



Welcome

Welcome to the ERI February Newsletter.

In Geneva, work in the past month has continued to focus on the finalising of the annual audit and report together with the preparation of reports to various funders on activities carried out in 2016, as well as in the preparation of funding submissions for 2018.

Brian made a presentation on the work of ERI at the conference of lead schools of Edmund Rice Education Beyond Borders held at Marino, Dublin in January.

ERI was also represented at regular meetings of the International Catholic Centre in Geneva, at two side events on children's rights hosted by Child Rights Connect, and at a consultation organised by the Australian Permanent Mission as part of its campaign for election to membership of the Human Rights Council.

News from ERI

February Newsletter

Committee on the Rights of the Child Issues General Comment on the Rights of Adolescents

The right of adolescents to be heard and participate. A group of young activists from the 'Nine is Mine' campaign pictured at their recent meeting with the Bulgarian Ambassador to India in New Delhi. The meeting was to lobby in regard to their submission for the upcoming

The ERI team is also awaiting the arrival of new member Constantine D'Abreu who is expected early in March, and Johnathan Haynes from Australia who will commence as a volunteer intern later this month.

In New York Kevin Cawley continues his involvement with several NGO committees. Two Iona College students Bianca Cardona and Elsuída Brunga have also commenced as interns with ERI in New York.

The ERI Team

In Geneva: Brian Bond cfc and Kevin Mullan cfc.

In New York: Kevin Cawley cfc

Coming Up at the UN

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

India (May 2017)

Philippines (May 2017)

South Africa (May 2017)

United Kingdom (May 2017)

Argentina (Nov 2017, submission due March 2017)

Ghana (Nov 2017, submission due March 2017)

Peru (Nov 2017, submission due March 2017)

Zambia (Nov 2017, submission due March 2017)

Canada (May 2018, submission due Sep 2017)

In addition, over the next year several countries are due to report to committees overseeing the various UN Conventions (Treaty Bodies).

These include:-

[Human Rights](#)

There are 1.2 billion adolescents (between 10 and 18 yrs of age) in the world today, representing 18% of the world's population. The vast majority (88%) live in developing countries. (UNICEF figures). Adolescence is a life stage characterised by growing opportunities, capacities, aspirations, energy and creativity, but also significant vulnerability.

Recognising that approaches adopted to ensure the realisation of the rights of adolescents differ significantly from those adopted for younger children, the Committee on the Rights of the child recently issued a 'general comment' focussing on the rights of adolescents.

'General comments' or 'general recommendations' are made by a UN Treaty Body (one of the groups of independent experts appointed to monitor implementation of each of the nine core UN human rights treaties) to provide an interpretation of the provisions of the particular human rights treaty for which it has responsibility. General comments seek to clarify the reporting duties of States parties with respect to provisions of the treaty, suggest approaches to implementing treaty provisions and raise awareness around issues affecting those whose rights are the subject of the treaty.

The comment emphasises the importance of valuing adolescence and viewing it as a positive developmental stage of childhood, and urges a commitment to *'building optimum environments to guarantee the rights of adolescents and support the development of their physical, psychological, spiritual, social, emotional, cognitive, cultural and economic capacities.'*

It repeated the principle that *'parental direction and guidance be provided in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child'*, the principles of non-discrimination and the 'best interests of the child' in all decisions about children (which also applies to adolescents) and the right of adolescents to be heard and participate.

The human rights situations of particular groups of vulnerable adolescents were singled out for particular attention, for example the comment pointed out that *'traditional concepts of masculinity and gender norms linked to violence and dominance can compromise boys'*

Committee (monitoring civil and political rights CCPR)

- Australia (Oct 2017, Geneva)

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)

- Australia (May 2017)
- Uruguay (May 2017)
- Argentina (Oct 2017)

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)

- Kenya (April 2017, Geneva)
- New Zealand (July 2017, Geneva)
- Canada (July 2017, Geneva)
- Australia (Nov 2017, Geneva)

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

- Ireland (Feb 2017, Geneva)
- Kenya (Mar & Oct 2017, Geneva)
- New Zealand (Feb 2018, Geneva)

Committee Against Torture (CAT)

- Argentina (April 2017, Geneva)
- New Zealand (April 2017, Geneva)
- Ireland (July 2017, Geneva)
- Timor Leste (Nov 2017, Geneva)

Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

- USA (May 2017, Geneva, OPSC, OPAC only)

Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

- United Kingdom (Mar & Aug 2017, Geneva)
 - Canada (Mar 2017, Geneva)
 - Australia (Aug 2017, Geneva)
 - Argentina (Aug 2017, Geneva)
- Future sessions: India, Philippines, South Africa.

Committee on the International Convention for the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW)

- Nigeria (April 2017, Geneva)

Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED)

rights’.

The range of rights commented upon included birth registration, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, the right to privacy and the right to information, among others. It urged protection from all forms of violence, support for families and caregivers, and the provision of basic health and welfare. The right to education was also highlighted with the positive impact of secondary education being mentioned in particular. The comment called for education to be ‘*child-centred, child-friendly and empowering*’ and emphasised the importance of a collaborative and participatory pedagogy. It also urged curricula for secondary education to be ‘*designed to equip adolescents for active participation, develop respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, promote civic engagement and prepare adolescents to lead responsible lives in a free society*’.

More controversially, especially for Catholics, it also urged that ‘*girls have access to safe abortion and post-abortion services*’.

A copy of the full text of the general comment can be downloaded from the [website of the Committee on the Rights of the Child](#).

