

## A Celebration of the 'Next Generation'

International Youth Day was celebrated on August 12 and the UN has designated this upcoming year as International Year of Youth focused on the theme "Dialogue and Mutual Understanding." We hope to have substantive involvement over this next year in promoting the skills and passions of young people in both UN and NGO settings. 'Mutual Understanding' is often an elusive concept in diplomacy but it is a part of youth's social makeup and certainly of their self-understanding. In this Year of Youth, we all have much to learn from the next generation of diplomats and advocates.

Global Action, in partnership with Soka Gakkai International, hosted a pizza party on July 29 to honor the service of the many disarmament-related interns and junior staff whose energy and commitment has sustained our organizations through a difficult three months of meetings on nuclear disarmament, small arms and light weapons, and the arms trade.

We invited about 30 young people to our office, many of whom had not had the chance to meet all summer long. In addition to feeding and greeting, we had the chance for some substantive conversation. As a group, we discussed ways to make the disarmament internship experience more productive, engaged and fruitful, understanding that, at Global Action at least, our interns are engaged in high level professional work that we could not thrive without.

We also discussed an idea to get 'graduating' interns more involved as mentors for new interns. Too often, young people get 'thrown into' responsibilities for which they have not been sufficiently prepared. Moreover, the UN system is at times baffling to new interns, and having a more 'seasoned' hand to help guide their movements appeared to be an attractive option to the young people who came to our office. Having those mentors be persons closer in age to the new interns was also seen as a benefit.

The junior staff who we have been honored to have with us this summer – Cristina Ayo, Ana Carolina Barry Laso, Ryan Faello, Melina Lito, Muireann Mageras, Chelsea Moubarak, Katherine Prizeman and Lori Sims -- have inspired us in many ways and made it possible for us to make substantive contributions to a wide range of security-related issues. They have performed their diverse tasks with kindness and skill and would all make excellent mentors for future interns. The same can be said for many of the young people who came to our office.