

Letter From Our Founder...

Dear Empower Peace Supporters:

What a year it has been for Empower Peace! In the past twelve months, we have completed a number of projects and programs that undoubtedly have had tremendous impact on the world we live in.

First, lets talk numbers: In the five years since Empower Peace was founded, we have connected nearly 30,000 high school students from 140 classrooms in 31 countries from six continents through one of our programs. Millions more have watched one of our made-for-TV documentaries broadcast on one of our global television broadcast partners.

In the past year we have organized and produced more of our exciting videoconferences going to places like Kuwait, Scotland and Dearborn, MI. We hosted 45 extraordinary young women from around the world at our Second Annual Women2Women International Leadership Conference at Lesley University. And we launched our new program EP World Classroom — a program that furthers our utilization of state-of-the-art technologies to bridge the distance between cultures.

Our use of technology has provided us with the tools to bridge the distance between cultures, not only distance in terms of miles, but, more importantly, the distance between people that exists in communication and understanding.

In the coming year, Empower Peace looks forward to continuing its commitment to enable youth around the globe to participate in programs that are entertaining, educational and most importantly impact the way young people see the global community.

We believe the need has never been greater for a worldwide initiative to empower young people to be the future leaders in public diplomacy. We hope you will join us in our effort to empower young people and help lead the way in making this world a better place!

Sincerely,

Rick Rendon

Founder, Empower Peace



EMPOWER PEACE CALL TO ACTION

Interested in reporting for a newspaper? Join *EP World News* and be a part of our new initiative to give students a voice about the issues they care about.

Many of you want to express yourselves or share stories of what is happening in your country as a way of bringing the world together.

With so much going on in your school, your community, your country, and our world, now is your chance to put a spotlight on a topic of importance to you. Maybe it's local politics or women's rights in your country? What ever it is, we want you to report on it.

Email us at info@empowerpeace.org if you want to write. We are accepting story ideas and articles every month.

Remember, the important thing is that you have a voice. As a leader you have the ability to champion the issues that you are passionate about. So get out your pens and papers, and start asking questions. This is your chance to inform the world! ✨





EP Meets IM

Look at the computer screen of any teenager in any given country around the world and you are sure to see one unmistakable similarity – instant messaging! Joining this interactive surge, Empower Peace launched EP World Classroom.

The purpose of EP World Classroom is to provide students an opportunity to learn directly from their peers around the world. EP World Classroom uses VBrick interactive web-casting technology that allows students to share their daily life, culture, and their history, live over the Internet to other students thousands of miles away. The best part is that viewers watching online can instant message in questions or comments that the presenter can address live!

“The younger generation is always using the newest technologies,” said Rick Rendon, founder of Empower Peace. “If you want to keep young people engaged you have to utilize the latest technologies. VBrick is as cutting-edge as it gets!”

Empower Peace officially launched the EP World Classroom program on December 13, 2007 at King’s Academy in Madaba, Jordan.

From King’s Academy, nine students made presentations during the one-hour broadcast. The students’ presentations

gave an overview of their daily lives, their country and school’s history, their religious lives, and their culture. Each student made a 3-5 minute presentation. King’s Academy Sophomores Leen Sinokrot and Ghassan Gammoh served as hosts. Empower Peace’s Director of Media and Advance Asad Butt served as moderator for the hour-long broadcast.

The broadcast was streamed live over the Internet. With the help of Partners for Distance Learning Organization, more than 30 schools logged on from around the world; most of the schools participating were from the United States. In total, about 500 students watched the broadcast.

While the students from King’s Academy could not see their viewers, they received hundreds of questions through the VBrick technology. In fact about half of the broadcast was dedicated to answering questions from viewers. Questions ranged from light-hearted topics to more direct questions about Middle Eastern life and culture.

King’s Academy Headmaster Dr. Eric Widmer said at the end of the broadcast, “I hope people have benefited in the discovery that we are human here too. If that discovery replicates itself around the world in the years ahead and we discover that we all have our humanity in common, perhaps peace will indeed have been achieved.” ❁

Building New Relationships

Continuing our goal of extending the bridge of peace throughout the Middle East, Empower Peace joined together with King’s Academy in Madaba, Jordan in 2007 to initiate new dialogue with students at the coeducational boarding facility.

