

Commitment 1 (117001)

AISA International NGO commits to creating an Academy of Peace, whose role will be initiating and teaching pedagogy as a method for developing a culture of peace in all segments of society.

Core responsibility: 1

Transformation (1C): Remain Engaged and Invest in Stability

Commit to addressing root causes of conflict and working to reduce fragility by investing in the development of inclusive, peaceful societies.

Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments?

Interfaith dialogue is a first step in preventing conflicts and developing inclusive and peaceful societies. For over a century the Alāwi Sufi Order has worked for reconciliation, dialogue and universal fraternity among the members of the human family. UNESCO recognized the Order during its 37th General Conference held in November 2013 as "a school for religious tolerance and conviviality."

The youth and citizens of the world require an education towards a Culture of Peace in order to build a society based on core values. The core mission of AISA NGO is to transmit a culture of peace through education. The first step was to create the SMF (Muslim Scouts of France) and to respect diversity. The goal is to build a future with one another, not one against another. Similar initiatives were created in other European countries. The purpose of education is not merely to develop skills and peripheral capabilities: education is meant to make human qualities and virtues flower and flourish.

Achievements at a glance

In order to contribute to developing a culture of peace in all segments of society, AISA NGO has taken the initiative to open a House of Peace at Almere, in the Netherlands. It brings together the youth and the elderly from different cultures and backgrounds, around activities such as circle meetings, art, music, debate, exhibitions, films, games, education and farming and around themes such as: citizenship, building bridges, peace and spirituality, ecology, economy, architecture, arts and music. For more details about the initiative, you can consult the document attached.

How is your organization assessing progress?

The House of Peace in Almere is unique and will probably lead to opening similar places in other countries. The inauguration of the house was blessed on June 4, 2016 by communities from 8 different faiths, children from different nationalities as well as Sheikh Bentounes (initiator and founder) and by the Deputy Mayor of Almere.

Challenges faced in implementation

The Challenge regarding the House of Peace in Almere, was to find a suitable site to build the house, and get support from local communities and municipalities.

Next Step in 2017

AISA NGO has initiated discussions with universities and experts in education to develop a global pedagogy for the culture of peace. Sheikh Bentounes has been invited to participate as a keynote speaker at the Summer University in Quebec, Canada, organized by Laval University on the theme “How to build a Culture of Peace and the role of religions in building Peace”. The objective is to initiate a research chair in this area in 2018 and we are looking for sponsors and the participation of other stakeholders, academia and UNESCO.

If you had one message for the annual report on what is most needed to advance the transformation, what would it be?

AISA NGO invites the Secretary General of the UN, the representatives of member states and non-governmental organizations and civil society, as well as academia and UNESCO to partner in the development of the Academy of Peace which will be a joint initiative of different schools and pedagogies. We invite interested organizations who have developed similar methods, pedagogies and other tools to contact us, and we are also looking for sponsors/partners to help us open schools in Algeria, Morocco, Senegal, Germany, Canada and in other countries.

Commitment 2 (117002)

AISA International NGO commits to mobilizing stakeholders to ensure that the International Day of Peace and Living Together (designated as September 21, by the UN) will be celebrated in cities and countries worldwide, making this joint action recognized at the International level a shared vision of a common destiny.

Core responsibility: 1

Transformation 1D: Develop Solutions with and for people

Commit to addressing root causes of conflict and working to reduce fragility by investing in the development of inclusive, peaceful societies.

Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments?

Interfaith dialogue is a first step in preventing conflicts and developing inclusive and peaceful societies. For over a century the Alāwi Sufi Order has worked for reconciliation, dialogue and universal fraternity among the members of the human family. UNESCO recognized the Order during its 37th General Conference held in November 2013 as "a school for religious tolerance and conviviality. However, as conflicts are driving suffering to unprecedented levels, more and more people, particularly the young, are calling for a change of paradigms. Humanity must react and move towards this available alternative: a society of « better living together » with all the values that fulfil this concept.

This new challenge that goes well beyond geographical, cultural, social and religious borders can only be achieved through a Culture of Peace. It was around this fundamental thought for the future that the idea to create the International Day of Living Together, and getting official recognition by the United Nations, was born. This day addresses the youth and citizens of the world with a message to build a society based on core values.

Achievements at a glance

AISA NGO conducted a call for support of the International Day of Living Together within the civil society and received letters of support from organizations, artists, intellectuals from all over the world. In addition, AISA placed a petition on the web site and received approximately 100, 000 signatures (online and paper copies). In October 2016, a delegation led by Sheikh Bentounes, the President of Honour at AISA International NGO has met several UN officials, including the President of the 71st General Assembly, NGOs in New York and Geneva to promote the initiative and has succeeded in obtaining support and commitment from several members of states and delegations. In Montreal, Sheikh Bentounes was a special guest and invited speaker at the experts table of the International Observatory of Mayors for Living Together to present the International Day initiative; he was also received by the Mayor of the City of Montreal, and an invited speaker in a conference organized by the Intercultural Council of the City of Montreal.

