



## **SUMMARY REPORT – Adelphi University-World Beyond War: a University-Organizational Collaborative Pilot**

**Report To:**  
Adelphi University, World BEYOND War

**Submitted by:**  
Dr. Phill Gittins, Education Director, World BEYOND War  
Dr. Susan Cushman, Adjunct Professor, Adelphi University

### **OVERVIEW:**

In Fall 2021, Adelphi University (AU) and its Innovation Center (IC) teamed up with World BEYOND War (WBW) to provide an educational and project-based experience to first-year undergraduate students at Adelphi University, Garden City, NY, USA. The objective was to introduce students to the fundamentals of peacebuilding and support their design and delivery of peacebuilding projects that align with both WBW and peace studies curriculum goals. The collaboration began in September 2021, with planning sessions between AU, the IC, and WBW, followed by a project that extended from mid-October to early December 2021. This partnership marks the first time a peace education and action opportunity has been offered to AU first-year students. The work took place in parallel with the ‘Introduction to Peace Studies’ first-year seminar, led by Dr. Susan Cushman, while the design and delivery of the student projects spanned eight weeks, followed by end-of-term presentations and celebrations. This pilot contributed to AU’s mission by creating a “distinctive environment of intellectual rigor, research, creativity and deep community,” and the IC’s mission in particular by “developing opportunities for applied learning, connecting academia with external partners to solve real-life problems.” It also contributed to WBW’s mission by supporting individual and organizational engagement with issues related to the abolition of war and the promotion of sustainable peace.

### **This report summarizes:**

- 1) Project background, aims, and objectives
- 2) Project monitoring and evaluation plan
- 3) Student peace projects and case summaries
- 4) Project outcomes
- 5) Project reflections and recommendations



## 1) PROJECT BACKGROUND, AIMS, and OBJECTIVES

### Introduction and Background

This project is the result of two entities — Adelphi University and World BEYOND War — collaborating to create something new: an academic-non-profit organization partnership that is mutually beneficial.

**Adelphi University** is a nationally ranked, powerfully connected doctoral research university. Founded in Brooklyn in 1896, Adelphi serves over 8,100 students at its main campus in Garden City, New York, and at dynamic learning hubs in Manhattan, the Hudson Valley, Suffolk County, and online. Our mission is to prepare our students to be ethical leaders with a global perspective, innovators, and problem-solvers. The faculty's wide-ranging expertise and experience inform our teaching so that our students master a body of knowledge and develop proficiencies in analytical, critical thinking, and communication skills, in and out of class.

**World BEYOND War** is a global nonviolent movement to end war and establish a just and sustainable peace, with membership in 192 countries and chapters and affiliates around the world. WBW received the Educators' Challenge Award from the Global Challenges Foundation in partnership with the London School of Economics (LES) Institute of Global Affairs. The awards are presented to projects that effectively communicate and increase engagement among young people and the general public around global risks including war, climate change, and nuclear weapons. In 2021, World BEYOND War received the US Peace Prize Awards for exceptional global advocacy and creative peace education to end war and dismantle the war machine!

The facilitator was Dr. Susan Cushman, Adjunct Professor in General Education at AU. Coordination and support were provided by Graziela Penna Fusaro and Zeynep Atabay from Adelphi's IC, and Greta Zarro and Dr. Phill Gittins from WBW.

### Aims and Objectives

Peacebuilding operates from the premise that both theory and practice are necessary for wider impact. Driven by this premise, the AU-WBW collaborative pilot was designed to provide students with both a first-year seminar (FYS) interdisciplinary peace studies curriculum and a final practical application of that curriculum. This work engaged with WBW's three broad interconnected strategies for ending war and establishing a just and sustainable peace, as outlined in the *A Global Security System: An Alternative to War* (AGSS): 1) demilitarizing security, 2) managing conflicts without violence, and 3) creating a culture of peace.

The aim of the project was to strengthen partnerships between academia and industry by supporting university students to work towards meeting the needs of the university and their industry partner through a combination of education and action.

The starting point of this work was two-fold:



- a) to introduce students to the fundamentals of peacebuilding through an analysis of the three strategies in WBW's AGSS and how they can be applied in local settings; and
- b) to mentor and support students in their design and delivery of peacebuilding projects in local contexts.

The first month of the project focused on peace education, the next two months on planning, researching, and executing the peacebuilding projects. On a broader level, the project aimed to develop a model for facilitating academia-industry collaboration and for engaging students in the design and delivery of their own peacebuilding initiatives.

