

PRESS RELEASE

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Conference Provides Skills for Empowering Peace in Middle East

International Conference on 'Transforming Conflict' – June 20-23, 2012 in Amman, Jordan

- At a time of unprecedented transformation in the Middle East, a unique international conference is being held in Jordan teaching effective skills in conflict resolution and cross-cultural communication that empower individuals in these societies to take a more proactive civic role in addressing reform issues facing their communities. **Common Bond Institute (CBI), International Humanistic Psychology Association, and People's Peace Fund** are organizing the **2nd Annual International Conference on "Transforming Conflict: Sharing Tools For Dialogue and Engagement"** in Amman, Jordan in June, an initiative that has been **endorsed by King Abdullah II of Jordan.**

The 4 day practical skills training program is dialogue oriented and highly interactive, providing state-of-the-art training in dialogue and deliberation, interpersonal communication, decision making, negotiation, problem solving, conflict resolution, teamwork, leadership, good governance, and sustainable reconciliation. Presenters from various countries and training institutes in the region and around the world, including a number from the US, will be on hand to provide intensive practical workshops and lead topical roundtable dialogues focusing on improving relationships within and between communities

With over 75% of it's population under the age of 35, the conference offers a unique opportunity to equip key individuals in Jordan and other countries in the region going through momentous transition with the kinds of skill set and abilities that can allow them to become direct contributors and future leaders in guiding this transition. "After most of a century with little in the way of active civic participation, there is both an intense wish to move forward in advancing democratic civil society, and a great need for more practical hands-on experience with the necessary skills at the grassroots level to effectively engage in this," said Steve Olweean, Director of CBI, a **Michigan based nongovernmental organization** that holds international conflict resolution conferences and trainings around the world. "We feel this is a time that calls for stepping forward to offer the best skills available in support of this amazing wave of liberation and empowerment sweeping across the Middle East,"

Workshops on proven, collaborative methods like NonViolent Communication, Win-Win Negotiation, Dialogue and Deliberation, Consensus Building, and Interpersonal Relationship are integrated with daily facilitated dialogue groups to incorporate & assimilate learning experiences to formulate sound, practical applications that can best contribute to the development and progress of each participant's society. Examples of expert in the field presenting include William Ury, John Marks, and Don Edward Beck.

“These dialogue groups are really the engines of the conference that lead directly into exploring concrete, productive ways to put skills and principles into practice,” said Olweean. The conference is designed to build a strong, interactive learning community that encourages participants to learn from prepared material while also bringing their own perspectives and experience to the table. “We expect individuals will come out of this event with skills and important networking relationships to continue working together beyond the conference,” Olweean said. “We’re pleased to have King Abdullah’s encouragement in this.”

Among planned outcomes is an agreement with the Jordanian educational institutions to compile a growing, comprehensive resource library of training programs and curriculum presented at these conferences to provide to Jordan’s formal educational system and ensure the benefit of many youth in their society readily having access to these skills now and in the future.

Although the conference is international and will have participants from a number of countries outside the Middle East, most are expected to gather from countries within the region, including **Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt, Syria, Libya, Iraq, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Turkey.**

After a highly successful 1st conference launched last July in Amman, the TC Conference has been established as an annual event in Jordan intended to progressively build local networks of trainers who can conduct more frequent trainings in their communities throughout the year. CBI has organized over 40 international conferences on conflict transformation and social healing, and numerous training projects, in more than 22 years, held in various countries including the US. Last October it launched another new international conference series in the Middle East on “**Practical Models For Peace,**” aimed at promoting support and resources for the many organizations involved in peace and healing work in the Middle East. In September of 2012 it will launch yet another annual international professional conference based in Jordan addressing the topic of “**Transgenerational Trauma: Unresolved Communal Wounds and Victim Identities.**” linked to establishing a professional multidisciplinary and multicultural network of study groups that will use the new conference as its annual meeting - the **Global Network for the Study of Transgenerational Trauma.** The Network includes permanent study groups representing universities, professional associations, institutes, and non-governmental organizations from a number of countries.

Participation in the June Conference on Transforming Conflict is open to all. Complete information about program and registration is available online at www.cbiworld.org, by Email at SOlweean@aol.com, or by telephone at **269-665-9393**

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