



Street paper delegates from around the world gather for the 2015 Global Summit of the International Network of Street Papers.

INSP PHOTO

Street papers worldwide unite around common mission

Did you know that Street Roots is part of a growing global movement? The International Network of Street Papers (INSP), based in Scotland, supports more than 115 street newspapers in 35 countries in 24 languages. Our collective grassroots network is giving more than 12,000 vendors at any single time a hand up through the sales of newspapers and magazines. It's really amazing.

Last week in Seattle, delegates came together from around the globe to celebrate and share best practices. It was an inspiring affair.

Street Roots had the privilege to send six delegates to the conference, including vendor Desmond Hardison, who sells at the Green Zebra on North Lombard

Avenue.

"Man, what an amazing experience," Desmond told me after the conference. "There really aren't words to describe the work that we are collectively doing together. Being able to connect with other vendors and street papers from around the world was just amazing. It's got me energized."

"Our diversity is our strength, and what we have in common trumps our differences," says Tim Harris, INSP board member and founder of Real Change newspaper in Seattle. "We are all in this together, learning from each other, healing a broken world, one vendor and one newspaper at a time."

It's true. When you're supporting Street Roots you are also supporting five young women in Mexico City who started the latest street paper, sharing tips with St. Petersburg, Russia, and Copenhagen, Denmark, about supporting vendors and sharing news content in Vancouver, B.C., and Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Street newspapers can be an incredible, powerful force in local communities, especially considering the widening gap between the rich and the poor in most urban environments and a constantly changing media climate. Not only do street papers provide people experiencing poverty and homelessness an income, they also help educate the general public on social-justice issues locally, while highlighting voices from around the world. Street



PHOTO BY ISRAEL BAYER

Street Roots vendor Desmond Hardison shares a pose with a new friend, Henrik, a vendor for Hus Forbi street magazine in Copenhagen, Denmark.

papers also serve as a watchdog for issues and policies affecting the poor. Providing quality journalism while highlighting the voices of the community is key. The phrase, "Think globally, act locally," takes on a whole new meaning.

As we traveled back from the international conference, many of us had a feeling in our hearts, much like we did as kids when we left camp, that we would never be the same. Our platforms and passion for our work create a bond that unites us across many nations and cultures, all with the goal to give people experiencing poverty a hand up by producing great publications.

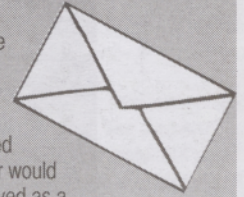
We are a family, and at the end of the day, that extends to you the reader. Each time you purchase a newspaper and support your neighborhood vendor you are not only helping an individual, you are helping thousands of people working together to support a better life for people experiencing poverty.

"I have my own things in my house, can buy things I need and when I go to sleep I can think about the future," says a Mr. Oh, a street newspaper vendor in Seoul, South Korea. "In the past I didn't, because I had no hope. It has made a big difference."

It's the same all around the world. Thank you, readers.

Write in

If you would like to have something that you've written published in our pages, or would like to get involved as a member of our reporting staff, contact Managing Editor Joanne Zuhl at 503-228-5657, joanne@streetroots.org. We ask that all submissions include the author's name and contact information, if available.



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If you are interested in volunteering with Street Roots, please submit a volunteer application at streetroots.org/volunteer. Or call Volunteer Coordinator Grace Badik for more information at 503-228-5657.



DIRECTOR'S DESK

By Israel Bayer

Israel Bayer is the executive director of Street Roots. You can reach him at israel@streetroots.org or follow him on Twitter @israelbayer.