



# World News

Autumn 2015

The 31st CIF International Conference  
in Sigtuna, Sweden  
August 3-7, 2015



CIF Sweden thanks all participants  
in the 31st CIF International Conference in Sigtuna  
for contributing and making the conference  
so interesting and successful!

**The Council of International Fellowship Magazine**

# A Message from the Editor...

## Dear CIF colleagues and friends,

Today, there are so many more ways to communicate than ever before. In the age of video conferences and instant messages, we can work together from almost anywhere and always be in touch. We can share our CIF work on Facebook, on Twitter and on our CIF websites. But, there will always be a tremendously important role for the magazine that you are now holding in your hands – or reading on an electronic device.

The CIF International World News Magazine is one of the oldest continuously published magazines in our small world, with an unbroken publication history dating back to its first issue many years ago, featuring Henry Ollendorff as a contributor, a man of vision, a humanitarian, a professional and a true leader. Back then, the magazine was printed in black and white with only a few pages. The type was small with very little content; the pictures were few and articles rare.

Now you can read the World News on your iPad, on your phone, your computer, or tablet, and it goes out to so many countries internationally. Every issue brings us a snapshot of the best of CIF's world: it engages, entertains and inspires!!!

In the age of constant communication, with so many ways to find new information, do we still need a CIF World News Magazine? Because the magazine is now, as it has always been – the fun and excitement of the CIF days and moments. It showcases the good work and successes of the CIF members all around the world, and it puts a spotlight on important issues affecting us all. The World News Magazine isn't just enjoyable for CIF members – it's a great way to boost CIF's public image, and show the world the work that CIF members do. I am aware of the concerns of some of CIF members and their dilemma in spending an x amount of money for the publication and printing of this magazine, and the debate – if this money could be best spend for a "more worthy" cause for our human fellows who suffer, who die from hunger or health issues. In order to feel with these members and acknowledge their concerns I suggest the following – minimize our magazine expenses by decreasing the number of issues per year to two annually, thus keeping this very strong public image tool and at the same time save some money for another CIF worthy cause.

So, when you're finished reading this issue, don't throw it away. Pass it along to another friend. Ask yourself who might be particularly interested in this month's articles. Give the issue to a friend, a co-worker or a colleague. Share it with someone you've invited to a CIF meeting or any other meeting. Visit the CIF website to share stories on social media or send links through email. Use it to Light up CIF – just as CIF members have been doing for more than 60 years.

I want to close this introductory message with a true example of "having friends come together from faraway places is a wonderful thing and a gift of humanity." A cousin of mine with his wife had planned a trip to India. They happened to be talking to me about this while I had in my hand a copy of the WN. I gave it to him to read about us and look at it while I was explaining about CIF, and how I had friends all over the world. I went on saying that I had been in India too and that I had some good friends over there. He heard me and quite pathetic he said: "Oh yes, fine." The next day I wrote to Noella and Zarin (our India colleagues). In less than 12 hours they both responded back to me, and much more! They asked me to give their emails for my cousin to contact them. That was it. I told him to contact my friends. He was very reluctant and could not see how they could help him, and how I could have friends in India!!! To cut a long story short. They went to India; they found true friends there with Noella and her family and came back with the best memories ever. I forgot to mention that my cousin is an amateur photographer. You can imagine his amazement with what he found in India. But mostly the hospitality, the friendship and the exchanges they had with Noella.

Coming back, they are already planning another trip back to India next summer. At an evening gathering, we had to see the photos he made from India and to eat Indian food. He shared with 10 other friends their experience in India and the hospitality of their new friends. This reflection of excitement coming from the diverse blend of cultures with the family of CIF is a true gift for our organization and something that we should cherish and protect with our lives.

Our annual meetings and every other year conferences are the best way to experience the true internationality of CIF. Conferences are a lovely place to bring your families and friends to share with you these special moments of friendship. Every time I return from one of these events I am inspired to do more, give more and make new friends all over the universe.

As Ron D. Burton (president of Rotary International) said: "I am firmly convinced that the woodpile is just a little higher because of your efforts. It is my hope that each one of you will continue to Engage CIF, Change Lives."



by Maria Christopoulou,  
Vice President CIF International,  
Editor World News



## Letter from CIF International's President

Mireille Boucher,  
President CIF International



It is with great pleasure that we met at the August 2015 conference in Sweden and again I thank the team of CIF Sweden for organizing it in less than two years: great success! And more, you ordered the sun! The setting was great.

Every two years we meet for moments of work, but it is also a highlight of meetings. This year the theme was particularly sensitive and topical as it concerned human rights. The speakers shared their knowledge and research that they conduct in this area. All the lectures were of high quality.

And the closing evening – it was with a very strong emotion with the presence of a great lady who engages in many activities to defend human rights: **Barbara Hendriks** in person! Inger, I want to especially thank you for this beautiful gift to CIF International. What an honor for us!

How will this period not be affected as thousands of people are fleeing war to countries where they hope to find a little serenity and rebuild? Do not forget all those who, whatever their age, gender, color, creed or belief in various areas of the world have their rights violated.

We were pleased to welcome new Branches: CIF Taiwan, CIF Spain, CIF Morocco and also new contact persons. The CIF is growing and should continue to grow.

Again elected as president for two years, I want to share with you

the pleasure I have to continue work with **Gabi, Rabia, David, Michael. Maria Christopoulou** had the maximum time of eight years on the Executive Committee (EC). She stops and we thank her for all the work she has conducted.

Welcome to Merja from Finland as our new member at large. We will continue to work for you, for CIF International. Our next EC meeting will be held in Germany early November.

I am very pleased to lead and work with this great team. Together we will continue to grow CIF with you. As 2015 PEPs (Professional Exchange

Program) end and 2016 PEPs are on the way, welcome to all our future participants. New participants will continue with us to grow CIF. Our programs allow you to create links with new countries and that is what strengthens our association. The contacts in new countries are an asset.

Also we continue to work on the Peace Projects and anything that can help to develop CIF. I wish you a good end of the year 2015 and look forward to seeing you at the next Board of Directors meeting – 2016 in the Netherlands and of course for all of you in 2017 in Greece.

**Amities with the French touch.**

**Mireille Boucher**

**CIF International President**

## New Berlin CIF Program Enriches Social Work Professional Exchange

**It was an impulse to develop the program here in Berlin more and more.**

Our second Berlin CIF professional exchange program started on May 31st 2015 and lasted for two weeks. Three social workers from Spain and France and one psychologist from Turkey took part in the program. For this article we describe some events to give you an impression of the program in Berlin.

On the first day we ran a preparation seminar where we led the participants through the German social system. Afterwards all participants, hosts and coordinators came together to get to

know each other.

Two weeks with a packed and gripping program followed. It was time to get to know especially the Berlin child and youth welfare system in detail, but also for discovering Berlin and its landmarks and culture.

On one afternoon during the

### GERMANY

*By CIF Berlin members:  
Gisa Rüdiger-Rathmachers  
Ines Scholz  
Astrid Sammet  
Anja Müller*



first week, the participants presented their own fields of work in a youth café called "Maggie" that is run by Gangway e.V., an association for street social work in Berlin. After the presentations we had a vivid discussion about the practice of social work in different countries.

During the two weeks of the program the participants got introduced to the governmental child and youth services. The youth welfare and youth service office is the custodian of child welfare and has to clear up the requirements of child, youth and family welfare. According to the Child and Youth Services Act (KJHG) families in need can get different support like counselling services, child guidance, care for a group or person, statutory socio-educational provision for children with problems, day care or residential care and many more. These services are provided by nongovernmental organisations and take place in- or outside the family.

The youth office cooperates also with other services as, e.g. the office for family guidance, center for mental health for children and youth, educational psychology and medical centers, such as hospitals for psychiatric diseases of young people. There the families get counselling, diagnosis and a wide variety of support recommended to the families. The participants also learned about the activity of the "child protection team" and the procedure in Berlin which will start after the team receives note of child welfare danger.

Also, our guests got insight into the action which will occur in cases of emergency or crises at schools. This systematic action is established at the Berlin emergency file. The schoolpsychologist, who is in charge for cases of violence and crises at the Berlin district Reinickendorf, supports schools in this region in establishing "crisis teams."

As a nongovernmental agency the participants visited DER STEG gGmbH. This agency specializes in the support for families, children and youth where one of the parents is mentally ill. The participants were very impressed about the fact, that in Berlin we first of all support the family to change their situation, so that their children are safe.

