

# SUSA News



## The **SIETAR**USA Newsletter

Society for Intercultural Education  
Training and Research

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**NEW!**

## President's Letter

Dear friends,

### “What You Appreciate Appreciates”

These words have been on my mind for a few days now since I first heard them at the seminar given by Lynn Twist, world famous fundraiser for causes like ending world hunger and saving the rain forests. She was talking about putting our energy, time and resources into what we are passionate about and watching it grow.

I decided that I will take this opportunity to talk about my passion and appreciation for SIETAR-USA and the people who make it grow.

I consider my participation in SIETAR to be one of the best things to happen to me in my American life. When I left Russia 18 years ago after giving back to the Soviet government my internal passport (and my citizenship), I also left behind one of my biggest assets – a circle of friends who loved to think, and talk, and engage in philosophical discussions late into the night. I never thought I would be able to replace that circle.

As is true of many others, I discovered that the intercultural field existed only when I was standing in the middle of it. Soon after I then found out about the newly forming SIETAR-USA. Lots of great friendships grew out of joining and becoming actively involved and grew a much wider circle than I ever had before of friends who think, talk, and passionately argue important and interesting things. I am home again with SIETAR and I want to make sure that this home will stand strong and welcoming for everybody who wants to be a part of this wonderful community of very different people, united by a common passion for intercultural understanding.

My special appreciations go to my colleagues on the SIETAR-USA Board of Directors and Advisory Board. We just completed our annual

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retreat. The amount of caring energy at the retreat was revitalizing. I very much hope that many of you at some point will take a step toward becoming more involved in a volunteer committee or in the Board. It is a most rewarding experience.

Quite honestly, I don't know why we call it a 'retreat' though, when it is a rather tiring meeting that starts on Thursday night and ends at noon on Sunday. A major part of this year's retreat was spent revising our by-laws—which I must say was hard work and not a very 'retreat'-like activity at all! A big change that came from our by-laws discussion will start next year, when the SIETAR-USA president will serve 2 years as a president after being a president-elect for a year. Thus, our current president-elect Andy Reynolds is taking on the SIETAR-USA presidency after our November 2007 conference, and will lead us throughout 2008 and 2009.

The year 2008 will be exciting for Andy, and for Sietarians all over the world, as SIETAR's Global Congress is scheduled for October 2008 in Spain. I encourage all of you to take a good look at your calendars and your family budgets, and try to make sure that life brings you to Spain at that time.

There are so many ways in which each of us contributes to building and sustaining our SIETAR home – from joining and paying our dues on time, to telling friends and colleagues about the organization, to coming to our conferences, or even presenting and volunteering at conferences or taking on leadership roles and responsibilities with the Board.

What we appreciate appreciates through our passion and commitment! With my deep appreciation to each and every one of you,

— **Tatyana Fertelmeyster**, *SIETAR-USA President*



## Executive Director's Note

As Tatyana reported, we just had a busy weekend with board members working hard on the many projects for SIETAR-USA. We are all very excited about the next conference being held in Kansas City, Missouri. Patricia Coleman talks about that in her column but I can attest to the fact that Kansas City is a terrific city with a lot of diversity and many interesting attractions.

A major decision was made during that board meeting regarding the administration of the Society. Currently, I am the Executive Director and have one assistant, sometimes with temporary help, who is a paid staff member. She is Susanne Taylor and I am sure many of you have met her at SIETAR-USA conferences. Susanne will be moving to Munich, Germany in June and is gradually phasing out of her position with SIETAR-USA. We will miss her. She has been wonderful at developing systems for members, working with the Board of Directors, and, of course, working with me. Much as she will be missed, her departure enabled us to consider a new way to manage the Society.

We have now contracted with an organization management group, ERGA Inc., who will bring a range of skills to the task of administering SIETAR-USA. Andrew Estep of ERGA will be working very closely with us to streamline our membership, financial, and other management processes. Andrew brings considerable expertise and a wonderful sense of humor to SIETAR. It will be a joy to work with him. New phone and fax numbers have been installed for those who wish to check on membership records or ask other administrative questions. Andrew works at the ERGA offices in Seattle where the numbers are: phone 206-859-4351; fax 206-626-0392.

