

August 2011

INTRODUCTION TO THE NATIONAL PEACE ACADEMY

Origins

In the USA, the dream of a National Peace Academy dates back to our Founding Fathers. Indeed, its roots go deep, to the 12th century Great Law of Peace of the Iroquois Confederacy. There has been a consistent call, in government and civil society, for a government department or office of peace and for a peace academy. The dream was realized in March 2009 at a Global Stakeholder Design Summit, held at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, where over 170 representatives of civil society, business, and government gave birth to the National Peace Academy.

The premise for the National Peace Academy is to educate in the sense of the etymological root in the Latin, *educere*, meaning to lead or draw forth. The National Peace Academy is an educational institution that in its design, policies, and peacelearning infrastructure "draws forth" the principles and processes of peace.

Purpose

The National Peace Academy supports, advances, and nurtures cultures of peace by preparing the next generation of peacebuilders who will bring their unique background to communities and the corporate, nonprofit, and government workplace. Through our learning programs we support the development of the full spectrum of the peacebuilder – inner and outer, personal and professional; and facilitate the development of peace systems – local to global.

What Is Peace?

"...peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part."

– Earth Charter

Right relationships, which are at the core of this definition, are relationships at all levels (from the personal to the ecological) between and among individuals, groups, and organizations that exhibit such values, attitudes, and behaviors as cooperation, compassion, empathy, win-win competition, mutual respect and understanding, good will, nonviolent conflict resolution, kinship with and sustainable stewardship of Earth's ecosystems, and the like.

Mission

The Mission of the National Peace Academy is to provide, catalyze, and make accessible holistic and integrative learning and research for peace, and to elevate in the public consciousness the meaning and value of peacebuilding and everyone's role in it.

Operating Mode

The National Peace Academy conducts programs, activities, and operations that are:

1. **Principle-based.** In everything it does, the National Peace Academy strives to embody and reflect the principles and processes of peace, both internally and externally.
2. **Comprehensive.** National Peace Academy programs are transdisciplinary in scope and integrate, inform, and are informed by peacelearning, peace education, peace research, peace practice, and peace policy.

3. **Collaborative.** The National Peace Academy works through and with existing and emerging institutions and programs in government, business, and civil society.
4. **U.S.-focused.** The National Peace Academy orients its programs nationally while networking globally.

Spheres of Right Relationship

The Earth Charter definition of peace suggests at least five spheres of right relationship to be nurtured toward full development of the peacebuilder:

Personal: how we manage our internal conflicts, attitudes, actions, and emotions toward living with integrity.

Social: how we manage our interpersonal conflicts, and give and receive the qualities and conditions of human dignity.

Political: how we engage with institutions and processes toward establishing peace and justice.

Institutional: how organizations and institutions are organized, and the systematic structures and processes through which power is mediated and human affairs are governed.

Ecological: how we shift our relationship to Earth systems from control over, to interdependence and living with and within.

Peacelearning Programs

The peacelearning programs of the National Peace Academy introduce participants to theory and practices for nurturing peace in each of the above spheres of right relationship.

Peacebuilding Peacelearning Intensive. The National Peace Academy's Peacebuilding Peacelearning Intensive (PPI) is designed for individuals and organizations who hope to launch new peacebuilding and change initiatives or enhance existing efforts. Participants are coached in the design and development of a strategic peacebuilding plan. The plan is assessed and evaluated by faculty and peers at the Institute, and the National Peace Academy provides ongoing guidance for project development afterwards. PPI 2010 was held at Wilmington College in Ohio and PPI 2011 at Champlain College in Vermont. PPI 2012 will take place July 2012 in Santa Barbara, California.

Peacebuilding Peacelearning Certificate. The Certificate Program, being piloted in 2011 and to be fully launched in 2012, is a collaborative initiative designed to catalyze learning opportunities for peace on a large scale by drawing upon the existing peace resources, knowledge, and experience that already exist in formal, non-formal, and informal educational institutions. It is comprised of accessible and affordable short courses offered by the National Peace Academy in partnership with universities, NGOs, and community organizations all over the country. Courses will appeal to the needs and concerns of citizens from all walks of life.

International Institute on Peace Education. The National Peace Academy is the home of the International Institute on Peace Education (IIPE). The IIPE was founded in 1982 by Dr. Betty Reardon and faculty colleagues at Teachers College, Columbia University, and has since been held annually in different parts of the world. The IIPE provides short-term, residential learning experiences in peace education. It is an intensive multicultural and cooperative learning opportunity in which participants learn from and with each other about substantive peace issues and interactive teaching approaches. The 2010 IIPE was held in Colombia, and the 2011 IIPE was held in Japan but has been postponed to 2012.

National Dialogues. The National Dialogues (dinners, school, community groups, teleseminars, etc.) are intended to foster thinking and conversation in the general public on critical issues related to peace, justice, community well-being, and change, encouraging participants to critically inquire into the possibilities and challenges of living in "right relationships" with themselves and others that might lead toward new visions and actions for establishing peaceful, just, healthy, and sustainable communities in the United States and around the world.

Our vision is that peace education, nonviolent conflict resolution, dialogue, and basic skills in the art and practice of right relationship become part of the very fabric of society.