A very special visit took place at the Pro Familia Counselling Center in Fürstenwalde, which is a small town near Berlin. A psychologist and two social workers staff this counselling center. It is located in a huge medical center with many specialised



divisions which the group visited. Afterwards during lunch, the employees described their daily business with the main focus on pregnancy and pregnancy conflict counselling, prevention advice and family planning, couple and sexual counselling and sex education. The participants were very interested, especially in two things: the legal basis for the termination of pregnancy (abortion) and the counselling in cases of abuse and domestic violence.

A highlight of this trip was the visit to a house for treatment



of pregnant women, unique in Germany, located in Bad Saarow nearby Fürstenwalde. A nurse guided the group through the building and spoke about the history and the tasks in the care for the pregnant women.

After refreshments in a café and a little shopping tour in downtown Fürstenwalde (?) an interesting and nice day was over.

After this strenuous first week all participants had fun during a weekend trip to the Baltic Sea. Heidi, who is also a CIF member, guided the group very professionally through the cities of Rostock and Warnemünde. The fresh sea breeze was a nice relief and in the evening we drove exhausted but happy back to Berlin.

The visit to the formerly the Kurt-Löwenstein School, which is a secondary school located in the northern part of Berlin-Neukölln, was another interesting part of the program. The surrounding area is characterised by poor educational standards and unemployment with 93 percent of students coming from migrant backgrounds. Social work has been offered to the pupils at the school since 2003 by Paul A. Kleinert. The school management makes up part of the advisory council for youth social work in Berlin schools. Work with potential dropouts is a central part of the social work at the Röntgen School which also has a strong ethos of parental involvement and community work. Thus, we were given a very detailed explanation by Paul A. Kleinert and Songül Aslan. The CIF group was especially impressed by the very well organized parents' café, which includes the parents into their educational system within the school. It especially represents the holistic approach of the social workers and showed us the socially integrating impact that overcomes ethnic and religious divisions.

Afterwards we met the EU commissioner of the Berlin district Treptow-Köpenick and visited a refugee camp in the southeast of Berlin, which was made possible by the director, Peter Hermans. At the so called "Temporary Accommodation Allende 2" the group got in contact with volunteers and got a short insight in the reality of the refugee life in Berlin.

On the last day, we evaluated the past two weeks together with the participants, and during the following farewell reception Deniz, Annie, Esther and Erika received their certificates. Relaxed and relieved, but also with a hint of wistfulness, we celebrated the goodbye together with our guests.

**In conclusion we have to state, that two weeks was very short for this challenging program. That's why we were not able to meet all expectations of our participants. But we all agree that it is worthwhile to continue the exchange of professionals, especially in Berlin. Nowadays social work is standing in front of new challenges and that's why we need this international dialogue even more.**

# Conference Results in Hope to Develop Madagascar Branch

I participated at the French Exchange Program in 1999. It's my first time to join a CIF International Conference. My experience during the Conference was to have many contacts, exchanges and discussions from **other CIF members over the world to have good relationship and cooperation.** The different lectures increased my knowledge and skills and developed my point of view for the future as personal, family and professional. And, the experience of how to manage an International Conference.

My challenge is to have more Malagasy Social Workers to participate in CIF Exchange Programs and after that to establish a National Branch in Madagascar. This is why we need support from developed branches to help us to send Malagasy to join Exchange Programs.

My achievement is my participation at the CIF International Conference. Because it is a long time that I ask for a grant, it's a memorable moment for me to attend this Conference. And I give thanks to all who supported me for the

Conference in Sweden and thanks to everyone who make possible my trip. And a special thanks for the host family who received me during my travel in Europe: Margit Hasselblad (Sweden), Nadine Rogue and Mireille Boucher (France).

My highlight was to meet two persons (Finland and Morocco) of my same program in France from 1999, and to meet the EC and the CIF members worldwide during the Conference, It's a wonderful moment.

## MAGADASCAR

By **THEODORIC RAJAONARY,**  
CIF Contact Person  
from Madagascar



# MY FIRST CIF WORLD CONFERENCE

In August, I had the privilege to participate in the Sweden 2015 CIF International Conference: **STRENGTHENING HUMAN RIGHTS IN SOCIAL SERVICES: HOW CAN SOCIAL WORK MAKE DIFFERENCE.**

## ESTONIA

By **Aet Urbas,**  
CIF Estonia

around 970 AD and soon became an important international trading post and Sweden's first town. Sigtuna introduced the first Swedish coins. The area flourished and many foreigners are believed to have settled here, sharing their knowledge, crafts and international network. The

It was my first CIF International Conference. In order to have the possibility to attend the conference, I asked CIF International for a grant. I am very grateful.

There were many interesting plenaries, group discussions, study visits and sightseeing in Sigtuna, market of the nations and election of new CIF executive committee at the conference.

Our stay and conference was organized at the Sigtuna Folkhögskola. Our delicious food was served in the Sigtuna Folkhögskola dining room.

I have very good memories from sightseeing in Sigtuna. Sigtuna is a very lovely small town. Sigtuna was founded



The Market of Nations



General Assembly votes on the new CIF International Statutes



Agency visits

wooden buildings along today's main street were built in the 18th and 19th centuries. And even today, just like in the beginning, the small shops, cafes and restaurants attract visitors from near and far.

And also, we went to various social agencies. I was with the group which visited Forum Disability and ADHD Center – Stockholm. Forum Disability is a part of habilitation services in

the county of Stockholm. It is a disability information center with a library, counseling services and presentations open anyone who is interested. There is also support and knowledge center for children, adolescents and young persons with ADHD. I got lots of very useful information from this center for my job.

The Conference ended with a closing ceremony with good music, food and dance in the big hall of Sigtuna Folkhögskola.

## Conference Gives Energy to Morocco

I have the honor of having a CIF International support grant to participate in the 31st Conference held in Sigtuna in Sweden. This conference gave me a lot of energy because of social meetings I am with participants who have great experience in the social work field. I enjoyed the whole program of the International Conference (good hosts, discussions, exchanges of experiences, visits...).

As I mentioned at the beginning, I had the chance to participate in this conference with aims to present the CIF Morocco Branch, have conference organization experience, present my 20 years of experience as director of the children's center in a precarious situation and share with all CIF participants.

Even if I had a language problem, I found some great volunteers who helped me with the translation; it was a great challenge to communicate our experiences and our good rehabilitation practices, and social reintegration for children and young people in precarious situations.

I can say that I realized my expectations during the 31st International Conference (professional exchange, joy, and reflection on montages educational projects with the various CIF branches).

In the end, I want to thank all members of CIF International for the grant given me to participate in this conference; I also thank CIF Sweden for the high quality of organizing this international event and also thank all participants who were great.

### MOROCCO

By *ELAIDI Mohammed,*  
CIF Morocco

## Conference Inspires Hope for a Better Future

I started my journey with CIF in the year 2012, when I devoted one month to the professional exchange program in Sweden. Since then, I can't imagine my life without my international friends and activities.

I was a participant of 31st CIF Conference in Sweden from 3rd until 7th of August 2015. This was my first big international Conference. In order to attend the Conference I applied for a grant from CIF. Luckily, I got the grant from CIF International and CIF Russia covered my travel expenses. I'm grateful for those people who made it possible for me to attend this event. Everybody in the CIF family is always ready to help. They will help you no matter what, even if you think it is impossible. CIF people help others. It might happen once that CIF family can save your own life – this is when professional field becomes personal. This is when CIF becomes your second family. So that is why CIF to me is much more than social work with clients and exchange of information, this is more about relations, support and acceptance.

The Conference took place at a nice area near Stockholm – Sigtuna. Sigtuna Folkhögskola was a wonderful place to learn, to relax, to interact and to live in. There were a lot of participants from all over the world. Almost two hundred people gathered together to discuss the main topic of the Conference – human rights in social service and **how can**

**social work make a difference.**

Those people, who got grants, shared their rooms with two neighbors. My roommates were girls from Turkey. One of these women was a participant in our Russian exchange program, so that there were many things to remember, talk and laugh about. Moreover, I met people who I have known from the Swedish PEP, and that was another pleasure.

I attended several workshops and lectures, where I had an opportunity to find out interesting information about the way of interacting with different groups of people and about their rights in different countries. Most of the lecturers were either university professors or field practitioners, so that it was held in the highest level.

One day was totally dedicated to study visits. Participants were divided into groups of nine people. Everybody chose the sphere, which was interesting and went out to see how it is applicable on practice, what was told to us in theory during the Conference. I have chosen to attend the center for elderly people as long as I have never been there. That was great – very friendly and happy atmosphere. I started to think about

### RUSSIA

By *Kristina Gubskaya,*  
Secretary, CIF Russia,  
St. Petersburg, Russia.



switching from childcare to elderly care after that visit.

