



The Peace Gazette

People to People International Peace Camp-Jordan-2009

Peace Camp penetrates students' souls

By Rugile Stonyte

48 students from 27 countries gathered in Amman, Jordan to participate in Peace Camp to share their culture, their emotions and ideas, and gain skills and knowledge in peace building and conflict resolution.

During the peace camp, students had different sessions and visited the most interesting fantastic highlights. One of these sessions was about peace and conflict. Students separated into five different groups, discuss the issues related to various conflicts and the possibilities to achieve peace, to make an environment where peace will be possible. The session was constructive and very useful because students discussed different conflicts and tried to find a suitable solution.

"I was pleasantly surprised that a session that could have been super

trivial and fluffy actually ended up being meaningful, educational, and deep," said Brandon, USA. "Everyone had peace in their heart, but expressed it differently depending on the surroundings and where they were from," said Till, Germany.

Conflict exists everywhere. We only need to be able to find a solution for

the conflict, according one student.

Students had another session about religion. During this session, they talked the major religions trying to find common themes. The most



Students share a special moment at the Dead Sea during Peace Camp held in March-April 2009 in Jordan.

important thing students understood after the session is that there cannot be an intercultural and interreligious dialogue without respect, tolerance, and understanding.

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Shirley Ochan epitomizes youthful hope, vigor

By Brandon Barbello, USA

Shirley Ochan is a pleasant young woman from Uganda where she is currently a senior at an all-girls school. Few Peace Campers have connections with Uganda, and so there is much to learn from her.

She first became involved with People to People International while studying at her boarding school. Her mother heard of Peace Camp and thought it would be a great fit for her. Though she was already very busy, she took the time and the chance to apply. Her risk paid off!

There are many differences between Uganda and Jordan. In Uganda, most people are Christian, compared to

Jordan, where most are Muslims. Uganda has a more liberal society, while Jordanians abide to stricter codes. Uganda has a warm, tropical climate and jungle-like environment, as opposed to Jordan which has a mountainous desert landscape of greatly varying climates.

Life in Uganda is not without its difficulties. One significant challenge is climate change, which has lessened the rainy season from nine months to six. The weather has gotten warmer and the cost of living has

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Students employ peace journalism

By Alexa Varano

Peace journalism is a term that many people are unaware of due to its infrequent use. The core of peace journalism is when the media exercises self-control to present events in a just and fair way for the betterment of all society. More simply, in the words of the great John Lennon, peace journalism is “giving peace a chance”.

In applying this method of journalism, journalists attempt to be as objective, neutral, and unbiased as possible. Vladyslav Vlasov from Ukraine contributes to the definition by stating, “Peace journalism is the ability to portray events in a total unbiased manner, by simply focusing on the facts.” Although it is important to print information and the truth of each situation, it is also important to include the hope for peace in news throughout the world.”

It seems as though in news articles and media today there is an extremely large focus on the negative aspects of the world. From one day to the next we hear about all of the tragedy in our neighborhoods and around the

globe. However, with every act of evil contributed to humankind, an act of moral goodness may be there as well.

Karapet Muradyan, from Armenia, stated, “Peace journalism is necessary for advocating peace. Journalism in general is a

With the stress on the good aspects of life rather than the bad more positivity will come forth based on the energy extended.

An actual law of nature states that like attracts like. Therefore, good attracts good and bad attracts bad; it is the law of



Students work on their photo spread as they put together the Peace Gazette at Peace Camp in Jordan.

tricky step. Media can both wage war and perpetuate peace. Peace journalism is important.”

It simply takes a shift in focus, which is in the direction that peace journalism would go. With peace journalism there is more of a focus on positivity and hope.

attraction based solely on energy. The more we focus on the evil acts done by humanity; people will continue to contribute their piece of evil. Often times people committing these atrocities are in search for the publicity, which is given to them very up front through the media. The use of peace journalism would state the facts as they are, but rather than attracting support by tearing into the hearts of readers and listeners, the media would be more uplifting in announcing the potential that can come out of the world by providing hope.

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Students capture images of peace

In these photo slideshows, students display their impressions of Peace Camp.

1. Peace at Peace Camp from head to toe
2. A day in the life of a leader

Peace camp is stereotype-breaker

By Michelle Lee, Rugile Stonyte, Tyler Hall

Peace campers get past many cultural differences that earlier may have been a stereotype. A peace camper may have never met someone from a certain country and think they know who that person is (purely by stereotype). When a group of people from multiple backgrounds and lifestyles are put together, no one knows what will occur. I think that activities such as discussions, games, excursions and cultural presentations introduce us to each other and our cultures.

Throughout peace camp, discussions have catalyzed cultural diffusion. Even on our first bus rides the peace campers, all strangers, shared dialogue about our interests. We exchanged personal discussions to erase differences. I think this happens because one on one interaction puts a friendly face to a mysteri-

ous culture. This way we are getting information from a first person source. I think that this prevents inaccurate and over exaggerated biases. These biases can demonize a foreign culture.

Through peace camp activities such as the lunar problem solving we learn how to work together through our ideological differences. This allows us to achieve a common goal. In this

activity we attempted to order fifteen items as a team.

At first we disagreed but after listening to different explanations the team came to a common agreement. This may seem simple but ten different people do not think the same way.

Excursions are also an important part of Peace Camp. These new experiences of Jordan were the first taste of Jordan for most of us. When we went to Petra and Wadi Rum, we were all in awe despite our diversity. This

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Shirley Ochan



simply means that they have to live with less.

