

Students work together in advising National Commission

The day started with a keynote speech by prof. Joris Voorhoeve, former politician and now lecturer at Leiden University and Haagse Hogeschool. Key of the speech was that children should be raised to be skeptical citizens, able to ask the right questions and not easily fooled by nice propagandistic words. The audience was impressed by the many examples from all over the world that Voorhoeve used to underline his message.

Ilona Rozenboom, UNESCO-youth representative in The Netherlands, was up next. She told the group about her experiences as a youth representative and asked the audience what they did to change the world-if only little.

After the lunch break the group split up in two, to discuss the topics that the National Commission had proposed. The National Commission is (amongst other tasks) an advisory body to the government on UNESCO-related topics. It has studied UNESCO's latest long and medium term strategies to define which topics that could be and asked the students for their opinions on the subjects.



The questions asked were these:

Education: Should the Paris Declaration on OER be adopted by all member states and how should its recommendations be fulfilled?

Science: Should UNESCO DG Bokova sign the Berlin Declaration on Open Access during the General Conference in 2013?

Culture: Is a new instrument needed to protect museums and collections?

Communication and Information: UN plan of action for the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity- which role for UNESCO?

The group discussions reflected discussions as held at UNESCO's premises. Due to the fact that the group of students was so international (more than 10 nationalities in 30 students) many perspectives were offered and lively discussions were held. Among the advises that the groups gave were:

Yes, all countries should adopt the Paris Declaration on OER and

- A good ict-infrastructure is essential for the use of OER in southern countries
- Education on how to use and reflect on materials found on the internet is important
- Pay attention to the quality issue in OER

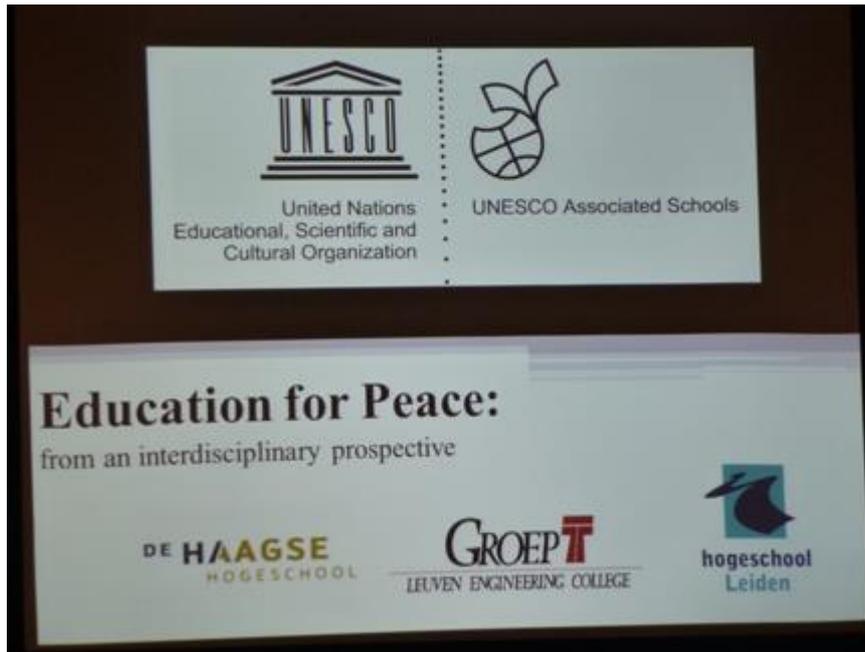
No, DG Bokova should not sign the Berlin Declaration on Open Access, as the preconditions are not right yet- the world is not far enough. As long as the current model is competitive (publishers making money, patents important) the students don't think true Open Access is possible.

Concerning museums and collections the students underlined the importance of awareness raising and sharing of knowledge. They think more people should know about museums and more opportunities must be created to bring people in contact with art. Policy plans are needed for hazard, war and disaster.

UNESCO could have an clear mission in the UN actionplan for the safety of journalists. Young people should be educated on the importance of the role of journalists in information transfer, and there should be safety and risk awareness programs for the journalists themselves. Safe places for journalists should be created.

This was the first international meeting within the Dutch-Flemish ASP-network. Judging from the reactions after the meeting, and the hard work during the workshops, it would be a good idea to organize another meeting next year!





- See more at: <http://unesco.nl/artikel/students-work-together-advising-national-commission#sthash.JnoIrXRZ.dpuf>