

**UNESCO Questionnaire on the implementation of the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace**

**Contact Information**

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I

ACTIONS ACCOMPLISHED BY YOUR ORGANIZATION WITH REGARD TO PROMOTING A CULTURE OF PEACE

**ABSTRACT:** Established in 2002, Service For Peace (SFP) conducts service programs to facilitate personal transformation and the transformation of interpersonal relationships. SFP provides meaningful service learning opportunities engage youth in meaningful service and advocacy for social justice issues. One of the most significant outcomes of these peacemaking programs has been the active involvement of youth in all aspects of program development from planning to implementation to advocacy. Youth have been involved in leading other youth to take responsibility for their community and to advocate for justice and peace are hopeful signs of the realization of a culture of peace. SFP representative have worked to connect local municipalities, businesses and nonprofit organizations into social networks to identify compelling needs within the community.

Our plan for the next five years is to continue to build partnerships with public, private and social sectors on a local level in 17 nations including: Nepal, Korea, Cambodia, Thailand, the Philippines, Japan, Mongolia, Israel, the Dominican Republic, Bosnia, Moldova, Russia, France, Great Britain, Spain and Croatia as well as the United States. These partnerships are the basis to build social networks that involve students and universities in cross-cultural learning experiences based on a curriculum that highlights, peacemaking and diversity, and leadership training. The prototype for this social network has been piloted In Korea with Thailand, Nepal, Japan, Taiwan, Mongolia, and the Philippines.

In this report I will focus on two case studies that exemplify the SFP transformational model of peacemaking in response to the UNESCO challenge to create a culture of peace.

**Background:** Service For Peace (SFP) is an international nonprofit organization registered in the US as a 501 (c) 3 public organization since 2002. SFP conducts service programs to facilitate personal transformation and the transformation of interpersonal relationships. We bring together people of different faiths, races, nationalities, generations and cultures so that they can find commonality and build friendship through working together for the common good. It is this active cooperation, not passive tolerance, which offers the real hope of peace. All of our programs focus on providing service and learning opportunities with a global peace perspective.

Our goal is to educate young people to be Peacemakers by becoming “transformational leaders”. We provide experiential educational opportunities for youth by engaging them in community based service learning projects that explore the causes of deviancy and social disorganization. The educational curricula guides volunteers to understand the complex issues contributing to social problems and encourages them to explore social justice issues and advocate for groups that are marginalized.

SFP initiated the Global Peacemaker (GPM) program for college students and young adults. The GPM program is an international service project conducted in 8 nations including: Nepal, Korea, Cambodia, Mongolia, the Philippines, Japan, Israel and Thailand. Participants representing several nations, races and/or faiths are invited to travel to a foreign country to serve a community in need. The programs introduce participants to the local culture, history and people and provide experiences through which they find unity with their fellow participants. With an emphasis on experiential learning and personal transformation, GPM seeks to foster peacemakers who will continue to identify and address barriers to peace in their own countries by bringing communities together to address common concerns.

In response to the UNESCO Challenge to foster a culture of peace beginning within the individual, SFP employs the transformational approach to peacemaking through service. An SFP peacemaker recognizes that if people change, the problem will probably change too. By changing people's attitudes and increasing their capacity to understand others, a peacemaker engenders moral growth for the parties in conflict. They then begin to see themselves and their relationships from a different perspective.

### **Experiences of Transformation**

One of the most powerful and challenging features of the GPM program is often the home-stay experience. Last summer in Israel US college students participated in a GPM project in which Jewish families hosted young Arabs. During the introductions, one host mother mentioned that she had a son in the Israeli army and this created some difficulty for the young Arab who was to stay in her home. But on the last night in that town, when the group gathered to learn traditional dances, the two reached for each other's hands and the Jewish mother pointed toward the young Arab and said, "My son." That moment was mentioned by one of the American participants as being the most meaningful of the entire two weeks. And this was not simply a nice experience. Several of the 24 participants were inspired to want to do more. Here's a quote from Darka Antlova from the Czech Republic.

