The Vancouver Island Peace and Disarmament Summit sponsored by the UVic Centre for Global Studies was a real success.

The summit started off on Friday night with a small dinner with opening Keynote Jamie Swift and a few of the organizers, followed by a screening of the movie “A Bold Peace”; an excellent movie that documents the process of Costa Rica removing its military despite high pressure from the U.S. and infringement of its borders by neighbouring Nations. Ultimately, Costa Rica’s greatest defense was its lack of military and use of diplomacy around the world. After a bit of trouble with the room change and technical issues, the movie and discussion which followed made for a great evening. It is hard to gauge exactly how many folks were there, but the Hickman 105 amphitheatre was mostly full. My best guess would be about 150-200. It was a good thing that we were able to book the larger room!
On Saturday morning we opened up the registration with coffee donated by level ground and snacks baked by members of the Vancouver Island Peace and Disarmament Network. The registration room was a real hub of activity, with posters, group tables and three people selling books. After an article featuring the Summit in the *Times Colonist* there were a number of people who showed up that were not registered and it was lucky that we had 15 volunteers to help with the different aspects of the summit. About 100 folks came from Duncan, Nanaimo, Courtenay and Vancouver to present and take in the keynote speakers-most of them stuck around for the entire day.

The morning was spent with opening words from Lorne Underwood from Tsawout, a plenary on current threats and the health and humanitarian risks of nuclear weapons from a physician’s perspective and Canada’s position in the UN in terms of disarmament. Following a short break Julie Cormier from Peace Quest moderated a session with keynote Jamie
Swift who delivered a presentation of his new book outlining the “vimy trap” that builds a fervor for war in Canada by falsely associating the great war with a sense of pride rather than shame, death and sadness.

After a quick group picture and lunch outside the David Strong building, participants returned to a selection of workshops in the afternoon, each tasked with coming up with a statement or action agenda to be shared with the larger group in the closing ceremony. The workshops included peace and art with the Raging Grannies; Faith, community and Peace; Song and peace; the white poppy campaign; some deep discussions facilitated by Moussa Magassa on Peace in our time and a presentation by keynote Nicola Peffers author of Refuge in the Black Deck, about military sexual violence.
The closing plenary featuring Tamara Lorincz of VIPDN and Voice of Women for Peace and Barb Taylor from Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom led a plenary next steps for building the movement for peace and disarmament in BC and Canada.

In the closing ceremony participants came up with a draft conference statement with the aid of Dr. Joan Rousseau who drafted the original statement, discussed upcoming actions for
movement building and finished on a particularly high note with several songs led by the Getting Higher Choir. [Here is a short video of one of the songs.]

A Quick clean up was followed by a celebratory meal where we all got to know each other a little better over some Thai cuisine at lemongrass Thai Restaurant in Cadboro Bay.

![Group photo](image)

Overall, we, the organizers are very pleased with the outcome of the inaugural VIPDN BC Peace and Disarmament Summit. There was a really vibrant and lively buzz felt throughout the day. We feel that the summit was successful in bringing together a broad group of Peace and Disarmament organizations on Vancouver Island and Vancouver area. We felt that this summit could be used to introduce and promote the Vancouver Island Peace and Disarmament Network, and in this regard we have certainly been successful. We did a lot of outreach both in newspapers (Tyee, Times Colonist) and through faith and other peace communities on the island. There were more people than we expected that came to the summit, and from a very broad background of faith and activist communities. While there is a lot of room for us to grow and be more inclusive as a group, we feel that this summit has really showcased the depth of experience and knowledge about peace and disarmament in this little pocket of the world and contributed to growing momentum in the peace community. We have already had a lot of positive verbal feedback and significant interest in joining our group and helping to organize the Peace Summit next year, which promises to be bigger and better. To this end we have sent out evaluations to participants for feedback and ideas for improving next year. A special thanks for the support of the Centre for Global Studies and all the volunteers, without whom the conference would not have been possible!