



INTERNATIONAL HEALTH AWARENESS NETWORK

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Empowering through Health and Education

Volume 18

**Building a Just and Sustainable Peace:
Improving Education,
Health, The Environment
and Social Equity.**

**A Global Conference
Hiroshima, Japan
August 31 - September 6, 2006**



Shirin Ebadi, 2003
Nobel Peace Laureate



Jody Williams, 1997
Nobel Peace Laureate

On August 6, 1945 at 8:15 a.m., the first atomic bomb the world had ever seen exploded over Hiroshima. Instantly, most of the city crumbled and burned. More than 140,000 people perished either immediately or within a few months. Those who managed to survive suffered from grievous mental and physical trauma from which many continue to suffer.

Since then, Hiroshima has become a spiritual center for the movement to ban nuclear weapons. Rising from the ruins, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum opened in August 1955, mandated to convey the facts of the bombing, thus contributing to the abolition of nuclear weapons and the realization of genuine and lasting world peace.

In this spirit, a coalition of international institutions and organizations invites sponsorship and participation in “a gathering of global conscience” to galvanize support for a just and sustainable world peace. The event grows out of the symposium on “The Role of Women in World Peace and the Role of Men and Boys in Gender Equity,” held in New York City in 2004. One important goal of the 2006 conference is to build consensus and support for the creation of a Center for Peace and Human Rights Education at Lehman College, in conjunction with other institutions and organizations.

“...we have come to realize that it is not enough to send peacekeeping forces to separate warring parties.

It is not enough to engage in peace-building efforts after societies have been ravaged by conflict.

It is not enough to conduct preventive diplomacy. All of this is essential work, but we must also act at a deeper level if we want enduring results. We need, in short, a culture of peace.”

— U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan

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A monument to our values?

The greatest obstacle to a 'culture of peace' is often an ignorance of other cultures, their values and traditions as well as their history. A superficial knowledge of communities often obscures the complex network of issues which pose real barriers to peace in so many places today – such as poverty, a lack of access to education and healthcare, unemployment and political disillusionment. Even developed countries are not immune to the tensions fuelled by ignorance and fear.

The artistic heritage of a nation is often an illuminating foundation for understanding the evolution of ideas and tensions affecting our world today. More than vehicles for aesthetic enjoyment, works of art stand testament to principles and ideals shared by entire civilizations. Who can look at Michelangelo's David without thinking of his fight for Florentine independence, or look at the Taj Mahal without feeling an Emperor's love? Impressionist landscapes tell of simple beauties we all enjoy while Bodhisatva statues testify to man's potential for spiritual enlightenment. Works of art and monuments remind us of conquests and wars won or lost; artistic styles which crossed political boundaries tell stories of traveling artists and civilizational movements.

The link between art and politics was recently explored by Peter Aspden's article in the Financial Times Magazine of October 29-30, 2005, "Cultural Exchange: An exhibition of ancient Persian treasures at the British Museum becomes a catalyst for a broader discussion about the politics of modern Iran." As he noted, "...a discussion that based itself on cultural questions, indeed that sprung from the loan of a handful of ancient jewels and semi-wrecked statues, passed seamlessly on to much sharper political issues." Indeed, with the current feeling among many that we are now facing what amounts to a "Clash of Civilizations", it is even more crucial that we look beyond dark corners of ignorance and superficial explanations in order to appreciate the contributions of art and culture to a common heritage.

Multicultural worlds are not a novel phenomenon, though the proximity of differences has been exacerbated by technology. Museums are a perfect venue to start breaking down the walls which divide us, of exploring new ideas and cultures and beginning to appreciate the many different streams which have fed our common human heritage.

All this remains a concern not only of those pondering the world from an ivory tower. Ignorance of other cultures and stereotypes of unknown communities will affect the base of willing contributors to development and education initiatives of NGOs reaching across political boundaries. The last century has demonstrated that military might cannot in itself solve the problem of political violence, which often has roots in socioeconomic deficiencies and affects those least able to deal with its consequences. In fact, the inappropriate application of military force can often create new conditions for future conflict. In education, healthcare and development lie some of the most powerful weapons against those who manipulate ignorance to incite hatred and violence. Understanding the culture and social evolution of our counterparts across civilizational borders is a vital first step to creating a culture of peace and reinvigorating the collective effort to eradicate the plagues of poverty, hunger and misery.

