



Soliya Connect Program - Facilitation

Soliya is recruiting skilled volunteers to facilitate its Connect Program for the Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 semesters. Soliya is an NGO and a lead implementing partner of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. Soliya's Connect Program is a unique cross-cultural education program that enables University students in the United States, Europe, North Africa, Asia and the Middle East to collaboratively explore the relationship between their countries & regions with the aim of improving intercultural awareness and understanding.

Each Soliya facilitator is paired with a co-facilitator from the US, Europe, North Africa, Asia or the Middle East. The co-facilitation pair "meets" online each week via Soliya's online video conferencing software with a group of 8-10 students representing a cross section of participating countries and universities. The medium is remarkably intimate: facilitators and participants can see one another's facial expressions, hear tone of voice, and even share jokes.

Over the course of the ten-week program facilitators guide their students through an exciting and unique online learning experience. They help their group to build meaningful transnational experiences by facilitating the sharing of personal and cultural information, and helping them talk intimately about the influences—both political and personal—that shape their understanding of relations between the "Western" world and the "Arab & Muslim World" world. Via the program students have a genuine window into the worlds of their peers, despite the distances that divide them.

To assist them in their work, facilitators are provided with an extensive collection of suggested activities, questions and readings. They also participate in an intensive online training program prior to the start of the program.

Soliya facilitators are an extraordinary group, drawn from a wide range of professions and backgrounds. It is a true global community – in the spring of 2009 we worked with over ninety-five facilitators from twenty-five different countries, and we anticipate that we'll have the same kind of diversity this semester.

Facilitators are absolutely critical to the success of the Soliya dialogue. **We would love to have you join our team!**

Some Statistics:

- **95%** of facilitators agreed that serving as a Soliya facilitator provided them with facilitation skills that they can use in other settings.
- **91%** of facilitators agreed that serving as a Soliya facilitator provided them with leadership skills that they can use in other settings.
- **98%** of facilitators rated the level of training they received for the Soliya Connect Program as "high" or "very high"
- **93%** of Soliya facilitators rated the level of support they received while facilitating the Soliya Connect Program as "high" or "very high."

Why Facilitate?

Through their experience with Soliya, facilitators gain:

- An opportunity to get hands-on experience facilitating international conflict resolution dialogue;
- Personalized feedback and coaching on their facilitation skills and style;
- Extensive training relevant to both in-person and online group facilitation;
- An opportunity to work closely with a partner from across the globe and to be part of an extraordinary international team of volunteers;
- Experience working with a growing international non-profit organization.



Students and facilitators participating in the Connect Program "meet" via Soliya's web-based videoconferencing application. This application allows for rich and intimate discussion, despite the distances separating the participants.

By the end of Spring of 2011 Soliya will have worked with over 80 universities, including Georgetown University, Al Akhawayn University in Morocco, University of Amsterdam, the University of Minnesota, and the American University in Cairo among others.

Ideal candidates will possess:

- Dialogue experience with groups from diverse cultural backgrounds, preferably as a facilitator or mediator;
- A knowledge of international affairs, particularly related to the relationship between the "West" and the "Arab & Muslim World";
- A passion for the issues that Soliya addresses;
- Flexibility, creativity, the ability to be honestly and openly self-reflective and a good sense of humor;
- Fluency in Arabic a plus.

*** Please note that the selection process for the facilitation team is highly competitive and we always have far more applicants than available spaces. All applicants should be committed to completing BOTH the training program and the 10 week dialogue program.**

Logistics:

All meetings take place online, using Soliya's customized internet-based interface (see previous page). All that is needed to participate in the dialogue is a web-cam and headset (provided by Soliya) and a high-speed internet connection. Facilitators can work from home, school or their office – wherever they have access to a computer with high-speed internet.

Connect Program Schedule:

Soliya runs two Connect Program semesters each year, a Fall semester and a Spring semester. Each semester runs for about ten weeks, from early October to early December in the fall and from early March to early May in the spring. During the semester, facilitators will meet with their groups once a week for two hours, at a regular, predetermined meeting time that suits each facilitator's schedule. We expect that facilitators will spend an additional 2 or 3 hours per week preparing for each meeting. There are also optional meetings with Soliya "coaches" and others in the facilitation team designed to provide facilitators with support and feedback.

