

Reconciliation through dialogue

-Invitation to a workshop in conflict management, June 28th-30th, 2003-

In connection with the Conference of European Churches (CEC) that will take place in Trondheim (June 25th to July 3rd, 2003) ISFIT in cooperation with Norwegian Church Aid will arrange a workshop in conflict management. As the main theme for CEC is reconciliation, and a group of Chechen and Russian students are invited to the conference to present their peace building efforts to religious leaders from all over Europe, ISFIT has decided to organize a three days workshop where these Chechen and Russian students will participate. In addition to these participants the organizers of the workshop would like to invite people from various conflict areas who currently live in Trondheim to participate.

The last six years ISFIT has regularly organized dialogue seminars focusing on basic conflict management skills/knowledge and reconciliation. These seminars have involved participants from different conflict areas, and it is our positive experience of bringing people from different conflict areas together in such settings that particularly encourage us to invite people also from other conflict areas also this time as it will provide unique conditions for mutual learning and shared experience.

The workshop will give the participants an opportunity to learn about general mechanisms involved in conflicts such as identity, stereotypes and enemy images, and what promotes the escalation and the de-escalation of conflict. Through a focus on basic human needs the participants will also get a touch of non-violent communication. The learning method that will be applied seeks to maximize interactivity and participation through exercises and role plays where the participants will personally experience group dynamics and behaviors characteristic of human conflict at all levels ranging from small-scale interpersonal level to large-scale interstate conflict level. Depending on the interests and readiness of the participants they will also get an opportunity to lead exercises as a start to develop themselves as facilitators/peacebuilders.

Participants: Participants should be motivated to contribute to a constructive dialogue and learning environment and a willingness to show commitment to reconciliation and peace building activities. We expect that participants are fluent in English and that they are between 18 and 70 years old.

Facilitators: The main facilitators are Gunnleif Nielsen, master student in health science, Siri Aas, master student in political science, Linda Henriksen and Vegar Jordanger, master students in psychology.

Costs: The fee for participation would normally be NOK 1500, including lunch and coffee. However, Norwegian Church Aid will sponsor all participants that are selected so the actual fee will be NOK 100 for each participant.

The workshop will take place at the idea-lab "Oasen", Richard Birkelandsvei 2A, 3rd floor (at Perleporten, Gløshaugen) and will start 9.30 every morning and is scheduled to last until 16.30. The deadline for application is Wednesday, June 25th (14.00).

If you would like to participate in the workshop please write a short motivation letter, including why you would like to participate, what expectations you have, what you would like to learn, and a little bit about your background. Send it to:

vjordanger@hotmail.com or gunnleif@stud.ntnu.no

We also recommend everyone, whether you like to participate in the workshop or not, to attend the Chechnya - hearing Friday, June 27th, where the Chechen and Russian students will present their work promoting peace process (for further information see below). If you have any questions concerning the workshop or the hearing, please write an e-mail to one of the addresses indicated above, or call Vegar (93258744) or Gunnleif (45606832).

Sincerely

Vegar Jordanger

Gunnleif Nielsen

*Extra Hearing at CEC Assembly
Friday June 27 13.30 - 15.00, in Nidarohallen:*

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“Students from Russia, Chechnya and Norway are building peace together. Norwegian Church Aid in co-operation with The International Student Festival in Trondheim (ISFiT) are presenting a project by Russian and Chechen students in their efforts to build reconciliation through dialogue.”

- Introduction by NCA (Gunstein Instefjord)
- Presentation of Chechnya, the people, the conflict and the dialogue project (Vegar Jordanger and Siri Aas interviewed by Stein Erik Horjen)
- Slides of Chechnya and Russia, accompanied by music Presentations of the theme Reconciliation through Dialogue (Ibragim Bitsayev, Yaroslav Tikhomirov, Aida Abaeva)
- How to promote reconciliation in Russia/Chechnya? (Chris Hunter and Erik Cleven)
- Music interlude
- Response from Church leaders (Russian Orthodox Church preferably)

(per 18.6.03)