

Green Legacy Hiroshima



'Over the years and in the course of many walks, we have come to appreciate the resilience, generosity, beauty and particular significance of Hiroshima's special residents: trees that lived through the atomic blast, and their descendants. These survivors of nuclear tragedy carry a significant message - not just for those living in or visiting Hiroshima, but for all of humanity. The Green Legacy Hiroshima Initiative has been established, to safeguard and spread the meaning and knowledge of their existence. It is hoped that many partners worldwide will join this Initiative and become active ambassadors in their countries of Hiroshima, its peace message and its green legacy.'

Green Legacy Hiroshima Team



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Background and Context

A green and vibrant city today, Hiroshima is renowned for its beautiful Peace Memorial Museum and Park, and for the abundance of its trees. Some 170 of these, in 55 locations within the roughly 2km radius of the hypocenter, are officially registered by the municipality as A-bombed trees. And like the atomic bomb survivors or *Hibakusha*, they too bear witness to the unbearable devastation wrought by nuclear weapons. Lovingly cared for over the years by authorities, botanists, various citizens' groups and individuals, they are identified by a name plate and the unique reference: *hibakujumoku* (survivor tree).

The atomic bombing of 6 August 1945 left the center of Hiroshima a radioactive desert, covered by ash, seemingly broken and devoid of life. Many believed nothing would grow for 75 years - there was even talk of rebuilding the city on another site altogether. So when new seedlings were sighted across this desolate landscape, only a few months after the bomb, they provided a powerful message, encouraging survivors in their struggle to rebuild. In the 1950s, Hiroshima called for the donation of trees for the Peace Boulevard and the Peace Memorial Park - thousands of seeds and saplings were sent from communities in Japan and around the world. This wide-spread solidarity allowed the city to undertake major greening efforts - in particular along its many river banks - which continue to this day. The exchange of seeds with different communities is in a long line of Hiroshima's many 'green' friendships.

As to the A-bombed trees themselves, they continue to flourish, flower, give fruit and bear witness. For years many worthy initiatives, to spread the seeds and saplings of these and other Hiroshima trees around the world, have been attempted. To date however no large-scale, international and systematic effort has been carried out.

Objectives

In order to engage all those committed to a greener planet, to future generations living free from nuclear threats, to honoring victims of wars past and present or to simply creating peace gardens in their communities, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), ANT-Hiroshima and a group of other dedicated partners and individuals have come together under the banner of 'Green Legacy Hiroshima'. The founding idea -- distribution and planting of seeds and saplings from Hiroshima's A-bombed trees -- is both simple and sustainable. The forms of its implementation, however, can be diverse and adapted -- from seeds planted in urban and botanical gardens, schools, embassies and other public and private institutions, to planting on symbolic sites such as in South Africa or Kazakhstan, where nuclear silos might have been. The universality of the core idea and diversity of activities it can generate make this Initiative symbolically powerful yet practically easy to implement.

The Initiative will also deepen ties between Hiroshima and the hundreds of professionals from different countries and disciplines, who have visited the city under UNITAR and ANT programs. It will tap into their considerable experience, energy and influence on their communities, inspire them to become active ambassadors of/remain connected, not just to



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their fellow-trainees, but also to Hiroshima, sharing its message for the 21st century. Inspiration and lessons from the Initiative can also contribute to the work of the United Nations in peace and security, climate change, biodiversity and nuclear non-proliferation.

Founding Organizations

UNITAR is the foremost executive training institution of the United Nations (UN), conducting programs around the globe for thousands of government, academia and private sector cadre annually. As the only UN entity with a presence in Hiroshima, UNITAR will be in a strong position to harness the strength of its alumni and other expert networks to safeguard and spread the message from the plant world's survivors of atomic bombings.

An NGO established in 1989, ANT-Hiroshima, using a worldwide network with its pivot in Asia, integrates the experiences and message of Hiroshima in all its activities related to international cooperation, peace education, peace cultural exchange and associated events. ANT founds its work on one core belief: even if the power of a single person is as small as an ant's, it is possible to achieve larger peace together, through global cooperation and solidarity.

Modalities of Participation

A pilot phase (1 July 2011- 30 June 2012) will focus on selected planting initiatives, to be conducted, initially, by UNITAR and ANT alumni in their home countries or within their diplomatic representations. All interested alumni can apply through a simple application form. Once accepted, they will receive seeds, guidelines and material. They will also be connected to other authorities, citizens and botanists in Hiroshima through the small support team to be set up by UNITAR and ANT. Costs related to each country initiative will be shouldered by the participants themselves.

A common website will bring this community of planters for Hiroshima together – sharing progress report from countries, experiences, lessons learned and advice on planting, tips on peace-related activities around the trees and other common challenges and experiences.

Though during the pilot phase participants will be selected mainly from within alumni networks of UNITAR and ANT, in the longer term Green Legacy Hiroshima is conceived as open-ended and inclusive of all those entities, public or private, that wish to and can partake in this global planting initiative.

For more information, please contact:

Green Legacy Hiroshima

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