I will continue to be the Executive Director with, hopefully, more time to devote to developing programs, visioning, and working with board members on their respective portfolios. I will also remain in Portland, OR [503-297-4622 (o) and 971-255-0520 (h)] at the Intercultural Communication Institute offices. There will probably not be a lot of very noticeable changes right away as we hope this transition will be seamless. I am looking forward to working with Andrew and continuing to work with all of you to make SIETAR-USA develop.

— **Peggy Pusch** *Executive Director*

# SUSA 2007 Annual Conference Report: Kansas City, MO

by **Patricia Coleman**, 2007 Conference Chair

## Why Kansas City?

As the newly elected conference chair, I was at a loss. I'd never been to Kansas City, and knew absolutely nothing about it except that I'd heard about the famous "Dorothy", "Red Slippers" and "Yellow Brick Road" of the Wizard of Oz.

So like many SIETAR-USA members, my first reaction to the announcement of the 2007 SUSA Conference site was: *WHY??? Kansas? What's there? How does Kansas City relate to our mission as interculturalists?*

In search of an answer to that question—I Googled Kansas City on my computer and found two listings: one Kansas City in Kansas and another in Missouri. I had learned Lesson #1: we are going to Kansas City, MO, not KS!

Then as I scrolled down on the Google page of search results I discovered headings that made me look twice and my curiosity was peaked. There was mention of French, Italian, and Spanish heritage. There were historical dates that suggested Kansas City was the site of some of the greatest achievements of the early American settlers' days. The pictures I saw were inviting, the people seemed welcoming, and the architecture I read about was enlightening. My five senses were even more fully awakened as I read on about Kansas City Jazz, Barbecue, Lights, Fountains, Dance, and Performing arts. There were Museums featuring historical faces like US president Truman, African American baseball legends, World War I soldiers ...and more.

Soon after this search I received an email from one of my cross-cultural training providers, Berlitz Cultural Consulting, asking me if I could go to Kansas City to deliver a program. I would have a chance to also take advantage of the trip to get a head start on the conference. The Magic had begun!

Off I went to Kansas City on a cold December day, flying from Fort Lauderdale's 70-degree (Farenheight) temperature into 40-degree weather at MCI airport in Kansas City. I had selected our conference hotel, The Westin Crown Center, for my overnight stay. As I made my way through the lobby I was embraced by a distinct warmth. No it was not the central heat, but the decor that said welcome, as well as the smiles that seemed to say 'we are expecting you.' I got to my room and the view was magnificent. Soon, I met the conference planning staff and the journey continued with more and more magic. I discovered the hotel and everything it has to offer, as well as the great things outside and nearby.

During my time there, I couldn't help but wonder if someone had made a general announcement that I was coming to visit our conference site, letting everyone know that I was not yet fully sold on this location. Because from the gate agent upon arrival at the MCI airport, to the car rental agent, to the arrival at the hotel lobby—I was floating on a "red carpet" cloud with everyone acting so nice and attentive! Though it was indeed an initial bit of culture shock for me, it didn't last.

I was reminded all over town and in local souvenir shops of the iconic story of the Wizard of Oz, with little reminders and regular sightings of Dorothy, the Red Slippers and the Yellow Brick Road. I recalled the famous phrase: "There's no place like Home" and realized that more than just a movie line, that saying is a locally held belief in Kansas City. I experienced it along with a homey, welcoming feeling in all over town. With so much culture and history surrounding me, I knew then that the best response to my original question of WHY KANSAS CITY? was: "WOW!! Kansas City!!"

So, dear SIETAR-USA members, I cannot wait to welcome you to the new home of the 2007 SUSA Conference on November 7-11 at the Westin Crown Center in Kansas City, MO where the early lights of the holidays will warm your heart, mind and soul.

*You can contact Patricia Coleman via email:  
AtoZworld@aol.com*

## Announcements

Book by long time SIETAR-USA presenter and member.

