Report on Dance workshop

To celebrate diversity for peace, I moved with some of friends from UNESCO-IHE in morning of 16 November 2013 and reached in Institute of Social Studies (ISS) at The Hague. The program was structured exceptionally perfect till beginning to end. The most inspiring part was to see different religions coming together and celebrate diversity for peace.

There were different workshops held in afternoon, so I participated in dance workshop facilitated by Ms. Riette Beurmanjer. Our group (10 participants) was indeed diversified in age, color, religion, geographical location and gender. I was really inspired by Mr. Ibrahim Khalil 85 year old man from Lebanon having much younger heart. Three students including me were from UNESCO-IHE, while two students were from ISS. Two of our members are from Netherlands including the photographer, one girl from South Africa and a man from Israel. The picture 1 shows the members of dance group.

Picture 1: Members of dance group

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1 Faris Qazi from Pakistan, Master student in UNESCO-IHE, Delft.
2 Dance teacher and theologian providing spiritual accompaniment in the ignition tradition
3 Unfortunately he is not seen in picture as he was behind the camera.
Workshop was started with reading two passages one from Bible \(^4\) and other from Bah\'i\(^5\) text. The theme for both the text focused on the human body and its interaction with various parts having diverse functions, but living with exit perfect harmony and synchronization. The different parts of body are supportive to one another in times of need and troubles.

First though in my mind was that we would spend our time here discussing the passages and metaphor of body. But I soon realized that I was absolutely wrong as something more interesting and challenging lies ahead. It happened at once when Ms Riette told us to remove our shoes and lineup in dance floor. And then next 1 hour we could smell our sweats, and I came to know that 24 hours antiperspirant/ deodorant advertisements by famous brand sometimes don't work. But undoubtedly all enjoyed it. Starting with warm up exercise and them moving to more advanced forms of dance. Each level brought us to full ecstasy, getting closeness to inner self and perfect calmness and peace. Each one of our group member selected a part of body that leads him/her to the next level of dance activities. The climax reached when each one of us taught other group members a unique step and then we practiced all the steps in regularized pattern. The harmony and coordination among the steps led towards a nice choreography, a simple one but more beautiful. The coordination developed the concept of oneness of humanity and mankind as a metaphor of world.

During the performance, I saw was simply the beauty of diversity leading to its oneness, a matrix that surrounded us as one body and mind. There were unique expression of oneness and friendship when I saw a Lebanon Muslim hugging a Jewish from Israel, and I felt warmth in the hands of my Indian friends. The geographical borders, the religion, the color and caste, the knowledge and wealth vanished at once; there were no dividing walls, because as one body with different parts we attained a perfect harmony with one another.

The take home message for me is that diversity is to be cherished and it could be molded for peace and harmony as an analogy to a human body. No part of human body tries to harm but

\(^4\) 1 Corinthian 12:12-31  
\(^5\) Promulgation of Universal Peace, p.322
they rather edifies one another for development of body. Therefore, the world of humanity is a composite body and we humans are parts of it with diversified roles and function for edification of body. As a dance has rhythm and beat, so as a human we have to keep harmony and rhythm with our environment, mother earth and fellow human beings. Peace could only be achieved if there is peace in me and if I am composed.

Therefore, I resolve to start with the man in the mirror\(^6\) by asking him to change his ways, to make a world a better place to live where..."The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea\(^7\)."

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\(^6\) Michael Jackson song "Man in the Mirror"

\(^7\) Isaiah 11:6-9