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Newsletter of Edmund Rice International



Welcome

Welcome to the ERI February Newsletter.

In late January ERI conducted a successful 3-day training program for members of the Edmund Rice Network and several partner organisations (Presentation Sisters, Trocaire and Caplor Horizons). The course was offered in response to requests from those interested in learning more about human rights but who were unable to find the two weeks needed to complete the regular course. (see story opposite).

The annual audit was conducted at the start of the month and then with Brian in Australia on home leave and Kevin in Ireland for much of February, it was left to Tino and Bernard to monitor events in Geneva

News from ERI

February Newsletter

ERI Geneva Training in Human Rights and Advocacy



Course participants l-r: Herve Bund Trocaire; Lynne Crilley pbvm; Brian Bond cfc; Emmanuel Aminent fpm; Ann Marie Quinn pbvm; John Casey cfc; Paddy Fitzgibbon fpm; Lorna Pearcey and Ian Williams – Caplor Horizons

and prepare for the Human Rights Council session.

In New York, Kevin Cawley has continued to be active in several NGO committees and in raising awareness and promoting environmental sustainability at Iona College. His most recent Carbon Rangers bulletin can be viewed [here](#)

The ERI Team

In Geneva: Brian Bond cfc, Tino D'Abreu cfc, Bernard Gazire fpm and Kevin Mullan cfc.

In New York: Kevin Cawley cfc

Coming Up at the UN

The following countries of interest to the Edmund Rice Network are coming up for their [Universal Periodic Review](#) by the Human Rights Council of the UN in Geneva:-

Dominica (May 2019)

Bolivia (Nov 2019)

Kenya, Grenada (Jan 2020)

USA, Liberia (May 2020)

Australia, Saint Lucia (Nov 2020)

Submissions are due 6 months prior to the date of the review.

In addition, over the next year several countries of interest are due to report to committees overseeing the various [UN Conventions - Treaty Bodies](#).

These include:-

[Human Rights Committee](#)
(monitoring civil and political rights **CCPR**)

- USA (Mar 2019, Geneva)

- Nigeria (July 2019, Geneva)

- Dominica (Nov 2019, Geneva)

[Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women \(CEDAW\)](#)

- United Kingdom, (Feb 2019, Geneva)

- Uruguay (Mar 2019, Geneva)

[Committee Against Torture \(CAT\)](#)

- United Kingdom (April-May 2019, Geneva)

- South Africa (April-May 2019,

There was a richness of experience in the group that gathered in Gaillard (France) and Geneva for the ERI three-day training course in January. Participants came from Australia, England, Ghana, Honduras, Ireland and Italy.

The Course focused our awareness on the centrality of human rights for the work of advocacy in Geneva where the Human Rights Council has its home. We learnt about the processes countries take part in to account for how they enact the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on behalf of their citizens, and how Non-Government Organisations (NGO's) participate by presenting alternative reports highlighting facts and evidence gathered from the grass roots in each country.

Our visit to the United Nations (Palais des Nations) building in Geneva enabled us to see one of these processes in action, when we were present at a Universal Periodic Review of Cyprus. Later in the day another layer of experience was added when the group participated in an interactive discussion with a member of the Australian Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva.

Other mechanisms for monitoring human rights were also presented. Countries are accountable for their adherence to nine core International Human Rights Treaties such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (the most widely ratified of all the treaties). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) and the recent UN Summits on Climate Change, particularly the 2015 Paris Agreement, were also discussed.

A visit to the offices of Edmund Rice International followed. The office space is shared with other faith-based groups (Franciscans International, Marist Brothers, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd and VIVAT). Being in a space where there is a shared mission in Human Rights offers the opportunity for networking and the sharing of expertise and ideas.

At the conclusion of the course, we found that the different pieces of the advocacy process came together to interlock and form a whole. It is not a perfect system, but it can bring to the surface what is working well in a country and where the human rights gaps are. This can happen when NGO's and other members of civil society act by lobbying Governments and raise awareness amongst community groups so that violations are in the open and not hidden.

