



University for Peace
Universidad para la Paz



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**Contribution of the University for Peace to the Mid-Term
Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations
on the Implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolutions on the
International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the
World, 2001-2010**

Introduction

The University for Peace is established as a Treaty Organisation with its own Charter set out in an International Agreement specifically approved by the General Assembly in Resolution 35/55 of 5 December 1980.

As determined in the Charter of the University and endorsed by the Council, the mission of the University for Peace is described as follows: *“to provide humanity with an international institution of higher education for peace with the aim of promoting among all human beings the 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.”* This mission covers the eight areas of action of the *Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace*, with a particular focus on an interdisciplinary approach to education for peace.

The Council approved a major, broad statement of the purposes and activities to be pursued by the University in a Strategy Paper adopted at its session in November 1999. The Council then approved more limited, specific priorities in endorsing Document PD/01/1.25, “Report on Progress and Plans for Programme Development” of 10 April 2001. This Document sets out the main goals of a five-year programme to revitalize the University and has provided the overall framework for programme development and institutional strengthening over the period covered by this mid-term report. These goals include four major elements: the development and teaching of a coherent academic programme and its dissemination through state-of-the-art technologies; building up a critical mass of students and faculty at UPEACE Headquarters; the extension of UPEACE activities into major regions of the world in response to its global mandate; and the establishment of a sound financial and management structure.

At each of its subsequent meetings, the Council has been briefed in detail on all the activities in progress and on all the planned activities to be undertaken and has provided guidance for the further evolution of the University. Thus programmes and activities have been continuously reviewed and adapted in the light of experience and of the changing international context within which the University must operate.

UPEACE has carried-out activities in all eight action areas of the *International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010)*. In accordance with its mandate, its activities have focused on actions to foster a culture of peace through education and to support participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge. Within these areas of action, however, the goals and topics of the other six areas of action have been dealt with in an integrated and interdisciplinary manner. This will be described in the sections dealing with its academic programmes and its policies for dissemination. UPEACE's regional and national programmes also deal with these six areas of action in a similar way.

A. Actions to foster a culture of peace through education

The specific mission of the University should be seen in the context of the worldwide peace and security objectives of the United Nations. The central importance of education, training and research in all their aspects to build the foundations of peace and progress for the 21st Century and to reduce the prejudice and hatred on which violence, conflict and terrorism are based is increasingly recognized. Thousands of qualified experts are needed in the developing and transition countries to prevent and mediate conflict and to achieve reconciliation, to teach non-violence, tolerance and human rights, to build the basis of good governance and democracy and to undertake the targeted programmes necessary to achieve sustainable development. And these future leaders and teachers must be trained in their home universities and schools.

Over the past four years, the University has established that there is an intense demand among young people to study and to devote their lives to all issues related to peace and security, the prevention of violence and the promotion of justice and sustainable development. It is also essential to provide education and training for those who are already engaged in such fields as humanitarian assistance, security sector and judicial reform, post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation and economic and business development and who need to acquire special skills in the prevention and mediation of violence and conflict.

Through its mandate for teaching and research, the University also provides a focus, as intended by the General Assembly, to attract the support and engagement of young people throughout the world for the activities of the United Nations system.

During the four years now elapsed, the University has made substantial progress on the four goals mentioned above. In January/March of 2004 a detailed *"Institutional Assessment of the University for Peace"* was carried out by a team from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Its conclusions, set out in an Executive Summary, are very positive about the results achieved by UPEACE under difficult conditions of financial uncertainty. Two quotations make clear the essence of the Assessment:

"Within three years it was able to re-establish itself administratively, financially and academically to such an extent that it is rapidly gaining a very positive international profile. This is no mean feat considering that it was given a very challenging triple mandate: to establish an international institution of higher learning in Costa Rica by engaging in teaching, research and training in support of peace building; to motivate and facilitate the establishment of such programmes in the major regions of the world; and to disseminate teaching materials using information technology together with a distance education curriculum. The University has

entered the fourth year of a five-year revitalization period. To say that it has “turned the corner” barely does justice to its achievements. Although there are still wrinkles to be ironed out and steps to be taken, the assessment team feels that the University is well on its way to fulfilling its renewal pledge.” (Assessment, page iv.)