Shirley herself, though, is unfazed by these difficulties. She looks forward to a bright future. Next year, she hopes to study engineering in the United States, likely at Boston College. For graduate school, Shirley is considering “something enterprising, like business.” She wants to be a success and share it with her homeland. On top of all this, wants to have eight kids! She fondly remembers her youth in a big family being raised by her entire village, and

MULTIMEDIA Cultural understanding?

In this video, one Serbian student and one Kosovo student discuss how they can best bridge differences.

1. An Intercultural Discussion, produced by students

is not concluding that all Peace Campers are the same person but that we have some similarities despite our differences.

During Peace Camp, cultural presentations have introduced us to the lifestyle of our peers and newly formed friends. Learning about roses in Bulgaria, the happy people of Columbia and the tiny size of Lithuania has brought smiles to our faces, candy to our stomachs and hopefully reduced our ignorance.

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so she would like for her children to experience the same.

Her Ugandan nationality has deeply influenced her personality. Shirley has high moral standards and an appreciation for the most natural of beauties. In Uganda, she says, the women do not even wear make-up! The people are just that content enough with who they are, but still, they strive for a better life.

Shirley Ochan is a young person of hope and vigor. An open future lies before her.

Cultural differences can be overcome

By Rana Ali, Kalina Cherneva,
Gustavo Orozco

The socio-cultural reality of humanity can be closely compared to the image one gets from a vast brick wall with mislaid parts;

MULTIMEDIA Impressions of Peace

In these Podcast audio files, students discuss their impressions of Peace Camp, and of peace in general.

1. Dyala and Maddie
2. Elliott
3. Maia
4. Vadim

missing bricks that don't allow the wall as a whole to be integrated. Such holes toughen the incorporation of numerous tiny parts into a concrete and unique image. Although, as humans we are aware that no reality is perfect we must be able to fill these gaps and put them aside to ensure inclusion and cohesion. Cultural differences have proved to be a rigid barrier between nationalities.

So, how can one overcome these cultural gaps? It is vital to initiate such a process by stepping back and analyzing the present situation that enables the holes in the wall to flourish. After all, a reality is constituted by much more than just bricks and holes. Viewing the wall from a wider perspective will provide an easier comprehension of what lies beyond the superficial fallacies and imperfections. Expanding the approach

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towards the wall will also allow the identification of prime materials that permit the enclosure of the present gaps. It is essential that the members of each culture are able to not only think outside of their box, but to think in another entirely different context.

In such a diverse environment as Peace Camp, such an approach to a different cultural reality is necessary to promote mutual understanding and peaceful interactions.

After all, we are all inhabitants of a common ground and have many more widespread fundamentals than superficial differences. A crucial requirement to encourage world understanding is an open and willing mind.

Peace Camp

Besides this session, students had wonderful tours to Petra, Kerak, and the Dead Sea. Petra is a cultural, historical, and educational city. Students learned lots of new things about the ancient era.

Students spent another three days at the Dead Sea, and visited the river Jordan where Jesus was baptized. Students left the Dead Sea for Amman where they planted trees for peace and friendship. The students were confident that they all had the best time of their lives, experienced the power of meeting new people, sharing their culture, and being part of an amazing journey. They have known each other for a week, but had the feeling that they had been friends for a long time. Students say they have become a family, like sisters and brothers. "I feel a strong connection to everybody. In these 10 days, a really deep friendship has developed between us that I have never experienced before," noted one student.

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Students enjoy a guided jeep ride through the beautiful Wadi Rum desert of Jordan.

International Peace: Is it impossible?

By Neelam Melwani

As of right now, the world is in a complete state of chaos. We are spiraling headfirst down the path of destruction. War, corruption, poverty, famine and greed plague the world as countries slowly put their self-interest before the well-being of the world as a whole. Our generation is now given a choice: what do we do? Do we continue our plight for peace or do we take the easy way out and result to war?

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millions of people. If some countries can live in complete harmony, if some peoples can live without problems with one another, then why can't the others?

In Curacao, people of all races, religions and cultures live like neighbors, and there are no serious or severe cases of racial discrimination. On this small island of 120,000 people, people are treated with respect and under-

is "rightfully" theirs. But can we ever actually justify war?

As the future generation we need to change. We need to encourage others that a life is worth more than a plot of land, or even a nationality.

Some people may argue that peace is only possible in a utopia, but I choose to differ. I refuse to believe that we, who are one, cannot live in complete harmony with one another, if only we took what we teach our kindergartners and implement it in our own lives. It's a simple equation with an even simpler solution: Sharing.

Peace isn't something we can create overnight. This peace process is one that may take us a couple of generations, but do we even have that much time? In Sudan, millions of innocent women and children are raped and harassed every year. In Iraq, people are still dying on the streets, even when war is apparently already over.

I don't feel safe. I feel threatened. I feel that if countries invest money into their school systems rather than the war industry, we would make the world a better place.

Our lives are all at risk in this situation, no matter where we live. Some people may consider peace a simple jigsaw puzzle, but it is more than just that. Peace is a puzzle with pieces that are constantly changing and pieces that are missing. It is our duty to pick up these missing pieces and solve the puzzle.

Kings of the Castle



Peace Camp students tour the ancient and mysterious Kerak Castle and fort during their trip to Jordan.

War, is more than just a simple three-letter word. It is more than just a single battle, more than just a single army. It is not just a struggle for power. War is malicious and the outcomes and results change the lives of not only armies, or political leaders, but countries, nations and millions upon

standing despite where they come from or who they worship.

However, in countries in the Middle-East for example, religion, ethnicity and culture are used as excuses for war. Political leaders once again, make self-interests their priority, be it protecting their land, or getting back what