

Atlas of Peaceful Futures Practices

A PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE
TO PEACE-BASED CIVILIZATION

By Pavel Luksha & Ilia Lysenko



GLOBAL
EDUCATION
FUTURES

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About This Atlas and the Learning Planet Institute

This Atlas emerges from the joint Peaceful Futures programme initiated by the Learning Planet Institute and Global Education Futures, aligned with UNESCO. Peaceful Futures aims to train and empower hundreds of young leaders worldwide, fostering true artisans of peace, with the support of leading institutional and on-the-ground partners. At the heart of this collaboration lies a profound recognition that the Learning Planet Institute aims to transform the way we learn and teach, so that every learner becomes an agent of change committed to Wellbeing, Peace, Democracy, Equity and Sustainability.

The Learning Planet Institute's commitment to reinventing learning for all ages to collectively shape better futures naturally aligns with the peace-building imperative. Since its creation in 2006, the Institute focuses on youth empowerment and transformative education. In March 2025, it has become the United Nations University (UNU) Hub for the Future of Learning with Youth. This expertise and global legitimacy provide essential foundations for cultivating the next generation of peacebuilders. Peaceful Futures can thus benefit from a range of other activities that are mobilising thousands of Youth changemakers already engaged in the fields of education, rights, health and the environment, such as the Youth Design Challenge, Re-Model UN, the network of Youth Fellows, etc. All domains intimately connected to peace-building work.

Central to both the Peaceful Futures programme and this Atlas of Peace Practices is the conviction that young people are not just beneficiaries of peace education but active co-creators of peaceful futures. This youth-centered approach reflects the Learning Planet Institute's broader commitment to learner agency, and participatory and intergenerational approaches to addressing global challenges.



About Global Education Futures

Global Education Futures (GEF) is a path-breaking international initiative dedicated to foresight, systemic innovation and weaving of learning ecosystems in education. Since 2015, GEF has convened hundreds of dialogues and co-creation processes with education leaders, policymakers, social entrepreneurs, and youth across all continents, exploring how learning can prepare humanity to meet the challenges of the 21st century. At the heart of this work lies a conviction that learning is humanity's birthright, and that education must be learner-focused, human-centered, and nature-informed. By fostering living learning communities and weaving them into socio-technical ecosystems, GEF has consistently advanced the vision of education as a driver of societal transformation.

The Atlas of Peaceful Futures Practices extends this journey into one of the most urgent frontiers of our time: evolving towards a peace-based civilization. Building on GEF's Peaceful Futures initiative (2022–23), which invited communities worldwide to envision futures beyond conflict, the Atlas collects and amplifies a diverse range of practices that foster peaceful societies and enable human communities to flourish. Just as GEF's earlier work mapped emerging skills

and learning ecosystems, this Atlas charts the living practices through which peace can be embedded in daily life, culture, and institutions. It is both a repository of innovations and a compass for those navigating turbulent global transformations.

Through its partnership with the Learning Planet Institute on the Peaceful Futures programme, GEF continues its commitment to nurturing a new ethos of leadership in education and beyond. The world urgently needs bridge-builders and weavers: leaders and communities who connect fragmented worlds, embody new paradigms of learning, and co-create regenerative and peaceful societies. Through this Atlas, GEF and LPI affirm that peaceful futures are not utopian ideals, but practical, systemic pathways that can be enacted here and now.



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Atlas of Peaceful Futures: Why Now?

THE EXISTENTIAL IMPERATIVE FOR PEACE

Humanity stands at a decisive threshold. We live in a time of extraordinary possibility—never before has our species held such knowledge, technological power, and cultural creativity. At the same time, converging crises threaten the very foundations of our civilization: wars that devastate entire regions, climate change that destabilizes ecosystems across the globe, and social divisions that fracture communities, and emerging technologies that amplify both the potential and the peril.

The polycrisis of our age reveals a stark mathematical reality: **our current approaches to conflict are no longer viable at scale.**

For most of history, wars were catastrophic but survivable. Empires fell, cities burned, populations suffered, but the species endured and eventually recovered. This ancient logic of conflict—inherited from millennia of tribal warfare, territorial disputes, imperialism, colonialism, and resource competition—shaped the institutions, strategies, and cultural norms that humanity developed to manage tensions between groups.

The 20th century shattered this calculus forever. Nuclear weapons marked an irreversible break with the past—for the first time, human conflict could destroy not just armies or nations, but civilization itself. The doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction made clear that any great-power conflict could escalate into global catastrophe.



Since the end of the Cold War era, the risks have only multiplied:

- **Nuclear arsenals.** Any large-scale exchange risks nuclear winter, the collapse of global agriculture, and starvation on a planetary scale. Even «limited» regional nuclear exchange would trigger cascading effects far beyond the initial combatants.
- **Biological and chemical weapons.** With advances in synthetic biology, pathogens can be engineered with pandemic-level lethality. These weapons respect no borders and cannot be recalled once deployed.
- **Cyber and AI-driven warfare.** Escalation in milliseconds, attacks on command and control systems, and the opacity of attribution increase the risk of miscalculation. The very infrastructure on which societies depend—power, satellites, finance, logistics—can be disabled in ways that invite uncontrolled retaliation.
- **Autonomous weapons.** The prospect of wars fought primarily by machines removes human judgment from life-and-death decisions, potentially triggering escalation spirals no human can control. And on top of these direct existential threats comes a powerful *trigger*: **climate disruption**. As ecosystems collapse, droughts and floods displace millions, and resources grow scarce, survival pressures will intensify. If we don't learn to live peacefully, climate-driven migration and resource conflicts could ignite wars of unprecedented scale—conflicts that could entangle nuclear powers or unleash biotechnological and cyber escalation.

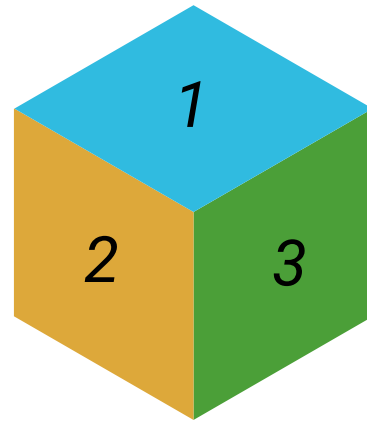
This is exactly what Buckminster Fuller foresaw when he warned us over half a century ago: *“Either the war is obsolete, or humans are.”* The polycrisis of our age proves him right. Wars can no longer be treated as localized contests. In a fragile, interconnected world, **any war can now escalate into an existential threat**.

This reality transforms peace from moral aspiration to survival necessity. Peace is now the **minimum operating condition for civilization**—without it, no other human endeavor can endure, let alone flourish. Science, culture, economy, democracy, and even basic human development become impossible in a world where conflicts can escalate to species-threatening levels.

Yet traditional approaches to peace—treaties between states, international law, diplomatic negotiations—while necessary, are insufficient. They address symptoms rather than causes, focusing on managing conflicts rather than preventing them. A peace that depends solely on the restraint of political elites is inherently fragile.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF PEACE: A THREE-DIMENSIONAL FRAMEWORK

If peace is an existential requirement, what does it mean in practice? **The Peaceful Futures framework** distinguishes three interconnected dimensions of peace, each essential and mutually reinforcing:



PEACE 1

Peace as the Absence of War. The state where physical violence, warfare, and direct threats to life are minimized or eliminated between and within human communities. This represents the most basic condition of peace—the cessation of active hostilities and the prevention of armed conflict escalation.

This dimension is maintained through:

- Early warning and conflict prevention systems
- Mediation, negotiation, and diplomatic intervention
- Ceasefire mechanisms and peace agreements
- Disarmament and weapons control
- Post-conflict stabilization

PEACE 2

Peace as Elimination of Structural Violence: The transformation of social, economic, and political systems that systematically harm, exclude, or exploit groups of people. Structural violence operates through institutions, policies, and cultural norms that create inequality and injustice, often generating the conditions that lead to direct violence.

This dimension requires addressing and transforming:

- Economic systems based on extraction and exploitation
- Environmental destruction and unsustainable resource use
- Political structures that exclude citizen participation
- Cultural patterns that romanticize violence and suppress diversity
- Unhealed collective trauma and historical injustices

PEACE 3

Peace as a State of Harmony and Flourishing: The presence of conditions that enable human communities and natural systems to thrive in dynamic harmony. This goes beyond the mere absence of violence to encompass the active cultivation of wellbeing, creativity, and regenerative relationships across all levels of life.

This dimension involves cultivating:

- Inner development and psychological wellbeing
- Empathy-based education and consciousness
- Regenerative economic models and wellbeing-focused policies
- Inclusive cultures and healing-oriented communities
- Participatory governance and citizen agency
- Life-affirming technology and collaborative social systems

Critical Insight: These dimensions are not sequential stages but interdependent conditions. Peace 1 without Peace 2 remains fragile—wars will reignite if systemic injustices persist. Peace 2 without Peace 3 stays brittle—societies cannot thrive on the mere absence of oppression. Peace 3 without the foundation of Peace 1 and 2 becomes privileged escapism, available only to those already secure.

True peace is not just “no war.” It is a systemic state of **healed relations, just structures, and cultivated flourishing**— that begins within individuals and extends outward into communities, nations, and the biosphere itself.

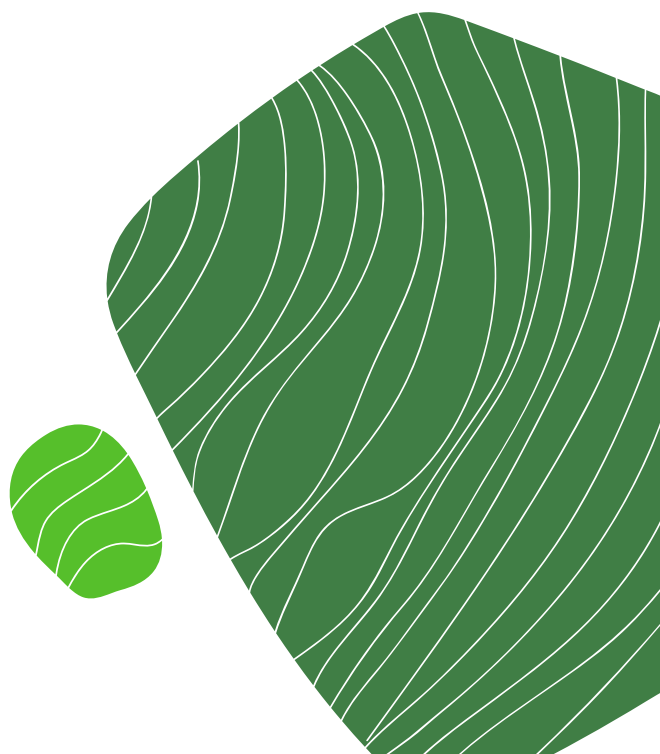


Principles for Peace-Based Civilization

Building peace-based civilization requires fundamental shifts in values and systems. The following principles provide guidance for this transformation:

- **Life- and Love-Centered:** All human activity must affirm interdependence and the sanctity of life. This means designing systems that regenerate rather than extract, prioritizing relationships and care over domination and accumulation.
- **Healing and Trauma-Informed:** Societies must address wounds of the past to prevent cycles of violence. This includes both individual healing practices and systemic approaches to historical injustice, colonialism, and intergenerational trauma.
- **Empathy-Driven and Radically Inclusive:** Every voice and identity must be respected; exclusion breeds violence. Peace requires expanding circles of moral consideration to include marginalized humans and increasingly, rights of nature and future generations.
- **Deep Democracy and Participatory:** Governance must be decentralized, participatory, and accountable to communities. People must have meaningful voice in decisions affecting their lives. Top-down solutions imposed by elites lack legitimacy and durability.
- **Knowledge as Commons:** Open access to education, technology, and information is foundational to trust and cooperation. When essential resources are hoarded, scarcity creates conflict. Commons-based approaches build abundance and collaboration.
- **Reciprocal and Regenerative:** Economies and cultures must restore what they use, embedding stewardship and reciprocity into every practice. This moves beyond sustainability to active regeneration of social and ecological systems.

These principles reposition peace as a **design criterion for human systems**—from education and healthcare to governance and economy.



Who Creates Peace?

The Peaceful Futures framework recognizes that «peace cannot be engineered for the general public by national and global elites, it cannot come 'top-down' from power structures... Rather, peace can only come from within, and it needs to be raised bottom up through shifts in consciousness, behavior, and culture.». Civil society, in all its diversity, is the principal driver of Peaceful Futures.

A. PRIMARY DRIVERS: CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVES & MOVEMENTS

- **Mediation & Peacebuilding Communities.** Groups that resolve and transform existing and potential conflicts through negotiation, truth-telling, reconciliation, and structured dialogue.
- **Governance Transformation Groups:** Organizations and movements working toward participatory, bottom-up governance systems that are inclusive across ages, genders, and cultural groups, emphasizing community and individual agency rather than large institutional control.
- **Economic Justice Initiatives:** Teams working to create fair economic models, promote regenerative economies, and eradicate economic injustice including monopolies and unfair supply chains.
- **Consciousness Evolution Communities, including Faith & Indigenous Tradition Groups:** Communities creating conditions for moral development and collective consciousness evolution through education, art, and media as central peace-making efforts.
- **Decentralized Technology Initiatives:** Open source platforms, open access, and sharing economy models across sectors, including socio-technical systems designed on life-affirming principles and AI that can «nudge» people toward peaceful behaviors.

B. ESSENTIAL ENABLERS: INSTITUTIONAL ACTORS

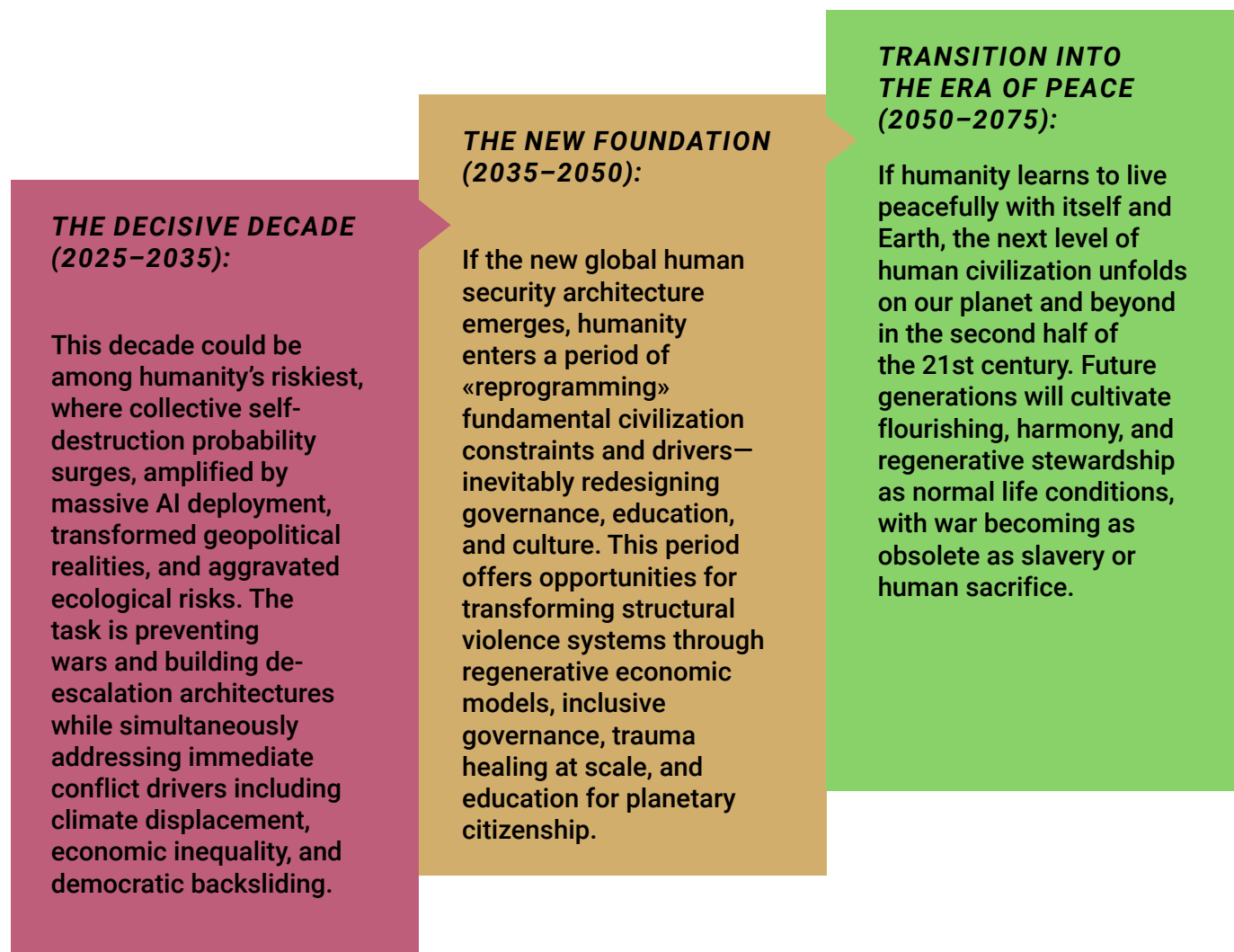
- **Economic Transformation Agencies:** National and international programs focused on phasing out socio-economic structures that maintain war conditions, including unfair supply chains and monopolies. This includes UN-related agencies, anti-monopoly groups, cooperatives, and economic ecosystems.
- **Global Governance Reform Organizations:** Groups concerned with transforming the United Nations and other international structures to become more distributed and supportive of local commons and decision-making.
- **Opportunity-Seeking Institutions:** Technology companies and even elements of the Military Industrial Complex that may recognize benefits in «solving» global challenges like climate crisis rather than perpetuating conflict.

Peace is not owned by states. It is everybody's business, arising from the creativity and courage of people and communities worldwide.

Peace as Evolutionary Leap

From a longer historical perspective, the transition to peace-based civilization is more than a political project—it is an evolutionary leap. Humanity is learning to transcend its oldest survival strategy—organized violence—and evolve into a species that survives and thrives through cooperation, empathy, and reciprocity with life.

The Peaceful Futures timeline suggests this transformation has rough trajectories, though progress is not linear:



This is not utopian thinking—but practical imperative. Each generation builds capabilities the previous could not imagine. The generation that created nuclear weapons also created the United Nations. The generation that invented the internet also developed global movements for human rights and environment. Today's generation is creating artificial intelligence and biotechnology—will they also create the institutions and cultures needed for lasting peace?

What is the Atlas and How to Use It

The Role of Atlas: A Bridge Between Vision and Practice

The **Atlas of Peaceful Futures** is a contribution to this evolutionary journey. It is designed as both **a map** and **a compass**:



As a **map**, it offers a typology of practices (Part II) that illuminate pathways to peace across multiple domains.



As a **compass**, it presents concrete case studies (Part III) that inspire, demonstrate possibility, and invite replication.



As an **invitation**, it calls on educators, policy-makers, practitioners, activists, and funders to integrate peace into their daily work and long-term strategies.

The reader is invited to:

- Understand why war is now existentially unaffordable.
- Explore the multi-dimensional nature of peace.
- Engage with the principles and practices that make Peaceful Futures possible.
- Be inspired by real cases that demonstrate peace in action.

The Atlas is not a final word but an **invitation to co-creation**. Peaceful Futures are made not by a single actor but by networks of people, communities, and institutions learning to live in ways that heal, regenerate, and sustain life.

The Peaceful Futures Practice Model: A Framework for Transformation

The field of peacebuilding suffers from dangerous fragmentation—mediators work in isolation from ecological activists, educators operate separately from economists designing cooperative enterprises, and artists healing trauma rarely connect with governance reformers building participatory democracy. This siloing undermines the very possibility of systemic transformation that peace requires.