“In spite of its impressive progress, the University still finds itself in a vulnerable position, partly due to financial challenges, partly due to the multiplicity and competing urgency of tasks, and partly due to the need for additional strategies and operational improvements.” (Assessment, page x.)

In order to implement the strategy adopted by the Council to meet this challenge, UPEACE is making progress in parallel on three mutually reinforcing components of its overall programme:

- The development and testing of rigorous, multicultural teaching materials through practical face-to-face teaching and evaluation at its headquarters and in other locations;
- The extension of its programme into key regions of the world so as to build partnerships, to understand different cultural concerns, circumstances, needs and aspirations, and to gain access to up-to-date information on key issues in the fields of conflict prevention and peace building;
- To convert this knowledge and expertise, using state-of-the-art education and information technologies, into formats suitable for dissemination and use by universities and other educational institutions across the world, through the *International Programme on the Development and Dissemination of Knowledge in the Field of Education for Peace*.

The new academic programme at the Master’s level, launched in 2001 at the San Jose Campus, with a single programme, was expanded to six M.A. programmes by August 2004. Enrollment has grown to 120 students from 38 countries representing all regions of the world. These students are currently engaged in one of the six Master’s Degree Programmes offered during the current academic year: International Law and Human Rights; International Law and the Settlement of Disputes; Natural Resources and Sustainable Development (offered as a dual-degree programme in partnership with the American University, Washington, D.C.); Gender and Peace Building; International Peace Studies; and Peace Education. A Master’s degree programme has been fully developed in Environmental Security and Peace, a critical issue for the 21st Century. A M.A. programme has been fully developed in Environmental Security and Peace, a critical issue for the 21st Century, and will be operational in August 2005.

The Programme on Peace Education is particularly relevant to the first area of the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace – how to introduce concepts related to peace and non-violence into society through many varied channels, including formal and informal education, training and the media.

The quality of UPEACE course materials is rigorously evaluated through an internal validation process. In addition, new courses are sent out for international peer review and each course taught is the subject of regular evaluation by the students. The Institutional Assessment by CIDA contains a specific section drawn from in-depth consultations with the students and participation in the teaching process by the assessment team. This demonstrates broad satisfaction while identifying some problems and weaknesses which are now being addressed.

The University feels especially proud of the performance, in their final dissertations in the academic year 2002/2003, of the students of the Master's Degree Programmes in Human Rights Studies and in International Law and the Settlement of Disputes. As expressed by Professor Jim Whitman, External Examiner from Bradford University, "their work clearly indicated a stimulating intellectual environment, and there was evidence of clear standards, supervisory oversight, available materials and a positive ethos".

During 2003, a major objective of the University was achieved, the establishment of an independent Academic Advisory Council (AAC) of distinguished scholars from all over the world which held its inaugural meeting in May 2003 in Stockholm. The University can now count on the Academic Advisory Council to obtain independent, multicultural, scholarly advice on the overall development of its academic programme, in particular, its academic quality, coherence and relevance.

B. Actions to support participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge

As a first step in the international extension of its programme and to strengthen its cooperation with UN bodies, UPEACE has established liaison offices in Geneva and New York. Discussions are in progress with the Swiss Authorities to strengthen the UPEACE presence in Geneva.

Now that the curricula and content of seven Master's Programmes have been developed and are being tested and improved through teaching at headquarters and elsewhere, the process of converting and disseminating the materials through state-of-the-art technologies has been initiated. A major thrust of the future development of the UPEACE academic programme will be to adapt and to disseminate teaching materials – which include specialised courses, individual teaching modules and eventually full graduate programmes – using DVD and CD-Rom technology, to partner universities in all parts of the world so that their professors can in turn teach peace and conflict studies to their students.

