



Alternative Perspectives and Global Concerns: AP-GC Annual Report 2014-15

Alternative Perspectives and Global Concerns has been registered as a federal Not-for-Profit Corporation in Canada. Corporation registration number is 902630-4.



2014-15 was a productive year in the life of the young Alternative Perspectives and Global Concerns. APGC experienced a series of important developments and events giving new directions to the life of the network. Here is a short report on what has been done over the last 12 months:

Part One: Organizational Developments

1. The constitution of the organization was drafted and introduced for voting. Members who actively reviewed the draft and contributed in the process of modification and approval are:
 - Hille Baker from Loyola University in Chicago,
 - Mahmoud Masaeli (drafter of the Constitution) from University of Ottawa,
 - Rico Sneller from Leiden University,
 - Angela Roothaan from the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam,
 - Jalil Roshandel from East Carolina University,
 - Stanley Anozie Uche from Sacred Heart College from Peterborough in Canada, and
 - Christopher Walshaw from University of Queensland in New Zealand.

The constitution was approved on January 30, 2014. It is on the website of the APGC.

2. APGC was registered as a federal not for profit corporation in Canada. Corporation registration number is 902630-4. Following this legally approved status, I have applied for the consultative status with ECOSOC, the United Nations. Currently APGC's profile is in the UN data bank. The approval process for membership in the UN is under way. This is the most important development in the life and the activity of our network.
3. So far 31 scholars and activists have joined the International Advisory Board of the Network. Now the geographical diversity of the network expands over New Zealand, Australia, Iran, Turkey, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, France, Canada, USA, Colombia, Nigeria, and South Africa. It is likely that two colleagues from Mexico and Brazil will join APGC as well. We would like to welcome all these colleagues and friends for expressing their willingness to collaborate with the network in achieving its goals. The new members are:
 - Philippe Girault from Canada and France
 - Ali Ardekani from Iran
 - Lode Lauwaert from Belgium
 - Kanakulya Dickson from Uganda
 - Benedict Okike from Nigeria
 - Fery Ghodsi from Canada
 - Marco Ceccarelli from Australia

- Michael Onyebuchi from Nigeria
- Gaafar Sadek from Canada and Iraq
- Salamat Ali Tbassum from Canada and Pakistan

The new website of our network has also been launched and is regularly updated. The logo of the network has also been designed.

Part Two: Activities of the network

The Network has continued initiating dialogues on global concerns. The following reflects a short summary of those initiatives:

1. As the eighth in a series on alternative perspectives and global concerns, a seminar on “Esotericism and Global Ethics: A Conversation on the Return of Spirituality in the Lifeworld” was held on October 16th, 2014 at the University of Ottawa. In this event that was aimed at discussing commonalities among eight spiritual traditions and the ways through which they can contribute in global ethics, the following colleagues contributed:



- Mahmoud Masaeli, *Why do We Need to Discuss the Contribution of Spirituality in Global Ethics?*
- Rico Sneller, *Jewish Esoteric Philosophy and Global Ethics*
- Stanley Anozie Uche, *African Esotericism with a Concentration on Igbo Tradition*
- Gaafar Sadek, *Shi'ite Esotericism and Global Ethics*

- Rajesh Shukla, *Hindu Spirituality and Global Ethics*

2. APGC, School of International Development and Global Studies at the University of Ottawa, and the Centre for Values and Ethics at Carleton University have jointly initiated and organized



the eighth International Conference in a Series on Alternative Perspectives & Global Concerns in Ottawa, October 17th-18th, 2014. This conference aimed at elucidating the importance of ethical considerations of the existing unequal development

among nations in light of the implications of the condition of globality. The conference explored the following themes:

- Ethical dimensions of worthwhile development vs. maldevelopment
- Winners and losers from globalization
- Poverty, agency, and empowerment
- Globalization of trade and the world poverty
- Financial integration and poverty
- Duty to help or to justice
- Duties of justice: beyond inequality of resources
- Justice as a virtue, in the context of international development.



As a constructive venue for discussing the ethics of global development, the conference brought together speakers from a variety of countries including Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Uganda, Turkey, Switzerland, Mexico and the USA.

This conference was sponsored by the two universities: Ottawa and Carleton.

3. With the goal of extending and presenting APGC in local communities, I have started with the Iranian community. For this purpose, and organized by the Persian Arts and Cultural Society of Ottawa (PACSO), I delivered presentations in five seminars around the “Crisis



of Identity in the Condition of Globality”. Seminars will continue from early fall with a concentration on the issues of democratization as a persistent urgency in a time of globalization and exclusion.

4. With the collaboration of our friend and member of the International Advisory Board, Marcelo Saavedra-Vargas, we planned a regional conference on “Latin American

Perspectives on the Condition of Globality” to be held in the National University of Bolivia in La Paz. The proposal was welcomed by the President of the University. We also planned to have the event convened in Lima in Peru and Quito in Ecuador as well. However, in spite of a great amount of effort that we put into designing the event, and the subsequent time-consuming communication, due to political conditions in Bolivia this event was postponed until a future opportunity permits.