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experiences, methods and outcomes via real-time on-line
communication.

"Peace Ribbons at Atomic Bomb Dome"

August 8, 2006 will be the 60th anniversary of Japan's being attacked by an atomic bomb. To commemorate these events, there was a peace gathering at the Atomic Bomb Dome in Hiroshima on July 30, 2005. Some 120 attendees held ribbons from around the world containing a wish for peace which were wrapped several times around the Dome. This event was organized by one of the Hibakusha groups, "Hiroshima Peace Ribbon Organization," and held every five years.



Dr Roshan and Dr. Stutman's Return Trip to Johannesburg for IHAN 's Decade Long Literacy Program, January 16th to 26th, 2006

We were welcomed by our board member Dr. Jaco Hoffman and Zander and Manda Hoffman at the Johannesburg Airport.

The opening ceremony of our trip was organized with an elegant dinner at the home of Mr. Hoffman. We were greeted by family members.

The following day we traveled to Pilgrim's Rest to the Mount Shiba Resort for a two day retreat, brainstorming, and planning of our project. We were fortunate to have wonderfully mild summer weather and enjoyed the picturesque and delightful nature walks, waterfalls, and beautiful wildlife of the area.

The highlight of our trip was meeting with our awardees, and a poetry reading workshop by Dr. Stutman. All the children were given their own copies of Dr. Stutman's book, *All the Power Rests with You*. An interactive recitation of the poetry by the students was remarkable. The supplies of shoes, clothing, booklets, and pens and pencils were donated to Heartbeat as well as the second payment of the scholarship fund as was pledged at the Sustainable Development

Summit in Johannesburg in 2002 .

During our trip we had numerous meetings with the faculty of the University of Pretoria: Professor Julian C. Muller from the Faculty of Theology, Mary Crewe, the Director of the Center for the Study of HIV/AIDS, and Professor Christof Heyns, Director, and Professor of Human Rights Law. Dr. Stutman and Dr. Roshan met with the Distinguished Professors to plan our future collaboration and activities in South Africa. We also had a meeting with Dr. Rev. Sunette Pienaar, Director of Heartbeat, our sister organization that administers to 5,000 HIV/AIDS orphans.

IHAN's work and Dr. Stutman's poetry were honored at a concert organized by IHAN Board member Dr. Jaco Hoffman at the elegant home of Henco Espag. Henco Espag is a young and talented composer who performed the original scores he wrote for three poems by Dr. Stutman sung by a young soprano and accompanied on the piano by Henco Espag. The private concert was attended by many dignitaries and friends. Leheiohonolo Moagi was in attendance.



U.S./Iranian Conflict

1997 Nobel Peace Laureate Jody Williams, Emira Woods, and Sorosh Roshan were invited to a press conference at the Washington National Press Club on June 14th, 2006, to discuss the US-Iranian conflict on nuclear weapons.



In Honor of 1993 Nobel Prize for Literature Laureate Toni Morrison on her 75th Birthday

A celebration honoring Toni Morrison's 75th birthday took place at Princeton University on February 17th, 2006. The occasion helped to launch the Bench by the Road project, which is a literary and scholarly initiative sponsored by the Toni Morrison Society.

IHAN First Vice President Suzanne Stutman, Co-Chair of the Bench by the Road project, Princeton University Chancellor, Tony Morrison Society President Carolyn Denard, scholars and friends of Ms. Morrison attended this celebration.



Establishing a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence

On November 17 and 18, 2005, at Penn State University, Abington College, Ribbon International participated in a peace seminar series entitled, "Establishing a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence," Chaired by Dr. Suzanne Stutman, along with the International Health Awareness Network (IHAN). This seminar series was held in preparation for a conference to be held in Hiroshima, entitled "Building Peace and Sustainable Development By Improving Education, Healthcare, the Environment & Social Equity," from August 30 – September 6, 2006.