King’s Academy is an independent, coeducational boarding and day school and provides an educational experience unlike any available in the region to outstanding young men and women from Jordan, other countries in the Middle East and beyond. King’s Academy opened in August 2007.

Having completed our first program in the EP World Classroom series from King’s Academy, Empower Peace hopes to continue to work with the students and faculty at the school to broaden the knowledge base of US students on Jordanian society, norms and culture and vice versa.

Furthermore, in coordination with Polycom, Inc., Empower Peace was able to help facilitate the donation of a videoconferencing unit to King’s Academy.

For more information about King’s Academy, visit www.kingsacademy.edu.jo, and to watch the on-demand VBrick broadcast from Jordan visit www.empowerpeace.org. ❁



W2W WOMEN TO WOMEN

Educate. Inspire. Lead.



2007 Women2Women International Leadership Conference

Given the success of our first Women2Women conference in 2006, Empower Peace decided to produce the event for a second year in August 2007.

The Second Annual Women2Women International Leadership Conference was developed to give participants an opportunity to further develop their leadership skills and learn from each other the cultural differences and similarities they all share.

Empower Peace partnered with Lesley University, Harvard University and The Fletcher School at Tufts University for a second year in a row. Empower Peace selected 45 young women from 11 countries to participate in the conference. The countries represented include Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Israel,

Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, the Palestinian Territories, the United States of America and Uzbekistan.

“I never really thought that I would be able to have friends from Arab countries,” said Brittany Bergquist, a W2W participant from Norwell, Massachusetts, USA.

“We got to meet such amazing women who have achieved so much in their life. And it inspired us to do something with our own. That I feel is an amazing success of this conference.”

*Fatima Fayyaz,
Student from Lahore, Pakistan*

The 45 women were selected from an applicant pool of more than 200 students from 20 countries. Applicants were chosen for their dedication to their community, their leadership potential and their academic background.

The conference took place from August 5, 2007 through August 10, 2007. The young women participated in workshops that explored government, community service,



business and media. Participants also attended a series of cultural events in the Boston area.

Among the established professional leaders speaking to the young women were: Juliette Kayyem, the Undersecretary of Homeland Security in Massachusetts, Vicki Donlan, Publisher of Women's Business Magazine, and Jim Roosevelt Jr., President/CEO of Tufts Health Plan and the grandson of Eleanor and Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

"We got to meet such amazing women who have achieved so much in their life. And it inspired us to do something with our own. That, I feel is an amazing success of this conference," said Fatima Fayyaz, a student from Lahore, Pakistan.

Participants toured the Massachusetts State House and listened to women elected officials discuss the role of women in government, the roadblocks females face in politics, and how minorities can have a voice.



"I think the Women2Women conference is a life changing experience and it's a mind opener. It's like a doorway where women like us make new friends, understand different cultures, and learn leadership skills."

*Reem Almualla,
Student from Bahrain*

The young women also spent an afternoon at Walden Woods – the home to notable author and environmentalist Henry David Thoreau. Here, Kathy Anderson, the Executive Director of the Walden Woods Project engaged the young women on community activism and the environment.

Other workshops and panel discussions the participants attended included, "Cultural Diversity in Leadership Development," "Women in the Media," "Women in Power," "Finding the Source of Your Creative Leadership Power," "Women in Business," and "Networking."

Dr. Mishkat Al Moumin, the Former Minister of the Environment for the Interim Iraqi government, addressed the young women on leadership through adversity in the week's keynote address. Her speech from the Fletcher School of Tufts University was also broadcast live over the Internet. The broadcast is archived on the Empower Peace website.

Many of the student participants considered the week to be a highlight of their educational experience.

"I think the Women2Women conference is a life changing experience and it's a mind opener," said Reem Almualla, student from Bahrain. "It's like a doorway where women like us make new friends, understand different cultures, and learn leadership skills." ❁



Extending the Virtual Olive Branch into Europe

On Thursday, March 22, 2007, Empower Peace conducted its most recent Internet videoconference uniting hundreds of students in three unique locations – Boston, Massachusetts, USA, Edinburgh, Scotland and Kuwait City, Kuwait.

