

## 2017 Oleander Initiative Program Report



UME is proud to announce the successful implementation of the 2017 Oleander Initiative.



**2017 Oleander Initiative staff and participants**

The 2017 Oleander Initiative featured two major changes from the inaugural program in 2016. First, UME increased the cross-cultural understanding aspect of the program by including adding five educators from throughout the US. UME also added a trip to Nagasaki, increasing the length of the schedule by four days and incorporating an important, often overlooked perspective into the program.



In all, 17 educators from throughout the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region, the United States and Japan spent 11 days together in Japan with the mission to **transform the lessons of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki into relevant and impactful peace education activities for their students.**



Opening

Dinner Guests flying “peace wish” origami planes at Seisen University

Oleander educators received a warm welcome upon their arrival in Japan. Seisen University in Tokyo hosted an opening dinner that included faculty and students, Japanese peace educators from the Tokyo area, as well as special guest Yuji Sasaki. Mr. Sasaki is the nephew of Sadako Sasaki (of the 1,000 paper cranes), and a notable musician in Japan. Mr. Sasaki performed his hit song [“Inori”](#) at the opening ceremony.



Following a night in Tokyo, the Oleander Initiative officially began with an orientation session at the Hiroshima offices of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). Oleander Participants met with the head of the UNITAR Hiroshima Office, Mihoko Kumamoto and her staff who

welcomed them to Hiroshima and gave a presentation entitled the “Rebuilding of Hiroshima.”



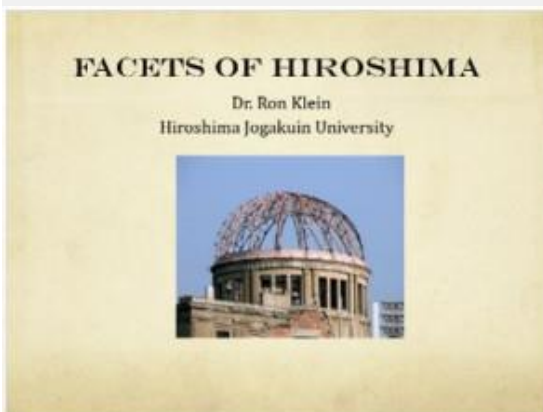
UNITAR Senior adviser Nassrine Azimi introduced the “Green Legacy Hiroshima” project which was established to spread the seeds and saplings of Hiroshima’s A-bomb survivor trees worldwide.



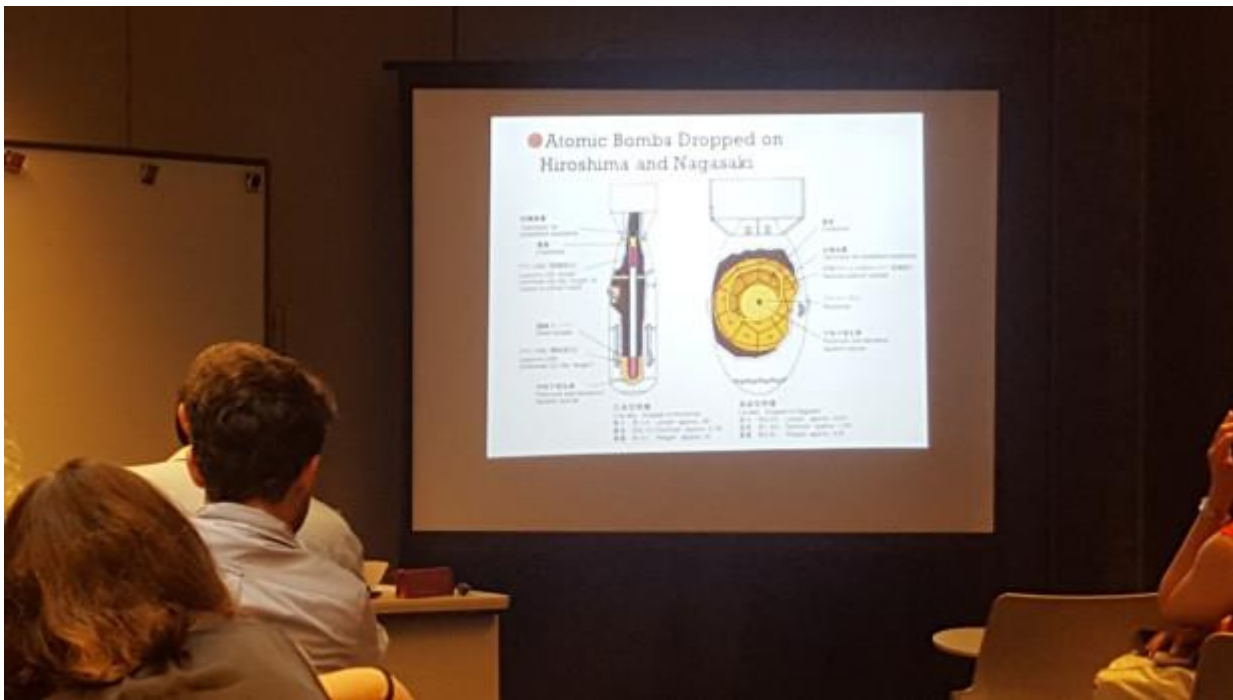


With a stunning view overlooking the Genbaku Dome and Hiroshima Peace Park, the UNITAR offices were the ideal location to convey the “power of place” at the heart of the Oleander Initiative.

