

# Global Peace Services USA

*...an idea whose time has come*

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## Collaborative Growth in Peace Services in Europe

Global Peace Services USA had its beginning in an encounter with Margareta Ingelstam in Sweden in 1989. Four years later Margareta was the keynote speaker at a consultation that led directly to the establishment of Global Peace Services USA. In our ongoing contact we have much to learn from the growth of peace service in Europe, where activities include research, education and training, organizing, and fieldwork. Recently I had a chance to talk about global peace services with Margareta when she was visiting in the United States. She described three developments of global peace services.

### Swedish Forum for Peace Service

In Sweden there is now a Forum for Peace Service, or Swedish Peace Team Forum. This is a coalition of about 50 organizations representing peace work, and also development, humanitarian, and human rights work. A study has shown that approximately 60 peace service projects have been carried out by Forum members in conflict areas within the last three years. An example is the project "Building a Democratic Society Based on the Culture of Nonviolence." In this project peace teams worked in cooperation with the Center for Peace, Nonviolence and Human Rights in Osijek, Croatia. The Osijek project involved training local people for reconciliation and peace building work in villages and towns in a most volatile area of eastern Croatia that borders Serbia. The project was funded jointly by more than seventeen governmental and nongovernmental agencies from a number of European countries. Kevin Clements, General Secretary of International Alert, London, who knew the project well, told the peace team members, "When the wounds of war were raw you helped heal some of them. When people from diverse communities were divided and not talking to each other you helped build and rebuild connections between them. When women wondered whether they could hold war torn communities together you gave them courage and helped them do what was necessary to survive and lift families and friends out of the immediate fog of war' and think of more peaceable options."

Last year the Swedish Peace Team Forum ran a course

for academic credit at the Civil Society Center of SIDA (The Swedish International Development Agency). The course was called "Conflict Transformation, Democracy, and Human Rights." It was held on four long weekends, with assignments between the weekend sessions. There was a thesis requirement, and also a requirement to design and present a creative workshop with others. The workshops were about conflict transformation, peace education, human rights, and education and training of others for work in conflict areas. The course qualified as part of a degree requirement in peace and conflict research and human rights. Between January and June, 2002, sixteen women and nine men between the ages of 24 and 59 completed the course. All were related to organizations that work in conflict areas, for example, The Red Cross, development organizations, and the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation. Margareta observed that planning and implementing the course was so exciting because it gave those involved opportunity to explore ways of integrating education with work for democracy, human rights, and conflict transformation. This is an approach that people are adopting in different parts of the world.

### European Civilian Peace Services

European Civilian Peace Services is a European-wide network. It aims to promote peace service as part of the work of the European Union for the prevention of violent conflict. Margareta told me that the network was asked to provide 2000 civilians trained in nonviolence to deal with the situation in Kosovo. Recruiting these 2000 persons, however, took so long that when they finally arrived in Kosovo the conflict had so escalated that it was considered too dangerous to have civilians there, and they had to return to their own countries. Furthermore, experts say that 2000 would have been insufficient. According to some peace scholars and politicians, if recruitment had been earlier and they had had more people, the conflict would have been managed without military forces.

A European Peacebuilding Liaison Office in Brussels publishes a newsletter with current information about the European Peace Service. The July issue tells of efforts to

mainstream conflict prevention and of specific prevention activities in three regions in Africa. There is also a project to identify experienced professionals who would be suitable for deployment at short notice in countries in crisis.

### **Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel**

Margareta also described the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) in which ten churches and organizations in the ecumenical movement in Sweden are cooperating. EAPPI is an accompaniment program in Palestine and Israel coordinated by the World Council of Churches. The accompaniment working group includes WCC member churches and ecumenical partners from Israel, Palestine, Sweden, the Netherlands, England, Scotland, Germany, Norway, Denmark, Belgium, Switzerland, South Africa, USA and Canada. The program aims to express solidarity with local churches and Palestinian and Israeli peace activists, to ensure respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, and to be an active witness that an alternative, nonviolent struggle for justice and peace is possible as a way to end the illegal occupation of Palestine.

With four others from Sweden, Margareta plans to participate in this program personally for three months, beginning in November. Over a period of 24 months, 55 persons from Sweden will go in teams. There is a preparatory training of about nineteen days before participants go to Palestine and Israel. Upon arrival, each accompanier will attend onsite orientation and a further training course which will include media relations, cultural sensitivity, and dealing with the military and with confrontational situations.

Each of the three peace service organizations described above is collaborative. Each is premised on cooperation among already established groups that already have some components of peace service, though not all have identical definitions of peace service. The European Civilian Peace Services sees peace service as nonviolent work in conflict areas, while the Swedish Forum for Peace Service sees peace service as nonviolent work for prevention of violence, for conflict transformation, and for peacebuilding in conflict areas. In all the examples it is clear that peace service is operating professionally and that it holds great promise for further growth.

*Mary Evelyn Jegen, SND*

## **U.S. Institute for Peace Grants**

The United States Institute for Peace recently made the following grants in the field of peace service:

**Henry Martyn Institute, Hyderabad, India** A training project designed to create a core group of peace facilitators drawn from different religions, traditions, cultures and communities in two conflict-afflicted states of the Indian sub-continent, Nagaland and Kashmir. The project will result in four training workshops in two states, as well as in an ongoing series of advanced peace skills workshops designed to develop a cadre of resourceful facilitators who can critically analyze conflicts, conduct trainings and intervene effectively in conflict situations.

