

Confronting Concerns: 2004



This was the Youth Component of the Network's *Communities in Dialogue* Program. It linked youth groups across cities, nations and continents so that they could learn ways of empowering themselves to promote the rights of children. As they learned from one another, they also discovered how to be involved in the political process in their respective communities and countries. Special emphasis was placed on each youth's right to such participation. Participants engaged in individual, small group and large group youth-centered exercises that required a great deal of critical thinking and analyses. Activities included role-plays, debates, brainstorming and open discussions based on the information collected from *The Covenant of the Rights of the Child* was the basis for this dialogue. It focused on human rights as being necessary for the development of peace. It aimed towards youth empowerment, leading youth to grow more hopeful while learning to participate in democratic processes.

The youth groups involved in the United States came from all parts of New York City, St Louis, and Los Angeles. There were also youth groups from the Philippines, Nigeria, and Ghana who actively participated. The Network staff developed six sessions on the Rights of the Child. Groups were invited to engage in these suggested activities and to share their ideas with one another on our website forum. Thus the youth had opportunities to express their viewpoint effectively and work to make changes in situations that may be unfair or hurtful to them and others.