Students from James Gillepies and Liberton High Schools in Edinburgh, Scotland, spoke with students from Pentucket and Stoneham High Schools in Massachusetts and students from the AMIDEAST ACCESS scholarship program in Kuwait. Although the various accents from around the world made the broadcast an interesting listen, it didn't take long to realize that the language being spoken could be understood in every location!



During the 90-minute broadcast, students openly discussed numerous topics such as hobbies, sports, television and even political preferences. Questions about political preferences and the outlook of students on their governments' foreign policies were asked without haste, illustrating the ease with which students in the various locations moved past cultural barriers to discuss more in depth topics.

During the broadcast Abdul Rahman Hogel, a student in Kuwait remarked, "We have got a lot of information about Massachusetts and Scotland and the most important thing was that we [took] a step to [break down] the wall and change the misunderstandings between us."



Students also discussed topics such as favorite television programs, hobbies, sports and music. As has proven true in past broadcasts, the latter of the topics merged the three cultures as one student in Boston sang a beautiful rendition of the Beatles' "Let it Be" which touched not only the live audience but viewers around the world.

Even the smallest similarities between the global peers became more and more evident with every question and answer exchange. "I never knew sports played such a big part in Boston and I was also very surprised to hear that school starts at 7:30 in Kuwait. I'd never be able to get up that early," said Ross, a student from Liberton High School in Scotland.

"These kids who are 16, 17, 18 are our future leaders in academics, business, politics, public services and so on. We want to forge this greater understanding so that perhaps they don't make some of the same mistakes as our generation."

*Nigel Griffiths
Member of Parliament, South Edinburgh*

"This will give them an opportunity to start links and friendships that will last a lifetime," said Nigel Griffiths, a Labour Member of Parliament from Edinburgh and host of the event. "These kids who are 16, 17, 18 are our future leaders in academics, business, politics, public services and so on. We want to forge this greater understanding so that perhaps they don't make some of the same mistakes as our generation."

Altogether nearly 1,000 students and teachers representing 15 countries worldwide participated in the broadcast.

From Kuwait, the event took place inside the US Embassy. From Massachusetts, students gathered at Polycom's International Headquarters. From Scotland, the students gathered at St. Thomas of Aquins High School. This was the first time Empower Peace ventured to Europe.

J.C. Honer, a teacher at Pentucket High School said, "I was truly humbled at this experience. The feedback from the kids was electrifying. It was an amazing experience!" ❄

EP RADIO

EP Radio is a bold, new program aimed at bringing interactive media directly to students' home computers. Using technology perfected by VBrick Systems, EP Radio broadcasts interviews with prominent leaders, newsmakers, and students live over the Internet to our members around the world. Each guest discusses topical issues with our EP Radio hosts in an informal living-room setting. Topics have included negotiating skills, public speaking, achieving your goals, networking, overcoming obstacles and getting into college and university. What makes the broadcasts unique is that VBrick technology allows students watching online to also participate directly in the chat by posting questions of the guests using instant messaging. The technology also allows the presenter to share a PowerPoint presentation with viewers live over the web.

Between January 2007 and September 2007, Empower Peace conducted eight broadcasts connecting to an estimated 2,500 students around the world.

Guests included:

Juliette Kayyem, the Undersecretary for Homeland Security in Massachusetts

Robin Worth, the Director of International Admission for Harvard University

Dawn Quensel, a Career Life Coach

Mary Lahaj, an Interfaith Coordinator.

EP Radio is hosted by Empower Peace Executive Director Tricia Raynard and Empower Peace Outreach Coordinator Mariam Abdo. Empower Peace Director of Media and Advance Asad Butt serves as producer and director of the broadcasts.

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There is no subscription fee. Subscriptions are available by contacting: Mariam Abdo at (617) 912-3835 or info@empowerpeace.org



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New and Improved

Empower Peace has launched a new and improved web site now located at www.empowerpeace.org. Log on today and see new videos and photos from our latest broadcasts, read about our exciting upcoming programs and view the "Day-in-the-Life" videos produced by EP students from all over the world.