Ribbon International is a United Nations Non-Governmental Organization and is based on the concept of "Ribbons," panels of cloth measuring 18 by 36 inches. These ribbons from around the world have each been sewn, embroidered, quilted or painted to reflect thoughts on peace, love and cherished values. Though created in response to negative realities such as violence or environmental degradation, the actual joining of the ribbons is a positive event, for each tie on a panel represents a common ground for peace among peoples. During the conference at Abington, a number of ribbons were exhibited and the relation of the project to a culture of peace was examined.

The original theme of The Ribbon was "What I cannot bear to think of as lost forever in a nuclear war." Ribbon International was founded by Justine Merritt, who got the idea following a visit to Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1982. On August, 1985, 40 years after the atomic bombs were dropped, 10 miles of Ribbon were joined together surrounding the Pentagon and other important monuments in Washington, D.C., as well as in the Atomic Bomb Memorial in Hiroshima. Since then, ribbons have been created and exhibited in the service of peace, disarmament, and environmental protection in many parts of the world.

During the conference, Ribbon International exhibited a panel with an infant's tiny tee-shirt sewn on it with fan-

ciful mushrooms. On the reverse of the panel, its creators (the Somerville-Ironquoit Task Force on Peace Making) wrote, "Our panel of The Ribbon shows our concern for the young of our species, whose voice is often not heard, or ignored. The newborn size undershirt is to remind us of the frailty of life and dependence with which we all enter this world. The shirt is decorated with mushrooms to show our hope that mushrooms may always be plants or fanciful designs, and never again grotesque clouds.... we send it with love, joy, and peace."

After September 11 (2001), Justine Merritt suggested a new theme, "The Ribbon: Tangible Hope," intended to make solid the commitment to peace and a reminder of hopes and dreams entrusted to us by future generations. The responsibility for peace falls upon us all, and each of us is obligated to maintain the vigil against a descent into wanton destruction.

The UN defines a culture of peace as one of "respect for human rights, democracy and tolerance, the promotion of development, education for peace, the free flow of information and the wider participation of women as an integral approach to preventing violence and conflicts, and efforts aimed at the creation of conditions for peace and its consolidation." (Resolution A/53/25) The culture of peace provides a necessary alternative to a culture of war that has so often dominated our past; it requires us to understand the root causes of conflict and bring together the great social movements of our time and harness their power to address these issues without resorting to violence.

The peace seminar was well received by students. Over 500 students attended this two-day seminar. A number of student organizations decided on developing annual events dedicated to the pursuit of peace, to create and exhibit Ribbons, and to create an annual scholarship in the name of peace.

Annual CSW Side Event

The Commission on the Status of Women concluded its fiftieth session by adopting its agreed conclusions, and recommending its priority themes for the period 2007-2009, for adoption by the Economic and Social Council.

International Ribbon & The International Health Awareness Network participated in a side event on March 3rd, 2006. A panel of experts discussed the Empowerment of Women through Health and Education. Ms. Amina Adams of the Division on the Advancement of Women gave a briefing on the challenging role of the United Nations in Sudan. IHAN Program Coordinator Padmini Murthy not only coordinated the event, but she also addressed the audience. The event was attended by students and faculty of the Abington College of Penn State University, including Dr. Suzanne Stutman, Dr. Paul Regan and Professor Bihn Le and several students from New York Medical College.

For 2007, the priority theme will be: "The Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination and Violence Against the Girl Child"; for 2008, "Financing for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women"; and for 2009, "The Equal Sharing of Responsibilities Between Women and Men, including Care-Giving in the Context of HIV/AIDS." The themes are based on the Beijing Platform for Action and the Outcome Document of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly.



Paul Regan, Keiko Chevray, Amina Adams

Feminist Majority Foundation Second Annual Global Women's Rights Awards Gives Birth to the Nobel Women's Initiative



Dr. Sorosh Roshan and Rigoberta Menchu Tum

On April 11, 2006, IHAN President Sorosh Roshan and Dr. Homa Mahmoudi represented IHAN at the Feminist Majority Foundation Second Annual Global Women's Rights Awards.