We also had a brief tour around Sigtuna. This town is really pretty and worth my coming back.

The Conference ended with a wonderful farewell party. At this point, everyone already knew each other, talked a lot, shared contacts, and promised to be in touch the next two years. In the late evening, some people danced and had a lot of fun.

The 31st CIF Conference was organized at a good professional level. Around 200 people took part. This Conference was one of the brightest events of my year.

I appreciate the opportunity to participate at the Conference and to represent CIF Russia. My personal regards and gratitude to **Eva Hasselblad** from CIF Sweden who was there for me to overcome the stress and my sickness, cheering me up.

Main idea of the Conference and CIF itself, from my point: we



should help, we should hold the hand of those who are weak, and we should do our best to make people believe in a better future, no matter the gender, age, wealth, religion or political situation in the world.

## Spain Experiences CIF as Challenge, Achievement and a Gift

Nervousness, illusion, worries, data, information...all different kind of thoughts crossed my mind when I was about to board the plane bound to Stockholm, Sweden.

I knew my first CIF International Conference would be a very important and special event to attend. This would be our first staging as new Branch and like an actress, I was feeling a mixture of self-consciousness and excitement at the same time.

But let's rewind to 2011. After our participation in the Exchange Programmes, the only thing we were sure about was the fact that we wanted to create a CIF Branch in Spain. We didn't know how, but we were adamant to achieve it, and with that goal in mind, we began to work in order to reach it. This would be our first **challenge**.

It is been six years since then, and we are very proud of the creation of the National Branch of CIF in Spain. This is the main reason of our attendance to the International Conference in Sweden, we hope the first one of many more. That is why it was so important and special for us. It would be like our birth ceremony where we were going to be officially presented and recognized as a new member of the CIF family – our first **achievement**.

Regarding the issue of the Conference, "**Human rights** in daily practice", I had the opportunity to mull over how I deal with



people when they come to me, and how my actions are directly connected to human rights. The importance to "create room to maneuver" and the need of constantly monitoring ourselves. To reflect on the way the science and the technology affect our lives and what might be the problems of tomorrow. That aging is a gender problem and that to live long is important, but even more than to live long is to live well. The importance of designing individual support with a whole life perspective. The crucial need of being believed and listened to build confidence and trust. To think about the image that oneself projects to others. The importance of knowing in detail the basic instruments concerning human rights: conventions, legal instruments, rules, standards, principles, mechanisms – I could hardly help someone if the human rights are not in my base-work.

Study Visit. I chose MISA, (organization specialized in different disabilities). MISA offers work aimed to programs focusing on people with different disabilities to enable them to get work according to their potential skills. Their services are based on the ideas that everyone can participate in society and working life with the right support. And this motto is the reason why I chose this resource: **EVERYONE CAN PARTICIPATE IN SOCIETY AND WORKING LIFE** is not only a possibility, but most of all a human right.

I want to share the result of the visit after all the information, impressions and opinions exchanged. We had to express in words the most important issue for us or something we wanted to highlight or remark. The result was:

"Attitude toward participants," "support disabled people to get a job," "renewal, new work opportunities," "meet the clients meets



**SPAIN**

Report By  
Mª José Sánchez Tera,  
CIF Spain

more," "believe in the client potential," "cooperation," "interesting to hear about other cultures and methods," "new inputs/strategies," "information about methods."

I want to thank MISA for the information, warm welcoming and the cakes they made especially for us.

I consider that **CIF Conferences**, CIF encounters have the Perfect combination:

- Lectures: to improve our knowledge and understanding,
- Study visits: to establish direct contact to know the way a country works related to different fields,
- CIF member meetings and general assembly: to reflect about the ongoing of the entity, exchange opinions, ideas,
- Group discussion: to reflect, exchange and make the most of the experience,
- Leisure activities and entertainment: very important to get to know each other and enjoy ourselves – dinner, market of nations, sightseeing...

Struggling with a different **language** is something that has always kept me worried due to the fact that it is more difficult to make yourself clear. It is easier using your mother tongue. But do you know what? Apart from our level of English, each of us has been able to understand and communicate with each other without any problem. This highlights the importance of body language, face to face meetings, feelings, closeness...



*"Because there is no love more strong than between two countries"*

But something might have been taken for granted. I don't know if any of you realize how lucky we are to be part of an organization like CIF. Not only because you have the opportunity to thrive and improve professionally by meeting colleagues from other countries which is very important, but also because you have the magic chance to meet people from all over the world. And not any kind of people but VERY NICE AND GOOD-HEARTED PEOPLE.

**This is a gift.**

Thank you very much for making us feel at home.

# Dreams Come True

*I had been looking forward to attending the CIF conference and Board of Directors (BD) meeting to meet CIF members since I participated in the Professional Exchange Program (PEP) of CIF Sweden in 2012 and CIF Switzerland in 2013. It was great I made it this year. This was like a quote mentioned in the book *The Alchemist*: "When you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it."*

## 1. CIF Taiwan's first time to the conference

The wonderful experience I gained from the professional exchange programs motivated me to set up a national branch in our country. I proposed this idea to Taiwanese Association of Social Workers while they invited me back to work with them. What the coincidence was TASW's President, Vice President, an Executive Director (former President) and Chair of Supervisory Board were all CIF alumni. Thus, this project was strongly supported and approved as the annual plan by TASW Assembly meeting. With the effort from us (TASW) and many social workers, CIF Taiwan was created in July, 2014.

Although Sweden was far away from Taiwan and my work load had been very heavy, I still told myself to try it. I was glad two board members of CIF Taiwan: Ying-Hau Huang (Sweden 2014 PEP participant) and Tung-Ru Hsieh, also joined this biannual event. So, we can share our experience together with Taiwanese social workers and encourage more people taking part in CIF activities in the future.

## 2. The Board of Directors (BD) and Assembly meeting

On the first day I arrived at Sigtuna, it was an interesting feeling to meet EC members of CIF International in person, because in the past two years, they assisted me to go through the process of establishing CIF Taiwan via lots of email contacts. This was the first time we talked face to face.

I could have never known how much work the Executive Committee (EC) members had done prior to the BD and Assembly meetings

## TAIWAN

From participant in CIF PEP, to set up new NB, then to attend conference  
**YA-CHUAN HSU**  
CIF Taiwan Vice-President





and the election, if I had not participated. The BD meeting took two days for many topics, for instance, the budget, ethics, and revised statutes. Besides, the EC members paired each new “freshman” with one senior member for helping them with getting into the swing of things. This was so considerate. I’d like to thank them and the president of CIF USA, Ms. Carolyn Sutton, for being my “tutor.”

Another thing impressed me was when the meeting started, some of BD members mentioned since English was not most people’s mother tongue and the different culture and background might make the communication more difficult. This discussion reminded me to listen to others carefully and try to make sure if my understanding was correct. Moreover, many of serious discussions in the BD and Assembly meetings broaden my views, such as the branch barriers to CIF international participation and the change of CIF logo. These processes showed how to speak out opinions bravely and respect other people’s thinking appreciatively. I realized how important the role CIF International plays. A well-developed international organization is the foundation of all professional exchange programs. I will pass on what I learned from the meeting to our members of CIF Taiwan.

### 3. The speeches and the workshop

The first speech “Peacebuilding through dialogue” was in the second evening of BD meeting. It was about empowering people who live in conflict situations to contribute to peaceful conflict transformation on the basis of democracy and human rights by providing a neutral space where people from opposite sides in serious conflicts can meet face to face in honest dialogue. I think this kind of program is also needed in Taiwan. After the speech, there was a surprise while the president of CIF Germany, Ms. Renate Wisbar, and I were taking a walk outside of the folk school, we bumped into the lecturer, Ms. Christiane Seehausen, and had a delightful “dialogue” over one hour on a twilight street. How lucky we were. Besides, I would like to thank the president of Austria, Ms. Judith Lamatsch, to give the seat to my colleague Tung-ru, so he had the chance to attend to the lecture.

Most of the speeches in the conference brought out the core value of social work: human rights. This gave me the opportunities to review the basic professional knowledge and to absorb new information. I could reflect on my practical working experience and rethink; I might have to adjust some of my attitude and actions.

As regard to the workshop, it was a meeting for Exchange Program Coordinators. In the first part of meeting, the lecturer Ms. Elisabeth Fischbacher and Ms. Lisa Purdy talked about the “Principles of Fundraising” and analyzed the finance of PEPs and of national branches. The second part, Ms. Rabia Özbas Durak discussed the problems NBs usually faced while holding PEPs. Because CIF Taiwan will launch our first Exchange Program in October, 2016, this workshop provided a broad overview to us and also stimulated us to consider how to execute our plan step-by-step.