The Practice Model fills this gap by organizing peacebuilding into six interconnected domains: (1) inner development and interpersonal healing; (2) dialogue, mediation and reconciliation; (3) education for peace and planetary citizenship; (4) art and cultural transformation; (5) inclusive governance and civic agency; and (6) ecological and economic transformation. Each domain contains practices organized across three scales of implementation—from simple initiatives requiring minimal resources that individuals can start immediately, to moderate efforts requiring dedicated teams and funding, to complex transformations demanding multi-stakeholder collaboration and significant investment.

This systematic approach provides the comprehensive map that peacebuilders need to navigate the complex terrain of transformation. Rather than leaving practitioners with inspiring visions but no clear pathways, it provides concrete answers to essential questions: What can I do tomorrow? How do I build from individual action to community change? Where should limited resources be invested for maximum impact? The Model demonstrates that peace emerges from the dynamic interaction of inner work, relational healing, educational innovation, cultural shift, governance reform, and economic-ecological justice—and that no single approach is sufficient, though each is necessary.

SIX INTERCONNECTED DOMAINS OF PEACEBUILDING



**Inner & Interpersonal
State of Peace**



**Art & Cultural
Transformation**



**Dialogue, Mediation &
Reconciliation**



**Inclusive Governance &
Civic Agency**



**Education for Peace &
Planetizenship**



**Ecological & Economic
Transformation**

Profiles of Peace Practitioners: Learning from Experience

While the Practice Model provides the comprehensive framework, the lived experiences of actual peacebuilders offer irreplaceable wisdom about what transformation looks like in practice. Through detailed profiles of practitioners, organizations, and specific practices from the key partners of the Peaceful Futures project, we explore the human stories behind peacebuilding work across diverse contexts and approaches.

These profiles reveal fascinating patterns about what serves as the main impulse for becoming a peacebuilder—from personal experiences of conflict to witnessing structural violence, from spiritual calling to academic awakening. They also illuminate what people actually consider as «practices» in their peace-building work. Some emphasize dialogue and mediation techniques, others focus on educational innovations or economic transformation initiatives. Some practitioners ground their work in healing trauma, while others prioritize policy change or community organizing.

The organizational profiles showcase how institutions—from grassroots movements to established nonprofits to innovative enterprises—translate peace principles into sustainable impact. These cases demonstrate both the diversity of organizational forms that peace requires and the common challenges of scaling transformation work. The practice profiles dive deep into specific methodologies, tools, and approaches that have proven effective in real-world contexts. These detailed examinations show not just what peacebuilders do, but how they do it—the concrete steps, the iterative refinements, the lessons learned through trial and error.

Together, these deep dives serve as both inspiration and practical guidance—revealing not just what peacebuilders do, but how they think, what sustains them, and how they navigate the complex challenges of transforming conflict into cooperation. Most importantly, they demonstrate that while the Model provides the map, the journey of peace requires both systematic frameworks and the irreplaceable wisdom that comes from walking the path.

This Atlas is written for practitioners, educators, policymakers, activists, and funders who recognize that peace cannot remain rhetorical. It must be designed, taught, practiced, and scaled.

Toward Collective Flourishing

Our work is based on a simple but radical premise: war is now too dangerous to continue, peace is too important to leave to governments, and the transformation to peace-based civilization is too urgent to delay.

The cases and practices documented here represent the creativity and courage of people worldwide who are already building foundations for Peaceful Futures. They show that another world is not only possible but already emerging in communities, classrooms, organizations, and movements across the globe.

The choice before humanity is stark but clear. We can continue on current trajectories toward increasing conflict, ecological collapse, and potential civilizational failure. Or we can choose transformation, learning to organize human society around cooperation rather than competition, regeneration rather than extraction, inclusion rather than domination.

This is not just a moral choice but an evolutionary imperative. The transition to peace-based civilization is the next great leap in human development—as significant as the agricultural or industrial revolutions. Unlike those previous transitions, we cannot afford to take centuries to complete it.

The future is not predetermined. It will be shaped by choices and actions we take today. This Atlas is an invitation to join the millions worldwide who are already making those choices—choosing healing over harm, justice over domination, life over death.

The horizon of Peaceful Futures awaits. The question is not whether we can reach it, but whether we will choose to walk toward it together.

This Atlas is a living document, evolving through the contributions of practitioners worldwide. It represents current knowledge while acknowledging that the field of peace-building continues to develop. Users are invited to adapt, improve, and share their experiences and suggestions to strengthen the collective wisdom for building Peaceful Futures.

This publication is part of the broader Peaceful Futures programme developed by the Learning Planet Institute in collaboration with Global Education Futures and aligned with UNESCO's commitment to peace education. The programme continues to evolve, seeking to expand its reach and impact through ongoing partnerships and youth empowerment initiatives worldwide.

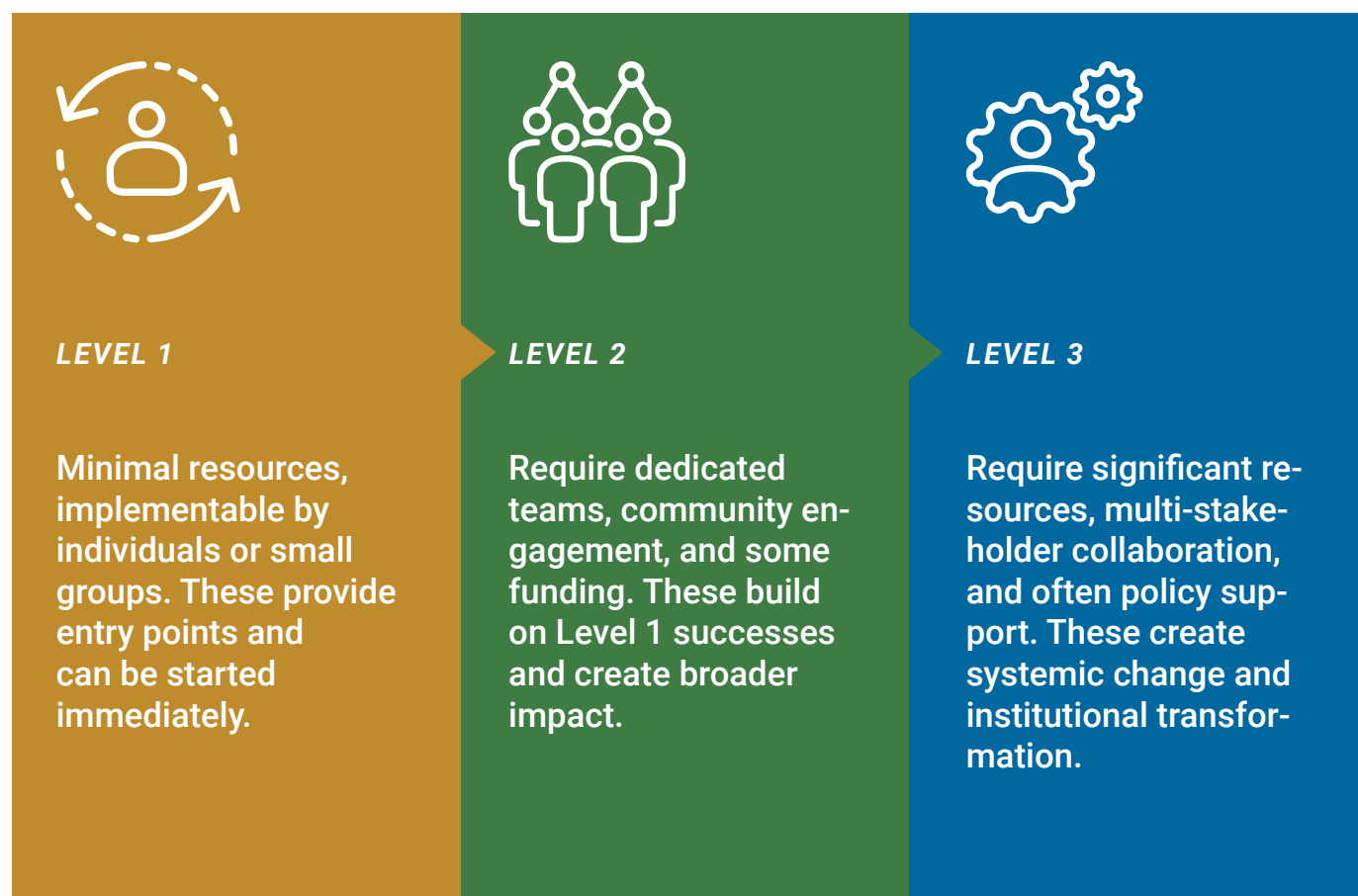
Please connect with us at peacefulfutures@learningplanetinstitute.org

Peaceful futures atlas— table of practices

PRACTICE CLUSTER	INNER & INTER- PERSONAL STATE OF PEACE	DIALOGUE, MEDIATION & RECONCILIATION	EDUCATION FOR PEACE & PLANETIZENSHIP	ART & CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION	INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE & CIVIC AGENCY	ECOLOGICAL & ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION
KEY FOCUS OF THE CLUSTER	Mindfulness & self awareness Empathy Emotional Literacy Trust Trauma Healing	Constructive Dialogue Mediation Reconciliation Conflict resolution Narrative practices	Formal & informal education for peace, sustainability, planetary stewardship, conflict resolution, emotional & civic literacy	Artistic expression & events Cultural storytelling Rituals. Intergenerational trauma healing through artistic means	Justice systems, Inclusive governments Participatory democracy Intergenerational partnerships	Just transitions, ecological stewardship, economic equity
1: EASY: MINIMAL RESOURCES, CAN BE DONE ALONE OR IN A SMALL TEAM	Meditation & Self-Awareness Practices Personal Embodiment & Somatic Practices Personal Emotional & Trauma-Informed Peace Practices Constructive Communication and Relational Skills including Non-Violent & EQ Communication	Informal Dialogue Circles & Cafes Truth-Telling & Testimony Sharing Indigenous and Traditional Conflict Resolution Practices	Peace Lessons With Open-access Education Resources Peace-focused After-School Clubs & Planetary Awareness Workshops Educational Social Media Campaigns Fostering Peace	Community Art Projects including Collective Art Art-Based Trauma-Informed Dialogues Theatre for Dialogue Digital & Social Media Peace Artistic Campaigns Informal Intercultural Art Exchanges	Civic Advocacy & Rights Literacy Workshops Youth Councils & Student Governments	Community-Based Ecological Restoration Sustainable Consumption Campaigns
2: MODERATE REQUIRES DEDICATED PROFESSIONAL TEAM OR COMMUNITY, SOME LEVEL OF FUNDING	Empathy, Emotional Literacy & Skills for Peaceful Life Community Led Programs for Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing Inner Development for Leadership & Agency Foresight for Peacebuilding Peer Mediation Programs Principled Negotiations	Power-Conscious Dialogue Design Structured Mediation Initiatives Intercultural & Interfaith Dialogues Community Based Restorative Circles Digital & AI Tools for Mediation & Reconciliation Digital Hygiene & Countering Hate	Speech Social & Emotional Learning including Conflict Literacy Education Anti-bullying Programs Conflict resolution, communication and mediation training Youth Action-Learning Programs Digital Peace Apps & Educational	Games Peace-focused School Curriculum & Teacher Competencies Arts-Based Peacebuilding & Trauma Healing Programs Digital Peace Storytelling Platforms Artistic Peacebuilding Residencies Open Government &	Anti-Corruption Platforms AI-driven Peacebuilding Platforms Community-Based Peace Indicators Deliberative Forums & Assemblies Gender Equality Programs Restorative Justice Programs Local Food & Water Sovereignty Local Circular Economy Initiatives	Just & Transparent Supply Chains Self-Employment Opportunities in Creative Economy through Training & Acceleration
3: COMPLEX SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES, REQUIRES MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PROCESSES & COLLABORATIONS	Peace Parks & Gardens Alliances around Inner Development & Universal Wellbeing	Systemic Conflict Resolution & Transformation Initiatives Global, National or Regional Reconciliation Platforms	Transformative Educational System Reforms National or Regional Peace Learning Ecosystems & Networks	Peace & Healing Festivals & Sport Events International Indigenous Cultural Initiatives Cultural Peace & Reconciliation Museums	Participatory Budgeting & Decentralized Governance (including Participatory Decision-Making) Institutional Reforms & Policy Shifts for Inclusion Governance of Territories Based on Indigenous Ethics & Worldview Security Sector Reform (SSR) Reform of Supranational Institutions	Regenerative Agriculture & Bio-regional Pilots Creative Economy Clusters Rights of Nature Green Finance for Peace Large Scale Nature Restoration Projects for Peace New City Projects for Peace & Consciousness

Integrated Model of Peaceful Futures Practices

This 6-cluster typology offers clarity, coherence, and usability for practitioners and community leaders, while also providing flexibility for showcasing diverse and inspiring real-world cases in the Atlas of Peaceful Futures. Each cluster starts with simpler, actionable, and immediately implementable practices, providing an easy entry point and enabling rapid engagement from peacebuilders of **varying experience levels**:



Notes on using listed practices and cases

POWER ANALYSIS MATTERS

All interpersonal practices in this Atlas must be implemented with explicit attention to existing power structures. Seemingly neutral interventions can reinforce inequalities and aggravate conflict situations if facilitators fail to address how gender, class, ethnicity, age, and other hierarchies shape participation. Whenever possible, before implementing any practice, try to conduct a stakeholder power mapping to identify who benefits, who might be excluded, and whose voices need special support to be heard.

EXPECT RESISTANCE AND FAILURE

Each practice has its own **limitations**, and many unlisted initiatives failed due to hidden complexities. Transforming systems of violence threatens established interests. Expect pushback from those who benefit from current arrangements—including key political and economic players. Many peace-building initiatives fail due to inadequate attention to power dynamics, insufficient resources, or unrealistic timelines. Learn from documented failures as much as celebrated successes.





CONTEXT DETERMINES EVERYTHING

These practices are inspirational examples, not universal solutions. What works in one cultural, political, or economic context may fail or cause harm in another. Always prioritize local wisdom, adapt practices to cultural norms, and ensure community ownership of peace-building processes.

INTEGRATION IS KEY

The six practice clusters are interdependent. Inner development without systemic change can become spiritual bypassing. Governance reform without cultural transformation often gets reversed. Economic justice without ecological regeneration proves unsustainable. Plan for integration across multiple dimensions simultaneously.

Recommendations on using the Model

USER GROUP	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Practitioners and Activists</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Start with Level 1 practices in your areas of strength and interest→ Build capacity through Level 2 initiatives as you develop experience and partnerships→ Advocate for and contribute to Level 3 transformations as opportunities arise
<p>Educators and Trainers</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Integrate practices from multiple clusters to address different learning styles and cultural contexts→ Use the three-level framework to scaffold learning from simple to complex applications→ Adapt cases to local contexts while maintaining core principles
<p>Policymakers and Funders</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Understand how different practice clusters reinforce each other and fund accordingly→ Support Level 1 and 2 grassroots innovation as foundation for Level 3 institutional change→ Design policies that enable rather than constrain civil society peace-building
<p>Researchers and Evaluators</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Recognize that these are inspirational examples, not necessarily the most rigorously evaluated practices→ Conduct your own due diligence before implementation, including context analysis and failure mode assessment→ Contribute to the evidence base by documenting both successes and challenges

List of practices

1. Inner & Interpersonal State of Peace



Practices that develop emotional literacy, self-awareness, inner balance, and the capacity for empathic and constructive relationships. These practices foster the psychological and relational foundations of peaceful societies by helping individuals cultivate resilience, compassion, and nonviolence in everyday life.

LEVEL 1 (EASY)

A. MEDITATION & SELF-AWARENESS PRACTICES: Individual or group practices that foster attention, emotional regulation, and inner calm. These include breathing exercises, mindfulness meditation, and contemplative sitting, which reduce stress and reactivity. Georgakopoulos et al. (2019) show individual mindfulness significantly reduces interpersonal conflict.

CASES:

- **Insight Timer:** Offers 130,000+ free guided meditations globally InsightTimer.com.
- **Plum Village app:** Free mindfulness app developed by Thich Nhat Hanh's monastery, with practices for daily peace and compassion.
- **Loving-Kindness (Metta) meditation:** Foundational Buddhist practice explicitly cultivating compassion and unconditional love, which has broad secular applications with research support for improving social connectedness and reducing hostility.
- **SKY Breath Meditation:** Evidence-based program (sky-breath.org) shown to improve emotional resilience.
- **Mindful Schools short practices:** Simple exercises for educators to integrate mindfulness into classrooms (mindfulschools.org).
- **Vipassana 10-Day Courses:** Donation-based retreats across India, Myanmar, and globally; foundational in spreading accessible self-regulation.

- **Tergar Meditation Community (Nepal/India):** Guided practices from Mingyur Rinpoche, adapted for global access, rooted in Tibetan Buddhist tradition.
- **Zazen (Japan):** The seated meditation of Zen Buddhism, emphasizing precise posture and «just sitting» (shikantaza) to cultivate awareness beyond thought.

B. PERSONAL EMBODIMENT & SOMATIC PRACTICES: *Body-centered techniques (e.g., movement, breathwork, grounding) help release stress and restore nervous system balance, especially for trauma-affected individuals. They promote resilience, bodily awareness, and non-reactivity in conflict situations.*

CASES:

- **Yoga Asana (India):** While often seen as a physical exercise in the West, it is a somatic practice to prepare the body and mind for meditation, cultivating discipline and self-awareness. The Isha Foundation (Sadhguru) offers simple, powerful practices like Isha Kriya for free online.
- **Qigong:** Simple accessible energy-based practices; e.g., Lee Holden's tutorials are globally available for beginners.
- **Tai Chi (China):** Often called «meditation in motion,» this martial art is widely practiced for health, stress reduction, and mental focus. Its slow, flowing movements are a powerful somatic practice for harmony and balance.
- **Aikido:** Founded by Morihei Ueshiba, known as the “Art of Peace,” teaching conflict transformation through harmonization rather than domination.
- **Capoeira Angola (Brazil):** Afro-Brazilian martial art combining movement, rhythm, and collective play, fostering resilience, dignity, and healing in post-colonial and marginalized communities.



C. PERSONAL EMOTIONAL & TRAUMA-INFORMED PEACE PRACTICES:

Daily micro-practices and rituals to increase emotional regulation, heal inner wounds, and develop resilience, especially for trauma-exposed populations. These are often accessible, self-led, or peer-supported.

CASES:

- **Five-Minute Journal:** A structured daily journal promoting gratitude and emotional clarity.
- **Your Wellbeing Toolkit by NHS**
londonwaitingroom.nhs.uk/personal-toolkit
- **Mood Meter App:** Emotion tracking app developed at Yale's Center for Emotional Intelligence.
- **Daily emotional check-ins** practiced at workplaces or schools (e.g., Positive Education programs).
- **Trauma Release Exercises (TRE):** Simple physical exercises to release stress and trauma (TRE for All). Note: initial facilitator guidance recommended before self-led sessions.
- **Naikan Reflection (Japan):** A structured method of self-reflection based on three questions: «What have I received from __?», «What have I given to __?», and «What troubles and difficulties have I caused __?». It powerfully cultivates gratitude, responsibility, and perspective.
- **Gratitude Practices** by Brother David Steindl-Rast Foundation: Daily gratitude reflections and mindful appreciation exercises inspired by Brother David's teachings, designed to cultivate sustained thankfulness and present-moment awareness for emotional resilience.
- **Tutu Foundation micro-practices:** Daily rituals of forgiveness and reconciliation rooted in Ubuntu philosophy, supporting conflict healing.



