

National Peace Academy

Peace Learning for the Full Development of the Peacebuilder and Peace Systems

The National Peace Academy supports, advances and nurtures cultures of peace by conducting research and facilitating learning toward the development of peace systems – local to global – and the development of the full spectrum of the peacebuilder – inner and outer, personal and professional.

Peace Learning Directed toward the Full Development of the Peacebuilder

At the heart of the National Peace Academy is the development of the peacebuilder – from the personal to the professional, the intuitive to the intellectual, the familiar to the foreign – while fostering and honoring individual strengths and contributions. The learning programs of the National Peace Academy develop both the self and the understanding of the self's role and contribution in society, preparing the next generation of peacebuilders who will bring their unique background to communities and the corporate, nonprofit, and government workplace. In nurturing the full development of the peacebuilder, the National Peace Academy is committed to:

- Educating the whole person for full participation in life as a peacebuilder, personally and professionally
- Developing the profession of peacebuilding, such that, peacebuilding becomes an integrated, recognized and active part of the fabric of the society and culture of the United States at the local, state and national levels
- Promoting peacebuilding as an integral and necessary component of every profession, pioneering peace education for the fields of business, education, healthcare, science, media, government

Peace Learning Directed Toward the Development of Peace Systems

As part of its whole systems approach to peacebuilding, the National Peace Academy facilitates the development of peace systems. Human systems function like ecological systems, where everything has a place and function in an organic, self-emergent, self-organizing set of relationships. Any system (a family, a private business, a public agency, a nonprofit service) can embody and reflect peace through its commitment to ethics, right relationships, just practices, and principles of sustainability.

The National Peace Academy supports the development of peace systems by facilitating peacebuilding and peace learning in groups, organizations, and communities; developing and demonstrating models; teaching the principles and processes of peace; and providing technical assistance to redesign systems. The National Peace Academy also promotes and conducts peace research that expands the theoretical foundation of peace, advances its application and practice, and evaluates peace efforts.

Working through the Four Cornerstones of Peace Learning and Action

In closing these gaps, the programs of the National Peace Academy comprise and address four interdependent, synthesizing, and catalytic cornerstones of peace learning and action: peace education, peace research, peace practice, and peace policy.

Peace Education

Peace education is concerned with facilitating learning for and about peace. Peace education facilitates learning around the following important questions: What skills, knowledge and practices can we utilize to handle our own internal conflicts, our emotions, and live with integrity? How might we manage our interpersonal conflicts and differences nonviolently? What are some of the ways we might engage in decision-making processes and inquire into the institutions and mechanisms we establish for assuring peace and justice? What are some of the ways we can facilitate healthy and sustainable relationships with Earth and the ecosystems we belong to? These questions illuminate the wide and varied content and concerns of peace education, including: conflict, crime, disarmament, economic development, the environment, gender issues, human rights, mental health, international peace and security, and social justice. The practices and capacities peace education seeks to develop are just as varied, including: conflict transformation, contemplative practices, cultural competency, dialogue, Earth stewardship, mediation, and nonviolent communication and restorative justice.

Peace education is also especially concerned with the pedagogy and methods utilized in facilitating learning, for it is through teaching that we model behaviors and social interactions. The National Peace Academy seeks to change the typical hierarchy that exists between the student and teacher in formal education. For teachers to be effective facilitators of learning they need to be learners as much as the students. The National Peace Academy advocates for increased teacher training in methodologies including student centered approaches to learning; self-reflection, journaling, meditation, and contemplative practices; forms of critical pedagogy and experiential learning; cooperative learning; community centered learning; and democratic learning oriented toward preparing students to be active citizens who participate in their communities and help shape new, more preferred realities.

Peace Research

The peace research agenda of the National Peace Academy is oriented toward the development of peace knowledge that informs peacebuilding. The National Peace Academy's

research agenda will explore the ethics of peace, peace psychology, the history of peace, the politics of peace, the economics of peace, culture and sociology, peaceable/nonviolent strategies and peacebuilding practices, education and pedagogy, and the presence of positive peace in the world and how to observe and measure it.