Following a decision of the Council, the specialized "Centre on Education and Information Technologies" has been established at UPEACE Headquarters and it is now developing the programmes on the dissemination of curricular materials and on Distance Education, "UPEACE GlobalEd". The objective of UPEACE in this field is to develop the substantive content, the methodology and the international networks and partnerships which will make possible the dissemination of knowledge and skills in the field of education for peace to partner universities and individuals throughout the developing world.

The campus in Costa Rica will continue to develop, teach and test course materials. It will remain relatively small as the main goal of UPEACE is to provide substantive support and training to universities and other institutions of learning in all regions of the world so that they can teach peace and conflict studies. By disseminating multicultural knowledge with UN provenance to thousands of young leaders and teachers in their home universities, the most effective use of resources and a substantial multiplier will be achieved.

The initial content of a number of courses became available in “packages” in the summer of 2004 for pilot use, testing and evaluation. Specific partner universities were identified in Africa, Latin America, Central Asia and Asia and the Pacific that are ready to use UPEACE course materials as they become available. The demand is immense.

In parallel, the programme of distance education UPEACE GlobalEd is under development. It will offer web-based e-learning aimed at individuals in the major fields that are the focus of the UPEACE academic programme.

C. The international extension of UPEACE’s programmes

UPEACE has been undertaking action to promote sustainable economic and social development; promotion of respect for all human rights; equality between women and men; fostering of democratic participation; and advancement of understanding, tolerance and solidarity; and promotion of international peace and security in an integrated manner. These actions are founded on the solid academic base of its academic programmes and are further promoted through its regional and national programmes.

UPEACE is the only UN institution in Latin America with a global mandate. In line with its mission from the General Assembly and the decisions of its Council, UPEACE has therefore prepared and initiated programmes in regions and major countries so as to extend UPEACE activities into Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Central Asia, Latin America, India and Brazil.

In addition to the former actions in the area of academic dissemination, UPEACE’s Institute for Media, Peace and Security is now being established in Geneva with Canadian and Swiss support. In addition, the UPEACE linked World Center for Research and Training in Conflict Resolution in Bogotá is now initiating its programme with the full engagement of the Colombian Government. Finally, the UPEACE-affiliated World Centre for Documentation and Information for Peace (CMIP), in Montevideo, continues to be very active in the Latin American region.

A substantial programme to strengthen education for peace in Africa has been developed through in-depth missions to ten countries to consult with a wide spectrum of academics, civil society leaders, researchers, officials, and the military. As a result, a unique body of knowledge has been accumulated on research and teaching activities in progress across the continent and on the practical needs and the obstacles to strengthening capacities in the field of education, training and research for peace. A solid network of motivated partner institutions in Africa has been established.

This process has led to the design of a major, five-year programme of support to African universities and other formal and non-formal educational institutions to build up their capacities to teach and research the vital issues of conflict prevention, peace building, environmental security, reconciliation and human rights on which peace and social and economic progress depend. The Africa programme is under way with the support of Canada, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

Many projects have been implemented by the Africa Regional Programme. Three highly successful curriculum development workshops have been held, two in 2003 and one in 2004 to develop Africa-specific teaching materials in the field of peace and conflict studies. In 2003, a peace education and human rights curriculum development workshop for the military and armed forces in Sierra Leone was held, and an international workshop on “Environmental Degradation and Conflict in Darfur” was held in Sudan. Another achievement of the Africa program is the development of a distance-education training course on the role of the media in the Rwanda genocide (pilot course presently under way). Additional, promised financial support is awaited to accelerate the further implementation of the programme so as to meet strong expectations and serious needs in Africa.

UPEACE has also launched a programme focused on education for peace in Central Asia. Based on experience of a successful pilot year, a three-year programme has been designed. However, donor support for activities in the region appears to be diminishing. Subject to the availability of funds, the programme in its next phase will include a teaching programme on peace and conflict studies, as well as a further meeting of the regional forum on Education for Conflict Resolution in Central Asia, and the extension of teaching to the local level which has successfully been initiated in partnership with UNDP in Tajikistan.

