

How is your organization getting ready for the 2010 Summit in Karlstad?

– First of all, we have been preparing for the event since the inspiring Rio de Janeiro summit in 2004. We have had numerous meetings in different locations globally to listen and discuss to understand the different perspectives and we are in full understanding of the respect of cultural differences that needs to be taken into consideration, best done by inviting organisations and individuals to present how they want to contribute and what they think needs to be presented in 2010. In September last year the World Summit Foundation came to Karlstad to plan with the Karlstad Steering Group and we continue to have an ongoing dialog on all issues with the board. We are inviting a large number of people internationally to join an Advisory Reference Group to suggest topics, starting in March, based on the central theme and the selected strands for the summit. In March, we are releasing the first newsletter to reach thousands of organisations and key people all over the world to update them on our preparations and inspire them to start planning and preparing for Karlstad 2010.

What will the 2010 Summit's central theme be?

– Let me elaborate on this by quoting the Alliance of Civilizations Secretariat at United Nations, New York. Ahead of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations meeting in Madrid January 2008 a media research papers stated that; *“Technology has made the media the most important immediate influence on opinions and understanding in the industrialized world and has significantly heightened media impact in the developing countries as well. Media has a powerful capacity to encourage global awareness thereby promoting cross-cultural understanding, tolerance and acceptance of ethnic, cultural, religious and gender differences in communities across the globe. Unfortunately, the media’s potential to be a force for good can easily backfire. By disseminating messages that create and reinforce negative stereotypes and perpetuate misconceptions, the media frustrates dialogue and works against mutual understanding”*.

– You can put it in one sentence if you like. In 1995, Benjamin Barber, Professor of Political Science, University of Maryland and author of *Jihad vs. McWorld*, expressed himself this way; *“It is time to recognize that the true tutors of our children are no longer the school teachers and university professors, but the filmmakers, advertising executives and pop culture purveyors. Disney does more than Duke, Spielberg outweighs Stanford, MTV trumps MIT”*. As for ourselves, we want to broaden our perspectives to the whole world knowing that the questions and answers differ dependent not only on who you are but on where you are.

– Nowadays, technically speaking, it is for anyone who has access to a computer, Internet connection, software and education, for a low cost to produce text, sound, image, animation and moving image. Especially this is relevant for the younger generation. Well educated citizens are also able to communicate through computers, mobile phones and the web 2.0 services to instantly publish and communicate the content all over the world. Search engines, communities, wikis and other web based services will help develop new knowledge. The United Nations Media Literacy Online Clearinghouse (link from www.wskarlstad2010.se) is an example of our ambition to use new technology and expertise around the world to improve on intercultural dialog, for example between Arab speaking countries and western countries.

– So, to sum up this we have chosen for our central theme: *Challenges in the world of young people’s communication*. And we have divided this great area into five main perspectives, or strands, using as guidelines the questions following;

- Communication for change

How, from your perspective, can communication in different media support needed social change?

- Children's (young people) education and development
How can media literacy and educational media make a difference?
- Ethics and social responsibilities
In a non-regulated global media world, how in your perspective, can quality in media for children and young people improve?
- Economics, policies and laws
From a child and youth perspective, what measures and steps must be taken to meet the challenges of today's media world?
- Children and young people's digital content creation
What happens when young people are able to digitally create media content (...with core values like equity, equality, inclusion, and intercultural dialogue)?
How can today's and tomorrow's media world gain quality from young people's digital media content creation?
How can young children and youth of the world help improve global understanding in creating media content?

What kind of activities is planned?

– We plan the activities to range from key note speakers, best practice media professionals productions, researchers seminars with presentations and debate of new research studies about children, the media and well being, to youth production workshops and presentations blending with cultural experiences like music and dance and theatre, and informal meetings with opportunities to interact during coffee conferences and formal panel discussions. A book documenting participant's main contributions and key note speakers in the 2010 event is also part of the plan. The activities will be planned to fit a global Summit for educators, producers, policy makers and all professionals concerned with and by children, youth and media.

The City of Karlstad is organizing the summit but how will the fact that the main venue is at Karlstad University with Department of Media and communication studies as an arranging partner strengthen the 2010 summit?

– The venue at Karlstad University provides state of the art technology for presentations and interactivity and online resources for communication, as well as students and teachers and researchers engaging to prepare, implement and follow up on the event.

How can adolescents participate? How many teens will be involved? How are they chosen?

– Young people can participate in planning, co-creating and contributing to the Summit, as well as attending in person and online. Adolescents can participate in many ways; workshops, youth production presentations, in seminars, etc. The best way to start is to contact a nearby media organisation, or school and to go to the web site www.wskarlstad2010.se and fill in the form at the starting page to make suggestions of your interests in the summit. Here you can present your ideas and what you would like to do 2008 to prepare for 2010. When you do that, you will also be added to our newsletter and this way

you can see the suggestions that other adolescents from all parts of the world have come up with, maybe to co-operate with them! There will also be an online World Summit Webzine during the 2010 event and if you are unable to come you can still publish yourself on the webzine and let others know what you are doing! It is an important contribution that you are making this way.

From your viewpoint which were the main contributions of the previous World Summits?

– The organizers of each Summit addressed the Foundation's broad objectives in a way that reflected their perspectives and comprehension of the issues they faced within their regions and given their level of development at the time. This has led to rich diversity in the nature, focus and contributions of each Summit. Bound together by a shared set of values, these diverse approaches achieved a wide range of Summit outcomes, details of which can be found in the Summit Reports on the Foundation website (linked from www.wskarlstad2010.se). In a fast-changing world, the Foundation aims to build on the strengths of each Summit, and move forward with our partners to find new and meaningful ways of addressing our objectives. The issues have changed over a 15 year period. We began by discussing television but now all forms of media for children are relevant to our objectives. Children, themselves are playing an integral role now and our concerns relate more directly to education in entertainment media and the commercialization of children's media (World Summit Foundation policy, Dr Patricia Edgar, 080302)

What are your expectations of the 2010 Summit?

– I believe that it will be a summit for 2000 delegates from 100 countries preparing with children and youth for a new media world in the 21st century. I believe that with the mobilisation, engagement and support from the international summit movement, we can together create a new format for a world conference with opportunities for networking, debate, challenge, interactivity and workshops to share perspective, experience and expertise. Activities can also be prepared concurrently in different locations around the world, feeding into and interacting with the Karlstad Summit through the World Summit Daily Webzine at www.wskarlstad2010.se

– Welcome now in 2008 to start your preparations for World Summit Karlstad 2010!