

NATIONAL PEACE ACADEMY

SYNOPSIS OF THE NATIONAL PEACE ACADEMY GLOBAL STAKEHOLDER DESIGN SUMMIT¹

Over 170 academicians, business leaders, government officials, field practitioners, and community leaders from around the nation and 10 other countries gathered March 2-4, 2009, at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, to design and establish a National Peace Academy in the United States. The participants in the Global Stakeholder Design Summit represented a broad spectrum of national and international perspectives and experiences, ranging from community- and faith-based organizations; to domestic, school, gang, and ethnic violence prevention; to journalism and the media; to economic and business practices; to human rights and social justice; to peace and conflict resolution education; to community and international peacebuilding.



Elise Boulding

The Summit opened with a video welcome message from Elise Boulding – Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Dartmouth College, co-founder and former Secretary General of the International Peace Research Association, and a major contributor to creating the academic discipline of Peace and Conflict Studies. The opening then continued with a celebration of the depth and diversity of experience, knowledge, and achievement represented in the room; a brief survey of the current state of the peacebuilder, including four dimensions of peace and five relationships in education to consider in regards to the design of the National Peace Academy.

Participants, sitting at 23 tables with a diverse group of seven or eight stakeholders at each and following a series of structured questions and exercises, then paired up to share and explore personal thoughts, experiences, and dreams about the National Peace Academy and its design possibilities that would inform the Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny phases to come.

In the first part of the two-part Discovery phase, the tables shared among themselves and in plenary the personal learning and insights from the pair-wise explorations. In the second part, participants rearranged themselves to sit at tables by stakeholder group. Each group, from its own perspective and that of the professions and organizations it serves, addressed and reported out collective answers to the following question: *What is unique and special about the stakeholder groups represented here—the collective strengths, assets and perhaps underestimated capacities that we have and can leverage to create a new realization of peace through the creation of the National Peace Academy?*



The purpose of the Dream phase of the Summit was for participants to imagine the National Peace Academy they want to work toward – specifically, the world of 2020. Then, in the Design phase, the Summit moved from dreams and visions to identifying concrete, prototype projects in various National Peace Academy design opportunity areas.

¹ For the full Summit Report, see: http://www.nationalpeaceacademy.us/files/design/npa_designsummitreport.pdf.



Fifteen design opportunity areas and a team for each thus emerged from the exercise. These design teams then met for a two-stage process of, first, brainstorming ideas related to their area that could move the National Peace Academy in the direction of future visions and dreams. In the second stage, they took the most promising of those ideas and developed the concept of a model of it that could have strategic value as a prototype to demonstrate an aspect of the National Peace Academy and be a learning model for refining its development.

In the Destiny phase, the design teams developed action plans, some involving one or more prototype projects, and then presented their plans and prototype ideas to the plenary. The Summit wrapped up with participants reflecting on their Summit experience and hopes and expectations for the National Peace Academy.



A core team is moving ahead to coordinate, manage, consolidate, and fundraise to support the plans and activities coming out of the Summit, and to carry the development process forward to operational realization of the National Peace Academy.

In these challenging times of systems and structures breaking down, the National Peace Academy takes its place among those emerging initiatives that will help create an infrastructure for peace, sustainability, well-being, and cooperation.

The National Peace Academy Stakeholder Design Summit was a quantum leap forward, a beginning that brought myriad stakeholders to the table in order to explore a dimension of peacebuilding that would build upon existing successes and integrate them within an emerging paradigm of practical peace.



The activities and energy of the Summit were a celebration and acknowledgement of all who work for peace, whether specifically within the field or through other personal or professional endeavors. The recognition that we are all peacebuilders and that an academy is necessary truly sets the stage for value added work to be done through, with, and building upon existing institutions, theories, and practice. The idea that peace is transformative, more than an absence of war, and an innate, integral part of humanity is our essential perspective. It is now up to all of us, working together, to take the seminal work of the Summit to the next level of development toward operational realization of the National Peace Academy, and thus to challenge our world and our human nature itself as we demonstrate through effective and practical programs that we can indeed move ourselves out from a framework of violence and into a framework of peace.