*"We hadn't known each other at the beginning but at the end it was so difficult to say goodbye to each other. In the end we became one family knowing that we are going to miss each other hoping to meet again at another opportunity of serving this country which became my new home. I really gained the desire in my heart to help this country and its people bringing peace through serving. I'm looking forward to other projects in Israel hoping that I'll be able to take part."*

And Katherine Andrews, a national VISTA volunteer, of the **Points of Light Foundation** in Washington DC wrote:

*Being a part of the Global Peacemakers Camp was a lesson in history and international politics that could never be rivaled in any classroom or newspaper article. Most people outside of Israel and Palestine are aware of the ongoing conflict there and may have basic understanding of the facts and events related to that conflict. But by hearing firsthand perspectives on the situation from the people whose lives are most affected by it, we foreigners had our eyes opened to the complexity and emotional connectedness that underlies this decades-old dispute. We have memories of real conversations, real accounts, and real images from which to draw in future discussions of the Middle East struggle for peace.*



*Preparing for Homestay in Beit Shemesh*



*An Arab Volunteer Tutors a Young Jewish Boy*

**Two Examples of Transformative Peacemaking:** The first example is a service learning program set in the Middle East and models how Israelis and Palestinians can form harmonious relationships and model peaceful co-existence. The second model focuses on bringing our global family together in response to the tsunami disaster in Thailand.

**Israeli-Palestinian Transformational Peacemaking:** In September of 2004, sixteen US college students went to Israel to explore opportunities to engage Palestinians and Israelis in community service. With the help of our coordinator in Jerusalem, Baruch Shalev, SFP established relationships with several Arab and Israeli communities interested in promoting service to reconcile relationships between the two groups.

In February 2005, SFP volunteers arrived in Israel from the US to participate in a multicultural exchange program at the invitation and expense of the At Risk Youth Division of the City of Jerusalem. The Jerusalem-USA Multicultural Program (JUMP) was formed as a cultural exchange program through the performing arts. SFP partnered with the Washington Aids International Teen organization (WAIT). WAIT is an HIV/AIDS educational organization that delivers its message of positive, healthy lifestyle choices through performances featuring modern dance and contemporary music.

The City of Jerusalem's Multicultural Dance Troupe, made up of at-risk youth, did several joint performances with WAIT in community centers around the city. The two groups also held performance workshops together, sharing their dance styles. Although there were language and cultural barriers, these were largely overcome through the universal language of dance and music. The WAIT team was invited to do assembly programs in several communities including Bedouins, Druze, an Ethiopian assimilation community, a peace event in Ein Geti, the Jerusalem YMCA and the Anglican International School.

The dynamic performance of the dance team opened many doors. The next step is to follow up those relationships through sustainable service projects that can engage a broader range of student volunteers.

In July, the Jerusalem Multicultural Dance Troupe will be coming to the US. We are in the process of preparing service and performance opportunities for them in Washington DC, New York and, possibly, in Maine. This is an opportunity to promote further cooperation between service organizations in the states with our developing partnerships in Israel.

**Bringing the Global Family Together in Southeast Asia;** While the work to end animosities in conflict ridden areas is critical for ushering in a culture of peace, more than the absence of violence or conflict is required to secure a future of cooperation. The hope for lasting peace is seen when the world responds as a global family, acting and feeling as brothers and sisters

sharing the same planet. Last year the awful tragedy of the tsunami, created an opportunity to demonstrate our compassion to the victims as members of our extended human family.



*The human loss of shattered families*



*Outweighs even the total destruction*

The initial efforts of Service for Peace (SFP) in southern Thailand began shortly after the tsunami on December 28 last year and started with activities similar to other relief organizations including helping to clear debris, collecting DNA to identify bodies of tsunami victims, preparing and distributing food, aiding in the general reconstruction of loss of property and helping to curtail the spread of communicable disease.

The SFP college student volunteers began to see that despite all this activity to reconstruct the villages of the Thai people, a greater need had been overlooked, the support needed to reconstruct lives, especially for the most vulnerable population, the children, many of whom were either newly orphaned or left with only parts of their families in tact.

SFP staff in Thailand consulted with several peer humanitarian organizations active in the region including Habit for Humanity to see if this was in fact a need that they recognized as well. Sangkom Netsopa, local SFP representative said, "We found that the Young People Development Center (YPDC), a youth camp and other organizations had been facing the same issue of how to help the children regain a sense of normalcy and security in their daily lives."