**International Catholic Migration Commission, Ambon, Indonesia** A training project targeting community leaders from religious-defined, conflict-affected communities in the Maluku Tengah district of Indonesia. During a week-long workshop, Christian and Muslim participants from five sub-districts will focus on inter-ethnic tolerance and community reconstruction. In addition, four Indonesian facilitators will receive intensive peacebuilding training, and the project will produce an article focusing on lessons learned.

**Yesodot – The Center for the Study of Torah and Democracy, Jerusalem** A faith-based peacebuilding training program for 16 religiously observant Jewish and Muslim teachers in Israel that explores the theological, psychological and social roots of intolerance and conflict. The initiative will result in a manual for facilitators of future religious Jewish and Muslim school encounters and a curriculum on coexistence for teachers that includes religious Muslim and Jewish sources, simulation exercises and other related teaching material.

## The University for Peace

While peacemaking and peacekeeping have been identified with the United Nations since its inception, peace education has received far less attention over the years. This is no longer the case, according to Martin Lees, Rector of the University for Peace (UPEACE) of the United Nations, headquartered near San José, Costa Rica. UPEACE, established on December 5, 1980, by UN General Assembly Resolution 35/55 is now a newly revitalized, restructured, and re-energized institution, emphasized Lees.

Speaking on July 14, 2003, at a Washington, DC luncheon organized by the United Nations Association of the National Capital Area, Martin Lees—UPEACE Rector since January 2001—recalled the university's mission “to provide humanity with an international institution of higher education for peace with the aim of promoting among all human beings a spirit of understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, to stimulate cooperation among peoples, and to help lessen obstacles and threats to world peace and progress in keeping with the noble aspirations proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations.”

In its first phase, UPEACE focused its attention on Latin America and developed graduate programs in the areas of natural resources, human rights, and the culture of peace. Lees noted that UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, as part of the 1998-1999 UN reform initiative, concluded that UPEACE should be revitalized. Accordingly, a new Governing Council, university administration, and Academic Advisory Council were appointed and a five-year expansion program was launched. Maurice Strong from Canada is now Chairman of the 17 member Governing Council, Graça Machel of Mozambique, serves as UPEACE Chancellor, and Kofi Annan is Honorary President.

The renewed UPEACE, indicated Rector Lees, is very much a teaching institution with a major focus on developing international partnerships and networks to disseminate knowledge and skills in the varied aspects of peace and security. It is the only institution within the UN system authorized to grant degrees at the master's and doctorate levels. A special strength of UPEACE, said Lees, is its multicultural character reflected in its faculty, students, and international collaborating networks. “Our job,” Lees remarked, “is to show the diversity of views.”

While the university is enhancing its Master's Degree program offerings on its Costa Rican campus, intensive efforts have been devoted to expanding the institution's international reach through regional partnerships in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Central Asia and Latin America. Through regional workshops and forums, partnerships with area universities in collaborative research and student/faculty exchange, UPEACE, Lees underscored, is seeking to build national capacities in education, training and research in peacebuilding. The university has also created an Institute for Media, Peace and Security, based in Europe.

Distance education will be an important tool in furthering UPEACE objectives, said Lees, and the university will make use of the Internet as well as DVDs and CD-ROMs in this effort. Its Centre for Education and Information Technology will play a particularly pivotal role in this area.

In September 2003, UPEACE will add a Master's Degree Programme in International Peace Studies as well as in Gender and Peace Building to the three Master's Degree Programmes currently offered in Costa Rica in Human Rights, International Law and Dispute Settlement, and Natural Resources and Sustainable Development (in partnership with American University in Washington, DC).

Two additional Master's Degree Programmes on Education for Peace Building and on Environmental Security will be added in 2004. UPEACE also offers an array of short courses and seminars on its 766-acre campus in Costa Rica. Undergraduates also have the opportunity to study at UPEACE through its Undergraduate Semester Abroad Programme.

While the University for Peace was created by UN resolution, it must raise its own funds through donations by governments, foundations, and corporations. Rector Martin Lees views UPEACE's future optimistically and looks toward a growing role for the university in building skills internationally “in the arts of peacemaking.”

*Mindy Reiser*

*For further information on UPEACE, consult the*

*university's Web site at [www.upeace.org](http://www.upeace.org)*

## **Join the GPS Annual Meeting October 25**

The GPS Annual Meeting will be held this year on Saturday, October 25, 2003, from 2 to 6 PM in Room 403 of the Marvin Center of George Washington University in Washington, D.C. We are fortunate to have Prof. Mike Wessells of Randolph-Macon College and the Christian Children's Fund as our lead speaker. Professor Wessells will speak on the topic, "Caught in the Cross-Fire: Working with Children in Zones of Conflict." The Marvin Center is conveniently located at 800 21st Street, NW, just south of Pennsylvania Avenue and a few short blocks from the Foggy Bottom stop on the Blue and Orange Lines of the Metro system. We look forward to seeing you there!

## **2003 GPS USA Board Elections**

In accord with the GPS USA Bylaws, 3 Board positions have been opened for election. Nominations have been invited via the Newsletter. An election ballot will be mailed to all GPS members within the next month.

### ***Global Peace Services USA***

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The newsletter of Global Peace Services USA is published quarterly. GPS USA is incorporated in the District of Columbia and is tax-exempt. Current board members are: Mehdi Aminrazavi, Clara Doyle, John Eriksson, Mary Evelyn Jegen, Jean Martensen, Aura Martinez, Cecil Monroe, Irfan Omar, Mindy Reiser, and Harry Yeide. We welcome contributions and comments. To contact us:

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