The ceremony honored female Nobel Peace Laureates Jody Williams (US, 1997), Shirin Ebadi (Iran, 2003), Wangari Maathai (Kenya, 2004), Rigoberta Menchu Tum (Guatemala) and Betty Williams (Ireland, 1976), who urged a negotiated solution to the US-Iran stalemate.

Feeling a particular responsibility as US and Iranian Peace Laureates, Shirin Ebadi and Jody Williams expressed concern about the relations between the US and Iran. "We do not want to see more suffering among women and children in another Middle Eastern country. We call for a negotiated resolution of the standoff," said Ms. Williams.

From June 6-8, 2006, Ms. Williams and Ms. Ebadi led a delegation of American and Iranian civil society representatives, including Dr. Roshan as IHAN's representative, to Vienna for meetings with representatives of the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors.

The delegation met with representatives of various governments: Austria (current President of the European Union), Egypt (Vice Chair of the Board), Canada, France, Germany, The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom.

VDAY

On June 19th, 2006, 1997 Nobel Peace Laureate Jody Williams joined the V Day by attending "A Memory, a Monologue, a Rant and a Prayer: Writers on Violence Against Women and Girls." IHAN was represented by President Sorosh Roshan and others members. The event was part of the two-week festival, "Untl the Violence Stops: NYC," which was sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation to stop violence on women.

Reception Honoring Nobel Laureate Jody Williams at the Harvard Club

IHAN Co-President Vijaya Melnick, Nobel Laureate Jody Williams, and Rosalinda Rubenstein were present at a reception at the Harvard Club in honor of Ms. Williams on March 28th, 2006. The following day, Ms. Williams addressed the Lehman College community at the 2006 Lehman Lecture. Her keynote address was entitled "Creating New Global Partnerships to Redefine Security."



WHO Meeting (May 22-26, 2006)

The 59th World Assembly Meeting was overshadowed with the sudden death of the Director General of WHO, Dr. Lee Jong-Wook, on Monday, May 22, 2006. He was mourned at the opening ceremony by friends, family, and all participants of the World Assembly.

IHAN President Sorosh Roshan presented a paper about maternal nutrition, early childhood nutrition and growth at one of the side events on Monday, May 22nd. This seminar was hosted by the Ministry of Health of Mexico and was attended by the Ministries of Health of 18 countries.



Let's Cultivate Peace

On June 3, 2006, IHAN's First Vice President Dr. Suzanne Stutman, IHAN President Sorosh Roshan, and Executive Director of Ribbon International Michele Peppers attended the 2nd International Salon for Peace Initiatives in Paris. They presented the Ribbon Workshop, which covered the culture of peace and the history of the project. In addition, Dr. Stutman presented a 30 minute workshop on her children poetry diary *All the Power Rests with You*.

Upcoming Events

August 31 - September 6, 2006
Hiroshima, Japan - Peace Summit

September 8-10, 2006
United Nations, New York - Annual UN NGO Conference

November 19, 2006
United Nations, New York and
Penn State University Abington College
World Day for Prevention of Child Abuse

December 10, 2006
United Nations, New York - Human Rights
Day Commemoration

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IHAN

The International Health Awareness Network (IHAN) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the health and welfare of women and children, particularly in developing countries. Each year we adopt a needy cause related to our mandate empowering through health and education and in cooperating with other NGOs, governmental bodies and concerned citizens we make a small but important difference.

IHAN PUBLICATIONS

1. *The Impact of Health Care Policy and Practices on Women.*
2. *The Impact of Nutrition on Women's and Children's Health*
3. *Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children.*
4. *New Millennium Strategies for Women's Health and Human Rights in the Work Place.*
5. *Improving Women's Health Throughout the Life Span: The Right to Information.*
6. *The Role of Women in World Peace and The Role of Men and Boys in Gender Equity.*

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With your help, we can improve international health education and awareness.

How you can help:

IHAN depends entirely on contributions of time and money to conduct its important work. You can help by sending a tax deductible contribution to the address below or by becoming a volunteer to assist us in our fund raising and in our health and educational missions. If you would like to know more about our work or how you can help us accomplish our mission, please feel free to contact us.

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