*Service For Peace is helping rebuild lives*



*And volunteers are needed all the time*

SFP worked together with the Korean Volunteer Council to mobilize over 160 volunteers working together with around 65 local Thai volunteers. The volunteers focused their efforts on the resource challenged schools in the villages of the Pang-nga Province surrounding the Phuket resort area to mentor the children with tutoring and cultural events to heal their fear that the tsunami will come again and take away more of their friends and loved ones. Volunteers chaperoned groups of children on outings to the sea to swim and play on the beach and outings to the zoo and museums in the resort areas that are usually frequented by only Europeans, Americans and wealthy Asians.

Volunteers helped in the restoration efforts of the villages and consoled the children who were traumatized by the sudden loss of parents, siblings, friends, teachers and substantial loss of property and infrastructure. SFP volunteers identified the most vulnerable populations that have been marginalized even before the recent tragedy with limited resources to provide primary school education. SFP volunteers inspired the children to envision a bright future for their villages. The activities included building temporary housing, renovating school buildings and enhancing the environment around the schools. Volunteers are continuing to advocate for increased access to higher education for youth in the villages and are coordinating fundraising drives to provide scholarships for village children, lunch support, computers and other materials desperately needed.

The international character of the college volunteers helps to fuel the excitement and distracts the children from the loss that surrounds them everyday. The language problems are overcome to a large degree by performing cultural activities. The volunteers teach songs in their native language and provide skits to entertain the children.

**Difficulties:** Our initial efforts have proven successful in securing committed youth involvement, developing youth leaders and creating networks of local municipalities and NGOs in the social sector, and in response to conflict ridden areas and in disaster relief. The challenge is how to keep the interest and momentum in projects outside of these special circumstances in order to build sustainable successful models of peacemaking. The initial anecdotal evidence of transformational stories and initial findings of formative evaluation are encouraging.

To make the UNESCO MANIFEST 2000 a challenge to be implemented and promoted actively by young leadership, they will be recognized jointly with Service For Peace and appointed as PeaceMaker Ambassadors. This will be backed by head's of Ministries of education, and create International scholarships for youth that participate in service work and initiate programs that contribute towards culture of peace.

If UNESCO could help create a forum for volunteers to report to each other about their experience this could help leverage our accomplishments towards reaching others. There can also be an exchange site were volunteers can share their stories and best practices of effective volunteer recruitment and retention.

International volunteering is motivated by something universal that provides a viable alternative to globalization through trade or armed deterrence but it is costly and needs support from private, public and social sectors.

**UNESCO Goals:**

- Fostering a culture of peace through education

SFP's mission is far more than promoting community service. Our mission is to provide educational programs that model transformational peacemaking through service. Our goal is to

educate young people to be Peacemakers by becoming “transformational leaders”. We provide experiential educational opportunities for youth by engaging them in community based service learning projects that explore the causes of deviancy and social disorganization. The educational curricula guides volunteers to understand the complex issues contributing to social problems and encourages them to explore social justice issues and advocate for groups that are marginalized.

Participants in Global Peacemaker programs are selected based on their motivation and potential to be leaders in their communities and nations. Ideally, they will have already proven themselves through their involvement in local service projects. During the preparation and execution of the project, opportunities are provided for experiential learning through cooperating with a diverse group of people in the service of an under-served population.

Graduates of Global Peacemaker projects are expected to make plans for their continued involvement in the work of building community through service. They are invited to be involved in the planning and execution of future Global Peacemaker projects and to maintain a supportive relationship with the community in which they originally served. Participants are encouraged to participate in a network of GPM alumni that can be a helpful resource in their ongoing service work.

- Promoting sustainable economic and social development

First of all, SFP’s Global Peacemaker projects promote sustainable economic and social development by involving local community leaders in the planning, execution and follow-up. The project itself is the launching or continuation of an ongoing process of development at the project site. The projects are selected with an eye toward the future and with a keen sense of the needs of the community served. Local community members and leaders are encouraged to take ownership of the project and to think in terms of continuing the work after the conclusion of the initial program.

