



 www.narpi.net
 admin@narpi.net
 070.7847.5010

Northeast Asia Regional Peacebuilding Institute: NARPI

Fall 2011 Newsletter

NARPI Summer Training August 2011

The first Northeast Asia Regional Peacebuilding Institute (NARPI) Summer Training – August 16 to 29, 2011 – brought together university students, teachers, NGO workers, and religious leaders in an atmosphere of sharing and learning. In total, there were 48 registered participants, mainly from Northeast Asia – China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Taiwan and Far East Russia – plus a few from Canada, India, the Philippines and the United States.



Participants, facilitators and volunteers of the course "Understanding Conflict and Peace" in Week 1.

Also present were nine facilitators who worked in pairs to design and facilitate participatory peacebuilding courses, and several NARPI steering committee members and volunteers who filled roles such as class assistant, class documentor, language support, snacks and photography/video. After the training, NARPI director Jae Young Lee reflected, "It is always an exciting joy to discover people with the same vision for a peaceful Northeast Asia. I'm glad that NARPI is becoming a nest where

we can build this common dream together."

The training took place at two contrasting venues: Week 1, at the Hi Seoul Youth Hostel in the busy Youngdeungpo area of downtown Seoul; and Week 2, at the quiet DMZ Peace-Life Valley in the northeast part of South Korea, in Gangwon Province, near the DMZ. Participants joined intensive five-day courses during each week of the training. Six courses were offered, covering the following themes: peace and conflict, peace education, restorative justice, historical and cultural storytelling, trauma healing and peacebuilding skills.



Shin Manshiq talks with his classmates of "Historical and Cultural Stories of Peace" about the cooperation between two villages in this model that came from their attempts to recover from a natural disaster.

Some participants found new directions for their future through the coursework. Participant Ayaka Naito shared, "There was a learning opportunity far greater than what I had expected. I am determined to study more, get more experience, and become a restorative justice practitioner."

Between Week 1 and 2, field trips to the House of Sharing and the DMZ offered first-hand experiential learning for the participants. The House of Sharing is a museum and a home to former "Comfort Women" - survivors of sexual slavery at the hands of the Japanese military during the Asia-Pacific War (1932-1945). During a group debriefing after the visit, participants processed what they had learned through drawing and sharing.



NARPI participants at the House of Sharing, listening closely to our tour guide, Chiaki Kudo, as she shares about what motivates her to volunteer there.

The DMZ tour included a visit to an observatory, a tunnel connecting the North and South, and a farming village in the Civilian Control Zone, where participants had a chance to cook and eat together with the local residents.



Participants Emily Wang and Ochi Shinichiro take turns pounding rice to make traditional rice cake during their visit to the village in the Civilian Control Zone.

Each evening during the Summer Training, there were also different opportunities for sharing and learning. Evening activities that were scheduled before the Summer Training started included one Cultural Night per week, and one Jeju Night per week. During the Cultural Nights, participants spoke, sang, played instruments, played games and danced to share about their culture.



Several participants from Japan perform a modern version of the traditional "Fisherman's Dance" during the Week 2 Cultural Night.

At the Jeju Nights, participants learned about the naval base construction project on Jeju Island, and realized how this naval base, if built, will become a threat to security for the entire Northeast Asia region. Some participants traveled to Gangjeong Village, Jeju Island, after the Summer Training ended to show their solidarity to the villagers and protestors there who are working to keep Jeju an "Island of Peace."

Participants write messages of support and solidarity for Gangjeong Village.



Participants also planned evening events and posted their plans on the weekly calendar, inviting other participants to join. These activities included discussions on various topics, presentations about NGO activities in the region, personal stories, and movie screenings.

“There was a big impact on my thinking and studying about peace in NEA. I was also able to deepen my understanding on the present situation in Korea regarding the “comfort women” issue, the Jeju Island issue, and the DMZ,” wrote Setsuko Mizuno, from Japan, on her final evaluation form.



Howard Zehr speaks on the history of the restorative justice movement at an open lecture in Seoul on Sunday, August 14.

To build local capacity for peacebuilders in Korea, NARPI also offered a series of lectures and workshops in the week leading up to the Summer Training. Howard Zehr, Al Fuertes and Carl Stauffer presented on the topics of restorative justice and trauma healing, and their lectures and workshops were conducted with Korean translation.

The NARPI Summer Training will rotate to different locations in Northeast Asia every year, providing the opportunity for first-hand learning about the history of conflict and peace in the entire region, and also giving a chance for more people to participate every year. NARPI partners in Hiroshima, Japan, are now considering the possibility of hosting next year’s training.



All join to sing "We Shall Overcome" in several different languages, at the close of the Week 2 Cultural Night.

To all our readers, thank you for your ongoing interest and support!

We continue to update our website at www.narpi.net. Please check it out for updates and more photos!

- The NARPI Team



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