## **2) PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN**

### **Monitoring & Evaluation**

The project's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan included:

- Student-led, co-created, deliverables – including PPT's, videos, curriculum material - that were submitted to WBW for comments and potential use.
- Student and staff correspondence as the project was unfolding as well as analysis of student-led projects.
- Several project debriefs between AU and WBW staff reviewing the pilot project in general and the student peace projects in general.
- A final project report completed by Dr Cushman for AU.
- Student 'reflection pieces' that have been reviewed and analyzed for patterns by AU and WBW staff.

## **3) STUDENT PROJECTS and CASE STUDY SUMMARIES:**

Below are summaries of four student peace projects designed and implemented during the 2021 pilot project. The name(s) of team members are included along with project description and results. Collectively, the peace projects:

- Promoted Inter-religious peacebuilding through education and dialogue.
- Developed high school peace studies curriculum.
- Developed elementary school peace studies curriculum.
- Promoted grassroots student organizing and non-violent resistance.

### **Case summaries**

#### **Student Group / Case Study 1:**



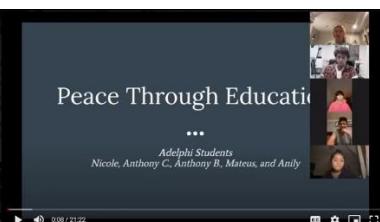
**PROJECT NAME** – Inter-religious Peacebuilding

**TEAM MEMBERS:** Emma Pappas (Chair), Brayan Fuentes, Emma Battenberg, Yasmin Abdelhamid, Anthony Coppola

**Project description/results:**

Religion is often seen as a driver of conflict and war. The aim of this project was to promote and open the discussion of peace within religion. After learning about how misconceptions of religion within Adelphi University are caused by a lack of communication, poor education, and false information, the team developed a project aimed at facilitating dialogue between different religions while promoting education around the role of religion in peacebuilding. This was done in two main ways. First, by participating in a campus event “Our Sacred Relationship With the Environment” organized by the Adelphi University Interfaith Center on 11/18/21, which brought 25 campus members together from Christian, Jewish, and Muslim faith backgrounds to discuss connections between religion, spirituality, and the environment. The team gave a presentation titled “Bringing Indigenous Wisdom to the Interfaith Center,” focusing on the peacebuilding initiatives of indigenous peoples. Second, they created a website with interviews between team members and AU religious club presidents to explore misconceptions and emphasize commonalities and peacebuilding strategies in each group.

**Student Group / Case Study 2:**



**PROJECT NAME** – High School Peace Curriculum

**TEAM MEMBERS:**

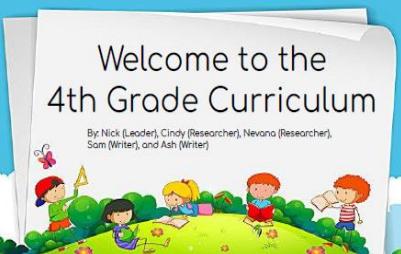
Mateus Vas (Chair), Nicole Shaw (Co-Chair), Anthony Civello, Anthony Bellino, Anily Lalsa

**Project description/results:**

Peace education is a critical component of peace work. Yet, many schools and universities are not teaching about peace. As a result, children and young people rarely have opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills needed to work for peace. To address this issue, the team focused their project on the development of peace education resources and materials. Research confirmed team members’ personal experience – that there was a lack of peace education in Long Island high schools. As a result, the team focused their attention on the alma mater of one group member, Carle Place High School in Westbury, New York. Leveraging the learning from the “Intro to Peace Studies” course, along with educational materials from World BEYOND War, the team presented a potential peace studies unit to a Carle Place High School history class. The recorded presentation includes the team’s presentation of a curriculum with 6 lessons and covers issues related to peace Journalism, nonviolence, governance, the role of the media and

media bias, and community engagement. The Carle Place high school teacher and class of students were generally receptive to the proposed peace curriculum, and the next step would be to formally propose the unit to a curriculum review board at Carle Place High School and other local high schools.

### Student Group / Case Study 3:

	<p><b>PROJECT NAME</b> – Elementary School Peacemakers</p> <p><b>TEAM MEMBERS:</b> Nicholas Calabrese (Chair), Ash Carter, Cindy Cho, Samantha Santiago, Nirvana Singh</p>
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#### Project description/results:

This group researched the New York state elementary school Social Studies curriculum and pulled five famous peacemakers from different contexts (Native American culture, abolitionist history, women's rights advocates, and Immigration advocates), and provided peacemaking connections between these topics and leaders. They spoke of the nonviolent resistant work of Deganawida, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Jane Addams, and Alice Paul. With colorful age-appropriate charts and images, the peacemaker theme was prominent in their proposed revised fourth-grade social studies curriculum. They introduced the Great Peacemakers website with paintings, prose, and video on 34 "historic luminaries" by artist Steve Simon. The group also proposed a game of "hot potato" (only with a ball) called "Mumball" where students practice their knowledge of peacemakers with a toss/question/answer format vs. a higher-stakes quiz or test.