D. CONSTRUCTIVE COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONAL SKILLS INCLUDING NON-VIOLENT & EQ COMMUNICATION:

Structured evidence-based methods of speaking and listening that promote empathy, clarity, and connection. One example of such methods is Non-Violent Communication (NVC) that helps people express needs without blame and listen to others without judgment, supporting peaceful everyday relationships. Originally, the Right Speech in Buddhist tradition is a core component of the Noble Eightfold Path, a principle for ethical communication that includes abstaining from lying, divisive speech, harsh speech, and idle chatter.

CASES:

- **Center for Nonviolent Communication:** Offers free/low-cost NVC introductory courses (cnvc.org).
- **The Compassion Course Online:** Low-cost global online training (<https://www.compassioncourse.org/>)
- **Compassionate Listening Project:** Community listening circles based on empathetic principles (compassionatelistening.org)
- **Compassion Games:** Global challenges encouraging communities to practice compassion collectively (compassiongames.org/play)
- **Active Constructive Responding** practices (ggs.vic.edu.au/2021/10/the-benefits-of-active-constructive-responding/)



LEVEL 2 (MODERATE)**A. EMPATHY, EMOTIONAL LITERACY & SKILLS FOR PEACEFUL LIFE:**

Structured educational approaches, often in schools or youth centers, that build emotional literacy, self-awareness, empathy, and cooperative behavior. SEL creates long-term foundations for peaceful conduct in communities.

CASES:

- **Peace by 2030 Game** by David Gershon: Group-led “real life quests” for socio-emotional learning (peace2030.earth/about-poe)
- **Empathy Circle** by Edwin Rutsch: Peer-facilitated listening practices. (cultureofempathy.com)
- **Wake Up Schools Retreats** (Plum Village, France): International educational retreats integrating peace, mindfulness, and community healing. (plumvillage.org/mindfulness/mindfulness-practice)
- **Cities4Peace**: program to develop emotional self-regulation capacity of law enforcement officers & community including former gang members (cities4peace.org)

B. COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUPS FOR MENTAL HEALTH & EMOTIONAL WELLBEING:

Semi-structured peer based spaces for stress, grief, or trauma, community workshops in resilience and psychological first aid. Through various formats including story-sharing, reflective listening, and role-switching exercises, these labs help participants deepen connection across differences and build conflict navigation skills.

CASES:

- **Mental Health First Aid**: Community-level training to respond to mental health crises. (mentalhealthfirstaid.org)
- **Men's Sheds**: Peer-support community spaces reducing isolation and depression (internationally replicated). (menshed.com/what-is-a-mens-shed)
- **The Art of Living** (India) programs for community-based trauma relief and empowerment, especially in conflict zones and rural areas, using breathwork, meditation, and community service (e.g., post-tsunami, in Kashmir, with refugees). (artofliving.org/in-en/peace-initiatives)
- **Friendship Bench** (Zimbabwe): A community-based mental health program where trained “grandmothers” provide counseling on park benches, helping thousands deal with depression, trauma, and conflict stress (friendshipbench.org/our-programs)
- **ThriveNYC initiative** (New York City): Comprehensive mental health promotion at city-scale. (<https://mentalhealth.cityofnewyork.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Thrive-Roadmap.pdf>)

- **Open Dialogue Community “Soul Hospital”** (Ukraine) for people affected by military conflicts
- **Emotions Anonymous:** A 12-step program for emotional regulation (emotionsanonymous.org/)

C. INNER DEVELOPMENT FOR LEADERSHIP & AGENCY:

Multi-day or multi-week programs for changemakers, educators, or civic leaders focusing on self-awareness, ethical leadership, emotional intelligence, and systemic visioning.

CASES:

- **Inner Development Goals Labs:** Facilitated group development processes for leaders (idg.tools)
- **Gandhi 3.0 Retreat** (India): Non-commercial gathering focused on service-based leadership. (www.movedbylove.org/retreat/g3/)
- **Sarvodaya Shramadana** (Sri Lanka): Grassroots community development movement integrating mindfulness and peace leadership (www.sarvodaya.org/unit/sarvodaya-shramadana-societies/)
- **Instituto Elos / Oasis Game** (Brazil): Participatory community leadership program that combines inner development with collective action, empowering local changemakers to rebuild trust and co-create visions for their neighborhoods (institutoelos.org/oasis-game/)



LEVEL 3 (COMPLEX)**A. PEACE PARKS & GARDENS:**

Public or semi-public spaces designed intentionally for reflection, mindfulness, and social healing. These include symbolic landscaping, art installations, and nature-based experiences that support post-conflict reconciliation and community resilience. Tidball & Krasny (2014) documenting transformative community impacts of peace gardens.

CASES:

- **Japanese Peace Parks** (Hiroshima & Nagasaki): These are the archetypal examples of complex peace parks. They are not just gardens but entire ecosystems of memory, education, and advocacy for nuclear disarmament, combining museums, memorials, and symbolic spaces for reflection and pilgrimage. (nagasakipeace.jp/en)
- **International Peace Garden** (Canada-USA): Bi-national peace garden established as a symbol of friendship and peace. (peacegarden.com)
- **Bacalhôa Buddha Eden Garden of Peace** (Portugal) (www.bacalhoa.pt/en/bacalhoa-buddha-eden)
- **Garden of Forgiveness** (Lebanon): Community reconciliation space in Beirut. (www.gp-b.com/garden-of-forgiveness)
- **Healing Garden of Sarajevo** (Bosnia): Community healing and memorial space post-conflict. (<https://www.new-east-archive.org/features/show/13665/smirna-kulenovi-our-family-garden-bosnia-performance-healing-art>)

Peace Chapel at International Peace Garden



B. ALLIANCES AROUND INNER DEVELOPMENT & UNIVERSAL WELLBEING:

Large-scale coalitions or networks working to integrate inner development and emotional well-being into education, policy, and systems change.

CASES:

- **Inner Development Goals (IDG) Alliance:** Global multi-stakeholder initiative linking inner work to the sustainable development. (<https://innerdevelopmentgoals.org/framework/>)
- **GNH Centre (Bhutan):** Promotes Gross National Happiness and inner well-being policy. <https://www.gnhcentrebhutan.org/home/about-us/>
- **Mind & Life Institute:** Brings together neurosciencecontemplative wisdom to foster insight and inspire action toward flourishing. <https://www.mindandlife.org/about/>
- **The Wellbeing Economy Alliance:** Advocates for inner and social wellbeing in policy, collaboration of changemakers working together to transform the economic system. <https://weall.org/>
- **New Zealand Wellbeing Budget:** An innovative national budget framework, launched in 2019, prioritizes social, environmental, and emotional well-being alongside economic growth, embedding holistic well-being into public policy and funding priorities. It has been revised but remains partially operational. <https://www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2019-05/b19-wellbeing-budget.pdf>

Inner Development Goals (IDG)

5 Acting Enabling Change

Courage

Creativity

Optimism

Perseverance

2. Dialogue, Mediation & Reconciliation



Practices that facilitate constructive dialogue, conflict resolution, and reconciliation between individuals, groups, and communities. This includes both informal and formal mechanisms for healing relationships, transforming narratives, and addressing past or ongoing tensions in ways that build trust and social cohesion.

LEVEL 1 (EASY)

A. INFORMAL COMMUNITY DIALOGUE CIRCLES & CAFES:

Community-based groups meeting informally to discuss local concerns & tensions, as well as possible future visions of peace, with simple structured dialogue processes and informal peer-based facilitation.

Meetings dedicated to empathetic listening and dialogue, safe spaces created for people to express personal concerns or traumas.

CASES:

- **Dialogue Circles** (Everyday Democracy, USA): Informal community conversations on social cohesion and local conflicts.
<https://dialoguecircles.com/>
- **The Listening Circle** (UK): Regular small-group meetings that promote emotional resilience and collective understanding. A Simple Tool to Enhance Listening and Reduce Extremism Among Employees.
<https://oxford-review.com/the-oxford-review-dei-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-dictionary/listening-circles-definition-and-explanation/>
- **Peace Committees** (Kenya): Informal community structures hosting local conflict dialogues to prevent or address conflict.
- **Kitchen Table Conversations** (Australia): Informal dialogues encouraging empathy and active listening among neighbors.
- **Compassionate Listening Project** (Israel-Palestine, USA): Dialogue circles across divides, rooted in deep listening.
- **"Sidewalk Talk" Project** (Global): Volunteer listeners host public-space conversations to reduce isolation and foster connection.

B. TRUTH-TELLING & TESTIMONY SHARING: *Facilitated exchanges where individuals share personal experiences of conflict or injustice to build mutual understanding and emotional connection. These are often used to humanize "the other" and shift perceptions. Often a part of the broader reconciliation work (see cases below).*

C. INDIGENOUS AND TRADITIONAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION PRACTICES.

Use of indigenous methods for conflict mediation and reconciliation, facilitating community-wide traditional practices of dialogue with use of traditional rituals (e.g., talking circles, cleansing ceremonies). These are context-specific, relational, and often deeply symbolic, requiring cultural sensitivity.

CASES:

- **Ho'oponopono** (Hawaii): Indigenous method effectively used for community and family reconciliation.
- **Ubuntu-based Mediation** (South Africa, Rwanda): Indigenous African principles used for community healing.
- **Navajo Peacemaking** (USA): Indigenous community-based mediation, recognized for its effectiveness in dispute resolution (Zion, 2005).
- **Peacemaking Circle Model**: Indigenous-inspired structured circles (Kay Pranis's work).
- **AIME Fire Circles** (Australia): Indigenous-led gatherings integrating storytelling and reconciliation with youth education.

LEVEL 2 (MODERATE)**A. FORESIGHT FOR PEACEBUILDING:**

Structured processes of future-oriented dialogue where diverse groups imagine peaceful futures together. These exercises shift focus from past grievances to co-creating shared visions, thereby fostering collaboration and trust.

CASES:

- **Structured Democratic Dialogue** (Cyprus): Series of facilitated conversations between Northern & Southern Cyprus activists to co-create pathways to peaceful futures
- **Future Vision Workshops** (Burundi): Youth-led foresight exercises to build consensus on peaceful futures.



B. PEER MEDIATION PROGRAMS:

Informal or lightly facilitated sessions where peers help one another resolve disagreements through listening, turn-taking, and mutual problem-solving. Especially common in schools and community settings. Gittins (2020) and Lederach (2003) identify community mediation as effective with minimal resources.

CASES:

- **Peer Mediation in Schools** (USA, Canada): Evidence-based programs reducing student conflicts (Johnson & Johnson, 2001).
- **Youth Peacebuilders Network** (YPN, Uganda): Peer mediators trained to resolve local youth conflicts.
- **Peer Mediation Initiatives** (Restorative Justice Council, UK): Training students to resolve conflicts in schools.
- **Neighborhood Peacebuilders Network** (USA/Canada): Hyper-local volunteer networks helping neighbors solve minor conflicts and promote cohesion informally.

C. PRINCIPLED NEGOTIATIONS:

Structured negotiation based on identifying shared interests, not positions, and aiming for win-win solutions (Fisher & Ury, Getting to Yes). Applied in community, organizational, and intercultural settings.

CASES:

- **Harvard Negotiation Project** (USA): Developed and disseminated the principled negotiation model.
- **Seeds of Peace** (Middle East/USA): Uses negotiation skills with youth from conflict regions.
- **Centro de Mediación Comunitaria** (Argentina): Applies principled negotiation in neighborhood disputes.

D. POWER-CONSCIOUS DIALOGUE DESIGN:

Structured processes that explicitly name and redistribute power before dialogue begins, including caucusing by identity groups, rotating facilitation leadership, and economic support for marginalized participants' attendance.

CASES:

- **Power Mapping Workshops** (USA/Global): Community organizing tools identifying decision-makers and leverage points for systemic change
- **Intersectional Conflict Analysis** (Global): Frameworks examining how multiple identities compound experiences of violence and exclusion
- **Popular Education for Critical Consciousness** (Brazil/Global): Paulo Freire-inspired methods helping communities analyze how systems maintain inequality
- **Economic Violence Documentation Projects**: Community-led research documenting how economic policies perpetuate conflict (e.g., debt, land grabbing, resource extraction)

E. STRUCTURED MEDIATION INITIATIVES:

Facilitated processes that bring together diverse local actors—e.g., civil society, elders, youth groups, local authorities—to address communal tensions. Requires trust-building and skilled facilitation.

CASES:

- **Community Mediation Maryland** (USA): Formal mediation service addressing neighborhood and family conflicts.
- **Norwegian Mediation Services**: Nationwide network offering mediation for local community conflicts.
- **People's Mediation Committees** in China are grassroots committees of elected or appointed community members who mediate civil disputes between neighbors, families, and businesses, resolving millions of cases annually & preventing them from escalating to the court system.
- **African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes** (ACCORD, South Africa): Training mediators and peacebuilders regionally.
- **National Issues Forums** (USA): Moderate-scale structured dialogues facilitating multi-stakeholder participation.
- **Dialogue Advisory Group** (Amsterdam): Mediation facilitating dialogue among diverse societal stakeholders.
- **Future Search Conferences** (Global): Community-level multi-stakeholder meetings to address and resolve systemic issues.
- **Fundación Ecoconciencia** (Argentina): Combines ecological dialogue with peacebuilding in Latin America.

F. INTERCULTURAL & INTERFAITH DIALOGUES:

Facilitated cross-cultural gatherings where participants from different cultural or religious backgrounds share experiences, stories, or rituals. These events foster empathy, reduce prejudice, and build interpersonal trust across lines of difference. Abu-Nimer (2001) and Gopin (2002) confirm intercultural/interfaith dialogues require moderate facilitation and investment, yielding lasting community cohesion.

CASES:

- **Jewish-Muslim Twinning Project** (Foundation for Ethnic Understanding, Global): Annual events promoting dialogue and mutual respect.
- **Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace**: Christian and Muslim women gathering for large-scale interfaith prayers and rituals that was instrumental in ending the Liberian civil war in 2003, healing sectarian divisions and advocating for national reconciliation.
- **Peace Feast** (Australia, UK): Informal community dinners facilitating intercultural dialogue.
- **Interfaith Friendship Walks** (US, Canada): Community walks promoting shared understanding across religions.
- **KAICIID** (Austria, Global): International center advancing interfaith dialogue as a peace mechanism.

G. COMMUNITY-BASED RESTORATIVE CIRCLES:

Structured, facilitated dialogues involving victims, offenders, and community members to acknowledge harm, promote accountability, and co-create reparative steps. These are used in schools, communities, and justice systems.

CASES:

- **Restorative Circles Project** (Brazil): Proven community-level restorative practice for resolving conflicts.
- **Restorative Justice Council** (UK): Structured restorative circles reducing reoffending and supporting victims.
- **Circle Forward Program** (U.S.): Implemented in schools and communities for addressing harm.
- **Family Group Conferencing** (New Zealand): Proven effectiveness in juvenile justice contexts
- **Community Conferencing Center** (Baltimore, USA): Structured community dialogues facilitating restorative justice.

H. Digital & AI Tools for Mediation & Reconciliation:

Online platforms and digital tools designed to bridge divides, foster empathy, and scale dialogue across cultural, political, or geographic boundaries. These initiatives often use facilitation, AI, or structured methodologies to engage participants who might never meet in person, creating safe digital spaces for reconciliation and trust-building.

CASES:

- **Polis** (Taiwan/Global): Digital deliberation tool enabling large-scale, structured dialogue among thousands of participants; famously used in Taiwan's vTaiwan process for participatory governance.
- **Uwiano Platform** (Kenya): A digital platform integrating the use of SMS, Incident Reports and Media reports to help strengthen peace and conflict prevention efforts in Kenya.
- **PeaceTech Lab** (USA/Global): Innovative team behind digital tools, media, and data analytics to counter violence and foster peace in fragile contexts.
- **ICT4Peace** (USA/Global): Foundation focused on digital solutions for peacebuilding.

J. DIGITAL HYGIENE & COUNTERING HATE SPEECH:

Tools & training for communities, educators, and youth leaders that help identify online misinformation, protect personal data, report abuse, and employ counter-speech strategies to challenge hateful narratives without amplifying them.

CASES:

- **TrollBusters** (USA): Provides just-in-time rescue, support, and defense for women journalists and writers who are targeted by online harassment mobs, helping to keep critical voices in the public sphere.
- **Take This** (USA): Fights toxicity and promotes mental health in gaming communities by training moderators, providing resources for players, and advocating for safer online spaces, addressing radicalization in its early stages.
- **Meedan's Check** (Global): A software platform and training program that empowers journalists and civil society organizations to collaboratively verify digital content and debunk misinformation, strengthening the information ecosystem.

LEVEL 3 (COMPLEX)**A. SYSTEMIC CONFLICT RESOLUTION & TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVES:**

Long-term, multi-layered efforts to address structural drivers of conflict—such as injustice, inequality, or collective trauma—through deep engagement with all affected stakeholders. Often requires external facilitation and sustained funding.

CASES:

- **South Africa's Truth & Reconciliation Commission:** National-level reconciliation, transitional justice, and systemic healing (Philpott, 2012).
- **Rwanda's Gacaca Courts:** Community-based justice system addressing genocide-related reconciliation.
- **Sant'Egidio Community** (Mozambique): This Catholic lay organization was instrumental in mediating an end to the 16-year civil war in Mozambique (1992), providing a neutral, trusted platform for secret negotiations between the government and rebels over two years, using a patient, relationship-based approach rooted in their faith principles.
- **The Bosnia and Herzegovina Commission for Missing Persons & Reconciliation Projects:** Post-conflict efforts with local and international backing.
- **Kenya National Dialogue & Reconciliation** (2008): Facilitated by international mediators post-election violence (Kofi Annan-led mediation).
- **Northern Ireland's Good Friday Agreement and Subsequent Peace Process:** Systemic community reconciliation initiatives post-conflict.
- **Colombia's National Reconciliation Processes:** Institutional dialogues supporting peace processes.

B. GLOBAL, NATIONAL OR REGIONAL RECONCILIATION PLATFORMS.

Official bodies tasked with documenting historical violence or injustice, promoting public truth-telling, and making policy recommendations for healing. Judicial and non-judicial approaches (e.g., special courts, reparative programs) designed to deal with past abuses and promote legal accountability while fostering societal healing and preventing future violence. These processes often include reparations and institutional reform proposals.

CASES:

- **National Dialogue Conference** (Tunisia): Formal, structured multi-stakeholder dialogues shaping democratic transition.
- **South African Council of Churches (SACC)**: SACC played a pivotal role in the anti-apartheid struggle, providing a moral framework for resistance, documenting human rights abuses, as well as offering sanctuary and legal aid to victims - setting the foundation for further reconciliation work.
- **StoryCorps** (USA): National platform archiving personal testimonies, including from marginalized and conflict-affected groups.
- **Nunca Más Report** (Argentina): Public testimonies in the 1980s documenting human rights abuses during the dictatorship.

Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet



3. Education for Peace & Planetizenship



Practices that promote the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to foster peaceful, just, and ecologically sustainable societies. This includes peace education, civic and rights-based learning, emotional intelligence, planetary stewardship, and transformative pedagogies that enable learners to become proactive agents of peaceful change.

LEVEL 1 (EASY)

A. PEACE LESSONS WITH OPEN-ACCESS EDUCATION RESOURCES:

Online platforms providing free educational materials on peace, conflict resolution, and global citizenship, and open educational resources (OER) on peace and planetary awareness - for easy integration into school & university learning processes.

CASES:

- **Peace One Day Education Resources:** Free lesson plans for schools promoting peace and reconciliation (peaceoneday.org).
- **UNESCO Peace Education Online Library:** Extensive free resources for educators worldwide.
- **Global Campaign for Peace Education:** Free downloadable curricula for teachers globally.
- **"Facing History and Ourselves" short videos:** Free online resources promoting historical empathy and conflict prevention.



