



## IHEYO 2009 – Annual report

### (1) Introduction

IHEYO had an ambitious Action Plan for the year 2009 with great expectations and projects. Realistically, not all projects or plans were realized but a great measure of success was registered. In principal IHEYO did her best in trying to take an extra step further to fulfill the aims of this umbrella organization as described in our By-Laws, article 3, section 2:

*“IHEYO aims to achieve the following non-profit goals of international benefit:*

- \* To promote the development of cooperation among member organizations and humanist youth, especially on the international level;*
- \* To promote circulation of information and expertise among member organizations and humanist youth;*
- \* To carry out educational and cultural action in order to promote a Humanist vision of cultural, social and ethical values;*
- \* To represent its members to any and all international governing institutions on all questions related to the organization’s purpose;*
- \*” To contribute and give a voice to youth humanism on the international level.”*

### (2) Brief Overview

2009 was broadly marked with a process of strongly connecting the members and partners and broadening the range of activities on an international level. We aimed at identifying the active members of IHEYO and trying to keep in touch with members that have less contact with IHEYO in the past. This was intended at strengthening the local and national youth work that our members and partners carry out in order to empower young people, to strengthen the human rights of all people and to enable youth develop themselves and their societies further.

In a bid to initiate a coherent program that captures our main thematic fields for action, IHEYO took steps in implementing a three-year program which was started in 2008 to run up to 2010 and this was geared towards strengthening its members and partners through regional working groups that could coordinate and carry forward activities to support these members and partners in combination with international spaces (online, face to face, etc.) In this line henceforth, IHEYO used 2009 to focus on the future of IHEYO in relation to other organizations like IHEU, our American humanist friends, Eastern Europe, South Asia (Nepal, India and neighboring countries) plus West and East Africa.

IHEYO tried very much to bring together qualities that are not often seen in many international organizations. It should be remembered that IHEYO as an organization is not only for youth, but also carried forward by youth. There is very limited hierarchy in IHEYO and a lot of team spirit and solidarity was maintained as well in 2009. The responsibility for the network and its activities lied completely within the young people themselves which created a maximum learning experience for the youth on an international level, and intercontinental level. This continues to make IHEYO one of the most unique youth international humanist organizations. We contacted many people from diverse backgrounds in touch with each other in an open space where they shared experiences and opinions on different topical issues. We still think that this is a very good quality and method of working with young people.

Like many other organizations, IHEYO still depends on external financial grants and membership fees both for the general operations and the projects that are carried out. IHEYO worked very hard to get funding for the action plan of the year. However some projects were changed or delayed because of the funding challenges. It is therefore unfortunate that some of the projects were not realized in the past but we still score in line with the highly implemented projects which put IHEYO above an ordinary youth organization. Realizing this short fall, we think the same projects can be modified and re-examined for future implementation.

We also agreed in the last GA in Washington that IHEYO remains and over see and above monitor in the implementations of several projects, maintaining its role as an umbrella organization than a grass root projects implementer.

### **(3) Regional Achievements for 2009**

#### *ASIA*

The **Asian Working Group** that was established in 2007 as result of the IHEYO 2006 Conference in India is strengthening South Asia through personal contacts and an active networking between humanist organizations and people interested in related issues. They have had regional meetings and workshops and increased their connections next to Nepal and India to countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan and also Australia. They have worked greatly in advocating for fairness and the liberty of the minority Delits of this part of the world. This group focused its work on the poor and oppressed such as dalits, women, young people in rural areas enabling them to rely on their own strength and thinking.

For that reason, the Working Group is mainly responsible for **the 8th IHEYO's Youth Conference 2009 in Nepal**. The Asian Humanist Group is responsible for this years Nepal conference and this **deserves a great and loud applaud!**

## ***EUROPE***

IHEYO has strengthened its out reach and have connections in Eastern Europe. The European Working Group has been in contact with the European Forum and other organizations to map out possibilities of more activities in Europe. All the needed preparation to formally establish the **European Working Group** of IHEYO and prepared an action-plan based on a discussion of our thematic priorities in Europe are now in place and we think 2010 will even be a better year for this group. The group still has the responsibility of finding all the necessary avenues and logistical needs in the 2011 Humanist conference due in Norway.

New Member organization have now been included from Poland and Germany that have joined IHEYO and the European group ( EWG ) to create a stronger network inside Europe as well.

Our Board members; Marit, Sven, Gea and Silvana have worked tirelessly in this line.

## ***AFRICA***

New Communications among the African Working Group have been made and a whole new board has been put in place to take the group to the next level. The once Secretary General of IHEYO , Yemi Johnson from Nigeria is now the new Chairman of the group and the current Secretary General of IHEYO and immediate past Chairman of the AWG is now the Vice Chairman of the group and in charge of the East African region. New volunteers have been contacted and they are ready to move forward with a more active and visible out put. The group is very hopeful that the next GA may take place in Africa. The AWG is looking forward to reaching out to as many young Humanist as possible with better results and networking. The Group has maintained its operations in relation to the activities of IHEYO. The Western region of Africa also intensified her efforts in line with publications using funds from other sources.