### 4. The study visit

As for the study visit, I chose the nursing home for elderly with dementia. Because many families suffer from this problem of taking care of their parents or grandparents in Taiwan, I thought this was a good choice to visit here. There were many informative lessons in this institute. First of all, when we entered the nursing home, we saw many elderly residents enjoying drinking “wine” (actually it was sparkling apple juice) from the “Happy-Hour Bar” and listening to old songs. The home tried to keep the elders connected with the real world via these regular activities similar with the experience they have had in their younger life.



Secondly, I found many differences between Swedish and Taiwanese nursing homes. I thought these were due to cultural differences. For example, here more had single rooms; shared rooms were more common in Taiwan. Moreover, most of decisions were made by the seniors themselves here even if they had dementia. In my country, family members decide many things for seniors who have this disease. There is no absolute right or wrong. What we can do better for dementia seniors is to have more discussion and consideration under our cultural context.

Third, because most of my career was caring about the development of manpower of social work, I was sensitive to the related issues. I was impressed by the low turnover rate here. Usually the workload in residential care is demanding physically and psychologically. Additionally, the care workers here were from diverse nationalities, ages and genders. There must be something to attract people working here for a long time. I could feel the key points were respect, to satisfy employees' need at work and to lead the team to better results through work-life balance.

#### 5. Group Discussion

There were two sessions of the group discussion. The first session was during the same time with the PEP coordinator's meeting, so I couldn't make it. The second session's second hour was during the same time with the election of EC. Therefore, I only joined the second group discussion for the first hour. Still, I gained something new from the leader and group members. A member from Germany mentioned a special respite care service that an insurance payment provided the service users, usually disadvantaged mothers, to take a vacation. I wish I could have participated in the full group discussions in all sessions so that I could have learned more from different social workers.

#### 6. The market of nations and multicultural immersion

Since this was the first conference for CIF Taiwan, we had no idea what the market of nations was until other participants told us during the conference. We didn't prepare anything to sell before arriving here. Luckily, my colleague Tung-Ru brought a set of magnets with cute appearance of Taiwanese indigenous of different tribes. My colleague Ying-How had some items to donate to the Lottery for the part each national branch had to support. Thanks to our friend Christina, the secretary of CIF Russia, who gave us an idea about writing down the translation name of participants' name with the characters of Taiwan's official language. Surprisingly, the lovely magnets and names with foreign characters were popular. We were very glad to make some contribution to CIF International.

There were so many interesting items sold by national branches. The president of CIF Hellas, Ms. Elisavet Bakagianni, even provided her house which located in a famous vineyard to tourists. The lottery winner could stay there and enjoy the scenic spot. To sum up, the market of nations was an marvelous way for cultural exchange. Besides, the grantees of the conference were also called to have the discussion for preparing the market of nations. I always loved to work with teams and complete tasks together.

Speaking of the multicultural immersion, the location of the conference was meaningful. Not only was the folk school basically all about culture, but also Sigtuna was a historical town. Moreover, all the music and dancing activity were good ways for us to experience this country. The food from the school restaurant was always an interesting topic to talk more about different culture with other participants.

#### 7. Old friends and new friends

It was wonderful to come back to Sweden and meet up with old friends including the participants, the coordinator of my field placement in Swedish PEP, the president and the board member of CIF Switzerland. I appreciated what they have done for me very much. Chatting about the old times we have spent together was so joyful.

On the other hand, the friendship among CIF members touched me so much, especially when I saw many senior CIF members. Maybe I will meet up with CIF friends in conference every other year like them. Besides, the President of CIF Germany told me the story about the participants of CIF in the early years, I thought that was so valuable and shall be recorded as documentary. Ms. Wisbar mentioned she has interviewed the alumni and written down the stories. Then she gave me this fantastic book. I cannot wait to read it after I learn German. On the other hand, it was good to meet Mr. and Mrs. Ollendorff as well. I seemed to see the legacy from the founder of CIF, Dr. Henry B. Ollendorff.

Besides old friends, I was also glad to make new friends. Everyone was friendly. Since I love social work, it was super inspiring to meet so many social workers, listening to their experience, values, ideas and learning from their viewpoints. Hope I can have chances to interact with more CIF members in the future.

Besides, one thing amusing happened to me about meeting a new CIF friend. A guy was arranged to be my roommate because it's hard for foreigners to tell the gender from Taiwanese names written in English. I didn't mind since it was too late to find another room for him. However, I couldn't speak French and my Moroccan friend barely spoke English. After we tried to chat by body language for a while, I took out my phone and asked him to talk to Google Translation. Then Bingo! I could understand what he wanted to express. Both of us could not help laughing out loud. What a "culture incident"!

To sum up, I appreciate CIF Sweden and everyone I met here. In CIF, we are like family even though we come from different places around the world. This is why we three members of CIF Taiwan sang the song "We are Family" as the gift to all of the participants in the conference dinner.

Finally, I would like to thank the President of CIF International, Ms. Mireille Boucher, for suggesting that we speak our own language on the stage before the conference finished. Instead of speaking our official language-Mandarin, I used my mother tongue-Taiwanese, the language which had been oppressed by the rulers in the past. This was really empowering. What I told everyone at the end of conference was: "We will launch our first Program in October, 2016. Taiwan is a beautiful country. Welcome to Taiwan!"



# CIF Community and Sweden Conference Offers Hope for Peace in World

**TURKEY**
*By Emine Koç, CIF Turkey*

I met the CIF community when I joined the Austria /Czech Republic program in 2001. Since this wonderful experience I have been actively contributing to the CIF Turkey program. Currently I am working with great pleasure as board member and CIF coordinator.

When we organized the Ankara Conference in 2001, my daughter was very small, so hardly participated in the Conference. Therefore, the CIF Conference in Sigtuna, Sweden was the first real CIF Conference experience for me.

We participated in the Conference with a big group of CIF friends from Turkey. We had the opportunity to meet old and new friends during the Conference. The Conference was organized in modest conditions with devoted efforts of CIF Sweden members and it worked smoothly except small problems. Presentations were satisfying followed by colourful discussions. Therefore I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the CIF Sweden Conference team members.

Beginning with the pioneering efforts of Henry Ollendorff, today the CIF community contributes to peace in the world. I am very glad to have the opportunity to make a small contribution to these efforts as part of the CIF community. I am honoured to be a member of this international organization. I understand once again that people who visit each other, have conversations, live together, share and learn each other's ideology – can overcome prejudices which related to their cultures, identities, and faiths. I respected again the persistent effort and willpower – contributing to peace in the world for nearly 60 years. I wish for the CIF spirit and philosophy to become widespread across the world – especially in these very days we need peace in my country and in other countries in the Middle East, Eastern Europe and other parts of the world.

I would like to extend my best wishes to all the CIF Community...

## Conference in Sigtuna

*By Davut Karaman, Social Worker, CIF Turkey*

For starters, I thank CIF for the grant. It was my second time in Sweden. I was in the CIF Sweden program last year. I met nice people in Sweden and I forgot my all prejudices about foreigners. We can make peace in the world. I have seen that when I was in Sweden. I have never forgotten my host families in Sweden. They were so hospitable, and I have invited them to Turkey. The conference was great and I have seen my friends again. I think social work can make the difference – we can solve our big problems in the world with social work perspective. We should have to perform social justice on the basis of human rights. Last word, I am happy to be in this organisation, but I think we need some young members for CIF. We need to reach people more now than ever and to tell them the goal of CIF. We need peace in the world. Someone should do that peace which the world needs now. (02.09.2015)

## Now on the Web – CIF International YouTube Channel to Promote PEPs!

Some of you who were in Sweden have already seen the new CIF video clips. I am so happy to now give all of you the link to our CIF International YouTube Channel and the links to the different videos produced so far. (Thanks to **Michael Cronin** for all the work.)

*By Gabi Kronberger, CIF International Treasurer*

Please link them to your branch website, watch them yourself and send the link to interested people, to your members, to former participants, use the videos in your PR work, post it on Facebook, spread the word around – our PEPs are a great thing and we want people to know about it and to join our big CIF family!!!



### CIF International YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3H3RULcvqhGUzjcv28FThg/feed>

1. What is CIF? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kn0vTd2aGTs>
2. International Professional Exchange Programs <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWtZed7o2n8>
3. Host Family Living [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcrKGgtC\\_zU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcrKGgtC_zU)
4. Experiences & Expectations <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZMFLVZa3w4>

*If there are any questions just come back to us.*

# Finland Participant Learns and Laughs in Greek Program

The CIF Hellas exchange experience turned out to be even much bigger than I expected.

