



IASSW UN Newsletter October 2019

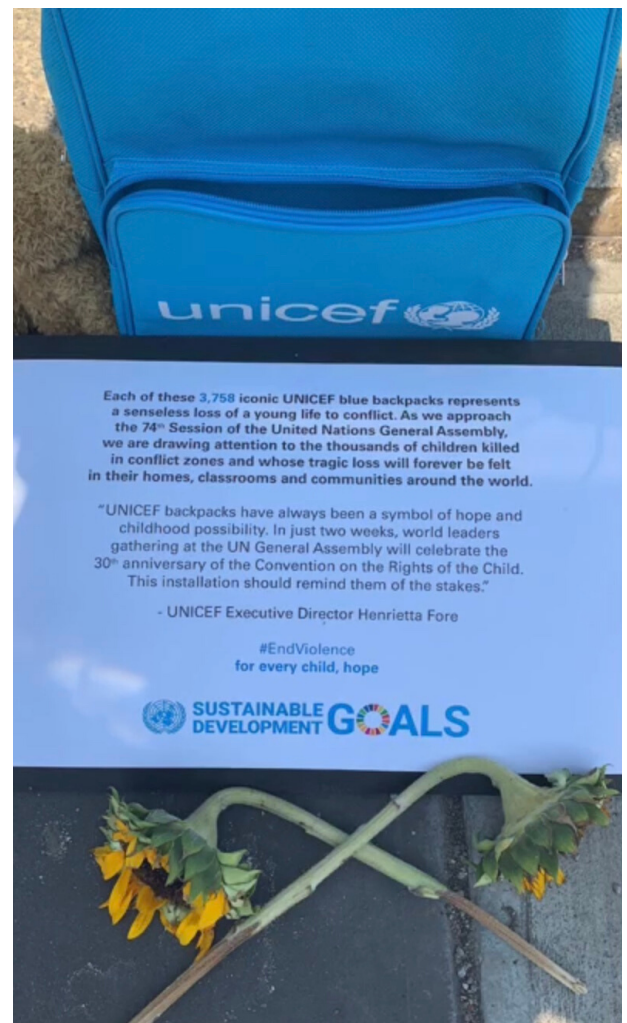
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“... more than 12,000 children were killed in conflict zones last year...”

UNICEF #EndViolence Children’s Memorial: A Graphic Portrayal

WRITTEN BY KRYSTINA JACKSON

After attending the UNICEF Executive Board of the United Nations Children’s Fund on September 11, 2019, I visited the UNICEF #ENDviolence Campaign Children’s Memorial, an art installation of 3,758 small blue backpacks to represent the children lost during conflict in 2018. This memorial was so striking, it took me back immediately. I remember posting the following pictures on social media and receiving so many comments of people being touched by it. As stated in the 2019 Annual Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, more than 12,000 children were killed in conflict zones last year, this being the highest number ever recorded by the United Nation’s data management system (Zuna, 2019). This art is a symbol of resistance and peace, and a call on everyone to act with urgency.





IASSW Co-Sponsors Side Event on Inequality at the HLPF



WRITTEN BY DR. LYNNE HEALY

IASSW joined with other NGOs to sponsor and present a side event at the July 2019 meeting of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) at UN headquarters in New York. Titled “Lived Experiences of Inequality: Grassroots Respond,” the event featured a panel of NGO representatives, including IASSW Main Representative Lynne Healy and 2018–2019 IASSW Intern, Zozan Antar. Preliminary results of a survey on inequality as it is experienced at the grassroots level were presented. The survey was conducted by the Grassroots Task Force of the NGO Committee on Social Development. It yielded a rich data set that is still being analyzed for a final report. Among the findings was that in general, respondents from wealthier countries were more likely to indicate that inequality was getting worse, while those from lower income countries expressed some optimism and cited improvements in equality in terms of education and health conditions. Bringing grassroots voices into the discussions of progress and gaps on meeting SDGs Goal 10 on inequality is essential and the survey was one small contribution to this endeavor. Thanks to all IASSW members who responded. We will be reporting on the final report when it is complete.