B. PEACE-FOCUSED AFTER-SCHOOL CLUBS & PLANETARY AWARENESS WORKSHOPS.

Youth-led or teacher-led clubs within schools promoting peace, global citizenship, and community service. Informal youth clubs focused on intercultural understanding and planetary responsibility. Short community workshops promoting empathy and global citizenship. Informal education events fostering planetary consciousness.

CASES:

- **PeaceJam clubs:** Youth-led clubs engaging students in peace initiatives and dialogues globally.
- **Charter for Compassion workshops** (Global): Local workshops emphasizing empathy in communities and schools.
- **Football for Peace** (Global): Initiative using football matches to bring youth from different ethnic/religious groups together, especially active in the Middle East and South America.
- **Bala Janaagraha** (India): Civic education after-school club, empowering children to understand local governance, identify problems in their community (e.g., water scarcity, waste management), and advocate for peaceful, collaborative solutions.
- **Earth Charter Educational Workshops** (Global): Interactive community workshops teaching planetary citizenship.
- **Climate Fresk** (France, Global)—community climate workshops for systems thinking.

C. EDUCATIONAL SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS FOSTERING PEACE AND EMPATHY:

Awareness campaigns on social media that promote peace literacy, empathy, and planetary values, reaching broad youth audiences.

CASES:

- **TED-Ed Peace & Conflict Series:** Educational short videos promoting peace literacy.
- **YouTube Peace Channels:** Curated free educational content focused on peacebuilding.



LEVEL 2 (MODERATE)**A. SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) INCLUDING CONFLICT LITERACY EDUCATION**

School or small community programs integrating emotional literacy, conflict literacy, and empathy training. CASEL meta-study (Durlak et al., 2011) demonstrates SEL programs improve emotional resilience and reduce conflict behaviors moderately.

CASES:

- **CASEL SEL Framework:** Evidence-based SEL implementation in schools casel.org.
- **Roots of Empathy:** Classroom-based empathy training used in schools internationally.
- **RULER Approach:** Yale's Emotional Intelligence program applied in educational institutions.
- **UK's Mindfulness in Schools Project (MiSP):** Large-scale adoption of SEL and mindfulness practices
- **Friends Schools (Global Network):** Schools in the UK, US, Kenya, and India rooted in Quaker values, emphasizing peace, justice, and community service.
- **Educating for Peace (Colombia):** Integrates communication and reconciliation skills into school curricula.
- **Peaceful Schools International:** School-based programs linking peace education and ecological responsibility.
- **Eco-Schools Program (Global):** School-based sustainability education integrated with global citizenship.
- **United World Colleges (UWC):** Global schools promoting peace, intercultural understanding, and planetary citizenship through education.
- **Green School Bali (Indonesia):** integrative peace and ecology curriculum.

B. ANTI-BULLYING PROGRAMS:

Evidence-based programs for schools & educational institutions addressing bullying as a form of everyday violence, fostering safe and inclusive environments.

CASES:

- **Programme TEI (Spain, Global):** peer-to-peer mediation training and programme implemented in schools worldwide.
- **KiVa Program (Finland):** Whole-school anti-bullying initiative proven effective internationally.
- **Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (Norway/USA):** Pioneer in research-based school anti-bullying frameworks.
- **Diana Award Anti-Bullying Ambassadors (UK):** Youth-led school program across Europe.

C. CONFLICT RESOLUTION, COMMUNICATION AND MEDIATION TRAINING:

Training youth & professionals in practical skills of communication, mediation, conflict resolution & transformation.

CASES:

- **International Mediation Institute (IMI, Global):** A global initiative setting and promoting high international standards for mediators and mediation training; providing certification, a transparent feedback system, and tools to help users find qualified mediators worldwide
- **International Institute for Mediation and Conflict Resolution (IIMCR, USA):** Offers global mediation and negotiation training, particularly for youth leaders.
- **Mediation Beyond Borders International (Global):** Provides cross-border mediator training and peacebuilding capacity development.
- **UN Mediation Support Unit (MSU, UN DPA):** Offers mediation training for diplomats, peace envoys, and practitioners globally.
- **Clingendael Institute (Netherlands):** Renowned for training diplomats in international negotiation and mediation.
- **CDA Collaborative Learning Projects:** An international nonprofit organization that provides training, consulting, and facilitation services to support conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and collaborative change efforts by empowering local actors and mediators in complex conflict settings.
- **Paralegal Training Programs (Across Asia):** Numerous NGOs across South-east Asia and the Pacific train community-based paralegals to provide basic legal aid and rights education, a critical form of civic literacy in regions with limited access to formal justice systems.

D. YOUTH ACTION-LEARNING PROGRAMS:

Experiential, project-based learning that enables young people to co-design peace and planetary projects, combining skills-building with action.

CASES:

- **Model United Nations (MUN):** Gamified education modelling United Nations process, promoting international dialogue, diplomacy, and peace.
- **Peace First (Global):** Provides microgrants and mentorship for youth to launch local peace projects.
- **Young Peacebuilders (UNOY, Global):** International youth-led network supporting peace projects and peer learning.
- **AIESEC Peace Action Programs (Global):** Cross-cultural youth exchange programs addressing peace and sustainability challenges.
- **Design for Change (India/Global):** Project-based approach for youth-led peace and empathy initiatives.
- **Roots & Shoots program (Jane Goodall Institute):** Small-scale workshops for youth promoting ecological empathy and global awareness.
- **Ashoka Youth Venture (Global):** Empowers youth as changemakers, many focusing on peace and social justice initiatives.

→ **ASEAN Youth Fellowship** (Singapore): A leadership program by Singapore International Foundation that brings together youth from across Southeast Asia to collaborate on policy innovation challenges, fostering regional understanding and a shared identity as future leaders.

E. DIGITAL PEACE APPS & EDUCATIONAL GAMES:

Gamified learning and digital apps promoting peace, dialogue, and global citizenship.

CASES:

- **Games for Peace** (Israel/Palestine): Digital games fostering intercultural dialogue and conflict resolution among youth.
- **PeaceMaker Game** (ImpactGames): Simulation game teaching conflict resolution and peace processes.
- **World Rescue App** (UNESCO-Mahatma Gandhi Institute): Educational mobile game teaching sustainability, conflict resolution, and global citizenship.

F. PEACE-CENTERED SCHOOL CURRICULUM & TEACHER COMPETENCIES:

Programs training teachers and schools to embed peace and planetary citizenship in daily learning

CASES:

- **Cambridge Peace Education** (UK): Integrates conflict literacy into SEL-based frameworks.
- **Peace Education Programmes** by PeaceDirect (UK, Global): Teacher training focused on active peacebuilding methodologies.
- **Trauma-Sensitive Schools initiative**: Incorporating trauma-informed training for educators.
- **Rotary Peace Fellowship Program**: International fellowship exchange promoting peace education, diplomacy, and global citizenship.



LEVEL 3 (COMPLEX)**A. TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM REFORMS:**

National or regional reforms embedding peace education, planetary consciousness, SEL, and global citizenship into formal curricula and educational policies.

CASES:

- **Finland's National SEL and Peace Curriculum:** Systemic nationwide integration of emotional literacy and conflict resolution into school systems.
- **Singapore's Character and Citizenship Education (CCE):** Comprehensive national education program integrating SEL, peace, and global citizenship education.
- **Bhutan's Gross National Happiness-based Education Reform:** National education curriculum reform emphasizing peace, SEL, and planetary responsibility.
- **Delhi Happiness Curriculum:** Innovative curriculum integrating SEL, mindfulness, and peace in public schools.

B. NATIONAL OR REGIONAL PEACE LEARNING ECOSYSTEMS & NETWORKS:

Establishment of nationwide or regional collaborative networks for peace education, curriculum standardization, and resource-sharing.

CASES:

- **European Peace Education Network (EURED):** Institutionalized European collaborative network for peace education policy and curricula.
- **Asia-Pacific Peace Education Network (APPEN):** Regional network enhancing peace education cooperation and research.
- **Global Citizenship Education Initiative (UNESCO-GCED):** International curriculum and advocacy for integrating peace and planetary awareness education.
- **Fundación Mi Sangre Network (Colombia/LatAm):** Regional network on youth peace education and citizenship.

4. Art & Cultural Transformation



Practices that use artistic expression, cultural rituals, and storytelling to process trauma (the past), foster dialogues that heal communities (the present), and shift collective narratives toward peace (the future). These approaches tap into the symbolic, emotional, and identity-forming power of culture to address conflict, foster empathy, and imagine more peaceful futures.

LEVEL 1 (EASY)

A. COMMUNITY ART PROJECTS:

Simple collaborative art initiatives (murals, street art, poetry) and informal collective creative expression activities to foster community cohesion.

CASES:

- **Paint Peace Project** (Global): Community mural projects promoting peace and community cohesion.
- **Street Poets Inc.** (Los Angeles, USA): Poetry gatherings facilitating emotional healing and dialogue among youth.
- **Aman Mushaira** (India): Local gatherings of reading poetry dedicated to peace, including Christian, Shia, Sunni, and also women poets.
- **The Peace Crane Project** (Global): Origami peace cranes made collectively by community groups and schools worldwide (in memory of Hiroshima bombing victims).
- **Lavka Mira** (Russia): Painted benches as symbols of peace in public spaces.

B. ART-BASED TRAUMA-INFORMED DIALOGUES:

Facilitated creative sessions (drawing, painting, music, dance) that allow participants to externalize trauma, share stories nonverbally, and build resilience. These methods provide culturally safe alternatives when direct speech is too painful.

CASES:

- **Art Therapy for Refugees** (Jordan, Greece): Visual art workshops for Syrian refugee youth to process war experiences.
- **Healing Through the Arts** (Sierra Leone): Post-war trauma healing using dance and drawing circles.
- **Combat Paper Project** (USA): Veterans transform military uniforms into handmade paper for art, poetry, and testimony.
- **Fundación TAAP** (Colombia, Global): Art workshops for children & youth to share experiences of civic war.

C. COMMUNITY-BASED THEATRE FOR DIALOGUE:

Simple theatre performances or role-playing exercises addressing community issues, and community theatre workshops facilitating dialogue and social reflection.

CASES:

- **International Theatre (MediaT)**: emphasises the role of theatre as a tool for conflict transformation and peacebuilding through fostering empathy, facilitates interactive performances that reflect real-world conflicts, allowing participants to experience conflict resolution in a deeply personal and engaging way.
- **Playback Theatre (Global)**: Community improvisational theatre retelling participants' stories to foster empathy.
- **Theatre of the Oppressed Workshops (Global)**: Small-scale community exercises exploring local conflicts through theatre.
- **Peace Plays Project (Global)**: Short play scripts freely available for communities to stage informal peace-themed performances.

D. DIGITAL & SOCIAL MEDIA PEACE ARTISTIC CAMPAIGNS:

Community-based social media campaigns using art, music, or video to spread peace messages, digital storytelling projects promoting peace awareness and intercultural understanding.

CASES:

- **Humans of New York Peace Stories (USA/Global)**: Visual storytelling highlighting human experiences of conflict and peace.
- **#Art4Peace Campaign (Global)**: Social media hashtag-based art-sharing promoting peace dialogues.
- **Peace Factory "Talk to Me" Campaign (Middle East)**: Visual campaign promoting dialogue between Israelis and Iranians.

E. INFORMAL INTERCULTURAL ART EXCHANGES:

Small community gatherings or informal art exchanges showcasing cultural diversity.

CASES:

- **Peace Drums Project (Middle East)**: Youth from diverse backgrounds performing shared musical events.
- **Cultural Kitchen (USA/Canada)**: Informal cooking and storytelling events that foster intercultural dialogue.
- **Music Without Borders (Global)**: Small-scale community music exchanges celebrating diversity and peace.

LEVEL 2 (MODERATE)**A. ARTS-BASED PEACEBUILDING & TRAUMA HEALING PROGRAMS:**

Structured arts programs addressing community trauma through theatre, visual arts, storytelling, or music, using creative expression as a tool for collective healing and reconciliation. Tanaka (2005) and Cohen (2005) found arts-based initiatives significantly impactful but requiring extensive facilitation and funding.

CASES:

- **Barefoot Artists** (Global, notably Rwanda & Palestine): Community art projects healing collective trauma through participatory mural-making.
- **Peace Paper Project** (USA/Global): Handmade paper art workshops addressing trauma survivors' stories.
- **In Place of War** (UK/Global): Art and theatre projects implemented in conflict-affected communities worldwide.
- **Wayang Kulit (Shadow Puppetry) for Social Dialogue** (Indonesia): This ancient art form has been adapted by NGOs like UNESCO and local community groups to address modern issues like religious tolerance, conflict resolution, and democratic education - with puppets providing a neutral, symbolic space to discuss contentious issues.
- **Acting Together on the World Stage** (Global): Performing arts educational program promoting reconciliation and peace.
- **MasterPeace Clubs**: Community-level clubs using arts and culture for conflict resolution and peacebuilding.
- **Drama for Life** (South Africa): Educational theatre program addressing social cohesion and peace-building.

B. DIGITAL PEACE STORYTELLING PLATFORMS:

Design and distribution of digital storytelling or mobile apps for conflict prevention education.

CASES:

- **PeaceTech Lab Storytelling Platform** (USA/Global): Digital storytelling resources supporting peace and conflict resolution.
- **PeaceCast.tv** (Global): User-generated digital stories shared via online platforms.
- **I Am Syria Digital Project**: Digital storytelling platform promoting empathy through Syrian refugee narratives.

C. ARTISTIC RECONCILIATION PROCESSES & PEACEBUILDING RESIDENCIES

National & international artist residencies & exchanges explicitly focused on peacebuilding, reconciliation, and trauma-informed artistic practice.

CASES:

- **Liberian Women's Chorus for Change:** National artistic initiative addressing reconciliation through musical performance.
- **Yuyanapaq** (Peru): Influential transmedia exhibition created by Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission documenting violence of 1980s and 1990s.
- **OneBeat Music Diplomacy** (USA/Global): International residency and musical collaboration promoting intercultural peace and understanding.
- **Visual Voices** (Cyprus): In Nicosia, the last divided capital in Europe, Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot artists and youth collaborate on murals on both sides of the UN buffer zone, using art to dialogue across a physical and political wall.
- **Mandala Making for Collective Healing** (Tibetan Buddhist tradition): The intricate, collaborative creation of sand mandalas as community-assisted projects in post-conflict areas with assistance of qualified monks serve as a powerful metaphor for working patiently together on something beautiful that ultimately must be released.



LEVEL 3 (COMPLEX)**A. PEACE & HEALING FESTIVALS & SPORT EVENTS**

Organization of national/international festivals & sport events (such as marathons) for peace, mindfulness, art, and healing, integrating meditation, peace education, and intercultural dialogue.

CASES:

- **Kumbh Mela** (India): The world's largest periodic gathering of humanity with the temporary city built on principles of service (seva) for a purpose rooted in peace, cleansing, and harmony.
- **Global Peace Film Festival** (Orlando, USA): Film festival promoting peace through curated cinema and dialogues.
- **World Peace Festival** (Berlin): Large-scale event bringing together mindfulness leaders and peace advocates globally.
- **Festival of Peace & Reconciliation** (Northern Ireland): Large-scale festival promoting reconciliation post-conflict.
- **Sarajevo Peace Event** (Bosnia & Herzegovina): International cultural festival commemorating peacebuilding efforts.
- **Global Peace Run / Sri Chinmoy Oneness-Home Peace Run** (Global): Torch relay across more than 100 countries promoting global friendship and peace.
- **Right to Movement Palestine Marathon** (Bethlehem): Annual marathon advocating freedom of movement and peaceful resistance.

B. CULTURAL PEACE & RECONCILIATION MUSEUMS:

Large-scale institutional projects creating museums or memorial spaces dedicated to peace, reconciliation, and memory of conflict, permanent or long-term cultural institutions promoting peace education.

CASES:

- **The War and Women's Human Rights Museum** (Seoul, South Korea): Dedicated to the victims of Japanese military sexual slavery («comfort women»), this museum is a harrowing but essential institution focused on truth-telling, memory, and reconciliation, dealing directly with gendered violence in conflict.
- **Apartheid Museum** (South Africa): Major museum documenting apartheid history, facilitating reconciliation dialogues.
- **Canadian Museum for Human Rights** (Winnipeg, Canada): Dedicated to education on human rights, reconciliation, and peace.
- **The Partition Museum** (Amritsar, India): The world's first museum dedicated to the traumatic partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, with personal artifacts, testimonies, and art to process a collective trauma that still shapes geopolitics today.
- **Imagine Peace Tower** (Iceland): A large-scale international monument and public artwork created by Yoko Ono, dedicated to global peace and reconciliation.

5. Inclusive Governance & Civic Agency



Practices that empower individuals and communities to participate meaningfully in decision-making, shape policies, and hold institutions accountable. This includes participatory democracy, civil society action, rights-based advocacy, and innovative governance models that deepen legitimacy, transparency, and inclusion in public life. Includes various types, from hyper-local (youth councils, participatory budgeting) to national (constitutional reform, SSR) to global (supranational institution reform)

LEVEL 1 (EASY)

A. CIVIC ADVOCACY & RIGHTS LITERACY WORKSHOPS:

Simple collaborative art initiatives (murals, street art, poetry) and informal collective creative expression activities to foster community cohesion.

CASES:

- **Amnesty International's "Human Rights Friendly Schools":** Rights-based education integrated into school culture that can be implemented with little cost at the school level.
- **Youth for Human Rights International:** Free civic and human rights booklets & campaigns worldwide.
- **Justice Defenders** (Kenya/Uganda): Training inmates and prison staff on legal and human rights, even in resource-constrained environments.
- **Proyecto Paz Latinoamérica** (Venezuela): Trains teachers to educate about democratic culture in high-risk areas.

B. YOUTH COUNCILS & STUDENT GOVERNMENTS:

Local youth platforms for democratic participation and peaceful leadership.

CASES:

- **UNICEF-supported youth parliaments in Eastern Europe:** Gives young people hands-on experience with democratic processes.
- **Youth City Councils** (USA): Locally organized groups influencing municipal policies.
- **Pakistan's School-Based Civic Clubs:** Simple clubs promoting youth-led social actions.

LEVEL 2 (MODERATE)**A. OPEN GOVERNMENT & ANTI-CORRUPTION PLATFORMS:**

Local efforts promoting transparency and accountability.

CASES:

- **Open Government Partnership (OGP)** local programs: Supporting municipalities like Tbilisi, Georgia in transparency efforts.
- **BudgIT (Nigeria)**: Open data visualizations of government spending.
- **MapLight (USA)**: Tracks political donations and lobbying influence.

B. AI-DRIVEN PEACEBUILDING PLATFORMS & DECISION SUPPORT:

Development of digital and AI platforms for large-scale conflict forecasting, risk analysis, and mediation.

CASES:

- **PeaceTech Lab (USA)**: Builds tech solutions for violence prevention in Africa and Latin America.
- **Build Up**: Supports civic peacebuilding with data science and digital facilitation.
- **UN Partnerships for Early Warning AI**: Exploring predictive analytics for food & water security risks to support diplomatic interventions.
- **PeaceGeeks (Canada)**: Creates digital tools to support displaced persons, fostering connection, safety, and peace at community levels

C. COMMUNITY-BASED PEACE INDICATORS:

Participatory processes where local communities—not external experts—define what «peace» and «safety» mean to them, and then co-create simple, tangible metrics to track progress, ensuring peacebuilding is measured by local values and fosters local ownership.