Secondly, at the conclusion of a Global Peacemaker project, a community center or school is established so that continued activities have a center and so that foreign assistance can continue to have a focus. Meetings for planning, organization, reflection, and celebration can be held in these centers

Thirdly, participants are educated about the needs and development plans of the host country. Information is provided to participants prior to their departure from their home nations and, immediately prior to the project, a symposium is conducted, usually at a college or university in the host nation. Regional, national and local issues are presented and discussed in order to provide a context for the Global Peacemaker project.

- Promoting respect for all human rights
- Ensuring equality between women and men

SFP incorporates a relational model of leadership which is inclusive of people of all ethnicities, nationalities and faith backgrounds. This paradigm includes equality of the sexes, and transcends racial, national and cultural differences. The SFP model of leadership empowers others to fulfill their potential to contribute to the common good. SFP programs transforms participants’ attitudes towards others and influences behavior by modeling ethical values and equipping participants with the skills needed to practice respect and compassion towards others.

- Fostering democratic participation
- Advancing understanding, tolerance and solidarity

SFP delivers a leadership development curriculum called “Pathmakers”. The goal of the curriculum is to empower students to become “transformational leaders”. Several graduates have

developed their own service projects and put together their own teams to implement their ideas. We partner with organizations that teach democratic principles to immigrant families, including the Institute for Practical Democracy.

- Supporting participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge

SFP students exchange email addresses with other participants. High School administrators and teachers coordinate Internet exchanges between pupils and SFP volunteers.

- Promoting international peace and security

The social networks of public, private and social sectors working together across borders to promote a culture of service promote good will and close friendships among the diverse populations. The promotion of volunteerism as a global ethic in countries around the world contributes to peace and security throughout the world.

## II

### GENERAL PROGRESS TOWARDS A CULTURE OF PEACE

Anecdotal evidence of personal transformation and the finding from formative research indicates that some of the significant outputs are numbers of youth exposed to service, numbers of youth exposed to youth from other cultures, growing number of partners interested in cooperating in SFP and GPM programs. Some of the significant outcomes were self reports of determination to continue a commitment to service and a greater interest in understanding people from different cultures. There is an indication that if a critical mass of people become involved in service that significant inroads can be made to change people's perceptions of the world around them and the diverse peoples in it. New role models for youth can be established that model peaceful coexistence and cooperation. These new models can be established as a position of strength and the old relationships of conflict will be viewed as a position of helplessness.

In Israel, SFP identified a coalition of religious and political moderates committed to peaceful reconciliation. The coalition opened the doors to diverse communities and laid the foundation for the JUMP exchange. A direct result of these three trips is the development of friendships and partnerships that are creating exchange opportunities aimed at bringing about peaceful reconciliation among the diverse communities in Israel, and with partnering communities here in the US.

It appears that the political climate in Israel is improving. The day SFP participants left Israel, Feb. 26<sup>th</sup>, there was a suicide bombing in Tel Aviv. Where this would normally provoke a retaliatory strike on a Palestinian stronghold, this time the Israeli Prime Minister cooperated with the new Palestinian authorities to bring those responsible to justice. However, political initiatives alone will not resolve historical enmities.

Our projects in Israel are in the pioneer stages. At this point, our most significant outcomes are youth involvement, youth leadership and the number of partners who are willing to engage in serious, international exchange programs with us. By that measure, we are having social impact.

To create a sustainable program in Thailand, SFP has worked to build significant partnerships with college student clubs at the Prince Songkla University in Muang, and mobilized the SFP worldwide college student club network to continue to raise funds and to supply ongoing international volunteers to the region.

## III

### PARTNERSHIPS AND COOPERATION

In answer to its mission to create models for lasting peace SFP has sought partnerships with the private, public and social sectors to engage in community building and peacemaking activities. To this end SFP is establishing social networks across the globe for the accomplishment of these community building and peacemaking goals.

In the US, SFP is cooperating with the Corporation for National & Community Service and other national partners to promote a Culture of Service. The strategy is to engage entire communities in public service through "Seasons of Service" projects. We are implementing this on an international level as well. For example, SFP is a lead agency with Youth Serve America to promote Global Youth Service Day around the world.

Our partners include the Hands On Network, United Way and The Points of Light Foundation, Habitat for Humanity International and the Korean Volunteer Council. In the US SFP has been engaged in national "seasons of service" days including Martin Luther King Day, National Youth Service Day, Join Hands Day and Make a Difference Day. Our flagship program is the annual "Summer of Service" program already in its fourth year of operation.