We are challenged to continue to keep human rights at the heart of our work for a just world, in particular in our engagement with the SDG's and during the Voluntary National Reviews at the High-Level Political Forum in the

Geneva)

Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

- Australia (Feb, Sep, 2019, Geneva)

Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

- India (April 2019, Geneva)
- Argentina, Australia, Ghana, Peru
(dates yet to be set)

Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED)

- Peru (April 2019, Geneva)
- Bolivia (date to be set)

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

- Zambia (April 2019, Geneva)
- Ireland (Nov 2019, Geneva)

Committee on Migrant Workers

- Bolivia (April 2019, Geneva)
- Argentina (Sep 2019, Geneva)

All schedules are subject to change without notice.

Procedures for the reviews vary with different committees. Most committees conduct a review of a state over several sessions. The Committee on the Rights of the Child conducts separate reviews on each of the Optional Protocols (if ratified by the State under review) in addition to the core treaty.

Forthcoming Country Visits Under UN Special Procedures

Special Rapporteur on Disability

Canada 2 April- 11 April 2019

Special Rapporteur on Privacy

Argentina 6 May - 17 May 2019

All schedules are subject to change without notice.

Children's Letter Writing Campaign

United Nations, New York. As members of faith-based groups we are also mindful of working from Gospel values.

We would like to express our deep appreciation to the ERI Team for what was a truly inspirational and enriching experience

Anne Marie Quinn pbvm

Human Rights Training for Schools Underway in East Africa



2019 has begun well for the Edmund Rice Advocacy Network (ERAN) in East Africa. with the training of volunteers and staff on child protection and safeguarding, and the training of teachers on Human Rights for schools.

A key strategic objective for ERAN in 2019 and beyond is to build capacity among teachers (rights club patrons) in 20 primary and secondary schools within Kajiado North and Kibera on Human Rights for Schools. A partnership with 16 schools in the two sub-counties has already been finalised with a signed agreement between ERAN and the school heads for the school to participate in the ERAN programs.

On the 25th and 26th of Jan ERAN rolled down its initial training for the patron teachers from 13 schools. The training focused on equipping the teachers with skills and knowledge in the following areas;

- Prevention science (to address alcohol, drug and substance abuse among children)
- Child safeguarding and protection guidelines (to enable those working with children to know what is expected of them and have a child protection policy in place for their institutions).
- Child development stages (to enable teachers have the ability to monitor the behaviours of children in their institutions and respond appropriately).
- School rights club (children in the clubs will be taught rights and responsibilities, justice and integrity, life skills, the effects of alcohol, drug and substance abuse, and environmental sustainability). The children will also involve



Edmund Rice International is again urging support for the [Children's letter-writing campaign](#) on behalf of children with HIV/AIDS. The campaign targets governments, pharmaceutical and diagnostic companies, and media in order to improve access to age-appropriate HIV information, testing and treatment for children and adolescents living with HIV. Children and young people are invited to take action with their school, faith community or family to help make this happen.

Resource materials have been updated by the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance and are available [here](#).

Our hope is that schools who supported the campaign in the past will do so again with a new group of students, and that they will be joined by many more of the estimated quarter of a million students in Edmund Rice schools around the world.

Governments are being asked to do more to eliminate mother to child transmission of the virus, do more to ensure children living with HIV receive appropriate treatment, care and support, to strengthen the capacity of families and the community-level and social welfare child care workforce so that together they can meet the developmental needs of children living with HIV, and address the problem of stigma and discrimination associated with the infection.

From the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

themselves in international and local children campaigns including the '30 rights in 30 days' campaign, HIV/AIDS campaigns for children and anti-drug and substance campaigns.

Active children from the clubs within the schools will be nominated to represent ERAN at various functions as children human rights ambassadors.

The training of patrons was a big success with the teachers eager to work with the ERAN team to bring about a positive change in children. The Human Rights for Schools is hoped to have a big impact on both children and teachers from 2019.

Johnstone Shisanya ERAN Co-ordinator

February 6th - International Day for Zero Tolerance of Female Genital Mutilation



Photo exhibit 'The 68 million Girls at Risk' to promote the ending of female genital mutilation

UN Photo/Loey Felipe

February 6 marked the international day for zero tolerance against female genital mutilation. The event was marked with a call by the [UN Secretary-General António Guterres](#) for increased, concerted and global action to end female genital mutilation and fully uphold the human rights of all women and girls. The theme for this year was 'Translating Political Decisions Into National and Grassroots Action'.

