

Thousands of years of human efforts in every field of activity have now culminated in opportunities which are unlike those of any other generation. There is much that can be done to generate goodwill and promote peace, and many people who have opportunities to discover how much of this potential can be fulfilled. *Who are the people who will step forward to discover how much of this potential can be fulfilled?*

Seven Women's Organizations Associated with Peacebuilding

a) International Peace Initiatives_(at <http://www.ipeacei.org/>)

[Note: All of the quotes below are from a webpage titled "Women's International Grassroots Peace Congress" (at <http://www.ipeacei.org/programs/inpeace/womens-international-grassroots-peace-congress.html>)]

"International Peace Initiatives is a U.S. and Kenya based organization that partners with a global network of individuals and organizations dedicated to finding, supporting, promoting, and funding innovative and effective initiatives that mitigate the effects of poverty, disease, oppression and violence."

"International Peace Initiatives hosted the 2nd *Women's International Grassroots Peace Congress* at the Kenya Methodist University (KEMU) in Meru, Kenya from August 20th – 23rd, 2009."

"The theme of the 2009 Congress was: '**Women, Peace and Community: Weaving partnerships that promote grassroots initiatives for sustainable development and cultures of peace.**' This was a multi-cultural, international forum aimed at crafting new and informed strategies for thought and action."

The Premise:

"The collective instinct in women for the protection of life is a powerful force for good in the world. Women can yearn for peace with a depth and commitment that enables them to work consistently, even in the face of continuing violent conflict, and work together, across political lines. When this collective instinct is honored and strengthened, it equips women to work more effectively for peacebuilding across our world.

"IPI brings women from the grassroots together because they are often the most vulnerable to armed conflict, poverty and disease. They are also often experts in community organizing on behalf of conflict resolution, health, education, and sustainability. Our Congress is convened to empower and fortify, through trainings and alliance opportunities, the grassroots women of the world, particularly in Africa."

The Goal

"The goal of the Congress was to create a space for education, networking, and promoting alliances that support and serve women working on grassroots peace, health and development initiatives. The Congress provided a regional and international outreach to dialogue about shared problems and to generate solutions. We endeavor to showcase best grassroots practices and share solutions to the many development challenges international women face today. This forum extended these connections through an *African Grassroots Women's Alliance*.

“This Congress was a forum for grassroots women to learn, share experiences, foster partnerships and alliances, and develop strategies for dealing with common challenges. The Congress aims to identify challenges, highlight successful strategies and best practices, share strengths and achievements of grassroots women, and to give voice to women’s grassroots peace and development initiatives in Africa and around the world. This gathering was committed to bring these grassroots voices to the world’s attention as the women speak for themselves on issues critical to the survival of our global environment and humanity as a whole.”

b) Peacewomen Across the Globe (at <http://www.1000peacewomen.org/eng/aktuell.php>)

“PeaceWomen Across the Globe is the organization following the initiative ‘1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005’, which nominated 1000 PeaceWomen from all over the world collectively for the Nobel Peace Prize.” (from the “About Us” section)

“A look at the portraits gives an impression of the wide range of women included in the nomination. The work done by the 1000 PeaceWomen takes place at the local, national and international levels and involves many different fields: promoting political rights, developing peace, supporting health, education, environment, fighting for children’s rights or against organized criminality, human trafficking and violence.” (from the “1000 PeaceWomen” section)

“We intend to make the daily peace work of women visible, worldwide. We are creating a platform where women can network regionally and thematically, share methods and strategies of work and develop common projects. We seek to incorporate women’s expert knowledge into all relevant decision-making and peace building processes.” (from the “About Us” section)

“Through targeted programs we support the work of PeaceWomen on the ground, connect them to networks and help them to develop their abilities. Our exhibition ‘1000 Peace Women Across the Globe’ and numerous publications draw attention to the valuable work of PeaceWomen.” (from the “About Us” section)

c) Global Peace Initiative of Women (at <http://www.gpiw.org/index.html>)

“The Global Peace Initiative of Women (GPIW) was founded to help awaken and mobilize spiritual energies in places of great need with the goal of aiding in healing and unifying the world community. GPIW facilitates this by seeking to gather together those of great insight, wisdom, compassion and dedication, many of whom are working quietly for the upliftment of the world. A major focus of GPIW’s work is to aid in building a global network of contemplative leaders who through their inner work can help transform the causes and conditions that lead to suffering at both the individual and collective level.” (from the “Homepage” section)