A Regional Programme is also being developed for Asia and the Pacific. In a first phase, a wide network of key universities has been brought into being in the form of an Inter-University Consortium: the Asia-Pacific University Network for Conflict Prevention and Peace Building (APCP). A major conference was held in China in June 2002 to consolidate the consortium. A planning process began in 2004, with CIDA support, to build on this first phase by designing a programme to focus more directly on the needs of a number of selected countries in the field of education for peace. In February 2005, UPEACE collaborated with two universities in India to co-host a highly successful curriculum development workshop for Peace and Conflict Studies, bringing together more than 20 universities from Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka.

UPEACE has also elaborated a programme for Latin America which will have its principal focus on practical measures to improve human security in the continent. It will emphasize three main issues: human security, security sector reform and the generation of employment, particularly for youth. And it will mobilize three instruments: strengthening education and training for peace in the region; stimulating research to identify the underlying causes of instability and violence as a basis for teaching and policy; and consolidating the data base and indicators required for effective policies on issues related to violence and the preservation of stability and peace.

A major programme has been designed in Brazil which will focus on urban and rural violence, with the support of the Presidency of Brazil and the collaboration of a large number of agencies and institutions. Also, the World Center for Research and Training in Conflict Resolution in Bogotá, an affiliate of UPEACE, is now launching its programme in Colombia with UNDP support.

A specific programme on education for peace has also been developed through consultations with key universities in India. It is likely that the recent change of government will make it possible to accelerate this programme which has been held back by a number of uncertainties in recent months.

D. Partnerships with other Institutions

The long-term vision of UPEACE is to become a network of collaborating UPEACE centres in different regions, guided from its headquarters in Costa Rica and cooperating with a large number of universities, NGOs and other partners on education and research for peace.

- The Charter of the University makes clear that UPEACE should focus substantial attention on assisting developing countries in particular to strengthen their capabilities to undertake teaching, training and research on peace-related issues so that they can better prevent and mediate conflict and violence and build the foundations of peace and progress. Through the programmes outlined above, relations between UPEACE and the developing and transition countries are becoming more intense, particularly within the framework of the regional and national programmes. In the longer term, UPEACE will be jointly conducting all its teaching and research activities in the different regions of the world, in collaboration with partner institutions. It is planned, for example, that in 2004, the new Africa Programme will be managed by its already appointed Director, from Addis Ababa Office.
- UPEACE is also collaborating with a growing number of NGOs at the “grass roots” level through its regional programmes and through its programmes of training and course development. Partnership agreements have been established with a number of NGOs and research organizations that can make specific contributions to UPEACE activities. Much more could be done but the further development of such relationships is limited by the staff capacity of UPEACE at present.
- Over the past three years, UPEACE has been approached to develop education and training activities in relation to the role of the military and security forces in the promotion of peace and the prevention of violence. In appropriate circumstances, UPEACE will cooperate in programmes to provide education and training to military and security forces in response to new challenges arising in the fields of peace and security.

As part of the UN family of institutions, UPEACE is now collaborating with a growing number of UN bodies, particularly UNU, UNESCO, UNDP, UNDPA, UNDDA, UNHCHR, UNITAR, ILO and UNICEF. These relations are becoming more significant now that UPEACE has developed a substantive programme and regained its credibility as an effective institution.

E. Summation

It is anticipated that at the end of the five-year revitalization programme approved by the UPEACE Council, the University will be teaching a wide range of Master’s programmes and short courses at headquarters and in other locations; it will be disseminating knowledge to partner universities and individuals across the world; it will be taking advantage of its established regional programmes to ensure the cultural relevance and realism of all its activities; and it will be participating actively in collaborative international programmes of education and research on peace-related issues. All of these areas of activity are contributing to the U.N.’s Action Framework of the International Decade for Peace and Non Violence for the children of the world.