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## 34 PEACE FELLOWS TO TACKLE LANDMINES, GUN VIOLENCE AND INJUSTICE IN 21 COUNTRIES



May 26, 2008, Washington, DC: While taking a class in international law, Lucas Wolf read about an African doctor's experience with landmine survivors. The doctor wrote about injuries. He mentioned treatments. But mostly, he prayed that the survivors would not visit him. Seeing them, especially the children, was just too hard.

"The injuries were so severe...inhumane," recalls Mr Wolf, who studies at the Universidad del Salvador in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The impact of the doctor's words remained long after the class finished. Mr. Wolf is now preparing to work side by side with landmine survivors in Ethiopia as a 2008 Peace Fellow of the Advocacy Project.

This summer, 34 graduate students from 19 universities will be serving as Peace Fellows with community-based advocates in 21 countries. Mr. Wolf is one of six Fellows sponsored by the Survivor Corps (formerly Landmine Survivors Network), a global network that helps survivors of conflict rise above their injuries and give back to their communities.

Worldwide, between 300,000 and 400,000 people live with landmine-related injuries, and an estimated 80 million mines are still in the ground.

Two Peace Fellows have been sponsored by The International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA). They will be working with IANSA members in Trinidad and El Salvador to combat gun-related and other forms of violence.

Peace Fellows spend up to three months with their host organizations and provide a range of information services (including newsletters and ICT) that help their host to spread the message and campaign for social change. AP has introduced several new services this year, including “wiki pages” that will allow their hosts to train in ICT while at the same time creating a simple web page.

Nerina Cevra, a program officer with Survivor Corps in Washington, described information as the “missing link” for partners. “We are looking to build their capacity at spreading their message and increasing their visibility on the web,” she said.

Fellows for Peace is now in its fifth year and the program has grown rapidly since 2003, when it began with 8 students. AP received over 400 applicants this year and has recruited from outside the United States for the first time. Six Fellows are from Canada, the United Kingdom, Argentina and the Netherlands.

The partnerships with Survivor Corps and IANSA show that larger networks are starting to see value in the model. Peace Fellows provide low-cost, professional, information support for advocacy groups that cannot afford conventional technical assistance.

Fellows are asked to continue representing their hosts on return, by organizing events and linking up with diaspora groups – and this also appeals to sponsors. “We see this as an investment that will pay off for a long time because the Fellows will be ambassadors upon returning,” said Tirza Leibowitz, who manages advocacy for the Survivor Corps.

About half of this year’s Peace Fellows will be working in countries affected by conflict. Some will be helping long-time AP partners, like the weavers from Srebrenica or Palestinian civil society. Two Fellows will be working with women’s groups on both sides of the Serbian-Kosovo border. Six will be deployed to Nepal.

But a third of all the Fellows will be going to new groups. They include Juliet Hutchings (American University), who will be working with advocates for the pygmies in central Africa; Ash Kosiewicz (Georgetown), who will support the Peruvian forensic team (EPAF); and Annelieke van der Weil (Amsterdam University), who will be working with advocates for the disabled in northern Uganda.

In each case, their short-term goal will be to create demand for information and help their hosts sustain their information tools after they leave. But the long-term goal is to promote social change, and the past year has shown how this can be done.

In 2008, Peace Fellows helped the Irish Travellers of Dale Farm (UK) to achieve a landmark victory before the British High Court; assisted Nepalese civil society during the country's dramatic transition from war to democracy; and helped the Oruj Learning Center (an AP partner in Afghanistan) expand its education program to almost 2000 girls - up from 30 in 2003.

- Read bios of all the 2008 Peace Fellows.  
<http://advocacynet.org/fellows/former-peace-fellows/2008-peace-fellows/>
- Read Peace Fellow blogs from around the world  
<http://advocacynet.org/fellows/former-peace-fellows/>
- Learn more about Survivor Corps.  
<http://www.survivorcorps.org/>
- Learn more about IANSA <http://www.iansa.org/>