CASES:

- **Everyday Peace Indicators Project (Global)**: Pioneered this methodology in conflict-affected countries like South Africa, Colombia, and Uganda, enabling communities to generate their own evidence base for what constitutes peace.
- **CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (Global)**: Known for its «Do No Harm» framework and participatory listening methods, CDA empowers communities to analyze conflict dynamics and assess the impact of aid and peacebuilding programs themselves.
- **Peace Nexus (Global)**: Supports local organizations with resources and training for context-sensitive monitoring and evaluation, emphasizing adaptive management and learning within peacebuilding processes.

D. DELIBERATIVE FORUMS & ASSEMBLIES

Structured, facilitated events where diverse citizens shape public decisions.

CASES:

- **Irish Citizens' Assembly** (2016–2019)—addressed constitutional questions including abortion.
- **French Climate Convention** (2020)—150 randomly selected citizens developed climate policies.
- **Mali Community Forums** (UNDP)—helped rebuild legitimacy and trust in war-torn regions.
- **Gram Sabha** (India): The constitutionally mandated village assembly is one of the world's largest experiments in direct democracy, where all adult villagers are members and have the right to discuss, approve, and monitor local development plans and budgets.

E. GENDER EQUALITY PROGRAMS:

Initiatives advancing gender inclusion in governance and civic leadership, ensuring women's equal participation in decision-making—as well as empowering women to lead peacebuilding processes.

CASES:

- **Rwanda's Gender Quotas:** Constitutional guarantee of >60% women's representation in parliament.
- **UN Women's "Women, Peace and Security" Programs** (Global): Training and policy frameworks promoting women's civic agency.
- **Self-Employed Women's Association** (SEWA, India): Organizes informal women workers into unions, influencing policy.
- **Naga Mothers Association** (North East India): In conflict-affected region of Manipur, India, women have formed a powerful non-state peace council that negotiates ceasefires, mediates between warring parties, and provides humanitarian aid.

F. RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAMS:

Community-led justice practices addressing harm, restoring relationships, and integrating victims and offenders in collective accountability. To be successful, such programs must account for power imbalances between victim and offender, including consideration of systemic oppression that may have contributed to harm.

Note: these programs are often a part of the larger, nation-wide effort of restorative justice (level 3).

CASES:

- **New Zealand Family Group Conferencing:** Pioneering restorative model in juvenile justice.
- **Restorative Justice Council** (UK): Mainstreaming restorative circles across schools and justice systems.
- **South Africa Community Restorative Forums:** Post-apartheid local forums addressing harm outside formal courts.

LEVEL 3 (COMPLEX)**A. PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING & DECENTRALIZED GOVERNANCE
(INCLUDING PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING):**

Citizens decide how to allocate part of a public budget and participate in state planning decisions. Success depends on addressing barriers to participation including meeting times, childcare, language accessibility, and economic precarity that prevents attendance.

CASES:

- **Porto Alegre** (Brazil): Origin city of participatory budgeting, influencing municipal priorities.
- **Paris PB** (France): Residents vote on how to spend €100 million annually.
- **Participatory District Planning** (Kerala, India): Citizens co-plan state development, with 35–40% of the state's planning budget devolved to directly elected local governments (Panchayats), mandating them to conduct participatory planning through Gram Sabhas.
- **Barcelona's Decidim platform**: Digital participation in government planning and budgeting.
- **Montevideo PB** (Uruguay): Citizens directly allocate a share of municipal budget.

B. INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS & POLICY SHIFTS FOR INCLUSION:

Legal or political shifts that structurally improve civic peace and justice.

CASES:

- **Transitional Justice & Constitutional Reform in South Africa**: Post-apartheid participatory constitution-building, foundational in post-Apartheid peace.
- **Timor-Leste's Post-Conflict Nation-Building**: The entire process of building a state after the 1999 violence, facilitated by the UN, involved extensive participatory consultations on the constitution and government structure, integrating local and traditional governance models.
- **Rwanda's Gacaca courts**: Community-based justice integrated with governance.
- **Colombia's Peace Accords**: Built-in citizen oversight mechanisms, included participatory governance principles and citizen oversight bodies.



C. GOVERNANCE OF TERRITORIES BASED ON INDIGENOUS ETHICS & WORLDVIEW:

Governance structures that embed Indigenous cosmologies, ethics, and collective practices into territorial administration and law, blending traditional decision-making systems with modern legal frameworks in ways that deepen peace, justice, and ecological harmony.

CASES:

- **Nunavut Inuit Majority Government** (Canada): Established in 1999, Nunavut is governed by Inuit-majority institutions that manage land, resources, and political decision-making, blending Indigenous traditions with formal state governance.
- **Zapatista Caracoles** (Chiapas, Mexico): Autonomous Indigenous territories governed through assemblies, collective justice, and community-led education, offering an alternative model of grassroots democratic governance.
- **Bolivia's Plurinational Constitution** (2009): Institutionalized Indigenous self-determination, recognizing community justice systems, collective land rights, and intercultural governance alongside the modern state.

D. SECURITY SECTOR REFORM (SSR):

Transforming security institutions (police, military) to ensure accountability, inclusivity, and alignment with democratic values.

CASES:

- **Northern Ireland Policing Reform:** Overhaul of police service post-Good Friday Agreement.
- **Liberia SSR** (post-2003): Internationally supported reform of armed forces and police.
- **Kenya National Police Service Reforms:** Community policing and accountability mechanisms.

E. REFORM OF SUPRANATIONAL INSTITUTIONS:

Advocacy or design of new governance models beyond the nation-state.

CASES:

- **Global Citizens' Assembly on AI** (2021): First global-scale participatory experiment on tech governance.
- **UN Parliamentary Assembly Campaign** (Global): Movement for democratizing UN decision-making.
- **GPPAC Network** (Netherlands / Global): Partnership for the prevention of armed conflict by civic means.
- **African Union's Panel of the Wise:** Continental mediation and governance advisory body.

6. Ecological & Economic Transformation



Practices that link peacebuilding with environmental stewardship and economic justice. This cluster focuses on transforming the systems that govern our relationship with nature and resources—promoting sustainability, regeneration, equitable development, intergenerational justice, and resilience in the face of climate and ecological crises.

LEVEL 1 (EASY)

A. COMMUNITY-BASED ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION.

Small-scale collective actions improving local ecosystems, including small-scale tree planting, community gardens, or river cleanups.

CASES:

- **Plant-for-the-Planet** (Global): Youth-led tree planting campaigns.
<https://www.plant-for-the-planet.org/>
- **World Cleanup Day (Global)**: Youth organizing trash cleanups and ecosystem restoration actions.
<https://www.worldcleanupday.org/>
- **Water School** (Uganda): Students engage in cleaning and protecting freshwater sources.
<https://www.waterschool.com/>

B. SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION CAMPAIGNS:

Raising awareness and changing consumption habits.

CASES:

- **Fair Trade Campaigns** (UK/USA): Local events promoting conflict-free, just trade products.
<https://fairtradecampaigns.org/>
- **Fashion Revolution—#WhoMadeMyClothes** (Global): ethical consumer education campaigns linked to transparency on peace in supply chains.
<https://www.fashionrevolution.org/tag/who-made-my-clothes/>
- **Green Ramadan** (Indonesia/Malaysia): Integrating ecological awareness into religious and cultural practices.
<https://greenfaith.org/green-ramadan-2023/>

LEVEL 2 (MODERATE)**A. LOCAL FOOD & WATER SOVEREIGNTY:**

Urban and rural community gardens promoting food justice and ecological peace, food & water security projects creating community peace.

CASES:

- **Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming** (India): Program promoting water-efficient farming to reduce water consumption & increase productivity—a direct practice of «peace with the earth» to increase farmer resilience, reduce debt (a source of conflict), and protects waterways. <https://apcnf.in/>
- **Sadhguru's Conscious Planet** (India): “Save Soil” campaign mobilizing global ecological awareness. <https://consciousplanet.org/en>
- **Incredible Edible** (UK): Planting food in public spaces with local volunteers. <https://www.incredibleedible.org.uk/>
- **School Gardening by Food & Trees for Africa** (South Africa)—school gardens improving nutrition and community bonds. <https://trees.org.za/food-security/school-gardening/>
- **Huerto Roma Verde** (Mexico City): Permaculture-based urban peace-building and eco-activism. <https://www.huertoromaverde.org/>
- **Kibera Green** (Kenya): Slum-based peacebuilding through urban greening and education. https://www.kounkuey.org/projects/kibera_green_street
- **EcoPeace Middle East**: Israeli, Palestinian, and Jordanian youth collaborating on water security. <https://ecopeaceme.org/>
- **Permaculture Network** (Palestine): Youth-led ecological regeneration linked to conflict resilience. <https://www.permacultureforrefugees.org/the-permaculture-palestine-network/>



B. LOCAL CIRCULAR ECONOMY INITIATIVES:

Community-led systems to reduce waste, share resources, and build resilience.

CASES:

- **Buy Nothing Project** (Global): Community-based networks reducing consumption and waste. <https://buynothingproject.org/>
- **Hug It Forward** (Guatemala): Students use plastic bottles to build classrooms—learning trash management and collaboration skills. <https://hugitforward.org/>
- **Zero Waste Municipalities** (Bosnia & Serbia): Cross-border collaboration for local campaigns and infrastructure for reducing urban waste. <https://gwcweb.org/2023/03/14/improving-waste-management-in-bosnia-and-herzegovina-and-serbia-the-success-of-the-zero-waste-municipalities-initiative/>
- **Amsterdam Circular** (Netherlands): City-wide initiatives, with scalable pilot programs. <https://www.amsterdam.nl/en/policy/sustainability/circular-economy/>
- **Belo Horizonte's Food Security System** (Brazil): Circular food economy addressing both peace and hunger. <https://www.futurepolicy.org/food-and-water/belo-horizontes-food-security-policy/>
- **Ghana Bamboo Bike Projects** (Philippines/Ghana): Eco-entrepreneurship creating sustainable jobs, building high-quality bicycles from sustainable bamboo. <https://ghanabamboobikes.org/>

C. JUST & TRANSPARENT SUPPLY CHAINS:

Building peace through economic justice in production networks.

CASES:

- **Fairphone** (Netherlands / Global): Ethical phone manufacturing with conflict-free minerals (fairphone.com).
- **Bext360** (Africa/US): Blockchain platform to ensure ethical coffee & cocoa sourcing (bext360.com).
- **TrusTrace** (Sweden/India): Sustainability traceability platform used in fashion (trustrace.com).
- **Ethical Trading Initiative** (UK): Business–NGO collaboration for workers' rights (ethicaltrade.org).
- **TraceX**: Blockchain-based solutions for agri-trading to trace produce from smallholder farmers to international markets, ensuring fair prices and transparency (tracex.tech).

D. SELF-EMPLOYMENT IN CREATIVE ECONOMY:

Training and micro-acceleration initiatives that link livelihoods with peace and sustainability, often for youth and marginalized groups.

CASES:

- **Generation Kenya:** Training youth in eco-entrepreneurship and highly demanded skills (kenya.generation.org).
- **School for Social Entrepreneurs** (UK/Global): Training social entrepreneurs working on peace and ecology (the-sse.org).
- **Put Remeslennika (Way of Craftsman)** (Russia): Training & acceleration for local craftsmen promoting local community harmonization (remeslo.design).
- **Fundacion TAPP** (Colombia): Peacebuilding methodology prioritizes training former & possible gang & guerilla members as artists & creatives (fundaciontaap.org).

E. ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE MOVEMENTS

Social movements connecting environmental protection with human rights and peace. Note: while launching a movement can be done with a small group of people and without any significant resources (level 1 practice), sustaining and expanding it requires massive resources (significant international movement building is a level 3 practice).

CASES:

- **Idle No More** (Canada): Ongoing indigenous movement protecting land and water (idlenomore.ca).
- **Chipko Movement** (India): Nonviolent forest conservation by local women (<https://earth.org/50-years-on-the-legacy-of-the-chipko-movement/>).
- **Fridays for Future** (Global): Climate justice framed as intergenerational peace (fridaysforfuture.org).
- **Wangari Maathai's Green Belt Movement** (Kenya): Tree planting and women's empowerment (greenbeltmovement.org).



LEVEL 3 (COMPLEX)**A. REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE & BIO-REGIONAL PROJECTS AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY NETWORKS:**

Scaling ecological farming and land-use systems as peace infrastructure.

CASES:

- **Rodale Institute** (USA)—large-scale research on regenerative farming and food security (<https://rodaleinstitute.org/>).
- **Lands for Life** (Colombia)—regenerative agriculture as part of post-conflict transformation (<https://rare.org/program/lands-for-life/>).
- **CORAF Agroecology Network** (Senegal)—empowering rural women in climate-adaptive farming (<https://www.coraf.org/evenement/lancement-du-projet-radius-reseau-en-agroecologie-pour-promouvoir-la-durabilite-des-systemes-alimentaires>).
- **Bioregional Weaving Labs** (EU): Regional alliance linking communities, ecology, and economies (<https://www.ashoka.org/en-us/program/bioregional-weaving-labs-collective>).
- **La Via Campesina** (Global): Largest peasant movement promoting food sovereignty (<https://viacampesina.org/>).

B. CREATIVE ECONOMY CLUSTERS:

Large-scale hubs of creative and cultural industries fostering reconciliation, dignity, and local employment, these clusters combine arts, technology, and entrepreneurship to create peaceful livelihoods, shifting fragile economies toward inclusive development.

CASES:

- **“Orange economy”** approach in Medellín Creative District (Colombia): From violence epicenter to creative economy hub (<https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/08/1152751>).
- **Design Indaba** (South Africa): Design and creative economy platform as a vehicle for civic renewal (<https://www.designindaba.com/profiles>).
- **Chengdu Creative Clusters** (China): Innovation hubs integrating design and entrepreneurship (<https://worldcitiescultureforum.com/city/chengdu/>).

C. RIGHTS OF NATURE & ECOCIDE PREVENTION LEGISLATION:

Advocacy and implementation of legal frameworks protecting ecosystems.

CASES:

- **Ecuador's Constitution** (2008): First to grant legal rights to nature (<https://www.garn.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Rights-for-Nature-Articles-in-Ecuadors-Constitution.pdf>).
- **Whanganui River Agreement** (Aotearoa New Zealand): The Whanganui River was recognized in 2017 as a legal person with governance shared between the Crown and Māori iwi, reflecting Indigenous cosmologies of rivers as living ancestors (<https://www.whanganui.govt.nz/Community-and-Places/About-Whanganui/Our-District/Te-Awa-Tupua-Whanganui-River-Settlement>).
- **Stop Ecocide International**: Campaign to recognize ecocide as an international crime (<https://www.stopecocide.earth/>).
- **International Rights of Nature Tribunal**: Public forum issuing legal opinions on ecological crimes (<https://www.garn.org/rights-of-nature-tribunal/>).

D. GREEN PEACE FINANCE & INVESTMENT MODELS:

Systemic financial tools funding for ecological peace.

CASES:

- **Blue Peace Bonds** (Gambia): Pilot case of sovereign peace bonds supporting sustainable development (<https://www.uncdf.org/article/8102/innovative-impact-investing-through-blue-peace-bond-launch-of-the-blue-peace-financing-structure>).
- **ReFi DAO** (Global): Regenerative finance ecosystems supporting community resilience (<https://www.refidao.com/>).
- **DOEN Foundation** (Netherlands): Peace-oriented environmental investment in Global South (<https://www.doen.nl/en/>).

Whanganui River New Zealand



E. LARGE SCALE NATURE RESTORATION PROJECTS FOR PEACE

CASES:

- **Green Infrastructure Master Plan** (Medellín, Colombia): Reducing violence through ecological urbanism (https://resilientcitiesnetwork.org/downloadable_resources/Network/Medellin-Resilience-Strategy-English.pdf).
- **Nature-Based Solutions in Bangladesh:** Mangrove restoration reducing disaster conflict risk (https://www.icccad.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/ICCCAD_NBSI_Policy_Brief_NbSRoadmap_August2020.pdf).
- **Gola Rainforest “Green Corridors” between Sierra Leone and Liberia:** Post-war forest restoration zones improving food, safety, and biodiversity (<https://un-dco.org/stories/conserving-gola-rainforests-sierra-leone-and-liberia-unite-peaceful-future>).

F. NEW CITY PROJECTS FOR PEACE & CONSCIOUSNESS:

Visionary urban projects embedding ecology, regeneration, and peace into city design.

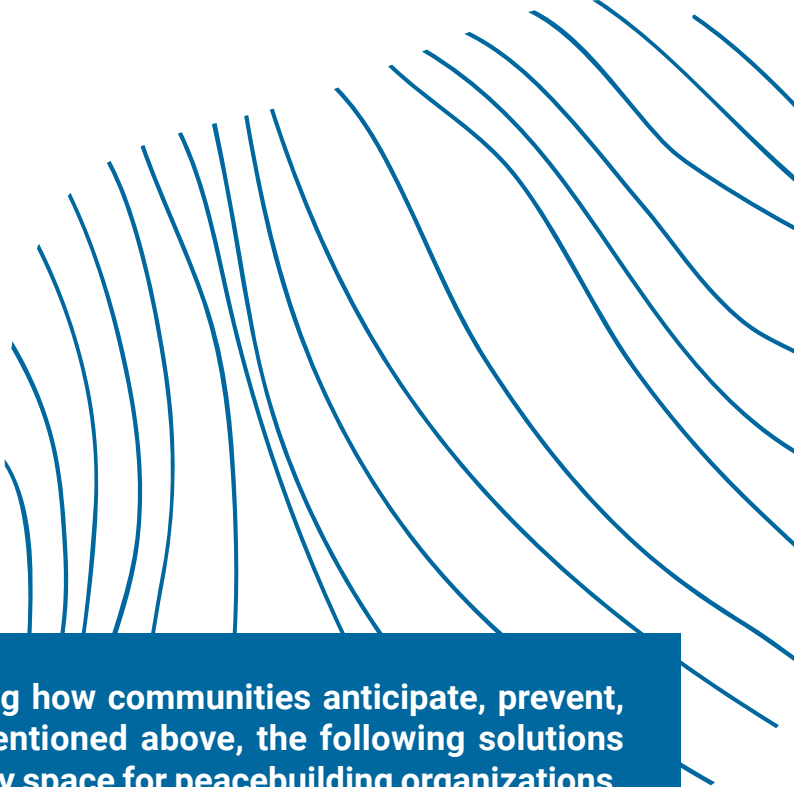
CASES:

- **Auroville** (India): Long-standing international community dedicated to peace and human unity (<https://auroville.org/>).
- **Gelephu Mindfulness City** (Bhutan): Planned eco-city integrating Buddhist principles (<https://gmc.bt/>).
- **Nuanu** (Bali, Indonesia): Regenerative city hub for creativity, consciousness, and peace. (<https://nuanu.com/>)

Nuanu (Bali, Indonesia)



Digital & AI based solutions & practices for peaceful futures



Digital technologies and AI are reshaping how communities anticipate, prevent, and transform conflict. While briefly mentioned above, the following solutions and practices represent a new opportunity space for peacebuilding organizations. From early-warning systems and online mediation platforms to digital storytelling, blockchain-based trust mechanisms, and youth civic engagement apps, these innovations expand the traditional peacebuilding toolkit. They are not meant to replace existing methods of dialogue, reconciliation, or grassroots organizing, but to augment them—providing new layers of transparency, scale, and inclusivity. Peace practitioners, policymakers, educators, and funders can leverage these tools to build resilience, amplify marginalized voices, and connect peace efforts across borders.

Cases below are ten domains where digital and AI technologies are being applied to peace and justice. Each case is accompanied by a direct link for further exploration.

Algorithmic Justice Warning: All digital peacebuilding tools risk embedding existing biases into automated systems. Require algorithmic audits, diverse development teams, and community oversight of AI-driven platforms.

1. PEACE-TECH PLATFORMS FOR EARLY WARNING & CONFLICT PREVENTION:

AI-driven systems that monitor indicators (e.g., hate speech, violence trends, disinformation) to predict and prevent conflict outbreaks.

