



The Peace Alliance (c4) &
Peace Alliance Educational Institute (c3) Present:
STRATEGIC PLAN: 2009-2011

A Working Outline

Key Initiatives:

1. **Legislative Advocacy**
2. **Community Peacebuilding**
3. **Mainstreaming Peacebuilding in the Media**
4. **Build and Empower Growing Grassroots Network**
5. **Financial Sustainability**

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

Unlike anytime in history, an awareness of the importance of violence prevention in the United States and peacebuilding work internationally permeates the national discourse in Washington. President Obama's agenda calls for an "End to the Dangerous Cycle of Youth Violence" and notes the administration's support of "innovative local programs" aimed at the prevention of youth violence. Similarly, officials in the State Department, USAID, and Department of Defense leadership advocate for innovative civilian-driven efforts to build peace across societies in conflict.

The growing consensus in Washington obviously didn't "just happen." We believe it is a reflection of an awareness that old ways of doing business are not working and a reflection of the advancement of the entire field of peacebuilding. The following elements drive this growing consensus:

- ◆ The continuous and demanding work of violence prevention and intervention practitioners on the ground level who work to effectively reduce violence and support those impacted by violence in the U.S.
- ◆ The success of international practitioners who recognize the conditions that breed violence and strategically bring together divided societies to resolve conflict in a nonviolent manner.
- ◆ Researchers who have successfully made the case that violence is a global epidemic and who have proven that peacebuilding works.

Additionally, consensus is building on Capitol Hill because we as advocates, in partnership with our allies, have organized for years – district-by-district and state-by-state – in support of the position that peace is possible and the time for innovative legislative change is now. Because of our collective efforts policy makers are seeking to invest in peacemaking, but the question remains: "how?"

At this critical moment, we want to be part of the solution to this question of "how?" To do so requires a well-tailored and timely approach to legislation that can specifically meet this challenge. To inspire the US government to realize its potential as a global peace champion necessitates a two pronged legislative focus. The first concerns federal peacebuilding structures to organize and administer these efforts, and the second concerns the actual on-the-ground peacebuilding work.

I. Peacebuilding Structures: Churchill once said: "First we shape our structures, and then our structures shape us." The U.S. government is not organized to administer effective and sustainable peacebuilding operations abroad, nor organized effectively to support a comprehensive approach to preventing violence within our borders. We will continue to advocate for a structure in government that will sustainably shape and support how we as a nation build peace. We hold that a **U.S. Department of Peace** is the most comprehensive measure to date that provides strong structural support to sustainably prioritize violence prevention and peacebuilding efforts in our federal government. We will collaborate with academics, policy experts, peacebuilding practitioners, and members of the government on the issue of structural reform as it relates to peacebuilding. We will continue to advocate for reform that puts in place more robust infrastructural support and coordinates the efforts of our government to build peace domestically and internationally.

While government infrastructure would eventually provide the funding and coordination necessary to support our peacebuilding efforts on-the-ground at the broadest scale, we recognize that restructuring the government requires an incredible level of research and collaboration that calls for a time intensive process. Thus, we feel a great need to support pieces of legislation that will immediately begin to fund programs effectively reducing violence, as demonstrated below.

II. Peacebuilding Work: In accordance with our mission statement of empowering civic activism for a culture of peace, and in alignment with communications between the State Coordinators over a nine month period in 2009, we have elected to support two pieces of additional legislation that will provide necessary and immediate funding and support to violence prevention efforts. These pieces of legislation will build an understanding and appreciation on Capitol Hill for the efficacy and legitimacy of peacebuilding, both domestically and internationally.

Pass and Fund the Youth PROMISE Act (HR 1064/S 435):

The Youth PROMISE Act will significantly enhance the capacity of our government to support peacebuilding programs in communities across the country. The Youth PROMISE Act is an innovative piece of legislation aimed at empowering community stakeholders to drive local violence prevention and intervention efforts. We will work in partnership with Rep. Bobby Scott's (D-VA) office and a broad-based coalition to pass Youth PROMISE Act through the House by the end of 2009, and then through the Senate and appropriations committees by the end of 2010.

Introduce or Endorse International Peacebuilding Legislation: Guided by advice from an advisory council we will introduce or endorse legislation aimed at supporting those international practitioners who are actively engaged in applied peacebuilding in areas plagued by conflict and violence, such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel, Palestine, and Darfur. The legislation we shall support will enhance funding for this critical work, will strengthen civil society and government relations, and will heighten the visibility and prioritization of peacebuilding efforts.

