

WFWP's Youth Leadership and Educators Conference in Senegal, Africa

Philbert Seka
August 22, 2018



Following the Africa Summit in Senegal in January 2018, Mother Moon encouraged America to reach out and support Africa, as an elder brother supports his younger. With that heart in mind, Youth and Students for Peace Africa connected with Women Federation for World Peace USA, represented by Denneze Nelson (WFWP New Jersey Chairwoman), to host the 1st Youth Leadership and Educators Conference in collaboration with Family Federation for World Peace USA, Universal Peace Federation USA and Youth and Students for Peace USA.



The program was held from August 11th to 22nd, 2018. Participants from abroad gathered from four different African nations: Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Senegal, and Guyana. It was a wonderful experience to lead such leaders in their respective nations to America to learn about Character Education, Youth

Leadership, Women Leadership, and Entrepreneurship.

"This is a new platform we are setting up in order to create an International Institute of Character Education and Leadership that will not belong to a particular nation or people but will gather the efforts and resources of people from the 5 continents to raise future leaders with global perspectives to tackle the challenges of our planet. To give a chance, hope and see the development of our villages, communities, and nations through the principles of interdependence, mutual prosperity, and universal values. Those global leaders who will graduate from that institute will be able to work together, serve everywhere beyond their own communities, nations..."

- Philbert Seka, Youth and Students For Peace Africa

The Workshop opened with a ceremony at the African Union (AU). The AU Ambassador, her Excellency Fatima Kyari Mohammed, Permanent Observer to the UN, greeted the group. She spoke about character education, service learning, and leadership skills training. It is the first time we have ever heard a high-level Ambassador refer to character education. Then the Senegalese Ambassador, His Excellency Cheikh Niang greeted the group and emphasized youth leadership. He spoke of WFWP in his speech stating that he is aware of the work of WFWP.

The Senegalese Ambassador from the UN was so inspired he invited the organizing team for a visit to the embassy for a short meeting. He shared about his familiarity of WFWP in Japan and Australia and his admiration for our work. He wishes us to maintain contact and find ways to work together in future. The Ambassador shared about the Sufi nature of Senegal where Muslim and Christians intermarry.



After the speech of the Senegalese Ambassador, Philbert Seka spoke about the initiative of the Leadership and Educators Conference by bringing from Africa 27 high-level educators and youth leaders. He emphasized the creation of a Leadership and Character Education Institute in Africa to raise young global leaders for future generations in Africa who will serve Africa and beyond. There were a total of 28 participants from Africa and the Caribbean as well as a large group of Chinese interns who attended the program. Participants were very inspired by the level of the speakers and the atmosphere at the African Union.

Dr. Alan Saunders took over for day 2 and 3 of the workshop and did a full lecture series on character education and leadership training with the support of Prof. Alain Tamelessio, Philbert Seka and Dr. Kone. The interactive lectures on character education and leadership training were well received. The participants, who due to their responsibility as educators and leaders are always giving orders to people under their responsibility, suddenly became attentive students. They attended the workshop like students in school, coming in the morning, taking a break at noon, resuming in the afternoon and ending each evening. They sat, listening carefully to all the presenters and took notes from the lectures. It was an amazing experience for them, but also incredibly inspiring to the lecturers.

"These leaders were crying out to me for us to continue this work, they all had a strategic plan to

implement what they learned. I was invited to speak in Senegal, Ivory Coast, Kenya, and Guyana. The 31-year-old Member of County Assembly from Kenya was so happy with the content. He shared that he promised in his campaign that he would donate 50% of his salary every month to help the widows and he does."

- Denneze Nelson

Naokimi Ushiroda and Naria McGee, respectively Youth Students for Peace (YSP) President and Secretary General for the US gave a presentation on their organization and their specific programs. Naokimi gave a powerful presentation on Peace Designers, a new material developed to raise a young generation of peacemakers. Participants were also especially interested in Milhan Stephens' lecture on how to nurture a culture of youth entrepreneurs in their countries, and Philbert Seka's lecture on how to reach out to youth via social media. Participants understood that the most relevant and meaningful change comes from young people. They quickly began planning projects to better involve young people in their communities and schools at home.



With all of the attendees so inspired, plans quickly became active resolutions:

The 22 participants from Cote d'Ivoire, who are all educators, have made a resolution to speak to the Minister of Education to include more progressive character education programs in the Ivorian education system. They have decided to lead character education training for school teachers across the 31 local regions of the nation.

2 participants from Kenya have decided to hold a leadership and character education workshop for 1,025 youth and women leaders across Kenya from April 9 to 14, 2019 at the University of Bungoma.

A young lady from Senegal, who is the Secretary General of the Youth National Council of Senegal, has set up workshops for 85 key women leaders on September 14th to 16th and October 5th to 7th 2018.