The "comrades," meaning colleagues, from around Europe (and the edge, Turkey) very soon turned out to be a group of professionals and personalities, that were inspired by learning and discussing and comparing the aspects of our different and similar social realities, but also were very fun-loving and team-work spirited in every way. During the three weeks in Athens I feel that I have learned so much and yet laughed so much, that with such energy one could warm up a Finnish village during the winter!

Professionally, the most inspiring were two main things: the role of the NGOs, which is very minor in Finland, but very strong in Greece, and I find myself thinking, "How could I be a part of that field, what new could a socially oriented NGO bring to Finnish reality?" I feel already that many ideas come up – especially the street work done by Arsia struck me as something very impressive and worth trying to create here also.

Another thing is the classic personal revelation: having a comparison, and especially during very critical times for my own field in child protection, has given a lot of personal strength. I both realize what things are very good in our system, and on the other hand, what is missing in the Finnish society and what I could bring on a local level and in my personal work.

Colleagues back in my town, Riihimäki, have been very interested to hear of my adventure and it feels that a new burst of energy has spread into our workplace, despite our otherwise difficult work situation. (We have much too many clients, the problem that many social workers face also internationally.)

I feel very thankful for the people in CIF Hellas who made the exchange happen and want to give my own effort to the Finnish Branch in the future!

## FINLAND

By Annlina Puisto,  
CIF Finland

# Visit to Refugee Camp, A Hellas PEP Highlight

Together with six other social workers, I had the privilege of being accepted by CIF Hellas for their exchange program, taking place in May this year. I come from and live in Norway, while my fellow social workers in the group originate in Estonia, Spain, Austria, Sweden, Finland and Turkey.

We started out Monday 11th of May, and rounded it up 29th of May. Already on our first day together, at the orientation seminar, we learned that our organizing committee, CIF Hellas which is entirely run by volunteers, had thoroughly planned and set up a program aimed at introducing us to the diversity of social work practice in Greece. The program was tight in terms of many visits to NGOs. The staff who informed us about how they approach the target groups was, by and large, professional social workers, but also sociologists and similar professionals worked for clients.

Our energetic ladies in CIF Hellas had carefully designed the program to match our individual professional interests. As for me, working as a therapist with traumatized refugees and asylum seekers, it was indeed rewarding to visit various organizations in this field, ranging from the Greek Refugee Council to agencies providing counseling and practical help/resources.

Personally, my highlight was when I got the chance to visit a refugee camp in Lavrio outside Athens. There I spoke to two social workers as well as a couple of asylum seekers, who provided me with a guided tour so I could see firsthand the harsh conditions that refugees have to endure.

Something that particularly impressed me during these agency visits, was encountering social workers who continued to work for free, having received no salary for months due to the financial crisis in Greece. Their determination to nevertheless provide services to their clients was to me a potent proof of the social workers' passion for social work.

Being in Athens during this crucial and unpredictable period of time, where Greeks suffer tremendously economically and in other ways because of the uncertain political situation, made us to a high degree interested in politics and the influence on social policies.

In spite of the financial hardships, volunteers at CIF Hellas, host families and others, generously practiced the famous Greek hospitality in terms of treating us to lunches, parties and giving us pleasant little gifts. We were all moved by these kind gestures.

There was also a little space left for seeing some sights in and around

## NORWAY

By Bodil Irene Høyer,  
CIF Norway



Athens. Personally I embrace as one of the very best memories from this exchange program, our excursion inland to Kalamata. There we met with the mayor and later had a traditional Greek dinner party, with music and dance at a terrace in a private home.

The following day we moved on to Nemea, a region famous for the production of quality wines. We had the privilege of visiting a winery, and tasting their delicious organic wine. Afterwards we had a lovely lunch at the house where the cheerful lady in the CIF Hellas group of volunteers, Veta, generously invited us to her home. The view overlooking the vineyards and valley was truly unforgettable.

To conclude, I brought back to my home country Norway, Greek tasty foods and retsina gifts – but above all, lovely memories from all the wonderful and interesting people I learned to cherish during these intense three weeks. The friendships I made with the fellow exchange participants, I will keep with me as shining gem of a unique period of my life.

I do wish to express a deep gratitude to CIF who made my participation in this exchange program possible, and warmly recommend it to other social workers ready for a mind broadening experience.

## AMAZED BY CIF ISRAEL

I was not aware about CIF until last year when my colleagues suggested applying. Therefore, I applied being a bit concerned about living in host families and social aspects of the program in general. I'm used to live alone, to travel alone, mostly work on my own; I do not invite strangers and even colleagues to my home.

I got approved. When I received preliminary timetable of the program, I got scared. In addition to host families living, there was hardly any free time. For every evening there were planned dinners, celebrations or some trips. However, the program turned out to be pleasant.

People in CIF are so nice. They opened their homes to participants, drove us around to different institutions and events as well as sightseeing. Professionals in institutions had time for us. We were invited to Holocaust Remembrance Ceremony, which is very difficult to be invited to. There was a problem with host family stay in one city – with no objections, Israeli CIF covered stay of three of us in the hotel for three nights.

During the program, there was contradiction in my mind about host families living; however, by end of the program I felt relaxed about being and staying in homes of other people.

Last but not least – every participant paid only 270 euros for this very intensive two-week program.

I am really amazed that such an extensive international network is operating mostly on a voluntary basis with very limited resources from outside. Everything works well – selecting participants by their home CIF and by the recipient country CIF, logistics, accommodations, agencies visits, introducing participants to local culture and traditions. In case of any problems, members of CIF are always helpful and welcoming.

I do not know any other international network working so well on voluntary basis.

**Thank you CIF and wish you success in the future!**

### ESTONIA

By Aare Raudsepp,  
CIF Estonia

## Keep Those Drops Coming!

As most of you in CIF know or may not know, our so called Peace Project started in Cyprus in 2011 from a seed planted two years earlier at the previous Conference in Finland. In 2012, we continued it at the CIF Italia Exchange Program with our first Israeli and Palestinian participants, Ofra and Mohammed. In 2013, the Project saw the participation of representatives from both sides from the Parents Circle – Family Forum: Two Sided Story ([www.theparentscircle.com](http://www.theparentscircle.com)) with a very successful presentation and workshop on the issue at the Conference in Turkey. In 2014, we had all the intention of repeating the 2012 experience at our PEP, but weren't able to get participants. So is that it? Of course not!

"The only thing to do is to go on site and get the participants," I thought. Booked the flight months before, in the midst of the escalation of the conflict at the end of 2014, I wrote to Edna and Ofra for CIF Israel, Mohammed our Palestinian CIF contact person and the people from the Parents Circle, things started rolling and much more was to happen.

From the 27th to the 31st of January, accompanied by my wife Tina, our Israeli Palestinian adventure began. Ofra opened her house and family, making us feel completely at home; Edna organized the six recruited interviews with the Israeli applicants in the most appropriate way – taking place at Ofra's house in an informal context, but in a totally professional manner. Having had

By Domenico Antonio (Mimmo) Merola,  
CIF Peace Project 2009/12/13/14/15...



**New Israeli and Palestinian friends for peace**

the fortune in 1980 of participating in the CIP Program, a time when people from the US would come to interview us, it felt very much the same – a pleasant sensation of easier and better days for similar projects. The great thing is that about this work of advertising for the program on behalf of CIF Israel, almost all the people that answered didn't know about CIF; regardless the

outcome of the selections they showed interest in participating as future host family or host agency.

Maybe it was a coincidence or maybe not, but during those days the previously mentioned Parents Circle organized their first General Assembly near Bethlehem in Palestinian Territory; so along with Ofra and other Israeli members we all rode on a bus to the meeting. One of the most enriching things I experienced once there was witnessing the way the two groups greeted each other as the best of friends, with the true pleasure of seeing one another in a truly authentic way. It was nice to see Mazen and Nir again (the two respective co-managers at the time who came to Turkey to talk about their organization). I took part in the activities of the meeting thanks to a volunteer personal translator, as the official languages were Hebrew and Arabic. I also had a chance to talk about CIF and had a meeting with four Palestinians who were interest in our 2015 Program, with two who actually applied.

So I returned home with my goal of six Israeli candidates and two Palestinians, but also came back with so much more:

- A unique personal experience to a Sacred Land,
- A total cultural enrichment,
- A feeling truly to be with family thanks to CIF Israel,
- A lot of new Israeli and Palestinian friends,
- A way to let more and more people discover about CIF in Israel and Palestine.

