

FFWPU USA: North America teams in YSP's regional S!NERGY competition

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North America teams went head-to-head during the regional [S!NERGY](#) competition hosted online by Youth and Students for Peace ([YSP](#)) on Jan. 22. U.S. and Canada participants presented their ideas for "Bridging the Divide Between Nations and Communities" - the competition's theme to address the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula.

The U.S. team, consisting of M. Tsuchiya and K. Kawa, previously won the [national championship](#) in December with their proposal to turn the Demilitarized Zone into a peace park to unite North and South Korea. They came in first place in the recent regional round as well.

"Our mission is to build a platform for righteous professors and youth to initiate the development of a global peace park in the DMZ as a solution for resolving the conflict on the Korean Peninsula," Tsuchiya said. "This would open the door toward peace between both nations."

The pair won \$1,000 toward implementing their idea and said their proposal was inspired by True Parents, who first announced their vision of a peace park at the United Nations headquarters in New York City in 2000.

"I have recommended that the UN open its fifth office in Korea, specifically, in the Demilitarized Zone on the 38th parallel," True Mother said. "This will bring the issue of Korean reunification to the attention of the world's people as no other action can."

Tsuchiya and Kawa said a peace park in the frozen conflict zone would effect change around the world. "Korea, as a nation deeply rooted in Christianity, was prepared by God to realize peace in the world," said Kawa. "What we've seen happen in the world shows that the 38th parallel was truly the frontline battle

between democracy and communism... And we see democratic nations losing to this ideology with the declining Christian culture that has emerged in South Korea and elsewhere."

Guest judge Genie Kagawa, who has carried out various projects at the UN as [UPF](#) International's director of the executive office, said numerous partnerships would be key to bringing about success. "Partnership is important with many organizations getting together [to support a peace park]," she said. "The idea to have partnerships between professors and students is also great because this really pins down the internal part of a value-centered approach, which will automatically be effective with changing society from within."

However, Kagawa noted that pushing the idea of a peace park through the political sphere could prove more challenging. Guest judge Dr. Seung-ho Lee, president of [The DMZ Forum](#), also agreed. An expert in environmental management and a former senior researcher and adjunct professor at New York University's Graduate School of Public Service, Dr. Lee said the U.S. controls part of the DMZ and noted its "strong presence in the territory."

"The U.S. government's role is very important," he said. "Reunifying Korea would also mean you have to influence or persuade U.S. politicians."

But Antonio San Juan, a third guest judge and current political and media relations advisor in Canada, said reuniting the Korean Peninsula is unnecessary altogether. He cited a 2017 report in which most young South Koreans who were surveyed opposed the idea.

Still, Francois Lacroix, who came in second place and represented Canada, said Korean unification is imminent - much like the fall of the Berlin Wall that reunited Germany. "This is less about promoting reunification than it is about preparing for it," he said, as he presented his idea of networking across college and university campuses in Canada.

"The United Church of Canada is very involved with Korean reunification and they have an online campaign supporting it," said Lacroix. "I want to sponsor their experts to come to university campuses where I have contacts and become a link for broader outreach."

The judges applauded the vision of both teams before submitting their vote alongside an online audience.

"Congratulations to both teams for their great ideas," said YSP USA President Rev. Miilhan Stephans. "We have a special role to play with peace on the Korean Peninsula. This conflict is complex, but that's why it's so important that our young people think outside the box. That is the only way we can truly address these issues."

Tsuchiya and Kawa will advance to the final global round of the S!NERGY competition in February.

You can watch the full regional S!NERGY competition [here](#), and learn more about the event [here](#).



Bridging the Divide



“Our mission is to build a platform for righteous professors and youth to initiate the development of a global peace park in the Demilitarized Zone as a solution for resolving the conflict on the Korean Peninsula,” said Madoka Tsuchiya.

Unificationists Tsuchiya and her teammate Kengo Kawa won first place with their proposal during IAYS’s recent national [S:NERGY](#) competition. The pair were among three top contenders in the online competition streamed live Dec. 29, presenting their ideas and solutions addressing the theme “Bridging the Divide Between Nations and Communities.”

“We see divorce becoming more socially acceptable, and a rise in suicide rates, too,” said Kawa. “We see cosmetic surgery as a common graduation gift to children, and this isn’t only happening in South Korea, it’s happening in the U.S. and other places as well.”

“True Parents addressed this issue of a Godless society by going to North Korea and risking their lives in the hope to bring reunification between North and South Korea,” he said. “They also understood how significant America is in the success of achieving this, as the southern half of the DMZ is controlled by America.”

The duo said turning the DMZ into a peace park could ultimately unite the two Koreas, with peace further strengthened by the United Nations establishing a fifth office there.

“The youth are most impacted by this conflict,” said Tsuchiya, “and we know that important changes in history have been made by young people – so now is the time to stand up and make a change... We need the knowledge

and support of professors as well to resolve this conflict.”