The National Youth Council will help to launch YSP in Senegal and train the leaders of the 17000 youth associations under its governance so they can each become teachers of character education.

The participant from Guyana is an Engineer in aviation and a youth leader. He has resolved to meet with the Minister of Youth and organize workshops on character education and service projects in communities.

The final day of the workshop, Friday the 17th, Mrs. Katarina Connery, Vice President of WFWP, gave an excellent presentation. She explained the important role of women in stabilizing society and the different types of leadership. This was very well received, especially by the ladies. Among the 28 participants, 17 were women. They stated that they would have preferred this presentation at the

beginning of the workshop, not at the end!

The closing ceremony was held on that evening. We were honored to welcome Richard Buessing, President of FFWPU USA, Angelika Selle, President of WFWP USA, and Dr. Hugh Spurgin, President of Unification Theological Seminary. President Richard Buessing spoke briefly about Rev. and Mrs. Moon's work in the US and the great commitment of Mother Moon in Africa. President Selle spoke on Mother Moon's work and WFWP's activities across the world and in Africa. After some incredibly heartfelt testimonies, certificates of completion were awarded to each participant.



Before they returned home to their countries, participants were taken on a trip to Washington D.C. so they could soak in our nation's capital and better connect with the heart of America. They were inspired to visit sites of monumental historic importance such as the White House, Capitol Heights, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Washington Monument where Dr. Martin Luther King delivered his visionary I Have a Dream speech. They were also taken to see the Washington Times, the second largest newspaper in Washington and learn about its contribution to America and the world.

Next year, the Youth Leadership and Educators Conference Edition 2 hopes to gather 120 participants, youth leaders, educators and young entrepreneurs from all over Africa and will be held at International Peace Education Center (IPEC) in Las Vegas USA. Preparation started and people already manifested their interest.

The Youth Leadership and Educators Conference is a step ahead to build an International Institute of Character Education and Leadership in Africa to raise a generation of future global leaders.

Testimonies

Mrs. Gla Saramata
Regional Director of Education
Cote d'Ivoire

"The key point of this workshop for me is to educate our heart. Because if the heart is well educated, we can become good people with good actions. I really appreciated also the spiritual dimension of the workshop. It will be a huge mistake if we separate our spiritual being from our body. If we ignore the training of our mind, never will we have a good character. That is what we lack in education systems. This training is not academic, nor a demonstration of knowledge. It was all about our the education our being. I'm grateful to the organizers."

Mrs. Fatoumata Coulibaly Silue
Head of National Center of Curriculum and School Manuals
Cote d'Ivoire

"I would like to start by saying thank you to the organizers. It was a wonderful experience for me

to be a part of this program. In the beginning, I thought we were going for vacation after a full year of work. But while there, I realized that we became students with normal school schedule, coming to class every morning, have a break at noon then start again in the afternoon and end in the evening. Besides the amazing content we have learned, the daily schedule itself was set to educate our character. As head of the National Center for Curriculum and School Manuals Production, I was moved by the workshop. I got a lot of ideas to achieve my responsibility. Our children and youth as well the persons in charge of their training need good content of education manuals. Nowadays, we all witness that the level of the education of the students is very low simply because the content of the manuals don't lead them to value. After this training, going back to my country I will suggest that the character education be part of the national curriculum by adapting our moral and civic education to students and I do my best to make it happen. But at the same time, I will start to apply the character education to my family, women in the various associations I'm part of. I will organize training."

Hon. Tony Barasa
Member of County Assembly
Kenya

"We thank everyone for taking care of us in the United States of America. The training was a success. We have shared with Philbert Seka already that we will organize the same workshop for youth and women leaders in Kenya in April 2019. As the population's representatives in the National Assembly, we will try to empower our youth and women through training for better tomorrow. I look forward to being called upon in any training session. I want to learn more."

Richard Chamlee
Engineer in Aeronautics
Youth Leader
Guyana

"I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the organizers and to all the leaders who welcome us here. This is a wonderful training for youth. Back in Guyana, I will meet the Minister of Youth and Ministers of Education who are close people to me. We will set up an agenda to train youth leaders in communities and school students. Meeting my brothers and sisters from Africa during this workshop gave me more inspiration to see what we can do together. I made connections and probably will visit them very soon. The workshop was like a family gathering. Thank you very much for all."

Mrs. Agathe Aka Degbey
High School Teacher of Philosophy
Cote d'Ivoire

"Here are my impressions I am delighted with the spirit of solidarity and teamwork that has prevailed throughout this period of trip, conferences, and sightseeing. The dynamism of the organizers of this activity awakened in me a new spirit in all that I must do now. The various speakers presented their themes with great professionalism. Through the teaching of character education, I realized that all values are based on the spiritual. I congratulate the initiative of this training because I have been enriched intellectually spiritually and materially. I understand the effort to provide for my personal development and to be an actor for the development of my community."