CASES:

- **UNDP Crisis Risk Dashboard** <https://data.undp.org/products/crisis-risk-dashboard>
- **International Crisis Group's CrisisWatch** <https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch>
- **Build Up's AI + Peace Toolkit** <https://howtobuildup.org/> and <https://howtobuildup.stonly.com/kb/guide/en/about-the-toolkit-in3LX-e21BT/Steps/1656279>

2. AI & DATA-DRIVEN RESEARCH FOR MAPPING STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE & INEQUALITY:

Machine learning tools for analyzing large datasets (e.g., urban design, economic access, gender-based violence) to identify structural injustices and support policy reforms.

CASES:

- **Humanitarian OpenStreetMap** <https://www.hotosm.org/>
- **AI for Social Good project** by Google <https://ai.google/societal-impact/>
- **TheGovLab studies** <https://blog.thegovlab.org/how-data-can-map-and-make-racial-inequality-more-visible-if-done-responsibly>

3. BLOCKCHAIN FOR TRUST & TRANSPARENCY IN PEACE PROCESSES:

Distributed ledger technologies enabling secure, transparent, and tamper-proof recording of agreements, dialogues, or citizen feedback.

CASES:

- **Blockchain for refugee identity and aid distribution** (e.g. UN World Food Programme's "Building Blocks") https://innovation.wfp.org/project/building-blocks?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- **Blockchain Society Lab** by Peace Innovation Institute <https://www.peaceinnovation.com/blockchain-society-lab>

4. AI AND NATURAL LANGUAGE PROCESSING FOR BIAS REDUCTION:

AI models trained to detect and neutralize harmful biases, hate speech, and misinformation in various media including other AI models.

CASES:**→ Jigsaw's Perspective API**

<https://perspectiveapi.com/>

→ AI Fairness 360 by LINUX

<https://ai-fairness-360.org/>

5. OPEN-SOURCE DIGITAL TOOLKITS FOR GRASSROOTS PEACEBUILDING:

Collections of online resources, apps, templates, and curricula that community leaders can adapt for local peacebuilding initiatives.

CASES:**→ Swiss Peace toolkit**

<https://www.swisspeace.ch/articles/digital-peacebuilding-toolkit>

→ CNXUS Digital tools for resolving pastoral conflicts in Sudan-Sahel context:

<https://cnxus.org/pastoralism-conflict-toolkit/modules/digital-peacebuilding/>

→ Tech2Peace resource bank

<https://www.tech2peace.com/>

6. AI-ASSISTED DIALOGUE FACILITATION & ONLINE MEDIATION:

Tools that support structured digital dialogue, group facilitation, or online mediation between communities in conflict. Includes natural language understanding and emotion recognition to reduce tension and support empathy.

CASES:**→ Remesh** (AI-powered dialogue platform) <https://www.remesh.ai/approach/collective-dialogue>**→ Peace Innovation Lab** (Stanford) tech for intergroup empathy building

<https://www.peaceinnovation.stanford.edu>

→ CMI—Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation Chatbot for inclusive dialogue

in Yemen <https://cmi.fi/2025/06/04/amplifying-youth-voices-in-conflict-zones-ai-for-inclusive-dialogue-in-yemen/>

7. DIGITAL PLATFORMS FOR YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:

Apps and web platforms that connect youth to peacebuilding projects, policy influence, and civic participation.

CASES:→ **U-Report by UNICEF:**

<https://ureport.in/>

→ **ChangeX** for launching social initiatives in local communities

<https://www.changex.org/>

→ **Youth x Youth network**

<https://www.youthxyouth.com/>

8. SERIOUS GAMES & GAMIFIED LEARNING FOR PEACE EDUCATION:

Educational or simulation games that teach negotiation, empathy, conflict resolution, or historical literacy related to peace.

CASES:→ **War of Mine** (war survival video game focusing on the civilian experience of war): https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/This_War_of_Mine→ **PeaceMaker** (Israeli-Palestinian conflict simulation)

<http://www.peacemakergame.com/>

→ **Mission US: “Up from the Dust”** on resilience during the Great Depression <https://www.mission-us.org/games/up-from-the-dust/>→ **EVOKE serious game by WorldBank**

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/edutech/brief/evoke-an-online-alternate-reality-game-supporting-social-innovation-among-young-people-around-the-world>



9. DIGITAL STORYTELLING & PARTICIPATORY MEDIA FOR PEACE:

Platforms and training that empower individuals to tell their stories through digital media—amplifying unheard voices and building empathy across divides.

CASES:**→ UNICEF Youth Lens on the World**

(photo-voice peace storytelling)

<https://unric.org/en/2024-youth-eyes-on-the-silk-roads-photo-contest/>

→ Digital Storytelling for Peace

by Search for Common Ground

<https://www.sfcg.org/what-we-do/digital-peacebuilding/>

→ StoryCorps stories archive

<https://storycorps.org/discover/> and <https://takeonesmallstep.org/>

10. DIGITAL MEMORY, TRUTH, AND RECONCILIATION ARCHIVES:

Online memorial platforms or interactive archives that preserve collective memory of violence, injustice, and reconciliation efforts, ensuring public access to truth and healing.

CASES:**→ South Africa's Digital TRC Archive**

<http://www.justice.gov.za/trc>

→ Memoria Abierta (Argentina)

<https://memoriaabierta.org.ar>

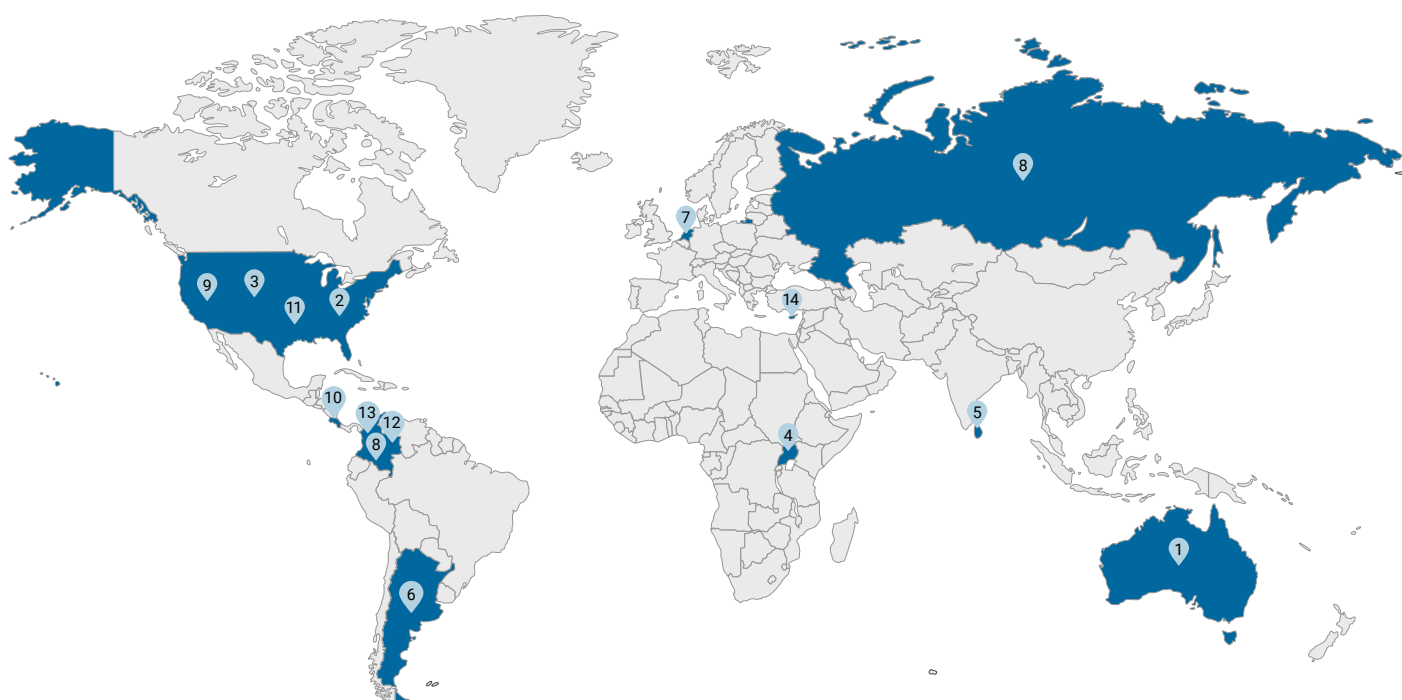
→ "Sites of Conscience"

digital storytelling projects

<https://www.sitesofconscience.org>

Case Studies: Practice Profiles & Founder Interviews

Map of Selected Practices & Partners



LOCATION OF PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. AIME 🌿 🎓 🤝 | 8. Peace Lab 💬 🎓 |
| 2. Cities4Peace 🌿 | 9. Youth x Youth 🌿 🤝 |
| 3. Empowerment Institute 🌿 💬 🎓 | 10. Fundación Etica Visionaria (FEV) 🌿 🎓 🌐 |
| 4. Nile Girls Forum 💬 🎓 | 11. Compassion Games 🌿 🌐 |
| 5. Educate Lanka Foundation 🎓 🤝 | 12. Fundación TAAP 🌐 🤝 🤝 |
| 6. Fundación EcoConciencia 🎓 🤝 | 13. Fundación Mi Sangre 🌿 🤝 |
| 7. The Hague Center for Global Governance, Innovation and Emergence 🤝 🌿 🎓 | 14. Future Worlds Center 💬 🤝 |

DOMINANT SPHERE

- | | |
|--|--|
| 🌿 Inner & Interpersonal State of Peace | 🌐 Art & Cultural Transformation |
| 💬 Dialogue, Mediation & Reconciliation | 🤝 Inclusive Governance & Civic Agency |
| 🎓 Education for Peace & Planetizenship | 🤝 Ecological & Economic Transformation |

AIME / BIG STORY

Country:

52 countries

Since when:

2005

[WWW](#)

Head of organisation / persona:

SHYAKA FARID
LWANYAAGA
The Bard/Co-C.E.O

Main projects:

- Big Story
- Mentoe Class
- UNCX5

Practice regions:

Australia, Africa,
America and Asia

Impact chain:

30 000

Target Audience:

broad range of citizens
(everyone)
all ages

Audience size per intervention

- 1-on-1
- Variable Groups (2–100 people)

This practice is

a series of interventions

Type of Delivery:

Blended (hybrid) delivery


Duration of the required training:

3 hours

Facilitators/ mentors

2 minimum

Special training or supervision

Necessary

Specific digital tools

Zoom and AIME's mentor app

3 keywords:

Story, relation, nature

Type of conflict:

- Pre-conflict condition
- Conflict Development/Crisis
- Post-Conflict Reconstruction



This practice is implemented in the following fields: *economy and entrepreneurship for peace art and culture, governance and policymaking climate actions law and justice, education.*

It uses *art and culture facilitation, foresight and community dialogues, volunteering trainings, workshops, and other educational interventions.*

This practice aims to develop: *Completing AIME's mentor training and either possessing a working with children clearance or singing a child protection declaration.*

The expected outcomes and benefits for participants and communities are: *building bridges of unlikely connections, having the haves and have nots in the same room, bringing intelligence/life experience for those from below the margins in front of the design for life systems.*

Parul—AIME—Big Story

Q: What is your personal story towards peacebuilding? How did you get engaged in this work?

Parul:

My family history is rooted in conflict and displacement. My father's family fled Punjab during the partition of India and Pakistan, leaving everything behind. On my mother's side, my ancestors were indigenous Gond people, displaced from their lands in the 1940s and '50s in the name of "development." Both sides carried stories of loss, forced migration and resilience, and that shaped me from the start.

Growing up in India, I also saw sharp inequality everywhere. It does something to you—you either become numb to it or highly sensitive. I was the sensitive type, always asking my mother: Why is the world like this, and how can we make it better? Losing my father when I was young pushed those questions even deeper.

As a teenager, I even questioned Gandhi. I thought non-violence delayed India's independence. But later I realised that by choosing peace, Gandhi prevented generations of hatred and revenge, and showed the world a new pattern of resistance. That insight, combined with my own family's history and my search for meaning, is what drew me into peacebuilding. Today, through AIME, I carry that forward by creating spaces where unlikely people come together, see each other as humans, and write new stories for peaceful futures.

Q: What methods are you using and implementing for peacebuilding?

Parul:

At AIME, we work with something we call Big Story. It's a way of bringing together people who would normally never meet—people in positions of privilege, people pushed outside the margins, and everyone in between, including those central to the power system. Through story-based and experience-based journeys across the land, we create encounters that connect these diverse worlds.

We draw inspiration from indigenous traditions such as songlines in Australia, where songs were passed down for thousands of years to carry the knowledge of the land. In the Australian context, let's say they're walking from what would currently be Sydney, specifically Gadigal country, all the way down to Naarm, Melbourne. These songs weren't just music—they told people how to navigate rivers, which trees offered food, and how to care for the land. Singing the songs kept both people and country alive.

We adapt this tradition into modern times. We design a collective story before each journey, then take groups of 50–100 people to places as varied as schools, indigenous communities, corporate offices, or private islands. Wherever we go, the same story travels, but it changes as it meets each community. Local artists join in, and everyone on the journey helps bring the story alive.

The stories we create are new, but they always honour the old stories of the land. Before we go anywhere, we build trust with local knowledge keepers and enter into a relationship with the community. We never go where we're not invited.

Q: Why does this work for peacebuilding?

Parul:

For me, peace isn't the absence of conflict. It's the ability to move through conflict in constructive ways. Storytelling helps us do that. When people try to solve problems only through intellectual debate, disagreements come fast. But when we enter a story, we move out of our heads and into our bodies, into a relationship with the land, the animals, and one another. Suddenly, it's not about winning an argument—it's about reconnecting.

We've used Big Story in communities recovering from wildfires or floods. For them, the stories bring hope and healing. We've also brought wealthy, isolated groups into contact with diverse travellers from around the world, and their eyes have opened to shared humanity. These stories break down walls between people.

It also continues a long tradition: indigenous storytelling has always maintained harmony between people and land. We are simply carrying that forward in a modern way.

Q: Where can we observe the effects—short-term, mid-term, and long-term?

Parul:

In the short term, the change is immediate: people who might never have spoken to one another suddenly share a story, laugh together, or create something side by side. Additionally, participants feel more imaginative, creative, and connected. Young people and elders alike tell us, "I didn't think I was creative, but now I know I am."

In the mid-term, communities begin to shift their narratives. For example, some individuals saw themselves as disadvantaged and began to describe themselves differently, with a new narrative: proud of their identity, proud of their relationship with the land. When people redefine themselves this way, they gain resilience.

The long-term vision is that humans remember our role as stewards of the earth. If I cut a tree, I am cutting my own fingers. If I pollute a river, I pollute my own bloodstream. When people truly understand this, conflicts between us diminish because our focus shifts back to caring for the land and for one another. That is what we mean by building a peaceful future.

Q: How do you measure the impact?

Parul:

The impact of a story is not something you see overnight. Sometimes it takes several years for the full effect to become clear. But there are signs along the way.

We collect testimonials and qualitative evidence right after the journeys—people share how they feel transformed. When we return to schools or communities years later, we see lasting shifts in how they see themselves and their future.

We also collaborate with universities such as Sydney and Queensland on long-term research, examining how imagination and resilience develop in schools. And we create documentaries that capture before-and-after images of landscapes and communities. One short film shows how a fire-destroyed land was revitalised after elders were finally allowed to practice indigenous fire management. You can literally see the change with your own eyes.

Q: What could youth leaders do as first steps toward peaceful futures?

Parul:

The first step is to learn the story of the land you live on. Every place has one. Sometimes it's preserved by elders; sometimes it's hidden under layers of concrete and history. But the soil is still there, carrying memory.

Go and ask: what is the story of this land? Build relationships with those who hold the stories. Museums and archives may help, but so will conversations with local communities.

Once you know the story, ask yourself: what does this land want us to become? How does it want us to live in a relationship with it? Then, don't hold that story alone. Gather the people you met along the way and write the story together.

And then—perform it. Don't worry about being a professional artist. Most of us at AIME weren't. But through trying—whether with a song, a puppet, or a simple act of storytelling—you'll discover new ways to connect with children, elders, even strangers.

If even 10% of the world's people reconnected with the stories of their lands, the world would already be a much more peaceful place.

Parul—AIME—Unlikely Connections

Q: What is your personal story towards peacebuilding? How did you get engaged in this work?

Parul:

My family history is rooted in conflict and displacement. My father's family fled Punjab during the partition of India and Pakistan, leaving everything behind. On my mother's side, my ancestors were indigenous Gond people, displaced from their lands in the 1940s and '50s in the name of "development." Both sides carried stories of loss, forced migration and resilience, and that shaped me from the start.

Growing up in India, I also saw sharp inequality everywhere. It does something to you — you either become numb to it or highly sensitive. I was the sensitive type, always asking my mother: Why is the world like this, and how can we make it better? Losing my father when I was young pushed those questions even deeper.

As a teenager, I even questioned Gandhi. I thought non-violence delayed India's independence. But later I realised that by choosing peace, Gandhi prevented generations of hatred and revenge, and showed the world a new pattern of resistance. That insight, combined with my own family's history and my search for meaning, is what drew me into peacebuilding. Today, through AIME, I carry that forward by creating spaces where unlikely people come together, see each other as humans, and write new stories for peaceful futures.

Q: What methods are you using and implementing for peacebuilding?

Parul:

At AIME, we also use what we call Unlikely Connections. The idea is simple but powerful: bring together people who would almost never meet as equals. In the early years, this meant pairing university students with Indigenous high school students in Australia. We trained the university students in empathy and humility — not to "fix" the problems, but to listen, learn, and stand alongside the kids. Over time, this model grew.

Now, instead of just two groups, we connect five: a young person, an educator, a community or government leader, an Indigenous elder, and an everyday citizen. Together they form a circle, a small core of unlikely allies who mentor each other and work on projects that matter to them. Sometimes it's about education, sometimes about climate, sometimes about community healing. The exact topic or project doesn't matter as much as the fact that these very different people are building something together.

Q: Why does this work for peacebuilding?**Parul:**

It works because it forces us to see the “other” as human. When people from different worlds meet, their assumptions are challenged. Privileged university students who once saw themselves as experts suddenly discover they have a lot to learn. Indigenous young people who were told by the system they couldn’t succeed find that their knowledge is vital. Both sides grow.

Research backs this up. Mentors report higher empathy, better communication skills, and long-term commitment to justice. Indigenous students who joined AIME went from having a 40% education gap to finishing school at higher rates than their non-Indigenous peers. That’s real change.

But for me, beyond the numbers, the magic is this: once you’ve built a deep connection with someone you thought was so different from you, it becomes harder to hold on to prejudice. That’s how we prevent future conflicts — by weaving networks of unlikely friendships.

Q: Where can we observe the effects — short-term, mid-term, and long-term?**Parul:**

In the short term, the change is immediate. People who would never have spoken before are suddenly sitting together, listening, and creating. It stretches your imagination: if I can connect with someone who looks or thinks nothing like me, I can connect with a puppet, a bird, or even a tree.

In the mid-term, you begin to carry that new lens into daily life. You treat the taxi driver, the shopkeeper, or the stranger with more respect. You start to value the humanity — and even the aliveness — in all things around you.

In the long term, it changes how your brain is wired. Like meditation, the practice of Unlikely Connections reshapes you. It makes empathy almost instinctive. That is what peaceful futures are built on: people who have trained themselves to see the worth of every human, and even beyond that, the cost of every living being.

Q: How do you measure the impact?**Parul:**

In the beginning, governments judged us by educational outcomes — graduation rates, university enrolment, and employment. And the results were stunning: Indigenous students with AIME often outperformed their peers. But that’s not our primary measure of success anymore.