### **Kids Like Me: Voices of the Immigrant Experience**

(Paperback)

by **Judith M. Blohm and Terri Lapinsky**

*"Kids Like Me: Voices of the Immigrant Experience provides a valuable resource for educators, volunteers, staff of youth organizations and parents of young people attending schools with the "kids" whose profiles are*



*so sensitively shared. Globalization's young faces and voices come alive in Kids Like Me." —Frances Hesselbein, former National Executive Director of the Girl Scouts of the USA and Chairman of Leader to Leader Institute.*

**Book Description:** Kids Like Me profiles more than 20 foreign-born adolescents and young adults now living in U. S. communities. Each chapter contains a short personal narrative told in the voice of the youth who is being profiled. These stories are intended to help students ages 10 years and up to understand the backgrounds of classmates from other cultures, foster intercultural awareness and sensitivity and encourage individual and community action to assist newcomers in their adjustment to the US. Written in a very accessible style, Kids Like Me also includes discussion questions, self-directed activities and research ideas that can be used in a classroom, club or community setting. Photos, maps and graphics add to the appeal of the text. Kids Like Me is available at bookstores everywhere, or order through our website: [www.interculturalpress.com](http://www.interculturalpress.com).



**Judith M. Blohm**

## Local Group News

### **SIETAR Austin**

SIETAR Austin has been busy since the beginning of 2007. We had a program in January titled "Building Bicultural and Bilingual Self-Confidence" with Lu Zeidan and Ted Klein. This program discussed how perception plays an important role in cultural interaction, as well as the different practical, psychological and socio-economic barriers English as a Second Language (ESL) students face that impact their language acquisition. Our February program, "Journeys of Migration" by Linda E. Edwards, examined patterns of migration and cultural impact on one small Caribbean nation, Trinidad and Tobago, that could be a microcosm for the world. We also hosted our second Intercultural Café on March 1st, where we invited the Multicultural Artists Partnership (MAP) and the Portuguese Language Meetup group. We built great partnerships with these groups and joined MAP to host the Asian Spring Festival on March 31st. Our next two programs will be: March 22 "Are the Chinese Inscrutable? Chinese Communication Style through American Eyes" with Dr. Catherine Farris, and April 14 "Cross-Cultural Workshops for ESL Instructors" with Ted Klein, back by popular demand. We're also planning a May program on Brazil.

### **SIETAR Houston**

We are planning a workshop open to the public on Friday and Saturday, 27-28 April 2007. This workshop will be facilitated by the amazing Diane Hoffner Sapheire. The workshop is called: Games and Activities for Your Intercultural Toolkit. This very practical, fun, hands-on 2-day workshop will give you the opportunity to participate in and experience, from the perspective of a learner, a repertoire of intercultural games and activities. We will also discuss how to facilitate the activities, including purposes, sequencing, debriefing, and how to customize. The facilitator is conducting this workshop pro-bono, as a fundraiser for SIETAR Houston. Its goal is to have participants experience many different methods and activities for developing intercultural effectiveness, and develop the ability to facilitate those activities.

### **SIETAR Metro New York City**

SIETAR Metro NY has new leadership. Caryn O'Sullivan – President; Sarit Abramowicz - Events Director; Paola Maderna - Membership Director; Dori Rubin – Treasurer. In addition, we are hosting our first event of the year in March: "The Trailing Spouse or the Rising Exec? Women in the Overseas Workforce." We know that women expatriates are on the rise.

But are they getting what they need to succeed from their company? Women are perceived to have a higher risk than men of non-acceptance in the international business arena. As trainers/consultants, is it essential to differentiate between men and women? If so, how do we address the issue of gender in the right way? Our Special Guest Speaker is Helene Seiler. Helene Seiler, is an international executive career coach and talent management consultant who specializes in coaching high-potential and senior global executives. She has a total of twenty years of international experience, including ten years in the human resource management of executives and ten years in strategy consulting. An expatriate herself, Ms. Seiler offers professional and personal expertise on the issues surrounding women working and living abroad. Please visit our website for information: [www.sietarnewyork.org](http://www.sietarnewyork.org).

### SIETAR Portland

SIETAR-PDX (Portland) has been pretty quiet with crazy travel schedules and weather conditions, but we are working on setting up a partnership with ASTD Cascadia, which we believe is one of the largest regional chapters of ASTD with more than 300 members! Although we have not set anything up formally yet, we are having dialogue around what partnering would mean between the two organizations at the local level and how that might translate to a national scope. In March, we will have a gathering to view the Intel presentation on DVD (from the 2006 SIETAR-USA conference), with Intel's permission of course.