The Oleander Initiative featured numerous academic sessions including a lecture entitled “Facets of Hiroshima” by Prof. Ron Klein of Hiroshima Jogakuin University. Prof. Klein’s lecture provided an overview of the history and aftermath of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and then focused on the constantly changing meanings associated with the city since the World War II.



In Nagasaki, Professor Kazue Shijyo compared the differences in the memorization of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with special attention on the role of Christianity in Nagasaki.



While in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Oleander Participants attended the Gensuikyo World Conference Against A+H Bombs. The World Conference includes nearly 10,000 attendees from over 50 countries and is the largest conference of its type. First established in 1955, it is credited as the venue that first gave voice to the hibakusha victims of the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.



Oleander participants attended various panels and discussion sessions focusing on nuclear disarmament at the Conference and had the chance to address the conference attendees.



The average age of hibakusha or atomic bomb survivors is 81, and with the number of survivors growing fewer every year, we were fortunate to hear two powerful testimonials by hibakusha during our time in Japan.

In Hiroshima, Teruko Ueno shared her experience as a 16 year old nurse working at the Red Cross in downtown Hiroshima on the morning of August 6, 1945. Her testimonial was part of an inspiring day at ANT, a local Hiroshima organization that conducts international peace and education projects inspired by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.





This special day included three generations of peacemakers from the same family. Teruko, who survived the atomic bombing, her daughter Tomoko who is the director of ANT, and her granddaughter Kuniko who also works at ANT and assisted Teruko in telling her story.



**Teruko, Kuniko and Tomoko at the ANT offices**

In Nagasaki, Miyako Jyodai was six years old and approximately 1.5 miles from the hypocenter when her city was hit by the atomic bomb. Ms. Jyodai shared her testimonial of that terrible day and also provided a perspective particularly relevant to the educators at the Oleander Initiative. Like the Oleander participants, Ms. Jyodai was a school teacher during her professional life and shared her experiences and challenges in promoting peace education during post war Japan.



Cross cultural exchange is an essential component of the Oleander Initiative and for the second year, Oleander participants had the opportunity to build bridges with students at the Jogakuin High School in Hiroshima. On August 4th, students conducted their own research on the various landmarks at Peace Park and presented their findings in English to the Oleander educators.



The relationships between the Oleander educators and Jogakuin High school further deepened during our visit to the school on August 6th, the anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Approximately 35 teachers and students lost



their lives at Joagakuin High during the atomic bombing in 1945. In order to honor these victims, Jogakuin High school implements an annual “Peace Forum” for students from throughout Japan, Asia and the US during the anniversary of the bombing.



The 2017 Peace Forum included special guest Dr. Lassina Zerbo, Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO).



The Oleander educators also visited the Honkawa Elementary School in Hiroshima. The Honkawa school was the closest school to the hypocenter of the nuclear blast on August 6, 1945. The original facade of the school and the basement have been transformed into a museum, complete with a scale model of the city of Hiroshima following the atomic blast.



Following the museum tour, Oleander educators and the Jogakuin students engaged in traditional Japanese cultural activities including origami and calligraphy.



At night, the Oleander educators joined the Bon-Odori festival at the Honkawa elementary school. Bon is a traditional summer festival that welcomes the spirits



of the dead and honors ancestors. The Bon-Odori at the Honkawa school had a dual purpose: to commemorate the victims of the atomic bomb but to also celebrate life through music and dance.



Hiroshima's comprehensive peace education curriculum spans from early childhood at nursery school to the last year of high school. Oleander educators had the opportunity to take an in-depth look into this unique curriculum through site visits to the Motomachi nursery school, Motomachi elementary school and a meeting with Hiroshima high school teachers.



### **Oleander educators greet Motomachi nursery school students**

Oleander educators also had the opportunity to have a discussion and a question and answer session with Motomachi elementary school faculty about the focus on multi-cultural understanding and peace education in their curriculum.



The Hiroshima peace education curriculum day concluded with a meeting with Japanese high school teachers who shared their successful peace education activities in Hiroshima with the Oleander educators.





On August 6th, Oleander participants attended the commemoration of the 72nd anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.



As part of the 50,000 attendees at the ceremony, Oleander participants were fortunate to be seated in one of the front lying seating areas with a clear view of the speakers. Speakers included Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui and the UN High Representative of the Office of Disarmament Affairs. Following the ceremony, participants placed flowers at the Memorial Cenotaph and walked around Peace Park to view peace related activities.