On the national front, AISA commissions have organized workshops, summer universities, and festivals around the 8 themes of the International Day of Living Together and raised considerable interest worldwide among youth and the civil society. A seminar and workshops on better living together gathered youth from different countries in Toulouse in December 2016. Detailed information on the supporting committees and signatories is available in the attached document. For more information on the activities please consult the website: <http://www.desireforpeace.org>.

How is your organization assessing progress?

We established one internal team to manage the whole initiative and mobilize the national commissions and partners in all the different countries to reach the target of 1 million signatures from civil society, as well as obtaining further national support from personalities and UN organizations. We now have a UN member state ready to push the initiative and present it to the General Assembly, hopefully during the fall.

Challenges faced in implementation

Changing from a World Day for better Living Together to an International Day has caused delays in the project. Funding promotional material and communication tools was a considerable challenge plus the need to translate into different languages to reach out to civil society in various countries. The effort to mobilize stakeholders required extensive travel and accommodation for the team engaged in reaching out to UN organizations and member states.

Next Step in 2017

Organize a workshop at UNESCO headquarters to obtain further signatures from NGOs and other stakeholders before seeking a resolution by member states during the next UN General Assembly in fall 2017.

If you had one message for the annual report on what is most needed to advance the transformation, what would it be?

Best practice is needed to simplify the whole procedure and speed up the process in order to achieve the goal of this transformation: a resolution from the 72nd UN GA declaring the International Day of Peace and Living Together (September 21).

Call for support and partnerships

AISA NGO invites the Secretary General of the UN, the representatives of member states and non-governmental organizations and civil society to help promote and register September 21, as the Day for Peace and Living Together on the official global calendar.

Commitment 3 (117003)

AISA International NGO contributes to the promotion of a culture of peace by facilitating an understanding of the following principles: gender equality, non-discrimination, the fight against poverty, and social and cultural progress. It firmly opposes fundamentalism and religious conflicts in order to build a world more just, more cooperative and more fraternal, in the service of mankind.

Core responsibility: 1

Transformation 1D: Develop Solutions with and for people

Commit to Address root causes of conflict and work to reduce fragility by investing in the development of inclusive, peaceful societies.

Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments?

By its expertise in spiritual and ethical areas, AISA International NGO contributes to the promotion of the necessity of Living Together through a Culture of Peace.

RECOGNITION BY THE UN IN 2014, ECOSOC (Section of the United Nations responsible for Economic and Social questions,) granted the special consultative status to the association, which became AISA International NGO. It is one of the very few organizations of a spiritual nature recognized for its expertise in the following areas:

Spirituality | Culture of Peace | Gender Equality | Social Development | Environment | Governance | Ethics

ACTING ON MAJOR CHALLENGES AISA International NGO has initiated festivals (Mawlid, Living Together in Cannes), organized congresses, symposia, and conferences that bring meaning to the dialogue between civilizations, societal challenges and Living Together. It produces exhibitions and films, as well as books, music albums and educational tools promoting education for the Culture of Peace.

It supports local, social and cultural initiatives, and organizes language courses, training, notably in management, for young people. It ensures the safeguard, restoration and transmission of the tangible and intangible heritage of Islam.

Recent activities include the organization of the International Feminine Congress for a Culture of Peace “Women’s Turn to Speak”, Oran, Algeria, 29-31 October 2014. Under the High Patronage of the President of the Algerian Republic, this International Congress offered an opportunity for an exchange and reflection on feminine energy, the bearer of peace and equality. With more than 3,200 participants and 50 speakers, representing 25 nationalities, it ended with the “Declaration of Oran”, which contains recommendations for actions to improve the status of women throughout the world, including the launching of a global mobilization campaign for the UN to proclaim an International Day of Living Together.

AISA International NGO produced “Islam, Voice of Women”, a film realized by Boualem Gueritli and Didier Bourg and translated in English.

Inaugurated at the International Feminine Congress, the “Veiling Unveiling” Exhibition invites us to travel through the centuries to discover the ritual, cultural and spiritual meaning of “Veiling Unveiling”. It provides an exciting investigation into the origin of the veil, which sheds light on the multiple values and meanings it carries in different civilizations from the dawn of mankind to modern times. This exhibition has been translated in English, Indonesian, French and Arabic and exhibited in France (Nice) and Corsica. Other events have been planned in a number of museums and cities in Europe.

Participation to the 59th Commission on the Status of Women in March 2015 at the UN headquarters.

Achievements at a glance

In September 29, 2017, Sheikh Bentounes has been invited as a keynote speaker to the Human Rights Forum, organized in New York, by The Colin Powell School for Civic and Global Leadership, the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies at the Centre for Worker Education and the Division of Humanities and the Arts. The theme of this 4th edition of the forum was “Women and the Veil”. Following this event, the exhibition “Veiling and Unveiling” was shown for one month in the main hall of the university.

A number of seminars have been organized in Algeria, gathering youth to discuss issues and challenges related to gender equality, harmony within the couple and other related themes. Publications related to Islam and the couple including a book written by Sheikh Bentounes on the feminine heritage of Islam, to be published in September 2017.