### SIETAR Washington D.C.

SIETAR DC chapter is continuing to grow. Currently there are 55 active members with an average of 10-15 people attending the monthly meetings. Ursula Leitzmann was newly elected Executive Coordinator and Julia Gaspar-Bates the Deputy Executive Coordinator for a two year period. Recent meetings have included the facilitation of a new simulation, Resilia, developed by the Peace Corps and the North American Simulation and Gaming Association. Resilia is an interactive session on the use of creative arts in cross-cultural training. We also had a panel of four intercultural trainers discussing their work in a presentation to students at The George Washington University, a fun holiday party which welcomed several new members, as well as a discussion on difficult moments in the training classroom and best practices. Upcoming events will include a repatriation simulation and talk with recent Peace Corps returnees, a reception held during the Intercultural Management Institute's conference in March, and an interactive session presenting Bafa Bafa co-facilitated by Judee Blohm and Sandy Fowler.

## 59th Annual DPI/NGO Conference at the United Nations: Summary Highlights

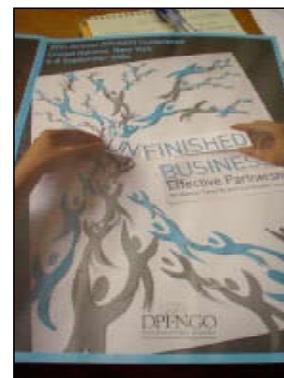
by **Karen Eng and Judee Blohm**

SIETAR is a non-governmental organization (NGO) affiliated with the Department of Public Information (DPI) of the United Nations. Two of our members, Karen Eng and Gilles Asselin, attend DPI meetings and briefings as official and alternate representatives respectively. All SIETAR members are welcome to access the UN and its resources through DPI and to request to attend the DPI/NGO conference each fall in New York City.

Last year's 59th Annual DPI/NGO Conference brought together over 2,500 representatives of affiliated non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other civil society activists from more than 90 countries September 6-8, 2006. The conference theme was Unfinished Business: Effective Partnership for Human Security and Sustainable Development.

Ms. Michaela Walsh, Chair of the Conference, explained that to ensure the widest possible exchange of views and experiences, all NGO delegations were asked to include one representative under the age of 30. SIETAR's UN rep, Karen Eng was happy to make the cut! The strong SIETAR representation also included Judee Blohm, Fiona Citkin, Sally Normand McReynolds and Marilyn Rymniak.

The conference consisted of an opening and closing session, two major panels, six multistakeholder round tables, ten midday workshops sponsored by NGOs, and several special events. Efforts were made to ensure that each panel featured at least one youth speaker. Participants could attend two of the six roundtables which featured representatives of the United Nations, governments, civil society and the private sector. The round tables addressed various themes: science and technology for education; emerging approaches to health care, including gender-based HIV and AIDS; human



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security: responsibility to protect and the peacebuilding commission; civil society and global partnerships for development; commitment to reducing extreme poverty and hunger; and promoting respect for cultural diversity in conflict resolution.

The choices of midday workshops provided participants the opportunity to learn from and share with fellow practitioners in the field experiences of particular relevance to NGOs in their efforts to advance the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). (To read about the Millennium Development Goals, go to <http://un.org/>)

Special events included the conference delegates' reception, an afternoon concert, an interfaith service, and the launch of the Redlight Children Campaign (described later in this article.)