New IASSW Intern of 2019-2020 at United Nations Headquarters!

by Krystina Jackson

My name is Krystina Jackson and I am the 2019 - 2020 University of Connecticut School of Social Work intern here at the IASSW. I am a first generation Jamaican American, raised by two hard working immigrants, and I find it essential to pursue my passions and fill my time with service. Respectfully, I am thrilled to begin my internship experience and learn as much as I can about international welfare. I am a second-year policy practice student pursuing my MSW degree. My focus is in international social work and I will be graduating with a certificate in human rights.

Within my first year of study, I interned at the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut, a state level organization that advocates for civil liberties and human rights. I also interned at the Center for International Social Work Studies within my school, increasing my knowledge and awareness around issues affecting immigrants and refugees. This past summer, outside of my MSW program, I was granted the opportunity to become a Hartford leader in the 2019 Obama Foundation Community Leadership Corps, which has expanded my knowledge within community organizing and has given me the tools and access to pursue change in my own community.

This school year I am the Co-chair of my school's Graduate Student Organization where I am leading an initiative called Black History 365 to raise awareness of the highs and lows of Black History for the entire year. This is a positive response to student concerns that were heightened by retirements of several Black professors from the School and weak programming for the 2019 Black History Month.

In the past, my work has focused on mass incarceration, cannabis equity, and environmental justice. However this year, I am honing my focus on land degradation in Sub-Saharan Africa where migration is increasingly getting worse. I am very intrigued by the Great Green Wall initiative through the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and specifically the Land Degradation Neutrality Agreement that brought forth a Gender Action Plan to approaching the work. Given my interests and the priorities of the IASSW, I plan to participate in the Committee on Social Development including their Grassroots Sub-committee, the Committee on Migration including their Sub-committee on Climate-induced displacement and xenophobia, and the Working Group on Girls. I am also eager to attend many UN Events to broaden my knowledge on human rights.

On the days I can afford to slow down, I like to meet friends for coffee, connect with family members, and travel. I look forward to a great year filled with priceless experiences and new relationships.

What is the High Level Political Forum?

Written by Dr. Lynne Healy

The High Level Political Forum (HLPF) is convened each summer under the auspices of ECOSOC, the UN Economic and Social Council. The major purpose of the HLPF is to conduct regular reviews of progress under the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015. The multi-day event (this year from July 9-19) includes plenary panels and interactive discussions featuring experts and government representatives, presentations of country Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), and side events sponsored by UN organizations, governments, and NGOs.

The theme of the 2019 HLPF was "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality." At each HLPF to date, whereas the overall 2030 Agenda is discussed, specific goals are selected for a more in-depth review. The 2019 session focused on the following:



Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

To find a list of the countries that submitted their VNRs in 2019 and links to the actual reports, see: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2019#vnrs>

The overall Sustainable Development Goals Report 2019 can be found at: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2019/>



Homelessness to be the Theme of February's UN Session

Written by Dr. Lynne Healy

Homelessness will be the theme of the next session (the 58th) of the UN Commission for Social Development. This is the first time a major UN event has addressed this topic. The full theme is: "Affordable Housing and Social Protection Systems for All to Address Homelessness." This is a topic of importance to social work, as we see the impact of homelessness and inadequate housing in everyday practice. Homelessness is linked as both cause and consequence to numerous other issues, including education, health, access to human rights and justice, employment, and many more. If your school of social work (including through student internships) is engaged in work with the homeless or on advocacy for housing, we would like to hear from you. You can send information to Krystina Jackson at Krystina.Jackson@uconn.edu or Lynne Healy at lynne.healy@uconn.edu For additional information about the upcoming UN Commission meeting in February, see: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/united-nations-commission-for-social-development-csod-social-policy-and-development-division/csod58.html>