To facilitate these two goals (programmatic and structural) we have identified the following actions:

Establish Legislative Advisory Councils: We will establish and facilitate Legislative Advisory Councils, composed of experts from the fields of international peacebuilding, youth violence prevention, post-incarceration community re-entry, and government reform that can uniquely advise the Peace Alliance on legislative matters. We will build the councils around the coming year's priorities to ensure we continuously have both domestic and international initiatives.

Gauge Network's Passion: We will gauge the interest of those in our entire network to guide our legislative priorities as we continue to maintain alignment between the policies for which we advocate and the priorities of the network. By surveying the network periodically throughout the year, we shall collect broad grassroots feedback. Through in-person meetings and conference calls we will engage in conversations about the issues that drive us to take action.

Develop and Join Coalitions: A plethora of advocacy and service organizations are taking action in support of peacebuilding. We will intentionally connect with our peers both at the local and national levels to grow our collective efforts and collaborate on focused strategies that we will implement together. So far we have joined the Alliance for Peacebuilding, an alliance of international peacebuilding organizations, as an affiliated member organization. We are currently one of 250 organizations allied in support of the Youth PROMISE Act as we lead the campaign to pass the Youth PROMISE Act in the Senate. Over the last few years we have built strong partnerships, alliances and coalitions and remain committed to the need for relationship and coalition building.

Strengthen Congressional Leadership: Leadership on the Hill remains an extremely important aspect of passing legislation. We will continue to strengthen our relationships with House Representatives and members of the Senate to support our current legislative initiatives. We will:

- ◆ Target key congressional members and their staff as determined by committee placement, political clout, the location of our most active constituency, and by how passionate the members and staffers are about ending violence and supporting peacebuilding. Our intent will be to gain champions on the Hill that will work with us to pass the critical peacebuilding legislation we support through the House and Senate.
- ◆ The success of the legislation on which we are working vitally depends upon the support of the Representatives and Senators who sit on the Judiciary, Foreign Relations, and Appropriations Committees. We will engage and build relationships with all members of these critical committees.

COMMUNITY PEACEBUILDING

Through local alliance building, community education, personal peace practices and service efforts in our communities, we will do the peace work on the ground for which we advocate. Together we will demonstrate -- through our actions -- what peace looks like.

As a network we aim to play a vital role in supporting the creation of the ground-level structures we are asking Congress to support and sustain. Nationally, regionally and individually we will work to:

Participate in and Build Coalitions with Peacebuilding Practitioners: By forming strategic coalitions and partnerships with cutting edge peacemaking organizations, we will connect network organizers with professionals in their community for possible partnerships, collaborations or other resource sharing or cross-promotional efforts. We will also encourage supporters to work with local organizations who need volunteer assistance.

Skills Training: We will connect our grassroots organizers with partnering trainers around the country to train in nonviolence, nonviolent communication, conflict mediation and personal peace practices. We will continue to hold Nonviolent Communication and other skill building conference calls to support the learning of those committed to personal peace practices. When individuals or groups that struggle with conflict or violence reach out to us for peacebuilding support we will work to connect them with experts that specialize in their area of concern.

Host Educational Events: We will host educational events to disseminate data on violence and its solutions to the media and general public. We will actively support the release of reports from the Global Peace Index, the United States Institute of Peace, and Centers for Disease Control.

Expand The Peace Registry: We will grow our U.S. based Peace Registry database to record the efforts of organizations building peace in our communities.

Be the Change- Transforming Organizational Disputes: We shall incorporate conflict prevention techniques into our organizational culture and establish formal practices to resolve conflicts as they arise. Whether through nonviolent communication, restorative circles, mediations, or alternative approaches, we are committed to directly addressing conflicts so that all members of our community feel heard, appreciated, and respected. We will work to establish a beloved community that is strong enough to stand the pressures we shall ultimately face as our work grows increasingly influential.

MAINSTREAMING PEACEBUILDING IN THE MEDIA

The media plays a vital role in popularizing issues in the national discourse. Yet national dialogue in the media consistently overlooks the efficacy of violence *prevention* efforts. To change this norm we will generate media that highlights evidence-based violence prevention programs working to make a difference in local communities and international work with nonviolent conflict resolution. In order to

raise awareness of the powerful legislation we are supporting and the peacebuilding work we are organizing we will continue our media efforts aimed at placing these efforts in the national spotlight.

