



Report on 66th UN DPI/ NGO Conference

Report on our experience of participating in the 66th UN DPI/NGO conference

The 66th United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI)/Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Conference was held in the Hwabaek International Convention Center, the City of Gyeongju, Republic of Korea from 30 May to 1 June 2016. World CLC had suggested CLC Korea to join the conference on behalf of the world community and share the experience with the CLC UN working group. To this, CLC Korea happily discerned to send its members including full-time workers for CLC HOPE School, ExCo members and members in charge of formation apostolate considering the theme of the conference. We shared the result of discernment with the world community and asked for help regarding registration process. World CLC welcomed the decision, encouraging us and collaborating with us.

To begin with, CLC Korea organized the UN conference preparation committee. In the first meeting, it clarified our objectives for participation and decided to send 14 members. (We got advice that it was helpful to clarify the objectives and how to achieve the goals from the start at the AP Team's skype meeting from a member of CLC Australia who had participated in the 64th UN DPI/NGO conference.)

Objectives of CLC Korea's Participation in the UN NGO Conference

- 1) To have an opportunity to look at our social apostolic activities in a new and creative way and to have a global perspective on the social apostolate of CLC Korea
- 2) To share our experiences with the world community through the CLC UN Working Group
- 3) To broaden our views and knowledge through participating in international conference at the UN level and reflect on our experiences together

Then the participants had a preparation meeting. The meeting provided us with an opportunity to understand the conference such as its themes and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Also, we confirmed our goals and arranged our schedules. After the three day conference, we had an evaluation session, where we shared what we had seen and felt, what new vision and inspiration we could have about our apostolate and what we wanted to share with members in CLC Korea and the world community.

The conference was held under the theme, 'Education for Global Citizenship: Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals Together.' The conference program includes opening and closing plenary sessions, 5 roundtables including special session and 46 workshops, one of which CLC Korea co-sponsored. The conference focused on Sustainable Development Goal number 4, "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education" adopted by UN Member States in September 2015. It discussed various strategies, specialties, and ways of civil society to use resources to provide lifelong education opportunities for all, which ensure inclusive, safe, and equitable quality education.

The first roundtable of which the theme was the right to accessible, safe, and inclusive learning spaces, was based on the motto that education "must leave no one behind" and be accessible to all throughout life through quality learning opportunities. However, too many of the world's students and potential learners are pushed away from educational and training opportunities for various reasons such as gender, ethnicity, race, language, region or religion. Currently, about 775 million adults, a disproportionate number of them women, lack minimum literacy skills.



The second roundtable of which the theme was that STEAM - Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math - should power the SDGs, starting with the point that providing more education opportunities related to STEAM has become an important element for a nation's economic development. It focused on the fact that STEAM, as an interdisciplinary learning model, offers new opportunities for creating sustainable models of production and consumption, public health, urban design and infrastructure, water distribution, from food to energy production.

The third roundtable of which the theme was children and youth, emphasized that educating children and the youth is the most important as to achieving 17 SDGs. It underscored the necessity of achieving quality education through innovative ways.

The fourth roundtable of which the theme was global citizens as stewards of the planet: energy, environment and climate change, provided a moment to evaluate how much we could strengthen human capacity through formal and informal education as well as grass-root advocacy activities as we live in an era of climate change, global pollution, depletion of natural resources and threat to biodiversity. It discussed the point why cultivating empathy and a scientific appreciation for the natural world, environmental justice, and responsibility towards future generations must be at the core of the education for global citizenship.



There were four rounds of workshops whose themes were really diverse, including human rights education, peace education, education for girl students, sustainable development in Asia and climate change, from reducing disasters to sustainable development. These workshops were carried out by various institutes, universities, businesses and NGOs. CLC Korea co-sponsored one of the twelve workshops for Day 1 with the topic of "See the Unseen: The Inclusion of Marginalized Groups" with

four other NGOs. We introduced CLC HOPE School.

Since the first commitment, CLC Korea has been with the poor, operating centers for poor children and juveniles. Reflecting on our experiences, we focused on the necessity of poor children's building up the capacity to stand up by themselves to cut the vicious cycle of poverty. We established CLC HOPE school in 2012 and have helped poor juveniles by providing quality education.

From this experience, we've learned many things. First, many poor juveniles show similar characteristics like lack of enthusiasm and low self-esteem, and are inexperienced in interpersonal relationships. In order to overcome this, we need to provide emotional support. Second, as teenagers, they show dramatic changes physically and mentally so we need to have a long-term approach. Third, we need to provide realistic support in helping them find their future career, which can really lead them to a self-reliant life as a responsible member of society.



Keeping them in mind, CLC HOPE School introduced the homeroom teacher system so that we could provide both individualized and holistic supports. In addition, we set up a support corps of experts, a corps of teachers and a corps of mentors, which work together to provide professional support. With career-oriented education, we can help young adults to choose their future course.

