

The third panel "What Happens to Graduates of Peace Education Programs" with panelists:

Barbara Wien, Peace Brigades International

Linda Johnston, George Mason University

Jane Docherty, Eastern Mennonite University

The panelists stressed the evolution, maturation, and diversification of the field over the last decade, and the implications for peace education (PE) graduates seeking jobs. Multiple networking is a crucial job-seeking strategy.

Barbara Wien shared that tracking studies provide the most definitive information on what happens to peace education graduates. Unfortunately, the most recent tracking study was undertaken by the Consortium for Peace Research, Education and Development (COPRED) in 1992. But we have seen a proliferation of NGOs that are potential sources of employment for graduates of PE programs. The peace movement itself is becoming more institutionalized, systematic, and global. It's hard to keep track of graduates. St. Thomas College in Miami does the best tracking. Their graduates go on to a wide range of jobs. It is estimated that 30% of PE graduates are teaching in universities, colleges and schools.

An important evolution with implications for PE graduates is that human rights, conflict resolution and peacemaking are working together more closely now - for example, Amnesty International and Peace Brigades International.

Linda Johnston discussed how to prepare for and get the first job in the field. There has been a big change in the last ten years, from being a "conflict resolution mediator" to earning an MA or PhD in conflict resolution and taking these skills back into other professions, such as engineering and health. This has increased the value of the field, not watered it down.

The Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR) has expanded from 5 PhD and 15 MA students 10 years ago to 15 PhD and 60 MA students now.

ICAR students are not looking for new jobs, but seeking to enhance their current jobs.

Jane Docherty noted that three of the teaching staff at the Conflict Transformation Program at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU), including Jane, are graduates of ICAR. There are both graduate and undergraduate programs in conflict transformation at EMU.

To be successful in a peace services career, the graduate must have a well-developed analytical capacity and be able to think strategically. Flexible skills and networking ability are also important.

The approach to a job search is critical. Most peace services jobs are not obtained through reading newspapers, but from a perch in existing organizations, from which new organizations are built, existing organizations are transformed or old jobs are done in a new way.

It is important to know how skills can be transferred from the U.S. to overseas. The "state of the game" is different there. Overseas, people are likely to know they have a system problem, but not many people realize this here.

Another element in a job search strategy involves joining relevant organizations (e.g. Association for Conflict Resolution, Peace and Peace Studies Assoc.) and getting to know the "players," including key peace service leaders in the Third World and military players. ■