

# Winter 2016-17 Newsletter

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the WORLD  
in RALEIGH



International  
FOCUS



## *International Focus News!*

To all our dedicated members,

It is with great pride that we announce that International Focus has been awarded the 2017 North Carolina Peace Prize by the North Carolina Peace Corps Association (of *returned Peace Corps volunteers*)! Our work in all of our programs and initiatives this past year has earned us this prestigious award. The North Carolina

Peace Prize honors community-based non-profit groups promoting cross-cultural understanding. This award is a testament to all of the hard work of the International Focus board, staff, interns, members, volunteers, and community partners who define us as an organization and a community. So, a big thank you and congratulations to all that have made this achievement possible!



**Election update:** We are proud to be able to host a diverse group of world leaders who were able to contribute global perspectives to the current state of American politics through IF's exchange programs.

**New Additions:** On behalf of the International Focus team, we would like to welcome new interns, Kate Broadwell and Mohammad Fayed, and volunteer Laura Moreschi to the International Focus team. We look forward to strengthening our organization by improving our exchange programs with the help of these passionate individuals!

Sincerely,  
Leila Bekri, Director IVLP



# *Highlights of the IVLP: Women Leaders Promoting Peace & Security*

## Multi-Regional: Women Promoting Peace & Security



*Judge Beasley meets with Women  
Promoting Peace and Security*

From December 7th to the 10th, International Focus welcomed eight female leaders from the countries of Afghanistan, India, Kyrgyz Republic, Nepal, and Pakistan to the Raleigh area as part of an International Visitor Leadership Program to learn how women leaders and organizations in the United States actively engage in mediating conflicts and disputes. The program was organized to support the US National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security, which calls for the empowerment of women as equal partners in preventing conflict and building peace in countries threatened and affected by

war, violence, and insecurity. During their time in Raleigh, the visitors visited with a wide-range of community organizations and leaders, such as Supreme Court Judge Cheri Beasley. For all participants, it was their first time traveling to the US and we were pleased to incorporate shared meals with local families in the area.

## Ghana: Textile & Apparel Industry in the U.S.



*Visit to learn about  
manufacturing processes.*

In December, a group of nine Ghanaian professionals visited the Triangle with the International Visitor Leadership Program to highlight current trends in the US textiles market. In partnership with NC State, participants met with professors at the College of Textiles, the only college in the United States devoted entirely to textiles. The group explored current textile and apparel design, production, and retail operations in the area.

## Bermuda: Workforce Development

International Focus welcomed five visitors from Bermuda, as well as one international liaison, to study workforce development from the perspective of American schools and organizations in the area. Visitors had a chance to not only visit the area around Raleigh, but also take a short day trip to Greensboro.

A highlight from the delegation's time in North Carolina was our



*Bermuda IVLP participants enjoy our monthly Coffee & Conversation with some IF members.*

and environmental issues in Bermuda. They shared their impressions about life in our area and members were delighted to find out they enjoyed some of the area's fine cuisine (NC barbecue and catfish!). Though their stay in our state was short, we hope the group had an excellent and productive time.

*By Kate Broadwell & Laura Moreschi*



## *Building Future World Leaders IVLP Alumni Testimonial Wojciech Cegielski from Poland*

*For this issue, we reached out to Wojciech Cegielski, a Polish journalist and foreign correspondent who is dedicated to covering issues in the Middle East. Mr. Cegielski is a IVLP alum. Here's what he had to say about his experience:*



*Photo by Fady Hassan Hanona*

### **1. When was your visit?**

I've been to North Carolina couple of times. My IVLP visit was in October/November 2010 (actually, I had a chance to see the wonderful and famous Halloween parade at Chapel Hill). Then I kept coming back. I've been to Raleigh twice during presidential campaigns 2012 & 2016. Still not enough for me!

### **2. Why did you visit?**

First time, it was IVLP, but later I came back for various reasons. As a foreign news correspondent covering presidential elections I was looking for interesting stories not only on politics but also on social life. As NC is considered swing state and is very diversified, it is the perfect place to find good stories. But I have also "personal" reasons, having friends in NC and being thrilled by the nature, atmosphere, hospitality of the people and - my latest discovery - the museums. Raleigh, Chapel Hill and other cities and places consist of the place you love to come back.

### **3. Where did you visit during the program?**

During the program, I had a chance to visit Chapel Hill, Raleigh and Durham. I took part in a short journalism course at UNC at Chapel Hill, visited a local tv station (WRAL) and spent lovely time in Wilmington. While in NC, my group also visited Baptist church and shared experiences with members of the community there.

### **4. Of all the things you did while here, what was the most memorable? Why?**

Definitely UNC. Vibrant, living, colorful place, filled with students from all over the world. Journalism courses, although short (too short!), were a piece of good, professional knowledge, useful for all journalists. Remembering highly professional level of courses, I could prove to myself, I was at one of the best journalism schools, probably not only in US.

### **5. How has your time in IVLP influenced you in your personal and professional life?**

It's a combination of private-professional life. Since IVLP, I have couple of close friends from the group of participants but also people I met on the way (including NC part). However, the value is not only friendship but the exchange of experiences - journalistic ones but also on fields such like sociology, political science and good governance in US. I have learned a lot on US politics but on United States as a country. The knowledge which is the result of IVLP was an added value during conferences and meetings on US worldwide, interviews with US experts, interviews with myself on US and during the process of making stories on America. So the contacts and the knowledge - the second one could not be acquired in any other circumstances.