In Israel our partners include the At Risk Youth Division of the City of Jerusalem, and the local municipalities that hosted our performances. The return part of the JUMP exchange will involve partners in Washington DC (including a performance before the US Congress) and New York, the YMCA, the Rotary and the City of Portland, Maine.

#### **IV**

##### **COMMITMENT TOWARDS NEW INITIATIVES AND NEW DIRECTIONS FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE**

9. Please list the new projects planned by your organization to promote a culture of peace in the next five years.

In the next five years GPM is rolling out an aggressive program to expand its peacemaking programs in Asia, the Middle East and the Americas to promote a culture of service as a foundation for a culture of peace. .

In Israel, the JUMP program, which involved students from age 15 to 24, raised several opportunities to move forward with this objective. Our next step will be to send a delegation to Israel to explore these possibilities and plan future exchange programs.

In southern Thailand SFP, in conjunction with local partner organizations such as Young People Development Center (YPDC) has made a 2-year commitment to maintain a full time presence in the villages of the Pang-nga Province working specifically in three elementary schools to conduct long term mentoring and youth development programs to serve victims of the tsunami disaster.

10. Do you think there are any priority domains amongst the areas defined in the Programme of Action? If so, please specify.

The priority domain of "fostering a culture of peace through education" deserves special attention. The term culture of peace focuses on the internal factors that contribute to the way to peace. Culture suggests our mindset, identity and way of living. It is our shared set of assumptions, values and beliefs by which we organize our everyday life.

Thus it is helpful to have a principle that can energize us and unify our efforts for peace. The organizing principle of a culture of peace is to live for the sake of others. A culture of service is foundational for a culture of peace. A culture of peace cannot be imposed from the outside; it is cultivated in the hearts of peace-loving people and ripples outward like a pebble tossed into a lake. Therefore, education is needed that can transform individuals and extend in a natural

fashion to harmonious relationships especially in the families and then to communities and nations guided by universal values. This is best learned experientially through learning the joy of serving others through direct service programs that also serve to meet local community needs.

11. Please describe briefly how you envisage the approaches to a culture of peace and the promotion thereof over the next five years.

**Phase One: 2005-2007:** Build partnerships with public, private and social sectors on a local level in 17 nations including: Nepal, Korea, Cambodia, Thailand, the Philippines, Japan, Mongolia, Israel, the Dominican Republic, Bosnia, Moldova, Russia, France, Great Britain, Spain and Croatia as well as the United States to involve students and universities in cross-cultural learning experiences based on a curriculum that highlights, peacemaking, diversity, leadership training, advocacy and sustainable development. The prototype for this social network has been piloted in Korea with Thailand, Nepal, Japan, Taiwan, Mongolia, and the Philippines. This model will be expanded to the Americas linking the existing networks with the Americas. The foundations for this are being launched in 2005 with a program in the Dominican Republic that will make a social network between the Americas. In Europe, a network connecting the US and Africa with Middle East universities and institutions will be built. Grassroots development for local involvement and support in all programs as well as a plan for sustainability will be key components of all SFP programs.

To make the UNESCO MANIFEST 2000 a challenge to be implemented and promoted actively by young leadership, they will be recognized jointly with service for peace and appointed as Peacemaker Ambassadors. This will be backed by heads of Ministries of education, and create international scholarships for youth involved in service and who initiate programs that contribute towards culture of peace. In order to accomplish this objective, partnerships are being formed among government agencies, NGOs, service organizations and faith-based organizations around universal values and a common vision for peaceful reconciliation and co-existence.

SFP is building national development plans to expand the culture of service through creating social networks to explore opportunities for exchange through service, culture, education and sports. As each of these tracks develops, we will tie them together through multi-dimensional programs where participants can form relationships and model peaceful co-existence.

**Phase Two 2007-2010:** Link together the local networks established in the 17 nations established in Phase One to create an international network of schools, universities, local NGO's and national government agencies to promote a culture of peace through conferences and international exchange programs. In 2010 convene an international gathering and conference of the global networks at the UN to share best practices and further connect these international social networks.