Founded in 2017 by True Mother, [IAYSP](#) seeks to advance world peace by empowering youth and students to become global citizens through character education and peace projects supporting the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The recurring S!NERGY competition has different themes to tackle various problems facing the world and enables students to present their ideas and projects to better society.

Tiffany Gao, who placed second, shared a presentation on “environmental racism” as she explained its effect on people and the need for increased awareness.

“Toxic waste facilities are often built in minority communities and we find environmental injustice in areas that were previously segregated,” she said. “This contributes to leading causes of death among minority communities, affecting their mental and physical health.”

Gao shared examples of air and river pollution in the Bronx, and how minorities are disproportionately exposed to more environmental toxins than is caused by their consumption, according to a 2019 [report](#) from the Proceedings of the National Academy of the Sciences (PNAS) USA. She proposed an action plan using social media, events, and networking to increase environmental and social awareness of the issue.

“By communicating with others and furthering their knowledge about this issue, from there we can seek to address the problem and implement solutions by lobbying policy makers or hosting community events and activities to reduce this inequality and climate effects,” said Gao. “In turn, this creates a rippled domino effect... from a task force of local activism to drawing attention worldwide.”

Ricardo De Sena placed third, addressing the issue of corruption in Latin America. Examining Uruguay in a case study, his proposed solution was a dual approach of building integrity and corruption prevention by focusing on young people and youth empowerment.

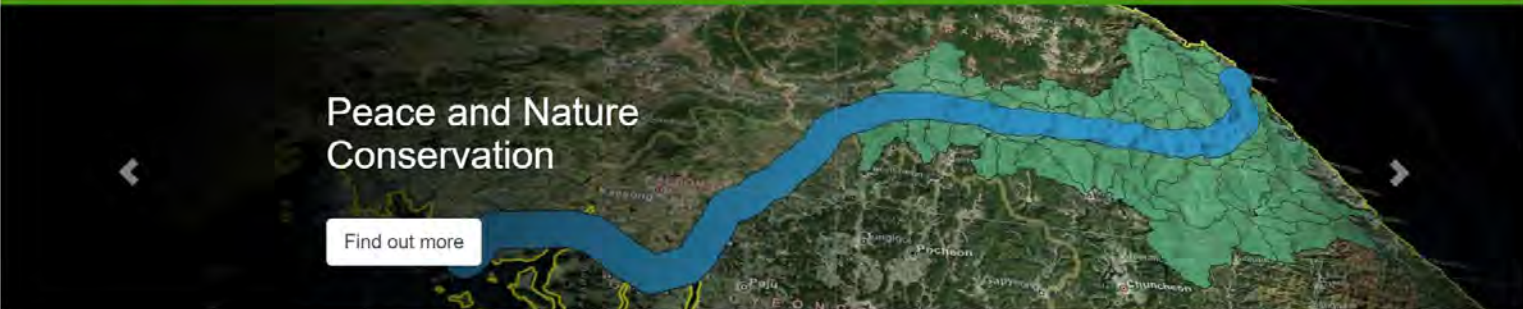
“Building an organization or think tank made up of the most promising leaders in Latin America could challenge the status quo and educate fellow youth and students on the state of corruption in their country,” he said.

Three guest judges evaluated the presentations, including Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) President Dr. Thomas Ward; Dr. Lisa M. Brady, professor and department chair of history at Boise State University; and IAYSP North America President Miilhan Stephens. Live viewers also casted their vote.

“What I love about this platform is it embodies one of our greatest values, which I think is unique to IAYSP, and that is something we call ‘hyojeong’ (a culture of heart),” said IAYSP President Stephens.

Winners Tsuchiya and Kawa will receive a grant toward implementing their idea and continue on to the upcoming IAYSP regional competition.

You can watch the full S!NERGY national competition [here](#).



Peace and Nature Conservation

Find out more

Welcome to the DMZ Forum

The mission of the DMZ Forum is to support conservation of the unique biological and cultural resources of Korea's Demilitarized Zone, transforming it from a symbol of war and separation to a place of peace among humans and between humans and nature.

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S!NERGY: STUDENTS X IDEAS X ENERGY



S!nergy is an event initiated by International Association of Youth and Students for Peace (IAYSP or YSP) in Japan and has started to spread to the other countries IAYSP is working in. It is a platform for students to share their projects and ideas in a professional setting. A group of judges made up of distinguished leaders of the community vote along with the audience on the best idea and presentation. The winner receives a grant to help further their idea or project.

UPCOMING S!NERGY EVENTS

FEATURED



**SINERGY
EVENT**

January 22, 2022 6pm EST

COMPETE

**RULES AND
GUIDELINES**

**EXAMPLE
PRESENTATIONS**

**PAST
SINERGY
EVENTS**