“We believe that a shift in consciousness is needed, a change in heart and mind, if we are as a global community to meet the challenges of climate change, environmental degradation, poverty and hunger, violence and conflict. Central to our work is the belief that the feminine qualities of wholeness, inclusion, and integration have a vital role to play in facilitating this shift and bringing greater balance to our world. Thus we make great effort to draw upon the resources of women spiritual leaders as we seek to empower these vital qualities.” (from a description of the Global Peace Initiative of Women organization at the website for Princeton University’s “Princeton Internships in Civic Service” Program, see <http://www.princetoninternships.org/id215.html>)

“Over the years GPIW’s work has grown to include three basic components – dialogues with women in conflict areas, programs to cultivate spiritual resources in young people, and gatherings to deepen interreligious and interspiritual exchange around principles of oneness, interdependence and compassion.” (from the “Our Beginning” subsection of the “Our Vision” section)

From “[A discussion with Dena Merriam, Global Peace Initiative of Women](#)” - Katherine Marshall, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs (May 2010) (in the “News” section of the GPIW website, or see <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-dena-merriam-global-peace-initiative-of-women>)

Dena Merriam: “...Women have not created the structures we now have that are not functioning, so we can more easily lead the changes towards the new structures we need. Women, we find, can more easily envisage and articulate the kinds of change that we need across all parts of society.”

Katherine Marshall: “Can you give any examples of what you mean? We are trying to articulate this hard to define sense of what is different.”

Dena Merriam: “...I have found that when I sat with women, no matter where they come from and how harsh the conditions and conflicts are that they are living, the women, from Israel, Palestine, and Iraq, for example, come as divided as the men, but are far more able to come together on common issues.

“And the issue where women always come together is the damage that conflict causes to children. No matter how divided they are, they find themselves on the same side of the fence. When a group of women leaders get together, within the first hour or two children always come up. Men can sit together for days of talk and the issue will not come up. Women are simply more finely tuned to how family structures are suffering, and how the different layers of society are damaged.

“They are also, I have found, more prepared to plunge in to try to solve the problem, more prepared to sacrifice for the solution. They have less need to hold onto positions. That applies even to the hardest core women, who are deeply set in conflict modes, and have suffered terribly. Even they can focus on the issue of children and look for common ground. I have seen this again and again.”

d) Women’s Federation for World Peace International (at <http://www.wfwp.org/wfwp/index.cfm>)

[Note: All of the following quotes are from the “The Bridge of Peace” webpage, which is part of the website of the Women’s Federation for World Peace International (see <http://www.wfwp.org/wfwp/index.cfm?SectionGroupsID=8>)]

“Ending the cycle of conflict by gaining a new perspective is essential to achieving world peace. Women's Federation for World Peace International is committed to utilizing the remarkably powerful Bridge of Peace Ceremony to further peacemaking efforts.”

“The Bridge of Peace Ceremony provides opportunities for individuals to take a meaningful series of steps that result in the creation of a new sisterhood partnership dedicated to and actively working for peace. Ceremony participants meet a peer from a former enemy nation, a different faith, culture or race and commit themselves to bridge the gaps of heart between them. They see beyond collective hurt and determine to reconcile and heal through their one to one friendship. This stops the cycle of conflict, cuts chains of resentment and anger, and frees the newfound sisters to experience a new beginning.”

“In 1995, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the end of WWII, the Sisterhood Ceremonies were taken to the United States. This began the era of the Bridge of Peace, as a special bridge was crossed by the participants. Each participant approached the center of the bridge to meet and embrace her new sister. Twenty thousand sister pairs were formed through Bridge of Peace Ceremonies in cities around the United States.”

In the following years, this movement was further refined and featured in a broader range of contexts with the same inspiration and impact. Through the power of ritual, this almost magical bridge ceremony brings about personal and profound revolution of heart that results in women and their families being liberated from debilitating hurt, resentment, hatred, and guilt. The Bridge of Peace Ceremony is an innovative beginning point for bridging the differences between people of different cultures, ethnic groups, religions and nationalities. Husbands and wives have even crossed the Bridge of Peace to recommit and strengthen their marriages.

“WFWP members use the **Bridge of Peace** ceremony to tend to some obvious needs for reconciliation: racial reconciliation; the healing of wounds between peoples of nations that have fought one another in wars; between people of different cultures or religions; and also as a way to uplift one of the most rewarding and challenging relationships-marriage.”

“Through gathering together as women, acknowledging our unique feminine natures, and experiencing the Bridge of Peace, we can come to see that each of us has the power and responsibility to contribute to world peace, at a minimum, by one relationship at a time.”