Now, we focus on three things:

Imagination — are people becoming more creative, more able to dream up new possibilities?

Mentoring — are people learning how to support each other across differences?

Custodianship — are people deepening their care for land, community, and future generations?

We work with universities and Indigenous research labs to study these questions. But often, the most powerful evidence comes from stories people tell years later — about how a single connection shifted their whole path.

Q: What could youth leaders do as first steps toward peaceful futures?

Parul:

Start small. Go to the edges of your network. Talk to someone you usually wouldn't — the security guard at your school, the street vendor, the classmate who sits alone. Try to connect with them as a whole human being. That's your first Unlikely Connection.

Then, look beyond humans. Follow the ants, watch the stars, listen to the wind. Other species carry wisdom we've forgotten to pay attention to. Peace is also about living well with the earth.

Finally, whenever you start a project, ask: Whose intelligence is missing from this room? Bring in the unlikely voices — the ones with different knowledge, different struggles, different gifts. When five unlikely worlds come together, real magic happens.

CITIES4PEACE / INNER PEACE FOR SUSTAINABLE OUTER PEACE

Country:

USA

Since when:

2019

[www](#)

Head of organisation/ persona:

Mandar Apte/
Executive Director

Main projects:

- Reducing gang violence in LA County
- Promoting peaceful coexistence in Cyprus
- Empowering community leader sin Washington DC South East to reduce gang violence

Practice regions:

Americas
Asia
Australia
Europe
South America

Impact chain:

500000

Target Audience:

broad range of citizens (everyone)
all ages

Audience size per intervention

Variable Groups (2–100 people)
This practice is
a single intervention,
a standalone practice

Type of Delivery:

Blended (hybrid) delivery


Duration of the required training:

Minimums 2 hours, optimum 10 hours

Facilitators/ mentors

not needed

Special training or supervision

Teaching advance yoga breathing and meditation exercises

Specific digital tools

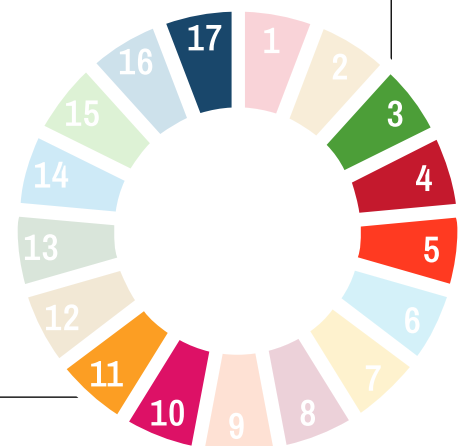
not needed

3 keywords:

inner peace, consciousness, mindful leadership

Type of conflict:

- Pre-conflict condition
- Conflict Development/ Crisis
- Conflict Escalation
- Post-Conflict Reconstruction



This practice is implemented in the following fields: *economy and entrepreneurship for peace, art and culture, gender equality, city planning and urban development, family and social sphere, law and justice.*

It uses *games, psychological, legal and financial consulting or coaching, restorative justice practices, trainings, workshops, other educational interventions.*

This practice aims to develop *the skill of Trauma Healing and Belonginess.* It grows from *Yogic Vedic breath based meditation and breathing exercises* which are also now part of UN MHPSS guidebook.

Expected outcomes and benefits for participants and communities are developing healing, developing grit, resilience, compassion and developing leadership and belonging.



Mandar Apte

**CITIES4PEACE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Q: What is your personal story towards peacebuilding? How did you get engaged in this work?

Mandar:

I began my career as a young petroleum engineer at Shell. My first big assignment took me to the Niger Delta in Nigeria. One day, a village mob attacked our work crew. We got away, but that shock stayed in my body and mind. I kept asking, Why were they angry at me? What did I do?

Back in Houston, I learned about the long-standing tension between oil companies and local communities. I also realised I was carrying trauma I didn't know how to process. That pushed me to try the Art of Living meditation and breathwork class. Within months, the heaviness lifted. I slept better, felt calmer, rejuvenated and saw my work differently.

I wanted to bring this 'inner peace' into my work environment.

In 2004, at Shell, together with some colleagues we launched AWARE—At Work As Responsible Employees- an initiative emphasising self-awareness, resilience and emotional intelligence to enable better decision making.

Later, I taught breath-focused techniques to U.S. soldiers suffering from PTSD. I also created a documentary 'From India With Love' on healing after violence, which facilitated connections between police officers and former gang members in Los Angeles. Gradually, I transitioned from engineering to peacebuilding, always beginning with inner work.

Q: What methods are you using and implementing for peacebuilding?**Mandar:**

My foundation is breath-centred inner work. Specifically, we teach the profound ‘Sudarshan Kriya™’ breathing exercise that is based on the science of breath. Each intense emotion correlates with a particular breathing pattern—anger manifests as rapid breaths, sadness as heavy exhalations, and anxiety as quick, shallow breaths. Conversely, by mastering specific breathing rhythms, you can steer your emotions rather than be ruled by them.

I keep the “chocolate” the same and change the “wrapper” for each group. For example, in the peacebuilding work in Los Angeles, between police officers and gang members, we began with daily breath practices and then added dialogue circles, collaborative poetry, and mural art to rebuild trust. With women across the Greek and Turkish parts of Cyprus, the core breath and meditation practices were the same, but the space included more story, music, and emotion.

To scale, we train participants as Ambassadors of Peace, enabling police to teach police, students to teach students, and neighbours to teach neighbours.

Q: Why does this work for peacebuilding?**Mandar:**

Peaceful futures don’t start with institutions; they begin with people. Communities are peaceful when individuals can manage stress, fear, grief, and anger. Most schools and workplaces don’t teach mental hygiene—simple daily habits that keep the mind clear—so breath-based tools fill that gap. They’re low-cost, non-sectarian, and practical. You’re breathing anyway.

When people learn to self-regulate, they react less and listen more. They can “agree to disagree” without violence. That personal stability becomes social stability. It’s the base layer for any peaceful future.



Q: Where can we observe the effects—short-term, mid-term, and long-term?**Mandar:**

In the short term, the effects are quick to notice: people sleep better, feel calmer, and the constant edge of anxiety begins to soften. Focus sharpens, and many say, “I finally feel like myself again.”

In the mid-term, with around forty days of steady practice, resilience deepens. People become less reactive to old triggers and more accepting of themselves. In groups, this shift shows up as fewer flare-ups and quicker moments of reconciliation, as if the whole team has more space to breathe.

In the long term, the practice builds a lasting sense of belonging and purpose. Inner stability grows strong enough to hold even the most challenging conversations. This is what makes it possible to bring police officers and gang members into the same room—not as enemies, but as humans who can see one another.

Q: How do you measure the impact?**Mandar:**

Our approach emphasises signs of positive peace instead of merely measuring reductions in negative factors. We observe changes such as people feeling calmer, experiencing less stress, resolving conflicts faster, and forming friendships more effortlessly. Additionally, we assess whether participants feel safe enough to listen before responding.

To capture this, we use simple check-ins before and after the workshops, short surveys, and follow-ups over time. But numbers aren't the only proof. We watch for changes in behaviour: Are people showing up regularly to practice circles? Are they taking the lead in peer-run sessions? Are they stepping up as Ambassadors of Peace, bringing these tools into their own schools, workplaces, or neighbourhoods? These are the markers that show us the practice is taking root and spreading outward.



Q: What could youth leaders do as first steps toward peaceful futures?**Mandar:**

For young leaders, the first step is simple: begin with a daily 15–20 minute breath and meditation practice. The emphasis is on ‘daily’. Pain will come to everyone in life, but suffering doesn’t have to be the outcome if you have tools to steady yourself.

The second step is to build your circle of trust. Keep at least two people you can share anything with—and commit to being that person for two others. Healing is not a solo journey; it’s mutual.

Next, choose ‘purpose’ along with a paycheck. Money has its place, but it cannot fill an empty heart. Align your studies or projects with something that truly matters to you, something that gives meaning. And find others who share that passion and get involved in bringing that passion to life.

Create outlets that nourish you. Writing, music, painting, or even a walk in nature—these are not side hobbies, they are lifelines that keep your spirit balanced.

Bring inner work into your spaces. It can be as simple as starting a weekly breath circle in your school, university, or community hub. Keep it open, simple, and welcoming.

And finally, don’t just practice—share. If something helps you, learn to teach it. Police listen best to police, students to students, neighbours to neighbours. Change grows strongest when it spreads from the inside.

Visualise the process in three stages: first, soothe your own nerves; second, develop trust with others; and third, collaboratively create solutions—be it through dialogues, murals, new policies, or startups.

A final note: You don’t need permission to begin. Start with your own breath. Practice for forty days. Invite a friend. When the inner climate cools, the outer climate changes. Peaceful futures are built this way—one steady breath, one brave circle, one local ambassador at a time.



EMPOWERMENT INSTITUTE / PEACE GAME

Country:

USA

Since when:

1981

[www](#)

Head of organisation/ persona:

David Gershon / CEO

Main projects:

- Peace Game
- Peace on Earth Zones
- Peace on earth by 2030 global peace movement

Practice regions:

21 countries across all continents

Impact chain:

2 000 000

Target Audience:

broad range of citizens (everyone), local community, women, young leaders, professionals, students

Audience size per intervention

- 1-on-1
- Variable Groups (2–100 people)

This practice is

a series of interventions

Type of Delivery:

Blended (hybrid) delivery


Duration of the required training:

Minimums 2 hours, optimum 10 hours

Facilitators/ mentors

not needed

Special training or supervision

not needed

Specific digital tools

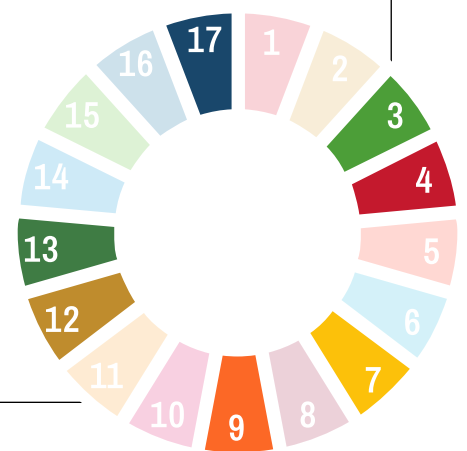
Zoom

3 keywords:

7 peace Practices

Type of conflict:

- Pre-conflict condition
- Post-Conflict Reconstruction



This practice is implemented in the following fields: *economy and entrepreneurship for peace, art and culture governance and policymaking, climate actions gender equality, city planning and urban development, family and social sphere law and justice.*

It uses *games practical conflict resolution or transformation, facilitation, foresight and community dialogues, volunteering, trainings, workshops, other educational interventions.*

This practice aims to develop *the following skills: peace building, empowerment, social impact.*

Expected outcomes and benefits for participants and communities are:

- Increase the community's capacity for cooperation, social impact and collective agency.
- Establish the seven Peace Game practices—empowerment, oneness, unity, cooperation, abundance, love and faith—as community social norms.
- Integrate the seven peace practices into the community's public, private and civic sector organizations strengthening their ability to cooperate for the common good.
- Utilize the Peace Game platform to help facilitate the transformation of the community's social and environmental challenges.
- Engage ½ of 1% of the community in playing the Peace Game—the tipping point for new behaviors to spontaneously be adopted. This is called creating a morphogenetic field or the "100th Monkey Effect."



David Gershon

**PEACE ON EARTH BY 2030
GLOBAL PEACE MOVEMENT
CEO**

Q: What is your personal story towards peacebuilding? How did you get engaged in this work?

David:

My path began in 1976, when the United States turned 200, and the country felt lost after the Vietnam War. I was a serious marathon runner with a simple idea: pass a torch around America to remind people of our shared values. We ran 9,000 miles in a nonstop relay. Mayors, governors—even the President—joined in. When I extinguished the flame in New York City, I had a deep spiritual moment. I saw the torch change into a Torch of Peace—circling the planet to spark cooperation among nations.

At first, nobody believed it could happen. Then the 1980 Winter Olympics asked me to organise their torch relay. That gave me the skills and the allies I needed. By 1986, we made the vision real: we carried the Torch of Peace around the world. It engaged 25 million people, 45 heads of state, and 62 countries. For 86 days, wherever the torch went, conflict paused. That experience convinced me that we can create peace on Earth.

After that, I focused on the “how.” I learned four crafts: how people change behaviour, how communities empower themselves, how large systems transform, and how small actions tip significant outcomes. I wrote the book “Social Change 2.0,” a blueprint for reinventing the world, and, with our team at the Empowerment Institute, turned those lessons into practical peace practices that people can use every day.

Q: What methods are you using and implementing for peacebuilding?**David:**

We teach and play seven peace practices through something we call the Peace Game. The practices are:

Empowerment—learning to be an effective agent of change in your own life and community.

Oneness—befriending “the other” (someone you usually avoid because of politics, religion, race, class, etc.).

Unity—shifting from division to common ground; training your attention to look for what we share.

Cooperation—collaborating together to create outcomes none of us could achieve alone.

Abundance—investing your time or money in people and groups that grow oneness, unity, and cooperation.

Love (Agape)—using prayer, visualisation, and intention to strengthen the energetic “field” of peace.

Faith—believing in yourself, in others, and in humanity’s future—and inviting more people to practice.

You learn and practice these in a nine-meeting game delivered by an app. People play in circles of 5–8 (in schools, faith groups, companies, neighbourhoods) or in teams of three a live online cohort I facilitate. Players choose bronze, silver, or gold levels for each action, so it’s both accessible and stretching. We run special versions too—like a Peace Trail in Oregon (think Camino-style stages), conference editions (e.g., Rotary), and citywide “Peace Zones.”



Q: Why does this work for peacebuilding?**David:**

Because peace isn't just the absence of war—it's the presence of cooperation at the local scale. The practices move people along that path in body, heart, and mind:

Strategic intelligence: behavior and systemic change with metrics

Symbolic intelligence: working on the level of symbols (like the torch) and mythic acts that touch meaning and souls.

Subtle intelligence: timing, resonance, and intention—the invisible side of culture change.

When we have people working on our seven practices together, they create a morphogenetic field—a cultural “gravity” that allows them to infuse peaceful choices into their communities. Our moonshot aspires to achieve Peace on Earth by 2030 by reaching a tipping point: practising consistently across 10,000 cities, which would impact approximately 0.5% of the world's population (~40 million people). That field-building is how today's actions become tomorrow's peaceful futures.

Q: Where can we observe the effects—short-term, mid-term, and long-term?**David:**

Short term: People who never spoke to each other have a real conversation. Someone reaches out to “the other.” A school, team, or club runs a cooperative project and feels the rush of creating something bigger than themselves. Participants report more hope, courage, and belonging—immediately.

Midterm: Narratives shift. Communities start describing themselves by what they create together, working on racial justice issues, or addressing conflicts over climate change or policies. Local leaders use the game to cool down these hot issues. In Ghana, two rival tribal groups mixed their teams to play; tensions softened because the practices directed attention toward collaboration and common ground.

Long term: A culture of peace takes root by diffusing and scaling into different cultures, be they cities, corporations, businesses, government agencies, nonprofits, faith-based groups, schools, or universities.

Q: How do you measure the impact?**David:**

We track both actions through the application and well-being via the Harmony Index:

Actions—the app keeps score in real time. So far, 3,309+ players have taken 70,000+ peace actions across 600+ cities in 60+ countries.

Community well-being is measured through our Harmony Index, which measures the level of community and personal well-being in the community across six metrics. We also study testimonials, before-and-after stories.

Q: What could youth leaders do as first steps toward peaceful futures?**David:**

1. Believe in yourself and your ability to influence the future through your belief and direct action.
2. Focus on what you want, not what you don't want. The former brings you long term allies who are inspired by your positive vision of the future. He later brings you burn out.
3. Learn about Social Change so you don't spend your precious time and that of others spinning wheels. My book on Social Change 2.0 is a good resource for this.
4. Build your social innovation and be prepared to spend several years getting a viable prototype. This document can help you on this journey. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/18KrG2Wlpd7q1oaghevaq-j30Hs2EUZZbLEGPCZqxm0/edit?usp=sharing>
5. Social Change is a long game. Make sure your initiative is aligned with your purpose for being on this planet so you have the needed staying power.

NILE GIRLS FORUM / PEER PALS MOVEMENT

Country:

Uganda

Since when:

2018

[www](#)

Head of organisation/ persona:

Peace
Monica Pimer /
Executive Director

Main projects:

- East Africa Feminist Peace Network
- Peer Pals Movement

Practice regions:

Africa

Impact chain:

1000

Target Audience:

broad range of citizens (everyone), local community, women, young leaders, professionals, students, refugees

Adolescents

(13–17),

Young Adults

(18–35)

Audience size per intervention

Medium Groups
(11–50 people)

Type of Delivery:

Blended (hybrid) delivery



Duration of the required training:
3 days

Facilitators/ mentors

Lead facilitator and co-facilitator

Special training or supervision
Necessary

Specific digital tools
not needed

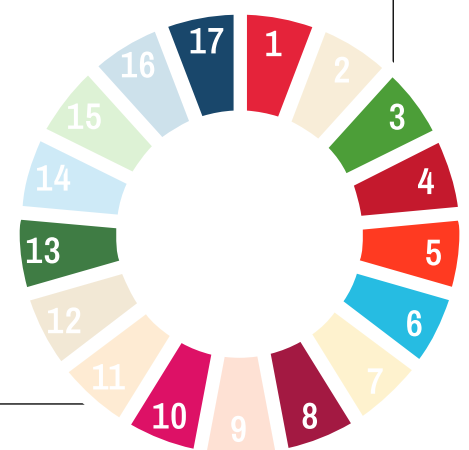
This practice is
a series of interventions

3 keywords:

Peace, Engagement, Equity

Type of conflict:

- Pre-conflict condition
- Conflict Development/Crisis
- Post-Conflict Reconstruction



This practice is implemented in the following fields: *economy and entrepreneurship for peace, governance and policymaking climate actions, gender equality family and social sphere, law and justice.*

It uses *art and culture, practical conflict resolution or transformation, facilitation, foresight and community dialogues, volunteering, psychological/ legal/ financial consulting or coaching, trainings, workshops, other educational interventions.*

This practice aims to develop *the following skills: Mediation and Dialogue Techniques, Community Leadership, Emotional Intelligence and Trauma Informed Approaches, Conflict Transformation, Public Speaking.*

Transformative Mediation and Community-Based Peace-building Framework guide the movement's methodologies, shaping how it approaches conflict, trauma, community dynamics, and youth empowerment.

Expected outcomes and benefits for participants and communities are *Increased Conflict Resolution Skills, Enhanced Empathy and Understanding, Empowerment and Leadership Development, Trauma Healing and Resilience, Improved Social Cohesion, Reduction in Community-Level Conflict, Increased Social Support Networks, Sustainable Peace Practices, Strengthened Community Leadership.*



Peace Monica Pimer

**NILE GIRLS FORUM
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Q: What is your personal story towards peacebuilding? How did you get engaged in this work?

Peace:

I was raised in northern Uganda, an area impacted by intense conflict stemming from the Holy Spirit Movement, a cult that eventually developed into the Lord's Resistance Army. It lasted nearly two decades. Children were abducted and forced to fight, women were assaulted, and families were displaced. One of my friends was abducted too—fortunately she managed to escape.

Seeing this up close made me wonder: how can I contribute to my community? At that time, travelling from Kampala to northern Uganda took several days due to unsafe roads. Schools were closed, healthcare access was limited, and fear was prevalent. Peace negotiations rarely include young people or women, even though they bear the most tremendous burdens. I realised that sustainable development relies on peace.