We were grateful to share the vision and characteristics of CLC HOPE School in the workshop even within a limited time. It became a chance for us to have a new perspective on our apostolic activities and the mission we had shared with the world up to now. We had a clear difference from the other NGOs in the workshop, which chose specific groups like the juveniles in crisis, the girls in prostitute, and the blind as their targets. We, on the other hand, discerned "poor children and juveniles". It might seem to be too general but we are different in that our approach is to give individualized and holistic support with a long-term approach and to provide intensive support for career preparation in line with educational support. Such characteristics of CLC HOPE School have been developed through continuous reflections on our experiences. We are confident that CLC will continue to look at the signs of the time and go to the place where God sends us. However, although CLC HOPE School is different from other institutes in its approaches and ways to tackle the problem, we didn't clearly present the points well so we also learned the necessity of presenting our message more effectively

While taking part in the conference, CLC Korea could see the following things.

1) We could see the reality with specific examples that many students are denied educational and training opportunities for various reasons like gender, race, ethnicity, language, location, and religion and the gap among regions is also huge. However, we could also feel the dearest wish of God who works through people as we see so many people and organizations from diverse countries got together, discussing and talking about our common problems and finding solutions.

CLC's common mission and apostolic activities are carried out in line with the common vision and activities of humanity and we could realize the role of the UN as a platform to spread the network of solidarity. We

could also learn how important it is for grassroots to raise their voices no matter how small or little their activities and the place for working seem. CLC Korea works with just a small number of poor juveniles but we need to look at our activities from a global perspective and view considering our vision, way of life and intention to achieve the goals. It was a great achievement to learn that we need to give global citizenship education to our students so that they can look at the problems of the world and have a future-oriented viewpoint.

2) In addition, the participants could directly experience the identity of CLC as an NGO. We could see that what CLC, reforming itself from Sodalities after the second Vatican Council, envisioned was not different from growing up to be a global citizen, which was dealt with as a theme of this conference. It reminds of us that CLC's mission is not to carry out apostolic activities itself but to lead at the frontiers to create a new stream to preserve the Earth, our common home and live with others. We learned that CLC Korea's common apostolic activities should be able to have more meaningful influences on Korean society and the church.

To that end, it is vital to have wisdom language with which we can approach the world in general. When we share with the world in a realistic attitude and ways, which are universal but have a gospel value, we can go into the world and collaborate with others with good will. We agreed that CLC Korea is called to form Ignatians who communicate and collaborate in wisdom language. "Fr. Arrupe SJ and others have commented that CLC is well placed to help carry the Church into the world (Project 164)". We deeply feel that it will be materialized.



3) On the other hand, we are thinking of how to amplify our capacity and wisdom. UN DPI/NGO conference is organized in an effort to achieve SDGs together with the public sector, businesses and NGOs centering on the UN. However, we had the impression that NGOs were not that active in creating network by themselves. As it is important to collaborate and create solidarity with other NGOs, our identity as one global apostolic body is very precious.

Up to now, the relationship between World CLC and the UN was not apparent to us. However, we now believe that it is important for World CLC to influence the structure of the world through the UN. We believe that CLC National Communities implementing the same apostolate should share their experiences and gather suggestions so that CLC is able to become actively influential. We could sense "What a moment of grace to be at the frontiers in the church and the wider society to have an impact as CLC" (project 164) through the conference. To that end, we think it is necessary for World CLC to connect National Communities by the same apostolate and vitalize networking.

4) We feel that CLC Korea is called to play a pivotal role in networking. In Korea, it is not easy for NGOs to concentrate on networking. We have operated CLC HOPE School for poor juveniles' self-reliance but have experienced limitations regarding networking with other similar organizations as they don't have additional capacity for networking and enough understanding or vision for solidarity. In this regard, CLC Korea should take the lead in creating solidarity. In addition, we need to make the curriculum of CLC HOPE School clear so that we can share our contents and experiences of doing common apostolate with other organizations in the field and other CLC National Communities.

5) Lastly, we'd like to share about the youth. There were many youth participating in the UN conference who actively expressed their opinions and enjoyed themselves freely during breaks by dancing and singing together. We think their energy comes from their "aspiration to make their ideals come true." We are hoping that CLC as a world apostolic body is attractive to the youth by showing them the ideals they aspire can be realized and inspiring them to materialize their vision.

CLC Korea's experiences in common apostolate are well structured within the community. Through them, we strengthen our identity as CLC, deepen the pleasure to live as a community and confess that the Holy Spirit is with us. By participating in the UN conference, we could widen our vision, which is a very important income. Now, it is our task to materialize the wider vision. We feel there's a long way ahead of us but we also trust the Holy Spirit will be with us in that journey. We expect the world community to continuously inspire and support us. We fully appreciate World CLC for this opportunity.