5. We have initiated an international conference on “African Alternatives and the Condition of Globality” to be held as the tenth in the series of conferences by APGC in the fall term at the uOttawa. While the process of collecting of the papers was going on, Huhua Cao



who is organizing another conference on the process of African Urbanization encouraged me to put the two events together in order to provide a more collaborative venue for exchange of ideas. The main advantage of this integration is that we can

present APGC to a broader audience and officials from a few international organizations and institutions.

6. For the same purpose of presenting our initiative to local communities I have initiated the following seminars to be held in Ottawa:
 - Ethics of Recognition and Gender Equality in Human Development: The case of Iran’s Womanist Movement for Equality, joint event by Alternative Perspectives and Global Concerns School of International Development and Global Studies, uOttawa, Friday, March 04, 2016.
 - International Law of Natural Resources and Ethics of Development: In Commemoration of Iran’s National Movement, joint event by Alternative Perspectives and Global Concerns and School of International Development and Global Studies, uOttawa, Friday, March 18th, 2016.
7. Last year, I had the opportunity to present APGC to the following institutions and to pave the way for mutual collaboration:

- Iran’s Wisdom and Philosophical Research Institute. The Institute is very positive to our plans. However, the initiatives can only take place after the removing of the sanctions against Iran.
- Allame Tabatabaei University of Tehran and the Faculty of the World’s Studies affiliated to Tehran University are also interested in joint events.
- Laurentian Leadership Centre in Ottawa.
- Institute for European Studies in Mainz, Germany. Our colleague and member of APGC, Grigore Mihai, encouraged submission of proposals for collaboration if they fit into the Institute’s mission.
- Through my contacts and meeting with Canadian parliamentarian groups, I have presented APGC to them as well. It is now likely that we can receive support from the members of the group. However, I need to wait until the election is held in October 2015 and will then boost the process of meetings.

Part Three: Publications

Based on the above-mentioned initiatives, APGC has three books in the process of being published:

1. Mahmoud Masaeli ed., *Globality, Unequal Development, and Ethics of Duty* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing), forthcoming book by 2016. Sixteen authors, mainly the speakers in the conference, have included their essays in the book.
2. Mahmoud Masaeli, ed., *Spirituality and Global Ethics* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing), forthcoming book by 2016. Innovative in its scope, breath, and depth, this book will cover twenty two spiritual traditions of thought and the ways through which they can contribute in global ethics.
3. Mahmoud Masaeli, *Root Causes of Terrorism: A Religious Studies Perspective* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing), forthcoming book by 2016. This book is created based on the papers that were presented in in the Leiden conference in 2011.

It must be noted that from APGC, the following colleagues and friends contribute to the said books: Rico Sneller, German Bula, Robert Ojeda Pérez, Stanley Uche Anozie, Halil Ayninalp, Grigore Mihai, Angela Roothaan, Benedict Okike, Dickson Kanakulya, Marcelo Saavedra-Vargas, Marco Ceccarelli, Ruud Welten, and Mahmoud Masaeli.

Part Four: Future Plans

1. Conferences:

- The 13th in a series on Alternative Perspectives & Global Concerns, conference on “Dialogue and Development: A Dialogical Insight into an Ethics of Global Development”, Ottawa University, Ottawa, early April or early May 2016. We are

open to changes in the proposed dates. Rico Sneller is also interested to host the event at Leiden University. We also invite the members of APGC to contribute to this event. For this purpose, please give us your date of preference, the location, and if you can host it in your university, and the title of your presentation.

- Seminar on “Cosmo-Consciousness and Global Ethics” to be held in October at the uOttawa. Ulisses Schlosser from Brazil and Mahmoud Masaeli are the main speakers, while discussants from other institutions in Ottawa will contribute to this event.
 - In accordance with the recommendation of Robert Ojeda Pérez from LaSalle University in Bogota, 14th in the series of conferences on “Latin American Perspectives and the Condition of Globality” to be held in Bogota, Colombia. A draft proposal has been submitted for consideration. German Bula from the same university will kindly collaborate in organizing and hosting of this event.
2. Teaching for the Southern societies: Two courses on the “Causes of Uneven Development” and “Alternative Perspectives in Human Wellbeing” are being prepared to be offered to the universities in the Southern societies through interuniversity linkage. These courses will be online and fully free of charge. We have had contacts with the related institutes to get the administrative support for these courses.

I have also been working on a similar proposal to teach at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. Primary approval has been obtained. If the project goes ahead as desired, the intensive course starts April 20th for five consecutive weeks. Courses will be taught free of charge.

Part Five: Some Proposals for the Members

The following ideas are suggested to our friends and colleagues at APGC with the aim of creating a proactive collaboration and further promoting the activities of the network:

1. We welcome all your suggestions regarding the promotion of the mission of APGC.
2. If you have blogs, please send the link to me to be added to the list of blogs on our website.
3. Please send a short report of the events in your institutions to me, while attaching pictures to the report. These reports will be published on our website.
4. We can re-publish your already published essays on the website of APGC. This helps our network to be a resource-based website in the area of interest.
5. You may organize events in your institutions or host events that we suggest.
6. Your published books can also be posted on the website.

7. Your generous financial support alleviates the burden of expenses incurred by us. If you are interested, please contact Rico Sneller (h.w.sneller@hum.leidenuniv.nl).

Sincerely,

Mahmoud Masaeli