

Speech at Marianne Andresen's House

Nothing is more powerful in the fight against extremism than a girl with a book in her hand. These are the words of UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon.

For us this is an encouraging reminder of the value of our daily work – to make education serve peace. Nothing less than this ambition was behind the establishment of UWC Red Cross Nordic at Haugland, Flekke.

It was this task that urged Tom Gresvig, Ivar Lund-Mathiesen and the rest of the founding team 30 years ago to travel round to the Nordic Countries – searching support for a College that served peace.

In 1995 it became a reality. It must have filled everyone with a strong sense of wonder. There they were – the 100 first students – from all over the world. “Am I going to live here?”, “Am I going to learn here – with these people?”

It was a tremendous achievement – the result of team work, vision, determination. It was done with great knowledge of what is possible – and what is it that serves our Nordic Countries, our Nordic Region and ultimately what is it that serves the world?

The Nordic Region takes on a great role in creating a more peaceful world – a more sustainable world – a world where education is held highly.

It is in this city that Malala received the Nobel peace Prize, stating that *Education is neither Eastern nor Western, it is human.* It is from this island that Gro Harlem Brundtland created her vision for a sustainable future. This city has given its name to a peace agreement – that may not have gone according to its ambition but still is a testimony to the role Norway takes as a peace maker and this summer we again saw this when Prime Minister Erna Solberg took on the role as champion for the Millennium Development Goals for education.

In Flekke we see girls and boys arrive. We see young men and women leave. They are eager. They take their task seriously. They want to change the world - now.

Will they make it? We now they will not do it tomorrow. But we also know that they leave us well equipped. They have experienced a purposeful diversity – and they have seen it as something good.

A context where difference is seen as meaningful in itself. They have learnt to become **tolerant**: Not slack tolerance – *Anything goes. What's the difference?* But a hard won tolerance – coming from a recognition of what is different in the other from having at least tried to put yourselves in the other person's shoes and value his/her way of being in the world

Or to put it with the Danish philosopher Løgstrup: *Our life is so constituted that it cannot be lived except as one person lays him or herself open to another person and puts him or herself into that person's hands.*

Friends, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you all. -For creating this marvelous opportunity for the young ones who come to our College. For giving them this experience of trust as they put themselves into the others hands. For supporting UWC Red Cross in our continued quest for making our relevance real.

We are all needed.

Arne Osland

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