

## Caux 2009: Report from the Communications Team

**Summary:** The summer went quite well. The reinforcement of the communications team with communications assistants was a success. However, there are some improvements to be made in the recruitment process and in the organisation and in the repartition of the work during the conferences. We will also have to think about what our priorities are. Regarding the pre-conference phase, there were several problems with the preparation of the individual conference programmes. We are working on these problems and hope that it will work better in 2010.

### 1. Pre-Caux Phase

The communications team's job in the pre-Caux phase is:

- Design the programmes for each of the conferences, in collaboration with the conference teams
- Promote the conferences
- Recruit Communications Assistants
- Prepare the Conference Phase

**1.1. Design the programmes:** We had some problems with the design of the Programme Supplements, i.e. they were only ready quite late in spring and not all of them matched the quality which we were hoping for. This had several reasons: The deadline that was set initially was not kept by the conference teams. We were not clear on the design and decided only at quite a late stage that we would do programmes for each of the conferences that could work as stand-alone documents, i.e with all the necessary information about the venue, the cost and the specificity of the Caux conferences.

The plan was to produce stand-alone programme for each of the conferences and print them in three languages in Spring. This was done with the programmes for the TIGE conference and the Multicultural World conference. It did not happen with the other conferences because:

- Tools for Change: the content of the Tools for Change conference programme was not ready, respectively the content that was prepared by the conference team was, in the view of the communications team, not good enough to be printed. The main critical point was that for us, the minimum requirement to print the thing had been to have the titles and short descriptions of the courses and the names and titles of the faculty ready. This was only ready around 3 weeks before the conference started.
- CFHS: The programme of the CFHS was not ready at all. In the end the supplement of this conference was only finalized two or three weeks before the conference started.
- LCSW: The LCSW-team was not interested in the offer from the beginning. They wanted to do their own design.
- Learning to be a Peacemaker: There was a big discussion about whether it should be publicized on the Caux website or not and it finally was, but only with the small leaflet that was produced by themselves.
- MEPP: The MEPP conference was off the record from the beginning. This was accepted by the communications team although we were confused by the fact that the conference was announced on the website of the Next Century Foundation (where there is also a report available at the moment: <http://www.ncfpeace.org/drupal/node/345>).
- TIGE: As mentioned above, a stand-alone programme was produced and printed. However the content could have been better. There were no names of speakers, only the descriptions of the

Work Streams, and those were quite 'fluffy'. We think that the TIGE team could do better next year.

- LLMW: As mentioned above, a stand-alone programme was produced and printed. The content was very good. We think that this should be the model for most of the other conferences. A very clear daily programme was ready by the end of April.

Lessons learned: We need to be clear from the beginning, i.e. in autumn already what we want to produce and we need to plan properly so that we are able to do it. At the same time the conference teams must stick to the agreed deadlines. In this year we will anyway print a programme for each of the conferences. We will have to make sure that the content is as good as possible. We hope that we will be able to do this and we also hope that the CPG will help us in achieving this goal. We also think that all of the conferences except for the joint ventures (Learning to be peacemakers and MEPP), have to respect the corporate design. i.e. We will talk to the LCSW-team and we want them to use the same design as all the other conferences. This applies as well for the Caux Forum for Human Security. As we are working with an external graphic designer for 2010, he will also do the design for the CFHS. It will be different from the design they are using now, but they will have to live with it.

**1.2. Promote the conferences:** One general remark: The promotion of a conference is very difficult if the programme of the conference is not clear (see above). So the first step for a good promotion is to have a good programme. This was not the case for most of the conferences (see above).

We think we did what we could. We posted the programmes to several websites, newsletters... in Switzerland. We did send-outs with the printed programme of the TIGE and the LLMW conference in Switzerland. We regularly sent out the 'Caux Programme-Updates'-Email-Newsletter. We did not do too much in other countries than Switzerland because we think that this should be done by the national IofC bodies in each country. Apparently there is some room for improvement on this and this was one of the reasons to launch the so-called 'Caux Promotion Project' in May, with the help of Cécile de Nomazy. This was a good idea, but it started too late and was not planned well enough. But one of the achievements was that awareness of the need for participants was raised and that we now have identified 'Caux Promoters' for some countries. We will stay in contact with these Caux Promoters and hope that they can help with the distribution of programmes and the promotion of the Caux conferences in other countries than Switzerland.

