

Peacebuilding Peacelearning Intensive



Sixty-five people from 22 U.S. states and eight from six countries in Africa, Asia, and South America headed home today from the Wilmington College campus in Ohio after a week attending the National Peace Academy's 2010 Peacebuilding Peacelearning Intensive.

The Intensive is a one-week learning program that supports citizens in creating opportunities to establish safe, healthy, and sustainable communities in which people are able to live with dignity, free from violence.

"Concerned citizens from all walks of life came to Wilmington," said Tony Jenkins, Education Director of the National Peace Academy, "and returned home with concrete ideas and proposals for bringing sustainable change to their organizations and local communities. I see this commitment as evidence that peace, hope, and

change are not just slogans but real, practical possibilities."

With the support and assistance of National Peace Academy edu-learner faculty, each participant worked throughout the week on the design and development of a strategic peacebuilding project plan to bring back to his or her community or organization. David Hazen of Oregon had this to say about the experience:

"For me the PPI was an immersion experience in the generation of collective wisdom, a continual gentle insistence that no single individual had all of the truth but that all the input from each and every individual was indispensable for the evolution of a group choice of direction. This healthy model of right relationship is the basis of cooperation and peace. The safety and freedom of this experience allowed myself and most others to open and expose our innermost heartfelt longings in ways that were life-affirming, heart-expanding, unexpected, contagious, and literally mind-blowing. As a result, my feeling of empowerment and my capacity to empower others has been transformed."

One participant's project involves individuals beginning to build bridges in a community by identifying the groups who can begin to speak to their neighbors and curb the child abuse



that exists in a culture where most feel it best to just leave well enough alone.

One of the Nigerian participants is establishing a project to bring together government, civil society, and business in the southeastern, oil-rich region of the country for nonviolent resolution of the long-running conflict there. It would support development to improve the lives of the people of the impoverished region and also institute corporate social responsibility practices.

National Peace Academy President Dot Maver said, “Based on the overwhelmingly affirmative response from Intensive participants, we at the National Peace Academy are eager to continue the creation of new programs to support the on-going development of the skills, capacities, and knowledge Americans are calling for to create positive change in their communities.”

National Peace Academy edu-learner faculty will follow up with participants to assist as needed with project implementation and impact evaluation.

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