

2019 Mayors for Peace Youth Exchange for Peace: Support Program for "HIROSHIMA and PEACE"

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My time in Hiroshima was unlike anything I've ever done. It was the most eye-opening and exciting two weeks. I met people from all over the world, all with a similar mindset on nuclear weapons. With this, I was given the opportunity to learn so much. Firstly, I learnt about the importance of intercultural communication. In the beginning of our studying sessions, I learnt about the different styles of communication that existed in the room I was sat in. There was a plethora of cultures learning with me, and so it was important to ensure that everyone was able to engage and involve themselves in conversation, through being conscientious of their culture's style of communicating. This may have been comprised of a slow pace and involvement of pauses, or fast paced with lots of interrupting (Figure 1). Because of those sessions, I was able to wait and make conscious efforts that everyone in the discussion were given the opportunity to express their opinions, and that no one was 'drowned' out because of the possibility of struggling with different communication styles. By learning about these styles of communication, I was able to appreciate that in order to effectively portray my ideas about nuclear weapons within the course and beyond, the acknowledgement of different communication and custom norms are imperative.

Figure 1- Table of Communication Style

Communication Style	Description
Bowling	Like the game, one will speak, and the others will wait their turn. Everybody knows there is going to be designated turn for you to speak without interruption.
Basketball	If someone has the ball, they are the ones able to speak. It is relatively fast paced, however if you hesitate, someone will take the ball from you, and therefore begin speaking.
Rugby	This style of communication is high involvement. There is lots of interception and therefore, interruption. People with this style of communication expect to be interrupted and there is rapid-fire changing of topic at times.

Secondly, I was enlightened to the Japanese perspective of what happened in 1945. This explored the social effects of the bomb; the homes and inhabitants of approximately 80,000 were wiped out in an instant. Furthermore, that the bombs effects did not stop there- the radiation in the air resulted in further casualty, both in current civilians, and their descendants. Learning about this resulted in a much more emotive feeling to the effects of the bomb. By going to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and see striking images of the injured, and hearing stories from Hibakusha (A-Bomb Survivor)

brought to life the suffering and the catastrophe that Hiroshima was left with. This side of the story is too often lost, being regarded as an American triumph with 'successful' statistics.

Thirdly, I learnt about the efforts our cities go to, to ensure their views on nuclear warfare abolition is heard. The opportunity to live and learn so closely with other 'Mayors for Peace' candidates in Hiroshima meant being able to hear about the efforts of other cities and how they are involved with the abolition of nuclear warfare. For example, Iran has over 1,000 member cities, and in 2015 created a Tehran Disaster Resilience Center (TDRC) with the aim of risk management, reducing cities' vulnerability in facing disasters and improvement of public safety of cities. To hear and learn about what is happening around the world was inspiring, and it was a pleasure to be able to spend time with individuals who can call places such as these their home.

What I plan to do based on my learning can be broken down into two main ideas. Firstly, through communication and my plan to become more involved in Manchester and the UK's efforts to raise awareness on the importance of nuclear abolition. I plan to encourage and spread awareness, through communicating with my peers, colleagues, and family. I will do this through telling people about my experiences in Hiroshima, and the impact it had on me. I will focus on telling the story from a Hibakusha point of view, placing importance on eliminating the understanding of a nuclear attack being just a set of statistics. Beneath the mushroom cloud was an entire city population's families and homes being obliterated. This is a perspective I feel may have been detached from as we have moved further away from the time of the incident. As a result, I appreciate the importance placed on teaching young people about nuclear weaponry and hope to remain to be involved with it in the future.

Furthermore, because of this course, I was able to meet individuals dedicated to the banning of nuclear warfare. One of these individuals was the CEO of 80,000 Voices. This is an organisation who works with ICAN and Mayors for Peace working towards creating a performance to completely reignite the message surrounding the nuclear ban. Upon returning to the UK, I spent some time working within 80,000 Voices. I plan to continue to be involved with the organisation and its plans in the forthcoming years as a young advocate for the nuclear ban.

Concrete suggestions for the abolition of nuclear weapons include, the importance of the continuation of the Youth Peace Exchange Program. This experience gave me and the fellow scholars the ground to be more educated on our outlooks and opinions, so that we can discuss the issues of nuclear warfare with vigour and insight. This course has given me the information to truly understand many aspects of nuclear warfare. This includes the formation of the weapon itself, and how there are such difference in opinions on them around the world. These programs provide young people with the power to spread the word on the dangers of nuclear warfare, using the example of Hiroshima from immersive experiences. In order to continue to the spread of this message, the continuation of exchange programmes is paramount.

Secondly, I believe that Mayors for Peace should embrace, and support organisations willing to make a change and become involved with how nuclear warfare is challenged and commemorated. It

is important that, while we become further away from 1945, the seriousness and importance of the message must not be lost. As a result, it is imperative the new ideas around commemoration are acknowledged and embraced. The most effective way to reproduce the message, is through the involvement of young people. Organisations such as 80,000 Voices aim to reignite the message within young people through performance. In order to end nuclear warfare, I believe it is young people who are needed to drive it. Young people's connectivity and voice is unlike anything before. Therefore, while it may be natural to want to continue to commemorate 1945 in the way it always has been, it can only be an advantage to recognise new ideas surrounding nuclear abolition and reawaken the drive for a nuclear ban.