**1.3. Recruitment of Communications Assistants:** We decided to recruit one communications assistant for each language and did this with an advertisement on the Caux website which was also posted to several other websites. We were surprised by the response and delighted that we really had the choice between several good applications. This applies for the German and the French-speaking assistants. With the English-speaking assistant, it went a bit differently. Mike Brown sent us the application of Carole Khakula and she came without any of our team knowing her, and we didn't seek out any other applicants. This is something which should be done differently for 2010. We know that it might not be easy to find a native English-speaker in Switzerland so we will be glad about help from IofC bodies in English-speaking countries but still we think that the Foundation which is finally paying for the assistants should have the final word on deciding who is coming or not. So the way to recruit people for 2010 will be as follows: In Spring 2010, there will be a job advertisement in French, English and German, we will post this on well-known job-websites in Switzerland and we will ask the national IofC bodies especially in France and UK for help to find these people.

**1.4. Prepare the conference phase:** This means we have to think about how to reach the media, what can we do on the website, what we have to do to prepare the welcome packs, plan the conference report...

On the media: We decided to send out a press release one week before each conference to invite the media and one at the end of each conference to give a summary of what happened. Plus special press

releases on special events like the official day or Prince Hassan's speech at the CFHS. The planning for the press was not too easy because the conference programmes were not clear on time. So we always had to be flexible. The same applies for the report. It would be easier to plan for the report, if the conference programmes were ready at least two weeks before the conferences start. But the main problem about the report was that it got crowded out of our thinking. That was one of the reasons for some difficulties in coordinating between the German, the French and the English team.

On the website: We decided to do the same as in 2007 and in 2008, but better. Two things came in in the last minute: Twittering and Podcasts. This was ok, but only because Twittering is not such a big deal and because Edward helped us with the podcasts.

On the welcome packs: It would make our work much easier if the programmes and everything else that goes into the welcome packs was ready long before the conference starts. As it was, at least partly the case for the LLMW-conference. Because this was not the case, we were not able to prepare the welcome packs before the conferences. This led to working through the night in Caux. We have the feeling that most of what goes into the welcome packs could be prepared long before the conference starts. So we will talk to the conference organisers and ask them to do the possible to make that happen. It is not funny to have to do everything in a rush in the last minute especially not if you have the feeling that most of it could have been prepared long ago. The biographies of the speakers, the daily programme, the information about communities, everything can be prepared. And it makes the work of the communications team much easier if we only have to do some small changes in the last minute and not have to start from scratch in the last minute. But of course we must also say: It was the first time we did this work with the welcome packs and we were surprised by some things. So for 2010 we think we know how it works and we will be able to ask the conference organisers on time to prepare the things.

## **2. Conference Phase**

The communications team's job during the conference phase is:

- Prepare the documents for the welcome packs
- Write and send out press releases
- Invite Media
- Keep the website up to date
- Write newsletters which are sent out by mail from the secretariat (Eve/Tatiana)
- Make sure that info materials about Caux and IofC are available for visitors and participants
- write articles and conduct interviews for the report

**2.1. Prepare the documents for the welcome packs:** See above. We will have to make sure, in collaboration with the conference teams, that most of the things are prepared beforehand. One issue which is always coming up again: the welcome brochure. We think it should be possible to design it professionally and print it in large numbers beforehand so that it can be used for some years. We think this should be possible and will come up with a draft in due time.

**2.2. Write and send out press releases/invite media:** This went fairly well. One point is that not too many journalists came and there were some articles in the media but not too many. We can surely develop our relationship to journalists and we will work on that. But we also have to be clear that most of the events in Caux are not very exciting, especially not for the Swiss press. This year, the CFHS had quite a good response in the media, but mainly because of Prince Hassan and other VIP's. The other media success was the Learning to be a peacemaker programme, because it just is touching on a very 'sexy' issue. So the media response will always depend on the content of the conferences and the people attending.

One critical point is that for exactly these two conferences we had a very strict media policy. We do understand the policy of the Learning to be a Peacemaker programme and we think it worked well. But we do not understand the policy of the CFHS. We were not allowed to publish the names of all conference participants and of the programme and journalists were only invited for Friday evening and Saturday morning. In our view, this is a pity. We think the CFHS should revise this policy for next year. There will never be thousands of journalists willing to come but if we are allowed to invite them for the whole session, we might get a few more that we did.

**2.3. Keep the website up do date:** On the website, we did the following: blog, news-items, press-review page, speeches-page, photo-gallery, podcasts-page, Twitter.

Blog: This is a problem. On the one hand, it is a nice feature and we would like to keep it because it gives the possibility to report about the conferences in a more personal way. On the other hand, the blog was mainly written by the communications team. We did many things to promote the blog and to recruit people to write something but it turned out that not that many Caux participants are interested in writing something. This was the same now in all of the three years we did the blog and this year was even worse because we did not get any comments at all. A blog should also be a forum where the readers are taking part, but this was not the case at all this time. So we will have to think about it.

News-items: This went fairly well.

Photo-gallery: Went fairly well.

Podcasts: Went fairly well, but we could have done more.

