The Middle East Oleander Initiative

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Months after the atomic bomb was dropped over Hiroshima, Japan, a small patch of red oleander flowers bloomed out of the irradiated rubble. Since then, red oleander has symbolized both the dangers of nuclear war and the hope of a more peaceful future. In a similar spirit, the Middle East Oleander Initiative will share the lessons of Hiroshima with educators from the Middle East to foster a deeper understanding of the threat that nuclear weapons pose to humanity. In turn, the Oleander Initiative participants will bring these lessons home to their students across the Middle East to foster a greater awareness of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear war.

**Program Description:**

From August 4 – 11, 2016, up to twenty high school teachers from the Middle East will gather in Hiroshima to learn first-hand from atomic bomb survivors about the horrors of nuclear war and from global experts about the basic issues of nuclear weapons - how they work and how to reduce the probability that they will ever be used again. The 2016 program will leverage "the power of place" of the city of Hiroshima - the first city to be devastated by a nuclear weapon - to generate awareness and inspire personal calls to action. In turn, teachers attending the seven day workshop will design educational activities specifically suited to their local contexts to raise consciousness about the perils of nuclear war. The 2016 pilot program in Hiroshima is the first of a series of educational programs, workshops and student activities designed to educate a broad foundation of future decision makers across the Middle East region.