

Thirty Peace Fellows to Support Community Advocates in 15 Countries



Washington DC: In eastern Uganda, the [Gideon Foundation](#) campaigns against child sacrifice. In Kampala, the Ugandan capital, [Kinawataka](#) helps poor women turn recycled straws into handicrafts. In Belize, the [Sarstoon Temash Institute for Indigenous Management \(SATIIM\)](#) is mobilizing Mayan Indians against an oil company. In India, Parma, a women's group, is demanding protection for Transgender people before the Indian Supreme Court. In western Kenya, [Kakenya Ntaiya](#) runs a boarding school to shield Masai girls from Female Genital Mutilation.

These are among 26 innovative community campaigns that are hosting a [Peace Fellow](#) through The Advocacy Project (AP) this year. Nine Fellows are currently in the field for [up to a year](#). The rest attended training in Washington, DC recently (photo above) and will volunteer for the summer.

Two hundred and thirty-one young professionals have served as Peace Fellows since the program began in 2003. In the process they have shown that graduate students have skills which are uniquely tailored to the needs of community based organizations. These include a knowledge of IT and ability to work under difficult conditions. Fellows also offer friendship, which can mean a lot to people who put up with discrimination and violence.

As the program has gained visibility, applications have become more specialized. For example, [Amanda Lasik](#) (University of California, San Diego) has worked for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society in Washington State - she will now help advocates

for the blind in Bangladesh. [Ryan McGovern](#) (American University, Cairo), an army veteran, has personally witnessed the impact of landmines - he left on Monday for Vietnam to work with landmine survivors.

[Rebecca Scherpelz](#) (Butler University) will draw on her experience with Best Buddies, a group in Indiana State that works on developmental disability, during her fellowship with the Gulu Disabled Persons Union in northern Uganda. As she says in her opening [video](#): "I know that it's going to be an amazing experience. I feel very prepared."

Several Fellows will be working on advocacy quilts. AP has helped seven partners (in [Bosnia](#), [Guatemala](#), [DRC](#), [Nepal](#), and [Uganda](#)) to make quilts, and several more have expressed an interest. [Kerry McBroom](#) (American University) has just completed a quilt with Roma women in Strasbourg. Two more Fellows, [Samantha Hammer](#) (Columbia University) and [Beth Wofford](#) (University of Maryland) will support Roma quilts in the Czech Republic and Kosovo.

In another new feature this year, AP has recruited Fellows through three university partners: the [Community Justice Project](#) at Georgetown's Law Center; the [Human Rights Internet](#) at Ottawa University; and the [Human Rights Center](#) at Oslo University. In one rich example of cross-culturalism, Maelanny Purwaningrum, an Indonesian student at Oslo University, is helping advocates against child labor in Nepal.

Although most fellowships are short-term, they are expected to produce a long-term impact. Since 2003, a series of Fellows has helped survivors of the 1995 Srebrenica massacre to publicize the massacre and demand justice. This year, [Julia Dowling](#) (Smith College) and [Quinn Van Valer-Campbell](#) (Monterey Institute of International Studies) are helping AP's partner, [Bosfam](#) to open a center in Srebrenica for returning survivors - long a goal for Bosfam and AP.

AP's program is managed from Washington, DC by [Karin Orr](#), who served as a Peace Fellow with relatives of the disappeared in Peru in 2010. She is supported by Erica Burdick (University of Maryland) and Pegah Asgari (California State University, Fullerton). AP gratefully acknowledges the help of [Humanity United](#), which is supporting two Fellows from the Fletcher School in Boston, the Brimstone Foundation, the Journey Fund and AP's many benefactors.

- [Meet this year's Fellows.](#)
- Check out available [AP fellowships](#).
- Learn about AP's [campaigns](#) and [partners](#).