In Nagasaki, the Oleander participants had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Tomihisa Taue, mayor of Nagasaki city and former Japanese ambassador and current chairman of the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation to Kuwait, Mr. Yasuyoshi Komizo.





### **Oleander educators and staff with Mayor Tomihisa Taue**

In Nagasaki, Oleander participants visited Dejima Island and dressed in traditional Japanese Kimono and Hakama outfits while experiencing life in Japan from the 1600s.



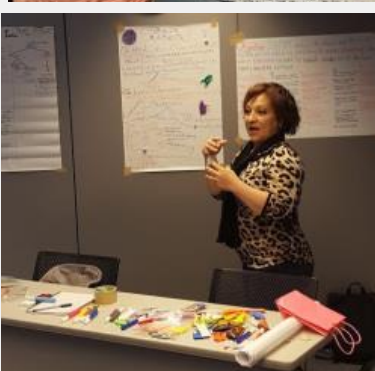
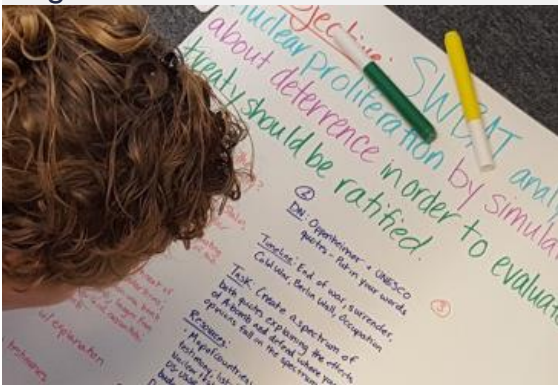
Throughout the Oleander Initiative, participants continually modified and refined peace education themed projects for the students in their home communities.







All of us at UME are looking forward to their work and the impact the Oleander participants will make in their classrooms throughout the 2017-2018 academic year. To see examples of Oleander projects from 2016, click [HERE](#). Thanks to the generosity of the City of Nagasaki, Oleander participants had the opportunity to work on their projects in donated classroom space located within Nagasaki National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims.



The powerful, tragic artifacts and displays at the museum further added to the “power of place” of the Oleander Initiative and gave participants additional

impetus for their important work to promote peace within their schools and communities.

### 紛争国の教員 平和教育学ぶ 広島で17人ワークショップ

原爆の日を前に、アフリカや中東など紛争地域から訪れた教員たちがヒロシマの平和教育を学ぶワークショップが広島市中区の市中央公民館であった。被爆地などのノウハウを学び、母国で役立ててもらう。

パレスチナやヨルダン、チュニジア、アルジェリアなど9カ国で、教育や平和事業に携わる17人が参加。被爆証言を読んだ子どもたちが当時の状況を想像しながら絵を描く手法や平和を願う歌詞を考え、合唱する取り組みなどを広島市内の中学教諭らが紹介した。

イスラム過激派のテロが続くモロッコから参加した高校教諭ユセフ・アルカイディさん(36)は「過去の歴史だけでなく、世



ヒロシマの平和教育について意見交換したワークショップ

界の平和のために貢献する若者を育てる方法を学び、刺激的だった。母国で実践したい」と熱心にメモを取った。

米マサチューセッツ州が拠点のNPO法人「中東大学プロジェクト」が企画、日本の教員らでつくる平和教育地球キャンペ

ーン中四国支部が協力した。一行は平和記念式典にも参列。プロジェクトの代表で被爆3世の日系人レイ・マツミヤさん(43)は「広島の平和学習は核被害だけでなく復興についても学べ、紛争地域の人々の希望になる」と話していた。(桑島美帆)

ヒロシマ平和メディアセンター <http://www.hiroshimapeace.media.jp/>

As in 2016, the 2017 Oleander received attention from prominent Japanese newspapers including the Asahi and Chugoku newspapers.

# NHK WORLD

NHK World, Japan's international English language news station also covered the 2017 Oleander Initiative. A 7 minute news segment about the Oleander Initiative broadcast to over 150 countries on Aug 30. Please click [HERE](#) to watch the broadcast. This program is due to air in the United States on PBS in early September 2017.





## **NHK camera crew at the Oleander Initiative**

Many Thanks to the Ottoman Foundation, Shinfujin Women's Association, Peace Exchange, ANT, Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation, Jogakuin High School, Honkawa school, the Nagasaki Memorial Hall for Atomic Bomb Victims and the Cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki for making this program possible.

Special thanks to Galia, Liz, Kathleen, Michelle, and Layla for their incredible academic guidance for this program and to Kanade, Saho, and Kohei for showing the best of Japan to the participants.

Please contact me at RayMat@ume.org if you have any questions or would like additional information about the Oleander Initiative.

Sincerely,

Ray Matsumiya  
Executive Director

**Help UME expand the Oleander Initiative in 2018!**

**Please donate to UME by clicking [HERE](#).**

