns for the promotion and protection of human rights.

## SOME PARTNERS OF CONSCIENCE INTERNATIONAL

Action Pour les Droits Humains et L'Amitié (ADHA) - Sénégal

African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS) - The Gambia

American Bar Association (ABA) - USA

African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) - The Gambia

Center for Minority Rights and Development (CEMIRIDE) - Kenya

Darfur Consortium

Foundation for the Fight Against Social Exclusion & Poverty Alleviation (FOFASEPA) - The Gambia

Freedom and Development Rights Initiative (FDRI) - Nigeria

Friends in the UK

Humanitarian Agency for Child Protection and Poverty Alleviation (HACIPPA) - The Gambia

International Refugee Rights International (IRRI) - USA and Uganda

International Movement for African Children (IMAC) - The Gambia

Minority Rights Group International (MRGI) - The United Kingdom

Network of Human Rights Journalists (NHRJ) - The Gambia

Save Darfur Coalition (SDC) - USA

Youth Exploration for Human Conquest (YEHCO) - The Gambia

West African Christian Friends (WACF) - The Gambia



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