No Easy Task: Quantifying Global Financial Corruption

It is estimated that currently 1% of the world's population control 50% of the world's wealth. What is worse is that global financial inequality is increasing. (see [Credit Suisse 2016 report](#)) Whilst the causes of this increasing inequality are complex, it is clear that corruption, tax evasion and the balance of political power play a significant role.

Estimating just how much money is lost through corruption,

- Peru (Sep 2018)

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.

Only dates for reviews still to take place are shown. If only one date is listed it probably means that earlier stages in the review process have already been completed.

Caritas Campaign

Edmund Rice International is again urging support for the [Caritas letter-writing campaign](#) on behalf of children with HIV/AIDS.

Resource materials have been distributed to Edmund Rice Schools around the world to enable them to participate in the campaign. If the materials have not reached your school please [contact us](#) and they will be emailed to you.

Our hope is that schools who

tax evasion, money laundering, and tax avoidance can be a difficult task due to the inherent secrecy associated with such practices. The [Financial Transparency Coalition](#) (FTC), a global network of civil society, governments, and experts, has recently released a report that attempts to quantify illicit financial flows.

Some of the findings from the report are:-

- US\$7.8 trillion (a trillion = one thousand billion or one million million) has been lost by developing nations due to illicit financial flows in the decade 2004 - 2013.
- as a percentage of GDP, African countries are suffering the most with US\$50 billion lost every year
- an estimated US\$7.6 trillion is held offshore in tax havens in 2015, 80% of which was undeclared and resulting in a tax loss of US\$190 billion
- one estimate of corporate tax avoidance and profit shifting by multi-national companies results in an annual loss of US\$100 billion to developing countries

Estimates quoted above vary according to different researchers, however it is clear that illicit financial flows are a major problem, low-income countries suffer disproportionately and financial transparency is a key to addressing the problem.

The full report can be viewed on the website of the [Financial Transparency Coalition](#).

Stand Up For Someone's Rights Today

Many of us are fearful about the way the world is heading. Extremist movements subject people to horrific violence. Conflicts and deprivation are forcing families from their homes. Climate change darkens our horizons – and everywhere, it seems, anxieties are deepening. Humane

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.

The letter writing campaign is now focused on Health Ministries of those countries with a significant HIV/AIDS problem rather than pharmaceutical companies, due to the current lack of clarity regarding status of the patents for anti-retroviral medication.

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, 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.

'Acting Justly' Course

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

From the International

values are under attack, and we feel overwhelmed – unsure what to do or where to turn.

Messages of intolerance and hatred prey on our fears. They are spread by people who seek power, deploying twisted logic and false promises, and fabricating outright lies. Their narratives speak to selfishness, separatism – a distorting, narrow view of the world. Little by little, this toxic tide of hatred is rising around us, and the deep and vital principles that safeguard peaceful societies risk being swept away.

["Stand up for someone's rights today"](#) is a new global campaign initiated by the OHCHR - United Nations Office of The High Commissioner for Human Rights. It aims to encourage, amplify and support what people do in their everyday lives to defend human rights. It promotes taking action for greater freedom, stronger respect and more compassion.

The campaign is based on the belief that each of us can do something to defend the human rights of others. Together, our individual actions can add up to a global movement and we can make a difference. If you would like to stand up and are not sure what to do, a few ideas can be found [here](#).

Earth Hour 2017 - Need to Address Climate Change Increasingly Urgent

ERI is again encouraging participation in [Earth Hour](#) on March 25th at 8:30pm local time. Earth Hour is a movement to encourage people worldwide to switch off their lights for an hour each year to demonstrate their commitment to fighting climate change.

The [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change was adopted at

Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work which ensure, in particular:

(a) Remuneration which provides all workers, as a minimum, with:

(i) Fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work;

(ii) A decent living for themselves and their families in accordance with the provisions of the present Covenant;

(b) Safe and healthy working conditions;

(c) Equal opportunity for everyone to be promoted in his employment to an appropriate higher level, subject to no considerations other than those of seniority and competence;

(d) Rest, leisure and reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay, as well as remuneration for public holidays

ICESCR, Article 7

The International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, which includes the right to education, has been ratified by 165

COP21 a little over a year ago. It is essentially a plan to save our planet from the worst impacts of climate change and build a sustainable future for humanity. Last year (2016) was officially declared [the hottest year on record](#) (the third year in succession this has happened) underlining the seriousness and urgency of the need to address [climate change](#).

Some grounds for optimism exist that the global community may be able to meet the challenge. The cost of renewable energy generation continues to fall with [solar energy now costing less than fossil fuels](#), and the movement to [divest from fossil fuels](#) continues to gain momentum.

Major concerns remain however, particularly in regard to the intention of states to honour the commitments made. President Trump's appointment of climate-change deniers to key environmental posts and the apparent move of his administration to [suppress the dissemination of scientific information](#) about climate change and the Australian government's plan to spend billions of dollars to [enable the establishment of a new coal mine](#) (which banks have refused to finance after recognising that the world is moving away from fossil fuels) are just two examples.

Click [here](#) to learn how to participate in Earth Hour

Learn About Our Work

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

Support Our Work

Thanks to [Misean Cara, Edmund Rice](#)

UN member states, including all countries where the Edmund Rice network has a presence, except for the following:-

The USA has signed but not ratified the convention. Saint Lucia and South Sudan have neither signed nor ratified the Convention.

(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.)

Development, and [Trocaire](#) together with our other donors for their ongoing support of the work of ERI

Click on the banner below to make a donation to ERI

Some Other Links

Join up, remember to click the 'like' button to show your support for ERI, tell your friends about ERI and contribute to the discussion board.

Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America [JPIC](#) website

The website of the world-wide [Edmund Rice Network](#)

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