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## 45 PEACE FELLOWS TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY ADVOCATES IN 26 COUNTRIES



Washington, DC: During the school year, [Kate Cummings](#) is a graduate student at Tufts University in Boston. For three months this summer, she will be helping women in Kenya to campaign against rape and human trafficking.

[Gretchen Murphy](#), from American University in Washington DC, will spend her summer working with survivors of landmine accidents in Vietnam. [Rebecca Gerome](#), from the University Sciences Po in Paris, will travel to Colombia to help build an international network against armed domestic violence.

The three students are among [45 who will volunteer this summer](#) for community-based partners of The Advocacy Project (AP) in 26 different countries. Several features of this year's fellowship program reflect the growing appeal of AP's model of international service, which seeks to help marginalized communities campaign for social change.

More than 450 students from about 200 universities applied for Peace Fellowships this year - a significant increase from past years. The model has also attracted the attention of several major social justice organizations, three of which are taking Fellows this summer to work with their own partners abroad.

The London-based [International Action Network on Small Arms \(IANSA\)](#) has asked for nine Fellows, including Ms Gerome, to help members of the [IANSA Women's Network](#) collect data on armed domestic violence. Sarah Masters, who coordinates the Women's Network, said that by collecting similar information from nine countries Peace Fellows would provide a "global snapshot of this very serious and little-known issue, and lay the foundation for a strong international campaign."

Four Fellows, including Ms Cummings, are being deployed to Africa by [Vital Voices](#), a

Washington-based organization that advocates for women's rights. They will split their time between five local groups in Cameroon and Kenya.

Four more volunteers will help [Survivor Corps](#), which is also based in Washington, to build its program for survivors of violent conflict in Northern Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Colombia. Two fellows, including Ms Murphy, will also be working with Survivor Corps partners - Landmine Survivors Network-Vietnam and Red de Sobrevivientes y Personas con Discapacidad El Salvador.

Tassos Coulaloglou, who coordinates AP's fellowship program, welcomed this growing interest in AP's model and said that students are particularly well suited to working with community-based advocates. "Our program is unique and the more we get out and tell people about it, the more interest it generates," he said.

Fellows from North America (shown above) completed a three-day training last week in Washington. European fellows are being trained this week in London.

This year, all Peace Fellows will profile their host organizations through text, photos, and videos. Helped by a generous two-for-one offer from [Pure Digital Technologies](#) and donations from supporters, AP is sending each Fellow out with a Flip video camera which they will use and then leave with their hosts.

As part of the profiling service, Fellows will also help their hosts to develop and use Google Sites where the profiles can be stored and used in their advocacy. AP hopes that in time, the groups can develop their own websites and newsletters, and use these in campaigns. Several AP partners, from Afghanistan to Kosovo, have used this approach to produce significant social change.

As in the past, all Fellows will produce regular [blogs](#), which will be excerpted in a bi-weekly e-newsletter. AP is also seeking e-mentors to follow the blogs of selected Fellows and connect with them after they return. Scores of e-mentors have already signed up. Fellows will be asked to promote the work of their hosts upon their return through outreach at universities, local schools and diaspora groups.

While AP's immediate focus is to ensure a safe and productive summer for this year's Peace Fellows, a longer-term goal is to encourage the idea that short-term volunteers can trigger a process that can produce a sustained, long-term impact.

- Meet the [2009 Peace Fellows](#)
- Check out [Peace Fellow blogs](#)