

2017 Mayors for Peace Youth Exchange for Peace: Support Program for "HIROSHIMA and PEACE"

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What I learned at Hiroshima & Peace 2017:

I went into the Hiroshima & Peace program with a broad knowledge about Hiroshima and WW2. I also had an understanding of peace and what it means to me, so there were not that many aspects that were completely new to me. Nevertheless, thanks to the quality and multidimensionality of the program, I still found myself looking at new aspects and angles of the Hiroshima story and message. I especially found new points of view in the lectures about Hiroshima & Art. Nearly new to me were many facts about how we plan to deal with nuclear waste in the future and how difficult dealing with it is going to be. I was most impressed by the testimonies of the Hibakusha we got to meet. Even though they did not help me to gain any more knowledge about the bombing, they made me have a deeper, more emotional connection to what happened in Hiroshima. By listening to them, I truly felt like I became a witness, just like they asked us all to be.

However, truly inspiring to me have been the discussions with my fellow course participants. Having so many people come together from all over the world and discuss a topic like this, you learn about so many points of view, concerns and troubles when it comes to peace. Many course participants already had experience in peace activities, just like myself, and sharing our experiences, successes and failures with each other provided me with new ideas about how peace work can also be done.

My own plans for peace activities:

By this date I was already able to put one of my plans into action. I was able to talk about my experiences at Hiroshima & Peace at the monthly meet up for young people I am organizing, and discussed the topics with the participants. In a second step, I hope to be able to mobilize some of them to do further peace work in our hometown and for the "Deutsch Japanischer Freundschaftskreis Hannover Hiroshima Yukokai e.V.". I would like to tell the story of Hannover and Hiroshima and of the Hibakusha to as many people as possible. As citizen of a Hiroshima Sister City, I believe we have the responsibility to know about what happened and to function as a multiplier in our country.

I will also continue my work for the "Deutsch Japanischer Freundschaftskreis Hannover Hiroshima Yukokai e.V." and with the actress Sachiko Hara I will continue to perform the "Hiroshima Salon" to find ways to tell the Hiroshima Story through art.

Concrete Proposal for Mayors for Peace nuclear weapon abolition activities:

I believe that when it comes to the goal of nuclear abolition, knowledge is power. If you understand, at least on some level, how nuclear energy and weapons are working and how they are compromising the future of mankind, one can only wish for their abolition. Next to knowledge, having an emotional connection to facts helps to strengthen your convictions. The stories of the Hibakusha combine these two elements and I think that Hiroshima & Peace should try to bring as many people and Hibakusha together as possible, may it be by exchange programs like I participated in or by inviting Hibakusha to come to Mayor for Peace cities all over the world.

For the Mayors for Peace office in my hometown, I propose to work with the existing structures and history between Hiroshima and Hannover. As already discussed, I would like to help organize an event to revive the Hiroshima Memorial Site in the "Hiroshima-Hain Hannover".