Peace Practice

Peace practice is the application of the principles and process of peace. The National Peace Academy supports the use and development of multiple approaches and practices toward nurturing internal or personal peace; peace between and among individuals; peace in and amongst cultures; peace in and amongst communities; peace with Earth and its ecosystems; active and engaged citizenship leading toward political peace; and the development of peaceful institutions responsive to the concerns and aspirations of the human communities they serve.

Peace Policy

Some transformation of existing institutions - including government, politics, education, and business - is necessary for a peace culture to emerge. The National Peace Academy supports the development and strategic implementation of peace-related policies with and across business, communities, education, government, the justice system, and politics.

A Value Added Approach

The National Peace Academy is a value added institution. It complements, adds value to, and works synergistically and collaboratively through and with existing and emerging programs and institutions – at all levels of civil society, business, and government – towards nurturing a culture of peace, sustainability, and increased livelihood for all citizens, nationally and globally.

We live in an increasingly complex society riddled with deeply embedded problems and ongoing conflict. In this context, the National Peace Academy believes it is necessary to draw upon and support the utilization of all possible resources and approaches to peacebuilding. Therefore, the National Peace Academy works to foster dialogue and facilitate learning amongst practitioners, researchers, policy makers, and evaluators working in different fields with the goals of strengthening individual efforts, increasing efficacy through collaborative and collective actions, and discovering new, more strategic approaches to change.

The National Peace Academy recognizes organizations and individuals working on issues of conflict prevention, conflict resolution, crime reduction, disarmament, economic development and poverty reduction, environmental and economic sustainability, gender equality, human rights, international peace and security, community mediation, and social justice as a network of unique partners all working on different pieces of a common peace puzzle. The National Peace Academy helps to fit those pieces of the puzzle together.

Filling Essential Gaps

Operating as a value added institution, the National Peace Academy endeavors to fill gaps in research, practice, and policy in the peacebuilding fields. The programs of the National Peace Academy are working to address the following gaps:

Establishing a model for a principle-based, transdisciplinary, learning institution

In supporting the development and transformation of new and existing institutions, the National Peace Academy models the principles of peace through its institutional design. The National Peace Academy is continually monitoring, evaluating, and adapting its internal and external operations in response to its own development and to what is being called for in the evolving world around it.

Bringing peace-related knowledge, and practice directly to communities where the learning is urgently needed

Government agencies, schools, businesses, and civil society are urgently calling for expert support in the application and integration of peacebuilding efforts within their communities. The National Peace Academy supports the learning where it is needed the most – directly in the communities – by bringing together local educators with experienced practitioners to help nurture sustainable efforts and programs that will be responsive to local needs and concerns.

Supporting macro capacity building in formal education

A tremendous gap exists between policy and implementation within formal schooling programs. Policies supporting the integration of conflict resolution, mediation, violence prevention, and social emotional learning have been enacted by departments of education in many states; however, the infrastructure and expertise to carry out the policies rarely exist. The National Peace Academy strives to facilitate dialogue amongst educational policy makers, practitioners, and evaluators and works with government, civil society, universities, and businesses to develop more responsive infrastructures and internal expertise, and enhance and increase teacher-training opportunities.

Identifying gaps and building bridges amongst formal and non-formal, academic and professional peace programs

More than 400 universities and colleges worldwide now offer undergraduate or graduate degrees as well as individual courses and certificates in peace-related fields and disciplines. These well established programs have made significant contributions to the development of the peacebuilding professions. The National Peace Academy will work in collaboration with these programs to identify gaps in knowledge and practice that need to be addressed in pursuit of the development of the full spectrum of the peacebuilder – inner and outer, personal and professional. The National Peace Academy also works to increase collaboration amongst these existing programs toward nurturing a more vibrant, comprehensive, and efficacious professional community of educators and peacebuilders.