

2018 Mayors for Peace Youth Exchange for Peace: Support Program for "HIROSHIMA and PEACE"

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I am very honored to have joined the program "HIROSHIMA and PEACE" as a representative of Barcelona city, having the opportunity to learn more about people from different countries as well as the kind of perspectives strongly based on each of the belonging cultures that took part of this Program.

In Hiroshima and Peace course, students with different backgrounds discuss about war and peace, from historical perspective to contemporary issues focusing in the tragic atomic bombing events in the last century, more specifically the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

Moreover, it is important to highlight some perspectives we talk about in the Hiroshima and Peace course that meant a breakthrough in my understanding about what peace means to me and the content of the concept in different contexts. First, in the subject *Nuclear Power and Modernity: the Fukushima Disaster from a Sociological Perspective* (taught by Masae Yuasa) we learned about the impact of Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident in the Japanese society, thinking about the reasons why nuclear catastrophes have continued occurring all over the world, learning also about the Japanese nuclear energy policies. Also, in the subject *Korean Hibakusha Narratives: From Ishimure Michiko to Han Soosan* (by Kyoko Matsunaga), we talked about the social discrimination in Japan during and after the Second World War. Continuing with the relevant perspectives, regarding the ones related to present and future, in the subject *The Nuclear Anthropocene* (taught by Robert Jacobs) we discussed about the current lifestyle being aware that we are repeating the historical mistakes depending on nuclear energies and ignoring the future, the need to think about a world without nuclear waste and how to manage this nuclear rests in the future. In addition, through *Transforming tragedies into new tomorrows* lesson (by Tomoko Watanabe) taking as an example its NGO "Ant Hiroshima" and its activity involved in reconstruction and peace-building projects, we got the encouragement, ideas and tools to take part or even create new actions or campaigns with local and international community to spread the spirit of peace.

One of the most important points we put in common at the end of the course was our initial perception of peace, it was then when we realized how much we had learned during those two weeks since finally we were able to elaborate well-founded reasoning around the idea of peace.

Through all these lectures given, we reach a very rich understanding of the nature and attributes of war and peace, the significance of peace-building and how to carry it out in the current global era.

On the other hand, what I am planning to do based on my learning and prior knowledge is to talk about my experiences at Hiroshima & Peace Course in my academic and professional environment. In a second step, maintain contact with the rest of the participants of the Program sharing the projects that each of us carry out in our city, experiences and best practices; promote common synergies among all sharing projects and activities realized to increase the impact of our actions, working together for a nuclear-weapon-free world. Moreover, working with the City Council of Barcelona through the Barcelona Cooperation for Global Justice Master Plan 2018-2021 we have the opportunity to initiate actions and activities to work internationally and locally to consolidate and promote the public policy for

development, solidarity, human rights and peace, involving actors with a relevant role and experience in the field of international relations and cooperation as Mayors for Peace. Therefore, with this objective, in October it will start the XXIV Public Hearing to students called “Barcelona, a city of peace” (2018-2019 academic course) through which students between 11 and 17 years old will make proposals to the city government and the councilors of each district. Throughout the process, teachers will receive the necessary training and support to know in depth the objectives of the Program. The main topics of “Barcelona, a city of peace” Public Hearing will be, among others, to understand what peace is, to reflect on peace and formulate action proposals and to develop autonomy, critical opinion, respect and civic commitment.

The concrete suggestions I can make to Mayors for Peace toward the abolition of nuclear weapons are to strengthen the ties between Mayors for Peace member cities, generating synergies and activities to maximize and globalize the impact of the actions, streaming with old members putting them in contact. Furthermore, it would be a good idea to suggest to Civil Society organizations to join Mayors for Peace through its City Members and request neighboring municipalities or sister cities to join the Organization.

To conclude, I want to say that I am pleased to participate in “Hiroshima and Peace”, it was a very precious experience to take part in this Program, meeting people from all over the world, with different points of view, stating that every single human being is unique in its previous thoughts, beliefs and the way it reacts to its circumstances depending on its cultural frame.

Sincerely,

Anna Escoda