### Student Group / Case Study 4:

	<p><b>PROJECT NAME</b> – PANYS (Peace Action New York State) Student Organizing as Nonviolent Resistance</p> <p><b>TEAM MEMBERS:</b> Nicole D'Angelo (Chair), Michelle Goodman, Derek Zacchino, Tayrah Cange, Abdul Diallo, Christina Giaquinto</p>
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#### Project description/results:

This group interviewed the Education Director of PANYS (Peace Action New York State), the oldest grassroots non-profit peace organization in the U.S. known for its advocacy no-nukes work and other peace initiatives. With 18 student chapters and over 3,000 members in NY alone, the organization appealed to the group, who initially wanted to start a student chapter at Adelphi. Upon reaching out to PANYS,

they decided to start the process by educating themselves and the class by hosting a webinar with the Education director of PANYS and one of the student chapter presidents from Macaulay Honors College (CUNY). Each student brought a question to the recorded video and engaged in conversation with the director and student activist to learn about priorities in PANYS activism.

## 4) PILOT PROJECT OUTCOMES

### Overall Outcomes

For the 2021 pilot, there were:

- 21 students engaged.
- 7 disciplines/majors represented: Nursing, Psychology, Finance, Business Communications, History, Political Science, International Relations,
- Four peacebuilding projects designed, delivered, and evaluated
- Four community organization partners (WBW, PANYS, Nuclearwakeupcall, AU Interfaith Center) and one school: Carle Place High School in Carle Place, N.Y.
- Four end-of-term presentations in the AU IC where student groups shared the status and outcome of their peacebuilding projects and the processes involved. Attendees included the class, faculty member (S. Cushman), members of the AU IC (G. Fusaro and Z. Atabay) and WBW staff (G. Zarro and P. Gittins).

## 5) PROJECT REFLECTIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

### Individual Outcomes

Excerpts below are from reflection pieces written by students, AU faculty and staff, and WBW staff. The reflection pieces can be used for narrative, qualitative analysis of project impact. They can also be used for future students, faculty, and staff as guidance in advance of their involvement in similar academia-industry collaborative endeavors.

### Student Reflections

#### **Group 1: Inter-religious Peacebuilding**

*What was incredibly unique about this project was that while we were educating others, we were also educating ourselves along the way. We have each learned so much about different religions, cultures, and misconceptions about them. We were also able to make connections in the Interfaith Center that will be helpful for years to come.... It was beneficial how Professor Cushman could share her connections with us to make our project richer. Overall, we are all very grateful for this opportunity to work with World Beyond War and actually be a part of something real and interactive.... We're grateful for the lasting friendships we made working together as a group and that we were able to create something we are all proud of.*

#### **Group 2: High School Peace Curriculum**

*In many ways, I am thankful for this project. I got to meet some truly amazing people, such as Dr. Phil Gittins or the ones in my group....We all learned a lot about how to be more outspoken, a “Go and Get it” mentality that is most vital in the current world. By presenting to Phil throughout the semester, reaching out to Nicole’s teacher and staying after class to talk out our ideas with Professor Cushman, we learned how things are done in real life.... My group met up only online. Frankly speaking, I wish there was more class time to work on the project, although I understand that Dr. Cushman has a curriculum she has to go through. It was very nicely put when she stated that this project could have been a class on its own. I thank Dr. Cushman for this opportunity, for the weekly check ins and for the enthusiasm. Phil was nothing but amazing to our group, as he praised our ideas and gave us many more to work with.*

### **Group 3: Elementary School Peacemakers**

*Our group did very well when it came to distributing work because we always made a plan and gave each other roles each week to help the project move forward. Due to my research on the women's suffrage movement, I learned a lot of very important information that I hadn't before. For instance, I was never fully aware of the severe brutality that women such as Alice Paul were forced to endure during this movement. I was also able to learn a lot from my group members' research about topics including, immigration and migration, abolition, and Native American peacebuilding...Professor Cushman was very helpful because we could always contact her if we had any questions or set up a group meeting with her to discuss the project if needed. Furthermore, the syllabus was structured very well and allowed us to have multiple steps throughout the semester so we didn't need to do everything at once.... We were able to create something that could be very helpful to elementary schools looking to incorporate peacebuilding into their curriculum. I am personally very proud of this project because my group and I were able to study topics that aren't talked about enough and we got to create a project centered around peacebuilding.*