### **Highlights of the two panels:**

- The first panel addressed the topic Moving Development Forward: Accountability, Transparency, Equitable Trade Policies. Examples of how accountability, transparency, good governance and equitable trade policies--as called for by Millennium Development Goal #8--are helping to raise resources for and successfully completing projects were highlighted by various speakers including Hans Blix, Chairman, Weapons of Mass Destruction, and Lester Salamon, Director of the Centre for Civil Society Studies at the John Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies.
- The concluding panel was The Role of the Media and Communications Technology in Achieving the MDGs. Speakers discussed emerging trends in information and communications technologies (ICTs) as well as new, innovative ways of distributing content to help achieve the MDGs. Panel member Rebecca MacKinnon, Fellow, Berkman Center for Internet and Society, Harvard Law School discussed a non-profit global citizens' media project called Global Voices Online. As co-founder, Ms. MacKinnon used her experience as a former reporter to redress some of the inequities in media attention by leveraging the power of citizens' media. Global Voices Online uses a variety of technologies -- weblogs, wikis, podcasts, tags, aggregators and online chats -- to call attention to conversations and different points of view. She talked about the emergence of bridge blogging through stories, commentary and news. For more information, or to engage in a bridgeblog, visit:

<http://www.globalvoicesonline.org/>

### **Highlights of a remarkable roundtable:**

- Promoting Respect for Cultural Diversity in Conflict Resolution provided a platform for representatives from different backgrounds to discuss efforts to increase the understanding of multiculturalism and to promote respect for cultural diversity. An exceptional panel included Carole Frampton, Director of Institutional Learning, Search for Common Ground; Eboo Patel, Founder and Executive Director of Interfaith Youth Core; Uri Regev, President, World Union for Progressive Judaism; and Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh, Sikh Leader, Chairman of Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha, Birmingham, United Kingdom. Speakers cited examples of effective dialogues between different religions and cultures, in particular as they apply to conflict resolution. Clashes of ideologies, values and cultural norms that accompany globalization were also examined in a lively discussion between the panel and the overfilled room of participants.

### **Highlights of a noon workshop:**

- Special Performance by the Bond Street Theatre and Clowns Without Borders. This workshop highlighted performing artists in areas of conflict. Representatives from Bond Street Theatre, Afghan Communicator, and Clowns Without Borders shared their personal experiences of performing in conflict areas. Clips of videos were shown including the Beyond the Mirror project in Afghanistan. The artists cited that as they traveled around the world non-verbal communication played a vital role in making children laugh and participate. With time, they learned that cues and signs that were used during a performance in one culture might not translate in another culture. They dedicated a lot of time to finding a universal gesture/cue that would travel beyond borders. The performing artists raise money on their own to travel, and they connect via the internet with various NGOs and other artists. They believe that there is a lack of support for the performing arts and artistic exchange in response to crisis, and hope to find additional ways to fund their cause in bringing smiles to children around the world. Visit their website if you are interested in learning more or would like to donate to these organizations:

<http://www.bondst.org>

<http://www.clownswithoutborders.org>

<http://afghancommunicator.com/Shop2.asp>

The closing session of the conference is always memorable, but even more so this year as Secretary General of the UN Kofi Annan and his wife joined the conference for the last time in his leadership capacity. Mr. Annan reiterated the importance of partnerships and how “non-governmental organizations continue to be essential allies of the United Nations, not only in mobilizing public opinion, but also in the process of policy formulation and in making them work on the ground; at the country and community levels.” Kofi Annan was given special recognition and a proclamation from the NGOs as he has been very active in the getting NGOs more involved in UN policy making.

A special event followed the closing session: The Redlight Children Campaign. Priority Films President Guy Jacobson presented extended excerpts from his three feature films: Holly, The Virgin Harvest, and the K11 Journey. Each year, over two million children are sold or kidnapped and forced into child sexual slavery and prostitution. Guy Jacobson shared a personal experience that led him to start the Redlight Children. The campaign seeks to generate conscious concern and inspire immediate action against child sexploitation. It is a worldwide grassroots initiative whose mission is to help decrease the demand for any form of child sexploitation by promoting more efficient legislation and stronger enforcement. While the campaign is global to match the worldwide epidemic, the legislation is localized by country. Mr. Jacobson discussed the challenges of filming these documentaries and at the very end, said, “Let’s make some noise!” For more information or to get involved in this campaign, visit:

<http://www.redlightchildren.org>  
[www.priorityfilms.com/K11](http://www.priorityfilms.com/K11)

Overall, DPI/NGO conference was a great opportunity to learn, promote SIETAR and network with delegates from around the world. For more information, including webcasts and downloadable speeches, visit the UN-DPI conference website: <http://www.unngopicconference.org>



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