Nothing moves if we don't move it! Especially in our times, I feel we should keep as many doors open as possible. I'm now old



Mimmo and Tina with their CIF Israel family

enough to confirm that if you want something in life you have to go out there and get it and this includes Peace. You might say that's just a drop in the ocean... yes, but the ocean is made of a plethora of drops, I just hope to always have the motivation to **keep those drops coming!**

*Others are merely the part of ourselves that we still don't know, peace is the condition and love the tool that can help us discover the beauty we are missing, possibly contributing to "Heal the World" a bit.*

## SWEDISH POEM

**SWEDEN**

Submitted by Tone Buberg,  
CIF Sweden

*A poem by the Swedish artist Tage Danielson was presented at the CIF Conference in Sweden by Jan Igefford (Sweden) and Tone Buberg (Norway). Many of you wanted to have it, so we print it here translated from Swedish by Kjell Hegland.*

*Norway was a colony of Denmark for 400 years until 1814. Then Denmark lost Norway to Sweden, who won a war. From 1814 to 1905 Norway was in a political union with Sweden as the big brother.*

*Twenty-two years ago at the Swedish CIF Conference we all witnessed a union between two CIF participants; Jorun Nielsen from Norway and Roland Mattison from Sweden. They then got married during the conference in a coffee break. "Are they here today?" Tone and Jan asked. "Yes, they are..." They were asked to come up to the stage. Here they were standing while this poem - named 'Pornography - the love between two countries' was read in Swedish and in English:*

His name was Sweden and her name was Norway. They fell in love at first sight.

"Are you willing to make a union with me?" Sweden asked Norway a beautiful winter's day.

"Yes, my boy," Norway said with laughed of the spectacular Sognefjord. "Let's lay down together between the Baltic sea and the Atlantic," he said. "Wherever - you want, my love, she replied.

They then lay down really close together. He caressed her softly all over the northern part.

"How strong you are my love," Norway said, "and you are not particularly neutral either, as they tell me."

He kissed her carefully on her two highest mountains: Galdhøpiggen and Glittertind.

"This feels even better than Denmark," she whispered. He felt goose pimples all the way from Lappland to Småland.

Boren and Roxen were shivering in anticipation. Suddenly he said: "My dear, I have never been to Oslo." "That is on time," Norway replied seductively.

He headed over the Funny border - Morokulien.

They made love passionately, so that the earth moved, because there is no love as strong as between two countries.

The snow melted all the way where the three countries borders meet, where the prude Finland banged irritated at the wall.

"You are wonderfully soft at the landscape of Hardangervidda," Sweden whispered. "Be quiet, my love, " she said and kissed him in Gavle.

They melted together in a big hug along the border.

They made love for a long- long time.

The love affair ended in 1905 when both parties wanted to be unfaithful and the famous Swedish sinfulness started along with Swedish massage.

*Then Tone and Jan turned to Jorun and Roland with the microphone: "Are you both willing to renew your VOWS??" Both of them said a BIG "YES!"*

# Conference Lecture Triggers Investigation of the LGBTQ Issue in India

## INDIA

By  
Anjanaa Chattopadhyay  
CIF India

The 31st CIF World Conference at SIGTUNA, Sweden, August 3-7, 2015 was an excellent program with interesting and meaningful lectures on topics vastly relevant in today's world. Among the several thought provoking presentations, I found Ulrika Westerlund's **LGBTQ rights are human rights** interesting on many levels. Ms. Ulrika's presentation was about rights of a unique community based on their sexual orientation. Ms. Ulrika spoke fervently about legal obstacles the community faces today and their constant struggle for freedom and dignity. The vehemence with which she spoke exposed her latent anger against the system that judged her community, and the laws that denied them the freedom enjoyed by others. Sitting there and listening to her, I felt baffled. How is it possible that countries tolerant in matters such as caste, class, color, culture and religion, which easily erupts hostility in other countries, can be so prejudiced against a community merely because of their sexual orientation? It is well known that 'different' doesn't necessarily mean 'wrong' and if it does not cause harm to any individual or the environment, doesn't one deserve the right to be 'different'? Instead of marginalizing the community and generating hatred and divide, a more cognitive and humanistic approach would be to discuss the issues causing concern and spread awareness regarding the health hazards involved. Inclusion is always a healthier option than exclusion.



I am not a legal expert or even well-versed in the subject of LGBTQ so Ulrika Westerlund's presentation made me curious, especially regarding the state of this community in my country. I faintly remember reading Indian mythological stories with similar subjects in my childhood so while probing into the Indian LGBTQ scenario, I looked up the Vedas, Mahabharata, Ramayana and Puranas and also our regional folklore and temple art. That's when I came up with startling discoveries! I found several stories dealing with change of sex, homoerotic encounters, and intersex or third gender characters. I found Hindu deities and heroes whose behaviour can be interpreted as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT), or as having elements of gender variance and non-heterosexual sexuality. Though not directly said, these books imply homosexuality as a possible expression of human desire. There are also instances where Gods change sex or manifest as an Avatar of the opposite sex in order to facilitate sexual congress. Sometimes in Indian Mythology, non-divine beings are found to undergo sex-change through curse or blessing of Gods, or as a natural outcome of reincarnation.

Sex change and cross-dressing occur in the story of **Shikhandi** in Mahabharata. From her childhood, Shikhandi is raised as a son and trained in warfare like a man and later she exchanges her sex with a male Yaksha and becomes a man. Eventually she becomes woman again and marries the most eligible male in Mahabharata - Arjuna. Mahabharata also contains the story of Princess **Chitrangada** who dresses like a man and valiantly fights to protect the people of her father's kingdom of Manipur. Incidentally, Chitrangada becomes Arjuna's wife too. Ironically, the most handsome, gallant and desirable male protagonist of Mahabharata, **Arjuna**, is an example of

gender variance himself. When he refuses nymph Urvashi's amorous advances, she curses him that he would become a "kleebeba" or member of the third gender. The curse serves fruitful during Arjuna's last year of exile when he turns into **Brihannala** the eunuch who dresses in women's clothes and teaches music and dance. In another story, Ila the king is cursed to be a man for one month and a woman the next. But of all the examples of gender variance in Hindu mythology, the most prominent and most symbolic is **Ardhanarishwara** or the Androgynous One. According to Hindu Philosophy, Ardhanarishwara is the symbol of the union of Prakriti (Woman) and Purusha (Man) where Prakriti symbolizes dynamic Purush and Purush symbolizes static Prakriti. So Purush is envisioned as the **Force** and Prakriti the **Creator**. Ardhanarishwara brings out the universal Truth that one cannot exist or function without the other. Surprisingly, it holds the neo modern concept that the male is as much female as the female is male.

Same-sex relationships too are present in these texts. When King Dilipa dies, the demigods become concerned that he did not have an heir. God Shiva appears before the king's two widowed queens and commands them to make love and by his blessings, they conceive a child named "**Bhagiratha**" - he who is born from two vulvas (bhaga). That Bhagiratha is shown later as one of the most famous kings of India may be taken as the sign of acceptance of such characters in society. In Vedic literature, Mitra and Varuna are portrayed as icons of affection and intimate friendship between two males. The Bhagavata Purana lists **Mitra** and **Varuna** as having children through ayoni or non-vaginal sex. The account of the birth of their sons **Agastya** and **Vasistha** is similar to Gay couples having children through surrogate mothers. It is fascinating that the Vedas dating to c. 1000-500 BC contain subjects that are still being debated upon in this 21st Century! However, it is to be remembered that the views on LGBT have been diverse and the extent to which the representations of the texts embrace or reject homosexuality has been disputed within the religion as well as outside it. Also, there are instances of portraying homosexual experience as natural in some texts and works of art whereas other Hindu texts contain injunctions against it.

Today in India, embracing LGBTQ community as part of society is unimaginable. The Muslim invasion in the 12th century and the successive Mughal Empire is largely responsible for this culture change because the successful Muslim conquerors while retaining their Islamic identity, created new legal and administrative system and introduced new ethos that challenged the existing cultural codes. This led to the rise of a new, more conservative Indian culture. The British rule (1858-1947) brought about more change and India moved further away from its ancient tolerant culture. Today's India will not tolerate sexual activity between two persons of the same sex; rather it is a crime by law and punishable by incarceration. The Indian judiciary is not to be blamed for this. Over the years, a falsely glorified, hollow yet beautiful concept has been woven into the folds of the 'Indian

Under its influence, the Indian mind-set has become more and more conservative and inhibited, especially when it comes to issues on sexuality and social morality, thereby making open discussion of sexuality a sacrilege. Naturally, it increases the pressure on a gay or lesbian to come out in the open. So either they opt to move to countries that are more liberal or continue to live their pseudo lives in India burdened with fear of family or social rejection. In such a situation, even if the Supreme Court decides to pass a gay marriage legalisation ruling, there will be far more opposition than support. Conventional Indian society will oppose it, conservative Indian bureaucracy will reject it and the Parliament will create havoc protesting against it. So sadly, in spite of its past liberal heritage, the world's largest democracy today is not ready to accept homosexuality or legalise gay marriage.