Female genital mutilation violates the human rights of women and girls, contravening established principles, norms and standards including non-discrimination on the basis of sex; the rights to health, physical integrity and life; the right to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; and the rights of the child. Under goal 5 on Gender Equality, the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 calls for an end to FGM by 2030.

In a keynote address to mark the event in Geneva, the First

Article 14

1. All persons shall be equal before the courts and tribunals. In the determination of any criminal charge against him, or of his rights and obligations in a suit at law, everyone shall be entitled to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law. The press and the public may be excluded from all or part of a trial for reasons of morals, public order (ordre public) or national security in a democratic society, or when the interest of the private lives of the parties so requires, or to the extent strictly necessary in the opinion of the court in special circumstances where publicity would prejudice the interests of justice; but any judgement rendered in a criminal case or in a suit at law shall be made public except where the interest of juvenile persons otherwise requires or the proceedings concern matrimonial disputes or the guardianship of children.

2. Everyone charged with a criminal offence shall have the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law.

3. In the determination of any criminal charge against him, everyone shall be entitled to the following minimum guarantees, in full equality: (a) To be informed promptly and in detail in a language which he understands of the nature and cause of the charge against him;

(b) To have adequate time and facilities for the preparation of his defence and to communicate with counsel of his own choosing;

(c) To be tried without undue delay;

(d) To be tried in his presence, and to defend himself in person or through legal assistance of his own choosing; to be informed, if he does not have legal assistance, of this right; and to have legal assistance assigned to him, in any case where the interests of justice so require, and without payment by him in any such case if he does not have sufficient means to pay for it;

(e) To examine, or have examined,

Lady of Burkina Faso and Goodwill Ambassador of the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices noted that the practice of FGM has no health benefits but only risks. She observed that though the practice is under decline worldwide, it is still prevalent in some countries of the world. She called for a concerted non-relenting education campaign at all levels to completely root out the practice by 2030.

Bernard Gazire fpm

February 8th - International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking



The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the International Union of Superiors General has designated February 8 as an International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking.

In Geneva, the prayer service was led by The Episcopal Vicar of Geneva, Father Pascal Desthieux under the theme *“Together Against Human Trafficking”*. He called on humanity to intensify prayer and education against the abhorable practice of human trafficking emphasizing that it is a crime against humanity. He appealed to the world to show compassion to victims of human trafficking.

St. Josephine Bakhita (see photo above), was kidnapped as a child and sold into slavery in Sudan and Italy. She was later freed and became a Canossian sister and dedicated her life to sharing her testament of deliverance from slavery and comforting the poor and suffering. She was declared a Saint in 2000. Following a petition by the Catholic Sisters in 2014, Pope Francis endorsed an International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking (IDPA) to be observed on February 8 – the feast of St. Josephine Bakhita! The International Union of Superiors General (UISG) was charged with promoting this event, and the first IDPA was celebrated on February 8, 2015.

Bernard Gazire fpm

Responding to the Urgency of Climate Change

the witnesses against him and to obtain the attendance and examination of witnesses on his behalf under the same conditions as witnesses against him;

(f) To have the free assistance of an interpreter if he cannot understand or speak the language used in court;

(g) Not to be compelled to testify against himself or to confess guilt.

4. In the case of juvenile persons, the procedure shall be such as will take account of their age and the desirability of promoting their rehabilitation.

5. Everyone convicted of a crime shall have the right to his conviction and sentence being reviewed by a higher tribunal according to law.

6. When a person has by a final decision been convicted of a criminal offence and when subsequently his conviction has been reversed or he has been pardoned on the ground that a new or newly discovered fact shows conclusively that there has been a miscarriage of justice, the person who has suffered punishment as a result of such conviction shall be compensated according to law, unless it is proved that the non-disclosure of the unknown fact in time is wholly or partly attributable to him.

7. No one shall be liable to be tried or punished again for an offence for which he has already been finally convicted or acquitted in accordance with the law and penal procedure of each country.

The [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(1966\)](#) has been ratified by 169 UN member states, including all countries where the Edmund Rice Network has a presence.