In preparation for the facilitation of either of these semesters, accepted applicants participate in an online advanced training program. This program provides transferable skills in facilitation and conflict resolution. Please below for details about the training schedule and application deadlines for our new rolling system.

Training Schedule:

Soliya offers two Advanced and two Basic facilitation and conflict resolution trainings a year. The recently added Basic Training now allows for more people to become Soliya facilitators, regardless of their academic and professional backgrounds!

Here's what past facilitators have to say about the program:

"I didn't expect the way Soliya would change my outlook on life! I learned a lot from working with students from both sides of globe - I learned about their lives, their views and I also learned from the way they talked to each other and built relationships to bridge the cultural gap."



Maha Bali
Senior Instructional Technologist
Center for Learning and Teaching
The American University in Cairo, Egypt

"Soliya's feedback and training sessions allowed me to interact with people who I would normally not have had a chance of meeting or dealing with. Moreover, the facilitation experience helped me better cope with both mediation and dealing with new dialogue technologies."



Ahmed Zahran
Finance Advisor – CO2 Emissions Trading
Shell Oil Company, London, UK

"Through the training offered by Soliya, and the weekly sessions themselves, I have been able to improve my facilitation ability as well develop useful skills that will inform and assist me in a professional capacity later down the line."



Taufiq Rahim
Master's Candidate, Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

"Through the Soliya Connect Program I've become part of a great network of facilitators, educators, business people, artists, and activists. It's been a fantastic opportunity to tap into and connect with the energy and creativity of Soliya folks worldwide."



Michelle Zimney
PHD Candidate
University of California Santa Barbara

Basic Training:

Occurs twice a year, in the spring sometime between March and May and again in August. Basic Trainings are held over a 3-5 week period and consist of a mixture of online sessions, readings, and multimedia resources. All Connect program Alumni can take a basic training if they are interested; simply indicate that you are an alumni and your semester in your application email (no need to send a resume or cover letter). If you are not an Alumni but feel that you need more of a foundation in intercultural dialogue/facilitation or want to see what Soliya facilitation is all about, please indicate this preference in your application.

Also if you are currently a Soliya participant, let your facilitators know about your interest in facilitating and indicate it in your end of semester student evaluation. Already filled in you evaluation before reading this? Just send a quick email to facilitator@soliya.net letting us know that you're interested; please include your full name and semester.

Advanced Training:

Occurs twice a year, in the summer June/ July and again in the fall October- December. The fall advanced training is an 8-9 week training during which you meet your group once a week for 2 hour sessions. The summer advanced training is an intense 5-6 week training during which you meet your group once a week for 4 hour sessions. These trainings are tailored for applicants that have a strong foundation in conflict resolution and facilitation and are ready to move on to more advanced and specific techniques for Soliya facilitation.

For both types of trainings, the day/time trainees meet each week with their groups is tailored to fit each trainee's schedule. Because our facilitators are our greatest asset, we do everything in our power to accommodate their busy schedules.

Note: All applications are subject to review by Soliya to determine training level placement, even if a preference has been given.

Information and Application:

If you are interested in being a volunteer facilitator, please submit an online application

1. Go to <http://www.soliya.net/?q=node/160>
2. Log in with the username facs@soliya.net and password soliya.
3. Fill in the application form that appears and click submit. You should receive an email confirming that we have received your application. If you don't receive confirmation please send an email to facilitator@soliya.net.

Applications are accepted all year long on a rolling basis, but space is limited.

The deadlines for each training cycle are the following:

Basic: Spring Training: **March 1st**

Basic: August Training: **July 10th**

Advanced: October - December Training: **September 1st**

Advanced Intense Format: June/July: **May 1st**

If you submit your application after these deadlines, you will be automatically wait-listed and considered for the following training. Depending on our need, however, wait-listed candidates might still be considered for the training they had intended to apply for. But, applying earlier makes it more likely that you will be interviewed and invited to train.

For further information about the program, please see Soliya's website at www.soliya.net