Press-review page: no problems

Speeches-Page: It is always very difficult to get the speeches. The best way is to get them from the interpreters, but it does not always work. There should be a way of getting each and every speech to the communications department. Even if it only exists on paper and not in electronical form, we should get a copy and we can then scan it and put it online. We would be glad to get some help on this (who is responsible?).

Twitter: This is not a big deal, because it takes not much time to twitter. The only problem is that not too many people were following us. But maybe this will be better next year. Twitter is not yet too popular in Europe.

Video: this is something which will have to be decided. We posted one video to the website, from the TIGE conference but we had to take it down again because there was a complaint from one person who was in the film and said that she did not want to be there and that she had not been told that this would be published. The filmmaker said that he had told her, but we were not able to verify this. The other problem was that some of the TIGE team were not happy with the quality of the film. They said it did not transport the right image of the conference.

In the GCG Meeting, there was a strong wish to have more videos on the website in 2010. We agree that it would be nice to have videos but we have to be clear that we would need some equipment and above all, some people who can do it. The things mentioned above which we are already doing and will continue to do are already quite time-consuming and we would not have the time to do more at the moment. And if we did videos we would have to make sure that everybody who is filmed signs a piece of paper and confirms that he is happy that this film will be published. And the quality would have to be good. So we would need at least two more communications assistants who would then only be responsible for videos. We are not sure at the moment if it is really worth it. Because if we produce videos of the type about the TIGE conference (summary of the whole conference), it gets difficult because people of the conference team might not be happy. If we only do films of single speeches or debates, there is a danger of producing boring films. It is questionable if it is worth to film a speech. It will be a boring film and people might prefer to download the podcast and listen to it in the train or car

rather than sit in front of a computer and watch a man speaking during an hour (as was for example the case with Prince Hassan).

**2.4. Write newsletters:** After each conference, the communications team is producing a newsletter which is then being sent out by mail to several recipients all over the world by the secretariat (Eve/Tatiana). Apparently this is still a need, but will have to be carefully observed how long it stays a need.

**2.5. Info materials about Caux and IofC:** there were some problems with this, probably also because of the change of guard in the bookshop. But we observed a slightly chaotic manner to keep things. It is not clear where the stocks are being kept. The storage room on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor would be the natural place. At least two members of the communications team should have a key to that room and everybody who is involved in the organisation of the conferences should be made aware that this is the place to keep things.

**2.6. Write articles and conduct interviews for the report:** This went fairly well. But again, it would help to have the programme ready early enough so that the communications team can plan properly.

### **3. After-conferences phase**

The main job after the conferences is getting the reports ready. This was working quite well in the end, but we had some problems. We began too late with the coordinating. The team who finally worked on the English report consisted mainly of people who had not been to Caux in 2009. Most of the reports and interviews were written in German or French and this was a problem for the English team. And the English team apparently also had an earlier deadline for their report. So they were waiting for things which were not produced yet, because the French and the German team had other deadlines. So for 2010 we need to start early coordinating early enough. All language teams should have more or less the same deadlines. If we still do have language teams. Because Changer is thinking about its future and the English team is a big question-mark. So one other possibility might be to do the report in German and then translate it into French and into English. The Foundation or someone else would then have to pay for the translation. One good thing about this solution would be that we had a report along the same lines in all three languages. Because that is another problem of the current system: Changer and CAUX-Information are not too far away from each other, but the English report very much concentrated on the Learning to be a Peacemaker programme.

### **4. General Remarks**

Teamwork in the communications team: it was not bad but we were not prepared well enough. So next time, the team has to be in Caux earlier and the tasks have to be defined and distributed properly. Of course there will always be ad-hoc changes but in 2009, almost everything was ad-hoc and this has to change.

We also suffered from a lack of a shared vision about what Caux is all about. The German report team discovered that it was not able to use Carole's texts while the English team very gladly made use of them.

There was also some different perceptions about what to do and when. There was a good teamwork between Philipp, Adriana, Helene Matthias and Andrew. We tried to coordinate themselves as much as possible. But Carole more or less did what she thought was right to do. So in 2010 it will have to be made clear from the beginning by the team leaders who is doing what and when.

There was no clear policy on how many days per week should be days off. For 2010 it will have to be made clear from the beginning.

Caux is in general quite chaotic. If you need something you often don't know where to get it. This leads to two things: 1. If we need something specific, we always have to run around in circles until we finally find it. 2. People are coming into the communications team's office with various requests that don't have to do anything with the communications team. So for 2010 we would like to see a list of all people who are working in Caux and with their telephone number and with their responsibilities. We have to work towards some kind of quality management system which with clearly defined roles and processes for everything. And this system has to be made available for everyone who has any role in Caux.

It would be good to think about priorities and to have some feedback from 'the bosses' what they think about all this. Should videos be a priority? Is the blog worth to be kept? Can we count on the support from 'the bosses' regarding the corporate design?