However, India legally recognises Hijras as a gender separate from men or women, making the country one of the few in the world to legally recognise a third gender. As a result, on 4th January 2015, independent candidate Madhu Bai Kinnar was elected as the mayor of Raigarh, Chhattisgarh, becoming India's first openly transgender mayor. On 9th June 2015, Manabi Bandopadhyay became India's first transgender principal of Krishna Nagar Women's College, West Bengal. There are now more discussions on homosexuality in Indian media and more depiction of LGBTQ in Indian films and in Indian fiction and non-fiction, gays are no longer an invisible entity; 2015 has also seen a beautiful Indian ad with a lesbian couple, go viral.

Organisations like the Naz Foundation (India) Trust, the National AIDS Control Organisation, Law Commission of India, Union Health Ministry, National Human Rights Commission of India and the Planning Commission of India have expressed support for decriminalising homosexuality in India. Several gay rights support groups and activists have come out to the streets and Pride Festivals are held in cities across India. The 11th Kolkata Rainbow Pride festival that started in 1999 and attended by only 15 people, saw more than 1500 people on 15 July 2012. Chandigarh held its first LGBT pride parade on 15 March 2013 and has been holding it annually ever since. The first LGBT pride parade in Gujarat state was held in Surat on 6 October 2013. Rajasthan witnessed its first pride event on 1 March 2015 in Jaipur.

Support of NGOs and gay rights activist groups may provide some comfort but ultimately it is not just about equality, privacy and choice but also about social acceptance and dignity. Studies show that there is a decline of prejudice when members of the majority group interact with members of the minority group. Keeping this in mind, the most powerful influence on heterosexuals' acceptance of gay people will come from them having personal contact with openly gay persons. Constant dialogue and interaction with the LGBTQ community can also combat prejudice and diminish hostility. Various organizations and people all over the world are working towards this goal and I am hopeful that the West will eventually see the human angle and support the LGBTQ community and India will realize the value of its lost heritage and revive the culture of tolerance and inclusion.

## CIF Cameroon Activities Support Service Organizations

# CAMEROON

By Albert Kalle,  
CIF Cameroon

A number of photographs below show some samples of our activities in the past years which we now update for our WN magazine with descriptions. Activities depicted include:

- 1) Fellowship with our visitors and the CITCAM President.
- 2) Donation to newly opened center for women at Enyandong.
- 3) Donation to mental home.
- 4) CITCAM President signing visitors book at the mental home.

- 5) Visiting the first orphanage in Limbe, Fako Division.
- 6) Christmas presents for a home in Kumba.
- 7) CITCAM members sharing fellowship at the home for displace youth.
- 8) Visit to second orphanage in Kumba.
- 9) Special Christmas visit to MELVI Orphanage in Kumba.
- 10) Donation to deaf and dumb school (EID KUMBA).



## CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF CIF WITH 1000 EUROS FOR PEACE PROJECTS

Join us in celebrating 60 years of CIF cross-cultural exchange in 2016! We pledge up to 1000 Euros to match contributions to CIF from members and branches for Peace Projects.

First, congratulations, CIF International! With the Statutes amendments approved at the 2015 general assembly meeting in Sigtuna Sweden, CIF once again confirms Peace and Understanding as central part of our purpose:

*"Article 4 – PURPOSE ...Its purpose is to promote professional, cross-cultural and educational exchange for those working in the field of social*

By Frank and Jane Ollendorff

*services. The learning and sharing generated by the exchange, provides opportunities for broadening professional as well as personal development and so contributes to peace and understanding."*

Second, now each CIF Branch must, with renewed energy – keep alive promoting and including **peace and understanding** in its Professional Exchange Programs (PEPs) and activities. "So many social workers actively struggle for peace, against racism and

hatred through their everyday work,” says Signe Skare of CIF Norway in her spring, 2015 *World News* article called 'CIF Needs Peace Projects.' “CIF's contributions can be made through its Peace Projects by supporting: a) professional exchange program participants from countries in wars / conflicts,” (for example, *Ukraine and Russia and Balkans*), “b) participants and their presentations at conferences, and c) national branches who want to try out new projects in their own ways in order to promote peace and understanding,” (for example, *CIF Italia and CIF Norway*).

Let's generate new ideas, new projects – think out of the box! We must find speakers to challenge us, workshops to stimulate our thinking, new ideas – new peace projects.

Third, now not just in our hearts and minds – it's in our CIF International budget! For the FIRST TIME, we have a line item in our budget allowing annual Peace Project grant applications to the BD – get the application details from Gabi Kronberger, treasurer of CIF International (contact information below).

We need fundraising to fully support peace projects and idea. As Henry Ollendorff said, “Cultural exchange should be the

main dish – not just the dessert!”

Peace contributions can be collected by National Branches and sent in Euros to the CIF treasurer (*instructions below*) or offers the possibility to give branch contributions in cash at the summer BD meeting in the Netherlands to save bank charges, or – Send your branch or personal funds by bank transfer in Euros marked Peace Projects to the bank account of CIF International:

Name: Council of International Fellowship e. V.

IBAN: DE02 5705 0120 0000 1884 25

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**Our Challenge – Making Peace a Priority!**

## CIF International Gets a New Look



The Council of  
International Fellowship

After more than 50 years, CIF changes its logo. This article will describe the reasoning behind the new branding initiative as well as review of the process that took more than 6 years to complete.

### What is “branding”?

Branding is a name, term, sign, symbol or design or combination that clearly identifies an organization that differentiates it from others.

### Why do we need this?

Branches reported several issues that makes this an important matter for CIF. There has been a significant decrease in participants to PEP programs. In the last five years there has been a 40% drop in both applications and number of participants to PEPs. Several branches had to cancel their PEPs due to not having enough applicants.

In 2010, a participant of the CIF Italia PEP, a public relations professional, conducted an assessment of our “brand”. The major outcome identified that our logo and website is outdated. The logo is not easily replicated, and has been used in many inconsistent ways.

We need to be seen as modern and attractive to new and younger participants to ensure sustainability of CIF PEPs and the overall mission of CIF.

### Background

In 2010 at the BD meeting in Hamburg the PR Committee was formed along with an approved budget. The Committee was charged to explore possibilities for a new name or logo. The Committee conducted a survey of the CIF membership to better understand how they felt about the idea of these proposed changes. The results revealed that our organization should focus on image and promotion rather than name or mission change. At the BD meeting in Cyprus held in 2011, BD agreed to support PR activities focused on branding and promotion. At the 2012 BD meeting in Dar es Salaam it was identified that PEP recruitment should be a priority and that there was a need for developing a

need for marketing materials. In 2012, members of the Committee promoted CIF/CIPUSA at the International Social Work Conference held in Stockholm. There was much enthusiasm about CIF/CIPUSA and PEPs. This indicated that we have an excellent and unique product, but we are not successful in advertising and promotion. In April 2013, the PR Committee met in Vienna to formulate strategy and action plans. At the 2013 BD meeting held in Ankara, there was a lengthy discussion about the idea of a new logo. In Zürich at the 2014 BD, the Committee received the mandate to work on CIF branding which included the design of a new logo, branding strategy, videos and other promotional materials.

### Videos

Four video clips were produced by professional filmmaker Elisabeth Innerwinkler which some of you have seen in Sigtuna. These videos have been uploaded to our CIF International YouTube Channel,

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3H3RULcvqhGUzjcv28FThg/feed>.

### Logo

A new logo was produced by Melissa Hebbe, a design and social media specialist. She extensively studied all about CIF, our history, values and needs for the future. Melissa incorporated what is important to CIF members that should be communicated to the public in her design.

*“The concept of the logo was developed from the idea of hands grasping the world; an individual taking the world with their hands, sharing their knowledge and learning from others. One of the major concepts of CIF is to promote international understanding and I believe this logo embodies that belief.*

*The mark is dark blue/green, while the words (The Council of International Fellowship) are the color teal. You may be wondering why not red? Or purple? The logo has so much energy and if a warm color (red, yellow, orange) were used, there would be too much energy. Blue represents peace, which is another concept CIF wants to impart on others through their exchange program. The font used*

is ITC Avant Garde Gothic, which is a thin, sans-serif font (compared to a serif font like Times New Roman). Since there is so much going on with the logo, the type could not compete with that. Instead, this font completes the mark.”