### **6. What was the most surprising or unexpected thing you found when visiting?**

I haven't got any idea how NC looks like before my first visit. I was surprised by how much green space there is and how often one can smell it everywhere. Comparing to the big cities up in the Coast, all of NC is calm, silent and green. With all my great feelings towards New York and Washington DC, you can think a bit slower and deeper in NC.

### **7. What is one thing you want the reader to know about your experience?**

I have learned much about the diversity of America. Having traveled through the States, before 2010 I never had a chance to visit a place which is. It among top tourist destinations like New York, California, Florida. And for obvious reasons, I didn't realize, North Carolina is so beautiful and fantastic place.

### **8. How do you maintain contact with North Carolina?**

There are not many things in media in Poland on NC but every time there is Carolina mentioned, I turn up the volume. Also, I'm trying to stay in contact with my friends in NC by social media and e-mail exchange. If there is a chance, I'm trying to come even for one day, like back in 2013 when I was on an assignment in the States and dropped by Raleigh. One night there was not enough but I was happy I could come back once again.

### **9. Other thoughts / comments**

If somebody asked me about a great example of a local community which influences people and keeps you coming back, I would have no doubt where to point.



## *Other Programs: IF Fostering Understanding Among Youth: Iraqi and American Young Leaders*

From August 2-16th 2016, a student delegation of 12 teenagers and 2 adult chaperones from Iraq visited the Triangle area for the Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Program (IYLEP), under the auspices of the U.S. Department of State, World Learning Center, and International Focus, Inc. The program brings English-speaking secondary school students from Iraq to explore the themes of leadership development, civic rights and responsibilities, respect for diversity, and community engagement.



The objective of the program was to foster mutual understanding between people of the USA and Iraq by promoting interaction with peers and families, service learning activities at universities and other facilities, and the creation of a service project to implement upon returning to Iraq. The Iraqi students stayed with local host families and participated in cultural outings, social gatherings and recreational activities. The program hoped to inspire and create a new generation of globally-minded leaders.



## *Recap: Citizen Diplomacy Series The Edward Murrow Program for Journalists*

On November 3rd, our Citizen Diplomacy Series brought The Edward Murrow Program for Journalists from East Asia and the Pacific to meet and network with IF members, staff, and professionals in the community. The group consisted of 10 professionals in careers relating



Journalists meet with David Huffman of the NC Department of Public Safety

to broadcasting journalism and news reporting from East Asia and the Pacific countries of Fiji, Laos, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, People's Republic of China, Singapore, Thailand & Vietnam. The IVLP program was arranged under the auspices of the State Department to examine the rights and responsibilities of a free press in a democracy and ultimately gain insight into social, economic, and political structures of the US elections.

The series was in partnership with The UNC School of Media & Journalism, and the IF delegation was introduced by Andrea Parquet-Taylor, News Director of CBS North Carolina.

Shona Murray, a journalist at Newstalk from Dublin, Ireland and an IVLP Alumna (2009 Edward R. Murrow Program for Journalists), addressed the group as well while she was back in North Carolina covering the November elections.



Shona Murray and Andrea Parquet-Taylor

By Kate Broadwell & Laura Moreschi



## *Reflections on Visiting North Carolina*



This past December, Hafiz Hamim Jalalzai, who works for the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock in Afghanistan visited North Carolina through the Afghan Diplomat's Training Program. The program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, supports Afghan development in the agriculture and public health sectors. One of the most gratifying moments from our work is to hear of the profound impact a visit to the

Triangle has had on participants.

"The people of America are very friendly and live in a free, friendly environment that is very cooperative. I will always remember my visit to North Carolina and will never forget this memorable visit. I have a great passion to go and meet my American friends there in the future. I learned greatly from my visit to America and in particular relished my trip to North Carolina. I have to thank the team from International Focus, Inc. for their good management of our visit, which made it possible to meet different people, make good friends, listen to the different experts' lectures and visit different places, government organizations, and farms."

Mr. Jalalzai also highlighted his shared meal: "The people of NC are very cordial and amiable, as I experienced this when I was invited by one of my American friends David to his home."

We always encourage feedback from our guests, and Hassam's thoughts are exactly what motivate us to continue engaging with world leaders to share North Carolina's expertise with global leaders.



## *Upcoming Arrivals*

### **February**

"Investigative Journalism"	Moldova
"US Judicial System"	Austria

### **March**

"Youth Outreach: Conflict Resolution & Empowerment"	France
"Innovation in Agriculture"	European Union
"Open World: Parliament"	Georgia
"Open World: Education"	Ukraine

### **May/June**

"Community Connections: Innovation-Based Entrepreneurship Development"	Belarus
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### **August**

"Youth Leadership Program"	Iraq
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## *Exciting Announcement!*



On March 9th, from 6:30pm-10pm, the Emerging Women NC Bow Tie and Butterfly Gala will be hosted at the NC Museum of Art! The gala will celebrate women leaders across the state who lead and serve our communities with compassion and integrity. There will be a rare exhibition of the 2016 Butterfly Women Collection Series by Lyudmila Tomova, and guests can witness the announcement and unveiling of 2017 Emerging Artist along with their first piece for the year. The event will be a brilliant display of talent, leadership, food, dance and community! Tickets are still available, and can be purchased on the Emerging Women NC [website](#).



# Membership

If you are not yet a member, please consider joining us. Members have access to international networking opportunities based right here in the Triangle, where you can discover the world in Raleigh! If you know someone who might be interested in what we do and the benefits of membership please feel free to share. Click link below for more information on how to join and the benefits of joining.

[Become a member](#)



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