We will work in the following ways:

Research Dissemination: Our national media team will collaborate with non-profits, NGOs, academia, and/or congressional offices on the dissemination of research, violence statistics and evidence-based violence prevention solutions, and legislation.

Create a Rapid Response Network: We will create and grow a rapid response network of those willing to communicate online and offline with media. To promote a critical media opportunity or in response to an important developing story, the Rapid Response Network shall be activated and will respond through letters to the editor, blogging, and calls to educate the media about peacebuilding.

Establish Regional Media Structure: Create four volunteer "Regional Media Coordinator" positions to cover Northeast, South, Midwest and Pacific Coast to work with our national media coordinator. These positions will focus on support for generating regional media and training the network.

Enhance Grassroots Media Capability: Train grassroots organizers to improve our media-generating capacity through print, radio, television and other modern mediums.

BUILD AND EMPOWER OUR GRASSROOTS NETWORK

To accomplish all of our strategic objectives we must grow and maintain that which makes our organization so unique--our grassroots network of citizen advocates and community peacebuilders. We will:

Grow Strategically: Implement a targeted recruitment plan, lead by small teams of staff, Board and volunteers, that will build local volunteer teams in Congressional districts of key committee members; building greater influence on key pieces of legislation.

Support Network-wide Strategic Planning and Gatherings: As an organization we must begin to create local strategic plans, create a supportive community for grassroots members, and continue to host inspiring national events. This includes:

- ◆ Supporting and empowering development and implementation of local action plans
- ◆ Hosting annual State Coordinator/Regional Organizer and Student Peace Alliance Retreats
- ◆ Supporting grassroots volunteers in hosting 8-12 regional conferences in 2010
- ◆ Hosting the 2011 National Conference in Washington DC
- ◆ Hosting the Student Peace Alliance 2010 National Conference in Austin, Texas (with 450 attending in February 2010)
- ◆ Planning monthly volunteer call with featured guests that include regional breakouts on strategic plan and local planning
- ◆ Supporting network with regional and national state coordinator calls

- ◆ Hosting twice a month newcomer orientation calls.

Develop and support coordinated actions: Continue organizing and supporting our Valentines Day Action, Mother's Day Action, and local events around International Day of Peace in September, as well as additional actions to be determined at key times.

Utilize Social Networking and New Media: Our social networking site, DoPeace, provides a space for organizers to stay in touch with each other, mobilize support for our actions, and provide feedback on national planning and broader public education.

ENSURE FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Funding is a critical component to every social change movement. In order for us to accomplish everything listed in this document we must raise the financial resources to be sustainable and to fund exciting new projects as they develop. Our work to raise funds will also strengthen other aspects of our work in several ways. First, it will help educate the public about the growing field of peacebuilding while building and engaging a growing constituency for peace. Second, it will grow our own volunteer network. Finally, it will deepen the national understanding of and commitment to peacebuilding efforts in every sector of society. To create a culture of financial sustainability we will:

Create Gift Programs: Build a major gift program that will recruit people to give \$5,000 or more to these efforts.

Improve Stewardship: To improve donor stewardship (our Peace Partner Program) we will create an annual calling program, create an acknowledgement program for all donor categories, and disseminate a quarterly accomplishments update. To support all of these improvements we will begin utilizing a new robust database that can meet our connection needs and track the donor cultivation process.

Hold Fundraising Events: For many years, fundraising events of all sizes have been the bedrock of funding for our organization. As we move forward, we want to ensure that this aspect of our fundraising plan continues to develop. As such, we will plan and encourage:

- ◆ Entry events: introduction to the organization, light ask (typically between 10-25 people)
- ◆ Fundraising house parties (Goals- 20 total for 2009; 30 or more for 2010)
- ◆ Table captain events (i.e. over 100 in attendance)
- ◆ Other diverse efforts: Walks, auctions, and concerts etc.

Establish a Grant-Writing Program: Build a volunteer grant writing team to solicit funds for Educational Institute activities such as peacebuilding training and community work, research, and public education through media and events.

Train Fundraising Superstars: Train interested volunteers in fundraising and speaking with videos, conference calls, written materials and support coaching.

Develop sustainability: Develop a sustainability plan for The Peace Alliance Educational Institute and a seed capital campaign to implement it.