The group is also proud to have had Yemi Johnson, member of the AWG and now working for IHEYO as editor and publisher of the Youth Speak up to the end of the year 2009.

### **(4) General Operations / scores**

\* We had a fresh and brand new look of our web site with new areas, modern and friendly options of operations for contemporary humanist thinkers and our other visitors! IHEYO continued offering advice particularly on fund raising procedures to our members groups that requested for such help. The website was also made open for member activities and this was an opportunity for groups to inform people about their activities on an international scale, and encouragement in their projects.

Our Website is now one of the best youth Humanist Website one can come across with many visitors and a user friendly out look. In a special way, Sven from Norway, our board member should be appreciated for his unlimited efforts in maintaining and updating our Website.

\* IHEYO successfully maintained the flow of our **Youth Speak** with the intention of informing people about developments and debates in youth humanism. We were able to publish 12 issues per year of **Youth Speak with** interesting topical issues, fun and events information to our members and interested organizations.

\* IHEYO continued with the **Humanist sofa**, a new possibility of traveling all over the world and getting to know more humanists. The system works like couch surfing, but is mainly provided for people out of the humanist area and IHEYO's member organizations.

We think this is a great opportunity for networking as well.

\* IHEYO was unable to maintain a **staffed office** to coordinate the work of IHEYO on a daily basis as it has been the case in the past. However, measures were taken to make it possible for IHEYO to keep a close contact with her members and making professional operations in the process of carrying out her targeted actions. At the moment IHEYO tries to coordinate all administration work on volunteer basis and to realize all arising matters inside the EC or volunteer support from the outside. Much has been achieved with this strategy and we think soon we shall have the staffed office once again in place.

\* IHEYO continued to strengthen her competence **on fundraising** process and vigorously sought structural funding from long-standing partners and new ones such as the European Union, HIVOS, IHEU, IHS, Council of Europe, HEF etc.... Much more is expected in this area and IHEYO registers its appreciation to Gea from Netherlands and Silvana from Germany for their great effort over this task.

\* The **Executive Committee** made efforts to become a more efficient structural organ and continued to be the central operations system of IHEYO. We are able to have one face-to-face EC-meeting in Nepal this October! This was supplemented with IHEYO's EC-monthly meetings online on Skype to make IHEYO more efficient in delivering her services. The meetings held have made the EC more focused through several discussions on different crucial matters. These Skype meetings have increased their periodical happening to a level of a monthly meeting.

\* IHEYO has done much in planning the **Annual event for 2009** and has happily been able to hold its annual conference with the support of **AHA - IHEYO**, and SOCH in Nepal from 20th-25th October 2009! IHEYO looks at this as a great opportunity for further net-working and strengthening her contact and working relationship with the young Asian Humanists.

Special thanks to Gurinder, Abhilash from India and Uttam from Nepal for their significant input into this huge task.

\* Enormous hours and energy has been spent in finding possibilities of a **closer relationship between IHEYO and IHEU**. It has been a priority of IHEYO to strengthen **our relation with IHEU**; and we have continued to be present at the meetings of their Executive Committee in the second half of 2009. This has made the working relationship between the two organizations better and more firm. Both organizations are working towards a stronger relation between them. The discussions and communication are still going on a very friendly and open level.

At this point the GA will be presented with the full document with all details for the same and this should be the final line in realizing this great Idea.

## **(5) Challenges / short falls**

\* **IHEYO was unable to get funding from IHS** which was a set back in the implementation process of several of the expected projects. Because of this shortfall, we were incapable of implementing several projects in different areas. IHEYO did not establish communication offices in Europe, Africa and Asia, as it was planned.

\* **IHEYO was unable to hire an office staff for 2009.** Up to March 2008 Silvana Uhlich the elected President in Washington 2008 took over the job till the end of October and this marked the end of the task and opening of the communication office. This of course delayed many decisions and projects as well as important communication flow. We think that soon, if we get funds, the anomaly will be ironed out very fast.

## **(6) Conclusion**

In totality therefore, 2009 had several challenges but all-in-all IHEYO was able to score above the average performance. Much was achieved and a firm foundation has been laid for 2010. IHEYO has managed to exist since its reactivation and much has been improved in comparison to its old fractured structure systems. We are greatly indebted in appreciation to our member organizations, funders, advisers, partners and current and previous members of the Executive Committee that have extended a worthwhile voluntary service to IHEYO. We deeply appreciate that.

IHEYO knows that for such a unique international organization, challenges are bound to be part of our daily encounter and we know that this is more than a simple task but we treasure the experience that comes along with it and we think that the status of IHEYO is and will continue to be better than before! IHEYO will continue to develop and promote humanism among our member organizations on regional, continental and international level. We will still maintain our grip on the impoverished part of the world.

We look at IHEYO's future with a positive attitude and we do continue to think that it is extremely important to maintain close communication between the EC and our members. In line with continuity and as a way forward, we are looking to a more fascinating and memorable 2010, full of achievements and making the world a better place for all as well as creating a long lasting legacy for IHEYO and humanists in general.

Prepared by

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