“The Bridge of Peace ceremonies continue to be an innovative and powerful contributor to the ongoing weaving of an effective worldwide grassroots network of women dedicated to creating peace in the daily lives of our families, communities and larger world.”

e) WorldPulse (at <http://worldpulse.com/>)

[From the “About WorldPulse” section]

“World Pulse is a global media and communication network devoted to bringing women a global voice. We broadcast and unite women's voices from around the world into a powerful force for change. We produce a print and web magazine as well as host an interactive community newswire, PulseWire, where women can speak for themselves to the world and connect to solve global problems.”

“Today, women from 179 countries use World Pulse...women are finding jobs, starting new programs and businesses, launching women-only cyber cafés, and finding international speaking opportunities that are changing their lives and lifting their communities.”

[From the “What We Do” section]

“PulseWire, our global community newswire, is the ‘online sanctuary’ of WorldPulse.com where every woman has a voice. New ideas and solutions rise from the ground up as women speak out from remote regions and hot spots via Internet cafés or cell phones. Our editors are always active on the site, looking for breaking stories. When fresh stories surface, we investigate and commission stories for our online and print magazines.”

“We are training a new online network of grassroots women citizen journalists to use web 2.0 and speak out as agents of change. Called “The Voices of Our Future,” our correspondents receive rigorous journalism and empowerment training from our program partners. Each correspondent is matched with an empowerment mentor to help her reach her dreams. World Pulse publishes their stories and three awardees are selected each year to travel on a speaking and media tour across the US.”

“We are working with our partners to build the largest interactive network of women in the world. We will unite millions of women into a powerful collective force to drive a more inclusive global agenda.”

Three Women’s Organizations Associated with Grantmaking and Philanthropy

a) Global Fund for Women (at <http://www.globalfundforwomen.org/>)

[From “The Issues” subsection of the “What We Do” section]

“The Global Fund for Women is a nonprofit grantmaking foundation that advances women's human rights worldwide. We are a network of women and men who believe that ensuring women's full equality and participation in society is one of the most effective ways to build a just, peaceful and sustainable world. We raise funds from a variety of sources and make grants to women-led organizations that promote the economic security, health, safety, education and leadership of women and girls.”

“Women perform two-thirds of all labor and produce more than half of the world's food. Yet, women own only about one percent of the world's assets, and represent 70 percent of those living in absolute poverty.”

“Two-thirds of the world's uneducated children are girls, and two-thirds of the world's illiterate adults are women. Numerous studies have demonstrated that educating women and girls is the single most effective strategy to ensure the well-being and health of children, and the long-term success of developing economies.”

[In description of the Global Fund for Women in the “Member Directory” section of the website for the Women’s Funding Network (see <http://www.womensfundingnetwork.org/the-network/member/global-fund-for-women>)]

“We are part of a global women's movement that is rooted in a commitment to justice and an appreciation of the value of women's experience. The challenges women face vary widely across communities, cultures, religions, traditions and countries. We believe that women should have a full range of choices, and that women themselves know best how to determine their needs and propose solutions for lasting change.”

From the “How We Grant” subsection of the “What We Do” section]

“The Global Fund is honored to work in partnership with women's rights organizations in 171 countries. The extraordinary courage, perseverance and leadership of these groups advance the international women's movement and promote social justice worldwide.”

b) Women’s Donor Network (at <http://womendonors.org/section/view/home>)

[From the “Homepage” section]

The Women Donors Network is a community where progressive women multiply their energy, their strategic savvy, and their philanthropic dollars to build a more just and fair world.

[From the “What We Do” section]

“The Women Donors Network is a learning community of activist philanthropists who are dedicated to a progressive global agenda.”

“We create community, educational opportunities, and action strategies that help philanthropists better use their wealth and influence to effect progressive social change. This is accomplished through the exchange of knowledge, information, and experience and collaborative action among a stable and expanding group of women who share key values.”

“Each year our members collectively give away well in excess of \$100 million.”

[From the “Who We Are” section]

“Members become colleagues and friends through education and action circles, retreats, regional and annual conferences, audio conferences, and on-line social networking.”

c) Women’s Funding Network (at <http://www.womensfundingnetwork.org/>)

[From the “About Us” section]

“Women’s Funding Network connects and strengthens more than 165 organizations that fund women’s solutions across the globe, making us one of the largest collaborative philanthropic networks in the world. Our members are women’s foundations that span public charities, private foundations and funds within community foundations.”

“Collectively our members invest \$65 million annually in women and girls worldwide and have over \$535 million in working assets.”

“As a global network and a movement for social justice, Women's Funding Network accelerates women's leadership and invests in solving critical social issues....”

“Women’s Funding Network serves as a global champion for investment in women and provides [member funds](#) with ongoing access, training, tools and support to help them increase their investment, influence and impact. We unite ideas, knowledge money and action to create lasting social change for women and girls, their families and communities.”