Compliance with the treaty is monitored by the [Human Rights Committee](#) which meets in Geneva.

The Convention has two additional Optional Protocols which must be ratified separately. The [first Optional Protocol](#) relates to the



The most recent report from the [UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#) that made it clear that 'rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society' is needed to address climate change was underlined by Brian in presentations to Edmund Rice Network gatherings in Melbourne, Perth and Brisbane during his Australian visit.

The scientific evidence is beyond dispute. Climate change is happening now and the effects will be severe, pervasive and irreversible with rising sea levels and food shortages caused by reduced harvests threatening to displace millions more people with a corresponding impact on global security, ocean acidification threatening ecosystems, a greater spread of tropical diseases, more deaths from extreme weather events and a greatly accelerated rate of species extinction.

The pledges made by all countries as part of the Paris (COP21) agreement to limit the global temp rise to 2C above pre-industrial levels (let alone the recommended 1.5C) are now seen to be woefully inadequate, and in many cases are unlikely to be achieved anyway. The next two years are crucial. At the recent COP24 meeting in Poland, nations pledged to submit revised targets by 2020 and report on progress towards those targets every two years. It is time to urge our leaders to seriously address the issue and honour the commitments they have made with actions not just words.

Given that it is young people who will have to live with the consequences of inaction in facing up to climate change, it is not surprising that young people are becoming increasingly active around the issue, with the 'strike' action initiated by Swedish schoolgirl [Greta Thunberg](#) being taken up by students around the world.

Click [here](#) to view her address to the COP24 meeting in Poland.

Another day of [global student strike action](#) is planned for [Friday March 15th](#).

Earth Hour 2019

establishment of an individual complaints procedure and has been ratified by 116 UN member states. Fourteen states in which the Edmund Rice Network has a presence have not ratified the Optional Protocol, (Dominica, Grenada, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, St Lucia, South Sudan, Timor Leste, Trinidad & Tobago, Tanzania, UK, USA and Zimbabwe). Liberia has signed the Convention but not ratified it.

The [second Optional Protocol](#) to the Convention relates to the abolition of the death penalty which 85 UN member states have ratified. Sixteen states in which the Edmund Rice Network has a presence have not ratified the Second Optional Protocol. (Dominica, Grenada, Ghana, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Peru, St Lucia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Trinidad & Tobago, Tanzania, USA, Zambia and Zimbabwe).

(The signing of a treaty is a means of authentication and expresses the willingness of the signatory state to continue the treaty-making process. The signature qualifies the signatory state to proceed to ratification, acceptance or approval. It also creates an obligation to refrain, in good faith, from acts that would defeat the object and the purpose of the treaty.

Ratification is an act by which a State signifies an agreement to be legally bound by the terms of a particular treaty. To ratify a treaty, the State first signs it and then fulfills its own national legislative requirements to incorporate its provisions into domestic law.)

'Acting Justly' Course



Like to learn more about how you can take effective action for justice at



Starting as a symbolic lights out event in Sydney in 2007, Earth Hour is now the world's largest grassroots movement for the environment, inspiring millions of people to take action for our planet and nature. This year people everywhere are invited to switch off their lights for one hour at 8.30pm local time on Saturday March 30th in solidarity with global efforts to secure nature and our common home.

Understanding the Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. Each goal has a set of targets to be met by the year 2030.

Click on the image below to learn more about SDG No.4 - Quality Education and the targets to be met by 2030.



Learn About Our Work

Click on the image below to view a video introducing the work of ERI

a global level?

Want to know more about the work of Edmund Rice International (ERI) and how you can be part of it?

Then why not sign up [here](#) for the ERI online course which aims to raise awareness about more effective global action for justice.

ERI Human Rights and Advocacy Training - May 2019

A couple of vacancies exist in the next 2-week training course in human rights and advocacy which will be offered in Geneva from April 29 - May 10, 2019.

Nomination forms have been circulated to each Province/District or can be obtained by emailing bpbond@edmundrice.org

It is planned to offer a second training in early November 2019



Support Our Work

Thanks to [Misean Cara](#), [Edmund Rice Development](#) and [Trocaire](#) together with our other donors for their ongoing support of the work of ERI

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