### **Group 4: PANYS (Peace Action New York State) - Student Organizing**

*I would rate finding our group topic around a 8 out of 10, because Prof. Cushman had told my group about PANYS and in the beginning it was very easy to get in contact with them. We were originally going to start a chapter at Adelphi, but that wasn't working out due to timing, so right away we came up with a webinar. So it was actually kind of easy to come up with a topic....The most important thing I learned was you can start making a difference and contributing to a cause anytime, there is no time limit on peace building! Even though I pulled most of the weight of the group, our webinar did come together nicely. I am most proud of getting PANYS and Macaulay Honors College to come speak at the webinar, very happy it worked out and they were able to attend. I hope we will be able to get our webinar on the WBW website to spread awareness about Peacebuilding for college students, and maybe start a peacebuilding chapter at Adelphi.*

### **AU Faculty Reflection**



*Overall, I really enjoyed getting out of my comfort zone and teaching something completely different, unplanned, and challenging (I like challenges). We all need to keep learning new things—and I learned more about WBW, the AGSS book/strategies, teaching groupwork over a period of time, and pairing students with other constituencies for a final project (like the AU Interfaith Center, PANYS, and local schools). It's all a bit messy, but with better organizing on our part (IC, WBW, and me/or other faculty), this model has great potential for academic-organization collaboration and applied learning for students. Thanks to WBW, the IC, and the class for taking a chance with the project. Overall, I consider the live class a success for its innovative course design, demonstrable student learning, and peacebuilding project outcomes, which hold much potential if/when we repeat and refine them in semesters to come.*

(Dr. Susan Cushman, Adjunct Professor, Adelphi University)

### **WBW Staff Reflection**

*This pilot project attempted to facilitate and support university-industry collaboration – in a field where those that study peace as a topic and those that practice it as a practice are too often left looking at each other from a distance. I would like to thank AU (students and staff) and WBW colleagues for engaging with us in this experiment in peace studies – one that sought to integrate education and action and link academia and industry. Through this work, we have become aware that it is possible to support students to move from intellectual insights to practical application in one semester. At the same time, we learned that this kind of work brings with it challenges – not least the demands it places on students and staff. Despite these challenges, and while we have much to improve upon next time, there is evidence to suggest that this pilot was a success. Overall, my hope is that what we achieved in 2021 will be the foundation for further work moving forward. Onwards and upwards!*

(Dr. Phill Gittins, Education Director, World BEYOND War)

### **Broader Outcomes**

Evidence of broader outcomes include:

- The model has great potential for refined organization-academic collaboration in the future and, specifically, provides a foundation for future collaboration between Adelphi University and World BEYOND War.
- The work facilitated further community outreach and engagement in the interest of peacebuilding.
- The collaboration may lead to a new standalone course with exclusive focus on a semester-long project, allowing all involved more time for even better outcomes.
- The work can be shared/produced in different formats to support wider impact.

For example:

- This pilot will be presented at the “TLC 2022/EVOLVE” (Adelphi University Virtual Teaching and Learning Conference, April 28, 2022).



- Featured on the websites of Adelphi University to inspire other faculty and World BEYOND War to promote this model of organization-academy collaboration.
- Published in an Education or Peace Studies journal — or both — to engage and share the work with the scholarly community.

## **Recommendations**

- **Mentoring & coaching:** Provide further support to students throughout the process – from design through delivery of their project presentations, which may include weekly or bimonthly check-ins with the industry partner.
- **Social media & technology:** Leverage further tech support from university I.T., industry I.T. or both.
- **Pedagogical updates.** More comprehensive integration of the *A Global Security System: An Alternative to War* (AGSS) and offer a model for potential establishment of a WBW student chapter, possibly in collaboration with PANYS.
- **Project teams:** Should there be the option of individual (and team) projects?
- **Project timing:** The time of the projects should also be lengthened, potentially to run from beginning to end of the semester. Separate course to focus exclusively on this partnership and emerging projects?
- **Structure versus agency:** Getting the balance right between providing a framework and allowing students space and time for innovation.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** All participants will complete pre- and post-surveys, deadlines for deliverables to client (industry partner), and reflection pieces.
- **Standalone module:** For best outcome, a stand-alone module (course) could potentially best facilitate the process of designing a project and all that goes with that – including prep time, outreach, research, and reporting of final project.