

Call for Input: Examples of initiatives to foster peace-seeking spirit

Report Form

Date of report (mm/dd/yyyy) October 18, 2018  
 Name of municipality Hiroshima City  
 Name of country JAPAN

Title of peace education initiative	<b>Collaborative A-bomb paintings project between high school students and hibakusha</b>
The initiative was implemented by (Choose one ✓)	<input type="checkbox"/> School <input type="checkbox"/> Municipality <input type="checkbox"/> NGO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joint initiative by: <b>Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation and Hiroshima Municipal Motomachi Senior High School</b>
Theme/Aim	- <b>Fostering understanding about the realities of the atomic bombing</b> - <b>Youth education</b> - <b>Conveying A-bomb memories to future generations</b> - <b>Abolition of nuclear weapons</b>
Participants (age, school grade, number, etc.)	<b>Up to 20 high school students and 10 hibakusha (number varies every year depending on the number of hibakusha who wish to have their A-bomb memories painted)</b>
Location	<b>Hiroshima Municipal Motomachi Senior High School and Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum</b>
Date(s) of initiative	<u>Typical timeline of painting</u> <b>May – June: Soliciting volunteer hibakusha and students and matching them up</b> <b>Summer – Autumn: Meeting of hibakusha and students, painting begins</b> <b>(Each pair has about a year to complete their painting.)</b> <b>Summer of next year: Exhibition of the completed paintings</b>  *Throughout the year the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum utilizes the paintings either as they are or as scanned files.

Please answer the questions below clearly and concisely.

1. Please describe the initiative. For classroom lectures and events, please provide a timeline of the event. For other types of initiatives, such as a competition, please describe the process in detail.
  - **This project has three main purposes:**
    1. **The students create paintings on the theme of the atomic bombing by listening to hibakusha’s experiences, to pass down the memories of the hibakusha to future generations.**
    2. **The hibakusha’s memories can be visualized as pictures and utilized as visual aids for learning the realities of the atomic bombing.**
    3. **Through painting A-bomb memories, the students will inherit the hibakusha’s desires for peace and also have a chance to think about the preciousness of peace.**
  - **During the one-year painting period, the students meet their paired hibakusha more than ten times, listen to the hibakusha’s experiences over and over, and keep redoing the paintings so that the scenes in the paintings depict those in the hibakusha’s minds as precisely as possible.**
2. Please tell us about the response from participants.
  - **One of the student participants said, “Through participating in this project for a year, I have come to understand that the hibakusha’s both physical and emotional wounds have not been completely healed even today, seventy years after the bombing, which makes me realize how horrible the atomic bombing was.”**
  - **Another student said “I realized that it is not enough to simply listen to the hibakusha’s experiences and understand them personally. Rather, we ourselves must take on the task of conveying them to the following generation.”**
3. Please tell us about positive outcomes that resulted from the initiative.
 

**Over the 11 years since the launch of this project, 126 paintings have been completed through collaborations between 37 hibakusha and 110 students. The paintings have been utilized in various ways in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum’s outreach activities such as:**

  - **visual aids when hibakusha share their experiences or when “A-bomb Legacy Successors” give talks**
  - **copies of the paintings produced and made available for rent for exhibitions**
  - **scanned files of the paintings made available for use upon application**

By painting hibakusha's A-bomb experiences, the students "relive" those experiences and realize that the current nuclear threat is something imminent, taking it more seriously as an issue close to them, and learn to express their thoughts on peace in their own words. It is a challenging work for students to listen to the hibakusha's experiences many times and to re-create the scenes on canvases, but all of the 110 student participants so far have completed their paintings without giving up. We believe that the students start to have their own commitment for peace, strongly influenced by the hibakusha who have a very urgent sense that they have not much time left, and are deeply committed to sharing their message with as many people as possible.

4. Please tell us about the challenges encountered in the initiative if any.

- The paintings have been displayed in various places in (and out of) Japan and a TV drama was produced based on this project. Also, this project has been reported on by various media. As the project has become widely well-known to the public, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum has received various requests and inquiries, including those regarding rental of the paintings and press coverage, the number of which has increased to dozens of times more than before. We need to consider how to deal with these requests.
- While this project is implemented as an extracurricular activity, with its gaining increasing attention of public and media, the school's art teachers have had to deal with more requests from outside the school, such as media reporters. It is also urgent to train more teachers who can take over the current teachers' role to lead this project.
- We wish that more people could have the chance to see the powerful paintings, but we have not had much chance to display them to the public, because the artworks cannot be transported via normal transportation methods while ensuring their safety and security. Instead of renting the original paintings, we need to urgently consider offering high-resolution scanned copies or producing replicas that are as good as the originals.

5. Please identify any materials used in the initiative (books, videos, slideshow, etc.).

**During the painting period, the student participants refer to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum's exhibits, books, videos, photos, paintings, PowerPoint slides which the hibakusha use during their testimonies, etc.**

6. May the Mayors for Peace Secretariat post the material mentioned in Question 5 on its website? (if there are no copyright or other problems in sharing them publicly)

- Yes \*Please attach the material(s).       No       Don't know.

If you would like to submit photos and other materials, please send them in a separate file.

## High school students painting A-bomb memories of hibakusha

### Collaborative A-bomb paintings project between high school students and hibakusha

Since 2007, with the support of the Creative Expression Course of Hiroshima Municipal Motomachi Senior High School, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum has run the A-bomb paintings project, in which volunteer students listen to the experiences of hibakusha who work as A-bomb Witnesses and paint scenes of the atomic bombing based on their memories.

The project has the aim of preserving the memories of the atomic bombing in the form of paintings and passing them down to the following generation. It also hoped that through painting A-bomb memories, the students will inherit the hibakusha's desires for peace and have a chance to think about the preciousness of peace.

During the painting period, the students and hibakusha get together many times and create paintings that depict the details of the horrible situation at the time of the bombing. Through working closely with the hibakusha, the students come to respect the hibakusha's memories and feelings, and the completed artworks are embedded with the messages of both hibakusha and students.

We hope that many people will have a chance to take a look at the paintings, produced as one of many efforts to convey the A-bomb experience to future generations.

#### [Production Process]



1. The student listens to the hibakusha's detailed accounts on his or her A-bomb experience.



2. The student plans the composition based on the sketches provided by the hibakusha and what photos still remain.



3. The student depicts the scene true to hibakusha's word, using many layers of color.



4. During the one-year painting period, the hibakusha takes a look at the work in progress many times, gives advice and instructs changes until the painting comes to completion.