How is your organization assessing progress?

The seminars organized in Algeria, will be held in other countries. The goal is to reach the youth and educate them. For its PRESENCE IN THE WORLD, AISA International NGO relies on a network of National AISA Associations in Germany, Belgium, Canada, Spain, France, the Netherlands and Switzerland. It partners with many like-minded associations and foundations in the Maghreb, Africa, Indonesia, Turkey, Japan, the Middle East and North America.

Challenges faced in implementation

Women and Islam, Women and the veil, and Gender Equality in Muslim countries are major challenges. The major challenge encountered especially in the 2014 Congress was bringing the progressive and the conservative feminists from different backgrounds together to achieve a general consensus on gender issues and specifically on the role of women in Islam.

Next Step to advance in 2017

Continue the efforts and activities and achieve partnerships with other organizations.

If you had one message for the annual report on what is most needed to advance the transformation, what would it be?

AISA's goal is to build "better living together" through gender equality. If the circle represents humanity in its diversity, the centre of the circle is the feminine. We are looking for partners to join our initiatives.

Commitment 4 (117004)

AISA International NGO has taken the initiative with the Mediterranean Foundation for Sustainable Development in Algeria and MED 21 program in France to create the EMIR ABD EL KADER Award for the promotion of living together and peaceful coexistence around the world.

Core responsibility: 1

Transformation 1D: Develop Solutions with and for people

Commit to addressing root causes of conflict and working to reduce fragility by investing in the development of inclusive and peaceful societies.

Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments?

Interfaith dialogue is a first step in preventing conflicts and developing inclusive and peaceful societies. For over a century the Alāwi Sufi Order has worked for reconciliation, dialogue and universal fraternity among the members of the human family. UNESCO recognized the Order during its 37th General Conference held in November 2013 as "a school for religious tolerance and conviviality.

In these times of crises and suffering on a global scale, humanity has need of models that inspire the values of peace and solidarity. The Emir Abd el-Kader was a convinced humanist who believed in unbounded solidarity between fellow human beings, without any distinction. During the riots of Damascus (1860) he saved thousands of Christians who were threatened by the vengeance of a manipulated crowd. His legacy of openness and tolerance, fraternity and solidarity deserves to be continued and constantly renewed as part of an award that bears his name. He recommended that Man "consider the soul of his fellows and himself as coming from the same origin [...] God is the God of all; so we love it all." (C.f. Kitab al-MaWaKif "The Halts").

Achievements at a glance

In addition to the creation of an International Day for Peace and Living Together, we would like to promote figures and personalities who have contributed to the promotion of a culture of peace and living together. For this reason, AISA NGO has taken the initiative with the Mediterranean Foundation for Sustainable Development in Algeria and the MED 21 program in France to create the EMIR ABD EL KADER (EAK) award for the Promotion of Living Together and Peaceful Coexistence around the Mediterranean and in the World.

The EAK Award ceremony was held on September 21, 2016 at the headquarters of the Mediterranean Foundation for Sustainable Development "Djanatu-al-Arif" in Mostaganem,

Algeria and was attended by nearly 3,500 participants, coming from all regions of Algeria and abroad. The award was given to three personalities: Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, former Algerian Foreign Minister and former Deputy Secretary General of the Arab States League and the UN, Mr. Federico Mayor, former Spanish Minister and Director General of UNESCO, and finally Mr. Raymond Chrétien, former Ambassador of Canada and President of the International Observatory of Mayors on Living Together in Montreal, Canada. The profiles of the laureates perfectly illustrate the level that the organizers wished to have for this award, in line with the exceptional figure of the Emir Abd el-Kader. More information is available on the attached report.

How is your organization assessing progress?

We established an executive committee to manage the whole initiative and mobilize national commissions and partners in different countries. The objective is to hold the award ceremony every year.

Challenges faced in implementation

The 2016 award ceremony was to take place in Algiers when only 250 participants were expected to attend. However, due to numerous requests from officials and delegations to attend the event, it was moved to a different location with a larger capacity. The team had to manage the organization of the event and accommodation as well as the security of the foreign participants within a very short delay and with scarce resources. The organizing committee is seeking sponsors for the next event.

Next Step in 2017

Due to limited resources, and considering the importance of this event and the participation level it is not possible for the team to organize a 2017 edition. The next ceremony for this award will be held in September 2018 in Algeria and we are seeking sponsors for this event. In the mean time, the executive committee is compiling a list of suitable candidates for this Prize including a Nobel Prize laureate. The Government of Indonesia is interested to partner with AISA International NGO.

If you had one message for the annual report on what is most needed to advance the transformation, what would it be?

We would like to hold the event in different countries and are looking for sponsors and partners. We hope to hold the 2019 edition at the UN Office in Geneva if possible.

AISA NGO invites the Secretary General of the UN, the representatives of member states and non-governmental organizations and civil society to help promote and register the Emir Abd-el-Kader Award on the official global calendar.