#### Where do we stand now?

According to the discussion about the logo during the GA. We received comments afterwards, and it appears that some National Branches are under the impression that they already have to decide whether they will use the logo or not, others think that they have to wait with implementing the new logo till August 2016.

There also seems to be confusion whether we use the new logo on an international level or not, as it would imply two different logos are being used at the same time, Internationally and by some National Branches.

As an EC we feel sorry for this confusion and apologize. We take the feedback and comments we received very seriously.

#### What are the possibilities?

1. Using only the old logo
2. Using the old and new at the same time
3. Using the new logo
4. Modify the new logo color
5. Develop a completely new logo

#### References to the Possibilities Stated Above

1. Discussion about the need to change the branding of CIF was taken in Hamburg, September 2010. Over the different years discussions have taken place. The current logo is however used in different ways so there is no common CIF logo at the moment.
2. During a transition period that would be possible.
3. The logo is available, so it would be possible
4. Comments have come in about the color. The color represents peace, so the EC would like to keep the color, but it can be slightly

modified to a more vibrant shade of blue.

5. Is a possibility, if funds are made available. It might be possible that the whole discussion starts again however, as every Branch/individual will have feelings about whatever logo is presented.

#### Based on the above, the EC strongly recommends the following:

1. Using the old and new logo at the same time till August 2017 as a transition time
2. Modify the new logo color

Based on the most significant feedback about the color, the color will be modified slightly to a more vibrant shade of blue.

The EC has begun to use the new logo after the GA meeting in August 2015, and will continue to do so. We will require the branches to start using the new logo once the color has been modified. Materials and instructions will be made available at that time in order to begin the logo transition.

We sincerely hope that you share our thoughts that we need to move forward and look into the future in order to successfully continue with this great organization.



## One New Member Joins Executive Committee Team

By **Jane Ollendorff**, Convener Election Committee

Congratulations to the new Executive Committee (EC) – a team of continuing leaders and one new who will serve in their positions until the 2017 election:

PRESIDENT:	<b>Mireille Boucher</b> , CIF France (continuing)
VICE PRESIDENT:	<b>Michael Cronin</b> , CIF USA (continuing in new position)
SECRETARY:	<b>David Scheele</b> , CIF the Netherlands (continuing)
TREASURER:	<b>Gabriele Kronberger</b> , CIF Austria (continuing)
MEMBERS-AT-LARGE:	<b>Rabia Özbas Durak</b> , CIF Turkey (continuing) and <b>Merja Niemelä</b> , CIF Finland (new).

Many thanks go to all the nominees and to committee member, **Suzanne Schorro**, CIF Switzerland, who participated in the election process. We especially appreciate CIF members who supported the election process by identifying and encouraging potential candidates! Once again we met our goal of identifying qualified candidates for each position prior to the beginning of the 2015 Conference in Sigtuna, Sweden. And, there were multiple candidates for the member-at-large positions.

We said goodbye with hearts full of gratitude to **Maria Christopoulou**, CIF Cyprus, who completed the term limit of eight years on the committee. As editor of CIF International World News, she demonstrated tremendous commitment and passion for communication about CIF in a professional manner!

Already the elected EC leadership team prepares to take charge of their new responsibilities. In November, they will meet in Germany to plan a transition of duties where necessary.

The 2017 Election Committee for will be appointed at the BD meeting in the Netherlands, summer of 2016. In the meantime, you can send any feedback about the election process and the names of qualified candidates for the future to president, **Mireille Boucher**. Let her know your interest, thoughts and preferences by confidential email at any time during the next two years.



## In Memoriam: Charles Startup

By Lisa Purdy  
and Jane Ollendorff

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Charles A. Startup, age 70, who was struck by a car while riding his bike on October 10th near his home in Oberlin, Ohio.

A member of CIF-USA, Charlie was a licensed independent social worker who worked with alcoholics and adults who were abused as children. In the 1960s, he, along with 22 other American Peace Corps volunteers, spent two years in a number of remote villages in the state of Andhra Pradesh in India helping impoverished people improve their farming techniques. He later worked with a Catholic school in India and performed land surveys before returning to the United States.

Charlie was a participant in the 1981 CIF program in Sweden, and was influential in starting CIF USA. He recently attended the CIF Alumni Conference in Sweden and had many CIP and CIF friends.

Those who knew Charlie describe him as being lively and bright, and having a fun sense of humor balanced with gentle wisdom. He found solace in bike-riding and enjoyed it daily. His interests included coaching youth soccer, cycling, traveling, independent films and writing poetry. One of his CIF friends, Patricia Barreiro Gandara of CIF Argentina said, "I think he would like that we take some time to read his poems."

Read poems by Charles Startup on the CIF-USA website: <http://www.cif-usa.com/charles-startup.html>

See Facebook comments and condolences from CIP/CIF members regarding Charles Startup at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/89002757584/>

He is survived by his mother, Jane; son, Joshua (Mai) Startup; sister, Ann Startup; her two sons, John Diliberto and Matthew Diliberto and his brother, Thomas (Rita) Startup. A Memorial Service was held on October 24, 2015 at the First Church in Oberlin. Online condolences may be made to [www.cowlingfuneralhomeoh.com](http://www.cowlingfuneralhomeoh.com)

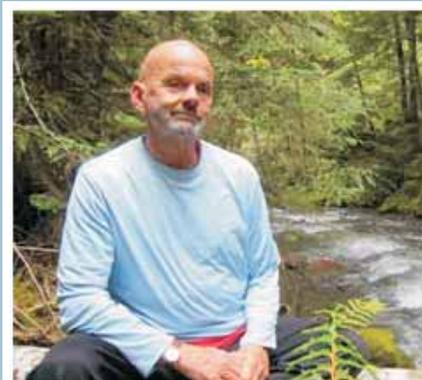


Photo of Charles Startup taken on a recent trip in Oregon

## *In Memoriam: Harry Andersson Submitted*

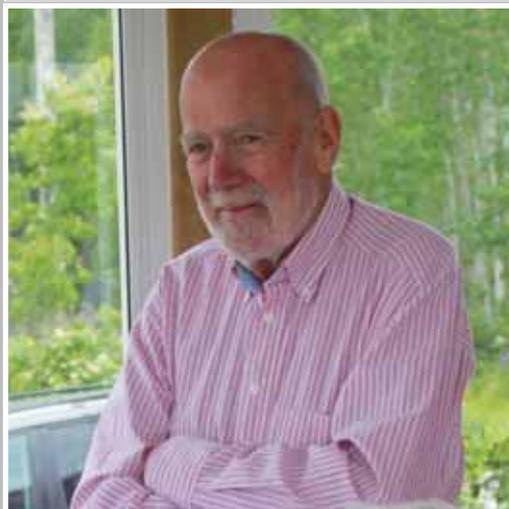
It is with deep sadness that CIF Sweden makes known the passing of one of its long time and most active members, Harry Andersson. Harry was 86 years old. His unexpected passing occurred while he was participating in a gathering of Swedish CIF'ers who were celebrating Mid-summer (Summer Solstice) on the Swedish Island of Gotland; just as he would have wanted it—in the midst of CIF friends.

Harry was a 1963 CIP participant in the Twin Cities Program. That experience, led him to become one of the founders of the CIF Sweden Branch and he remained an active and loyal member until his death on June 26, 2015.

Harry's contributions to CIF Sweden were many. He served many years on the Executive Committee, and was also a member of the organizing committees for the CIF International Conference in Sigtuna, Sweden in 1971, the 1993 Conference in Åkers Runö, Sweden and the CIF Conference hosted by Sweden in 2015.

Harry and his wife, Ulrika Pohl Andersson (CIP 1969), participated in almost every CIF International Conference since the founding of CIF. Harry was one of the founding organizers of CIF Sweden's Exchange Program and, through the years, he volunteered his time to help make the program one of CIF's strongest. Harry's loyalty, dedication and service to CIF Sweden and to CIF International will be sorely missed.

by Lollie Bailey-Nilsson  
on behalf of the CIF Sweden Branch



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*Photo submitted by  
Masako Aoki, CIF Japan*



*Ipomoea nil* is a species of *Ipomoea* morning glory known by several common names, including picotee morning glory, ivy morning glory, and Japanese morning glory. It is native to most of the tropical world, and has been *introduced* widely.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ipomoea\\_nil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ipomoea_nil)

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The 31st CIF-International Conference  
in Sigtuna - August 3-7



<http://www.cifsweden.se/conference2015/>

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