Although peacebuilding is frequently associated with war, its scope is broader. Issues like domestic violence, school bullying, and land conflicts also undermine peace. This understanding motivated me to start this initiative. In 2018, I established the Nile Girls Forum, prioritising young people—particularly girls and young women—in peace discussions.

Q: What methods are you using and implementing for peacebuilding?**Peace:**

One of our most effective approaches is peer education. We have created a movement of young women- The Peer Pals Movement across rural northern Uganda and Kampala's urban slums. We start by training them on fundamental questions like: What does peace mean to you? From there, we advance to conflict resolution techniques and practical initiatives.

We are creating a curriculum that acknowledges various realities, since peace means different things to a refugee compared to someone living in a slum. Additionally, we have launched a podcast where young people share their personal stories and perspectives on the topic of peace.

Another approach involves intergenerational dialogue. We begin by training young people, then integrate them into discussions with decision makers. This ensures that when they speak, they are well-informed and confident. It's not just symbolic youth inclusion; it's a genuine dialogue on equal footing.

Q: Why does this work for peacebuilding?**Peace:**

It succeeds because it prepares the next generation of peacebuilders. Too often, young people are viewed as conflict victims rather than leaders. By providing training, fostering connections, and amplifying their voices, we create sustainable solutions that empower individuals to thrive.

Collaboration is crucial because working toward peaceful futures is challenging when done alone. Our efforts are strengthened through meaningful collaborations, expanding our reach into areas that would otherwise be inaccessible. It also introduces diversity into peacebuilding efforts—because peace can mean different things in different contexts: safety at home in Uganda, land rights elsewhere, or return from exile.

This broader perspective enables us to co-create solutions grounded in real-life experiences. That's how peaceful futures are built: young people equipped, communities listened to, and local realities shaping global visions.

Q: Where can we observe the effects—short-term, mid-term, and long-term?

Peace:

In the short term, mindsets are evolving. Communities are starting to view peace not as a distant or abstract goal but as an integral part of everyday life. For instance, families involved in our programs are discussing ways to reduce violence at home, teachers are addressing bullying in schools, and partners are seeking guidance on how to incorporate peacebuilding into their efforts. These minor shifts are significant because they help normalise the concept that peace is a responsibility shared by all.

In the mid-term, young people begin to take initiative. They don't simply participate in workshops—they take action. Before elections, they volunteer as observers, record instances of electoral violence, and advocate for fair processes. Some organise dialogues within their schools or communities. This reflects a new awareness: young people now link politics and daily life through a focus on peace, and they are prepared to defend their communities when tensions escalate.

In the long term, we observe decision makers responding. For example, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development invited us to co-create Uganda's first-ever National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security. That's historic. It demonstrates that youth-led peacebuilding is no longer invisible. Young voices are not just being heard—they are shaping national policy and laying a foundation for future generations.

We have equally had partnership calls with the UN Youth Office in New York City, United States to collaborate and front peace building in our communities in the Global South.



Q: How do you measure the impact?**Peace:**

We begin with quick assessments conducted before and after activities, asking communities to define what peace means to them and how their perspectives evolve over time. Additionally, we prepare position papers following dialogues and present these to policymakers.

An alternative method is youth-led research. For instance, we studied displaced communities in Uganda and presented the findings at the Learning Planet Festival. This global platform provided us with visibility beyond Uganda, and the feedback from international audiences helped us refine our approach and identify where our work aligns with global challenges.

We also examine documents such as government strategies and civil society declarations to check for the inclusion of peacebuilding language. When peaceful features are included in national plans and NGO priorities, it indicates that our advocacy is effective.

Ultimately, impact is not just numbers; it's when young people's voices shift from being ignored to shaping decisions.

Q: What could youth leaders do as first steps toward peaceful futures?**Peace:**

First, equip yourself. There are free online courses, podcasts, and research available. Learn the basics of peacebuilding.

Second, start where you are. Peace starts in the home—resolving family conflict, stopping bullying in school, or leading small initiatives in your community. You don't need to wait for a big platform.

Third, be creative. Organise a peace run, start an anti-bullying campaign, or host dialogues in your church, mosque, or workplace. Small actions add up.

Finally, position yourself. Opportunities come to those prepared. If you are informed and engaged, you can call out gaps and push for inclusion at decision-making tables.

Peace is more than stopping wars—it's about building relationships and fairness in everyday life. Young leaders everywhere can begin today.

EDUCATE LANKA

Country:

Sri Lanka

Since when:

2009

[www](#)

Head of organisation / persona:

Manjula
Dissanayake /
Founding Executive
Director

Main projects:

Educate Lanka
Youth Change
Agents Programme

Practice regions:

Sri Lanka nationally

Impact chain:

3 000

Target Audience:

Local community, young
leaders, students

- Adolescents (13–17)
- Young Adults (18–35)

Audience size per intervention

- Medium Groups (11–50 people)
- Large Groups (50–100 people)

This practice is
a series of
interventions

Type of Delivery:

Blended (hybrid)
delivery



Facilitators/mentors
not needed

Special training or supervision
not needed

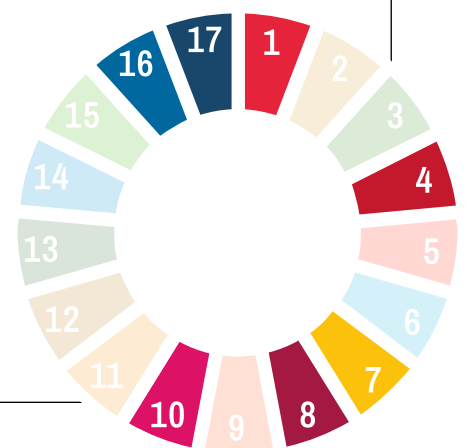
Specific digital tools
Zoom

3 keywords:

community based,
youth, social-emotional
learning

Type of conflict:

- Pre-conflict condition
- Post-Conflict Reconstruction



This practice is implemented in the following fields: *economy and entrepreneurship for peace, civil community.*

It uses *facilitation, foresight and community dialogues, trainings, workshops, other educational interventions.*

This practice draws from social-emotional learning and design thinking.

This practice aims to develop *the following social-emotional learning skills: problem-solving, critical thinking, empathy, global citizenship.*

Expected outcomes and benefits for participants and communities are:

- Preventing students from dropping out of school early, allowing them the means to continue their learning journey through higher education.
- Ripple effects in communities: students gain confidence not just in academics, but in speaking, problem-solving, and leading, communities get real, practical improvements while young people gain a sense of ownership in creating them.
- Transformational changes: families move out of deep poverty, mindsets shift—students volunteer more, feel more hopeful about their society, and start acting as changemakers.



Manjula Dissanayake

**EDUCATE LANKA FOUNDATION, INC.
FOUNDING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Q: What is your personal story towards Peacebuilding? How did you get engaged in this work?

Manjula:

I grew up in Sri Lanka during a conflict that lasted nearly 30 years. From the day I was born until the age of 19, when I migrated for higher education, the war shaped my daily reality. When I had the chance to study in the United States, it felt like an escape from uncertainty. Yet even from afar, I carried a deep wish to see a peaceful Sri Lanka. At the time, I wasn't sure if it would ever be possible.

While I was studying finance and starting my career, the 2004 tsunami struck Sri Lanka. It was a tragedy that killed almost 30,000 people. During these severe times, I also witnessed something powerful: people of all ethnicities and religions came together to lend a hand. That sense of unity motivated me to organise Sri Lankans in the U.S. to provide relief support efforts. That was my first real experience of mobilising a community toward something bigger than ourselves.

From there, I founded Educate Lanka. The idea was simple but powerful: connect Sri Lankan youth who lacked resources with Sri Lankans abroad who wanted to give back. At first, the focus was on education. But soon I realised that education could also be a form of skills and peacebuilding - if we helped young people not only study, but also build empathy, question stereotypes, and see themselves as globally conscious citizens. That belief has guided my journey ever since.

Q: What methods are you using and implementing for Peacebuilding?**Manjula:**

Our approach involves two steps: first, providing students with the necessary tools and knowledge; second, ensuring they apply these tools practically. In Sri Lanka, education has frequently focused on memorisation and exams, but we aimed to offer something more meaningful—skills that young people can genuinely use in everyday life.

Our curriculum currently features seven modules. Central to this is design thinking, a problem-solving approach that promotes creativity, empathy, and iteration. Surrounding this are modules on global citizenship, critical thinking, communication, and understanding biases and stereotypes. For example, students learn to identify how discrimination or stereotypes impact society—and how they can unlearn these biases.

But learning doesn't stop in the classroom. Students work in diverse teams, often mixing ethnic groups or even international peers, to design projects that solve real problems in their communities. It might involve creating new learning spaces in schools or tackling local environmental challenges. Through this process, they not only apply what they've learned but also build confidence that their ideas are valuable.

Peacebuilding occurs both directly—by fostering empathy, perspective-taking, and cooperation—and indirectly, by empowering marginalised youth with economic opportunities. When young people are enabled to engage meaningfully in society, they are less likely to be drawn into conflict.



Q: Why does this work for Peacebuilding?**Manjula:**

It succeeds because it addresses two major gaps. Firstly, it equips young people with foundational social emotional skills and values that enable them to become empathic citizens who are socially and globally more aware and confident in their ability to make a positive difference. They develop critical thinking skills to avoid manipulation by stereotypes or divisive stories. For decades in Sri Lanka, youth were susceptible because they weren't encouraged to think independently. They were frequently told a single version of "truth" and expected to follow it. With the proper tools, they can now question, challenge, and forge their own paths.

Second, it addresses economic marginalisation. Many conflicts arise from frustration—young people who feel excluded or without opportunity are more vulnerable to violence. By investing in their education and skills, we create pathways for them to succeed and contribute positively.

In simple terms, our work builds resilience. A student who learns empathy, works with peers from other backgrounds, and successfully completes a community project gains both perspective and confidence. He understands he can make a difference, even in small ways. Over time, this creates a generation of citizens who are less likely to accept hate or violence and more likely to build bridges.

That's how peaceful futures are built: step by step, person by person, equipping young people to think critically, act empathetically, and feel empowered.



Q: Where can we observe the effects—short-term, mid-term, and long-term?

Manjula:

In the short term, the impact is straightforward. Our long-term micro-scholarships prevent students from dropping out of school early, allowing them the means to continue their learning journey through higher education. Our training programs give them immediate exposure to new skills and hands-on experience. Within six months, they can already point to projects they've designed and implemented—like converting an abandoned space into an outdoor classroom, which then benefits hundreds of other students.

In the mid-term, we see ripple effects in communities. A team of 10 students might launch a project, but the benefits spread to hundreds or thousands of people. Teachers, peers, and families start noticing the difference. Students gain confidence not just in academics, but in speaking, problem-solving, and leading. Communities get real, practical improvements while young people gain a sense of ownership in creating them.

In the long term, the changes are transformational. Families move out of deep poverty as young people graduate and find employment. Household incomes can increase tenfold with a single student's first job. More importantly, mindsets shift. Students volunteer more, feel more hopeful about their society, and start acting as changemakers. When multiplied across hundreds and thousands of young people, this mindset shift becomes a powerful force for peace and social progress.



Q: How do you measure the impact?**Manjula:**

We measure in two ways: quantitatively and qualitatively.

We quantify key metrics, including hours of training, project completion, academic advancement, and employment results. For instance, we track the number of students who avoided dropping out, those who completed community projects, and how household incomes shifted after students entered the workforce.

Qualitatively, our emphasis is on transformation. We conduct surveys before and after training to track changes in self-confidence, empathy, and attitudes toward other communities. Many students begin with little hope, feeling abandoned by society. After participating in our program, they often report feeling seen, valued, and motivated to contribute. This psychological shift—believing that “I matter and I can make a difference”—is as crucial as academic performance and income.

We also collect stories and testimonials. Students share how they now challenge stereotypes, volunteer in their communities, or inspire siblings to stay in school. Numbers are important, but peacebuilding is ultimately about people. For us, the most powerful measure of impact is when a young person who once felt powerless becomes someone who creates positive change.

Q: What could youth leaders do as first steps toward Peaceful futures?**Manjula:**

My advice is straightforward: take action. While reading, listening, or attending events is valuable, genuine learning comes from doing. You don't need to begin with a large project or a new organisation. Start small. Volunteer with a local initiative. Organise something in your school or neighbourhood. Treat it as a trial run.

Through action, you'll discover your passion and learn what works—and what doesn't. In our own journey at Educate Lanka, we never waited for the “perfect” plan. We tried, failed, adjusted, and kept going. Every pilot taught us something.

My message to young leaders is: peacebuilding begins with small steps. Put your passion and interest into action as quickly as possible, and then let the process guide you to your destination.

FUNDACIÓN ECOCONCIENCIA / TRANSPARENCY COMMUNITY SYSTEM

Country:

Argentina

Since when:

1996

[www](#)

**Head of organisation/
persona:**

Rodolfo Tarraubella
President

Main projects:

socioenvironmental conflicts around Alumbrera mining, MARA mining project, Puna's community against the provincial government, and Rio Tinto Lithium (mining company), Catamarca

Practice regions:

Argentina, Panamá, México, República Dominicana

Impact chain:

25 000

Target Audience:

Broad range of citizens (everyone), local community, women, students, company's officers and employees

- Adults (18–60+)

**Audience size
per intervention**

- Medium Groups (11–50 people)
- Large Groups (50–100 people)

Type of Delivery:

In-person


**Facilitators/
mentors**

Needed

**Special training
or supervision**

No

**Specific
digital tools**

No

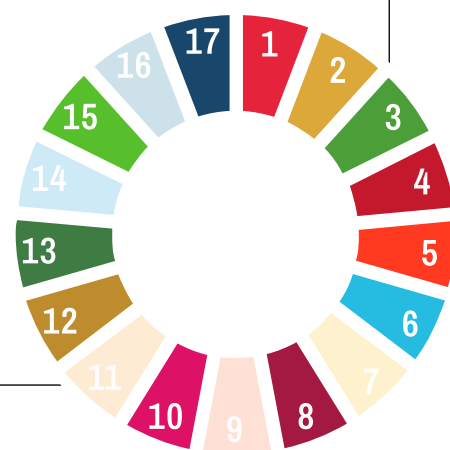
This practice is
a series of
interventions

3 keywords:

transparency, peace,
development

Type of conflict:

- Pre-conflict condition
- Conflict Development/ Crisis
- Conflict Escalation
- Post-Conflict Reconstruction



This practice is implemented in the following fields: *companies, communities and government.*

It uses *art and culture games, practical conflict resolution or transformation, interest-based negotiations or mediation, facilitation, foresight and community dialogues.*

This practice draws from *Integral theory, Spiral Dynamics, Art of Hosting Meaningful Conversations, Mediation techniques and theories, basic psychology.*

This practice aims to develop: building good emotional links, enhancing the differences tolerance, acceptance of sexual diversity, acceptance of different religions and ideological diversity, ability to dialogue without aggression, to express without shouting, to say no when we disagree with the argument of other person.

Expected outcomes and benefits for participants and communities are: communities trained to become entrepreneurs, seeking to be free from company dependence, communities trained in roundtable dialogue without aggression, communities monitor the company's effluents and suggest possible environmental solutions to the company, communities empowered with knowledge in social skills can teach others to produce social pacific services and products.



Rodolfo Tarraubella

**FUNDACIÓN ECOCONCIENCIA
PRESIDENT**

Q: What is your personal story towards peacebuilding? How did you get engaged in this work?

Rodolfo:

I often say that reality is not a fact—it's a social construct. That insight shaped my path. I witnessed conflicts between communities, companies, and governments unfolding in daily life. People were frustrated about various issues they perceived, and the feeling that no one was listening to them.

I highly value being present in social relationships, sharing moments: drinking mate, visiting farms and homes, spending a long time with people and communities, so that both people could know me and my team before any formal process and for me to understand the people better. That trust lets us start an honest dialogue later.

My story has always been about walking into difficult places—where companies, governments, and communities distrust each other—and trying to build bridges. It's not an easy path. We receive pressure from both communities, corporations and government, and sometimes the pressure is so heavy you need to step away to breathe.

But I keep going because I believe in the mission. I remind myself: if we want a peaceful future, we must create it, step by step, with integrity. This led to the establishment of the Community Transparency System.

Q: What methods are you using and implementing for peacebuilding?**Rodolfo:**

My method, called Community Transparency System, is simple yet demanding: we work with enhancing communities and stakeholders' relationships, on environment and communication, with a strong emphasis on Actions (that's why we call communic-action)

In practice, this means three things. First, participatory community integration, with an explicit mission to bring prosperity to the communities, work with their motivation and minds, and an implicit mission to build emotional links and monitor the quality of contacts. I spend around 9 months just being with people, drinking mate, laughing, dancing, and mapping their needs and dreams, building trust. These steps are mandatory before we start the dialogue.

Second, we established community participation mechanisms, including roundtables held with clear rules and protocols for consultation and claims, as well as a transparent record of every promise. We focus on social peace by formalising the problem, reducing tensions, and finding possible solutions, while engaging various stakeholders. That way, dialogue doesn't depend on goodwill alone but on a structure everyone trusts.

Third, we push for positive nature practices. Even in industries like mining, we challenge companies to restore ecosystems, reduce harm, and leave behind regeneration, not just extraction or production.

It's not quick. It's not glamorous. But it's how communities move from anger and silence to voice and agency.



Q: Why does this work for peacebuilding?

Rodolfo:

I often joke that our biggest problem is that we don't have telepathy. Between what I mean and what you understand, there are always emotional disruptions. It is impossible to know if my conversation partner got the same idea that I intended. That's why our first step is to build emotional connections. When people trust you, they begin to listen, they begin understanding.

Then comes the second ingredient: facts. We provide data—water analysis, traffic counts, environmental monitoring—so people can discuss reality less about perceptions and more about reality; beliefs are set aside to give weight to evidence.

The mix of trust, transparency and facts is powerful. It turns confrontation into cooperation. And when people see with their own eyes that dialogue leads to change, they start imagining peaceful futures where conflicts don't have to repeat.

Q: Where can we observe the effects—short-term, mid-term, and long-term?

Rodolfo:

In the short term, you see signs of life: people gather, they smile, they share their dreams out loud. That's already a victory in places where silence ruled. Midterm, you see systems working: round tables with protocols, water being monitored, truck speeds reduced, and small businesses starting because training was followed by mentoring. Communities begin to understand their responsibilities and what belongs to the company. Long term, you see more profound shifts: companies earn a “social license to operate” only by investing in the community, environmental restoration projects take root, and cultural spaces like a House of Peace emerge—places where dance, cooking, art, and dialogue keep the spirit of peace alive across generations.



Q: How do you measure the impact?**Rodolfo:**

We measure in two ways: through people and through instruments. On the people side, we track the number of households we've mapped, how often we visit, who attends roundtables, and the commitments logged in our final document. On the technical side, we measure water quality, river flows, truck speeds, hiring practices, and we audit transparency agreements. On the social side, we evaluate the frequency of contacts within the community.

But numbers alone aren't enough. The real test is simple: are people understanding each other better, and are problems actually shrinking? If yes, then we're making an impact. And if a company refuses to invest in communities or keeps breaking trust, we don't hesitate to walk away. That, too, is a form of accountability.

Q: What could youth leaders do as first steps toward peaceful futures?**Rodolfo:**

Start small, but start real. Go into a community, not with solutions, but with questions. Ask people about their needs and dreams, and show up consistently so they see you are serious. Even one evening a week makes a difference.

Learn basic tools of monitoring—how to test water, track traffic, or keep a simple record of commitments. These small facts change the tone of big debates. And always use creative spaces to connect: a cooking class, a dance night, even freestyle rap battles can open doors to dialogue. That's why I dream of every community having its own House of Peace—a place where culture, learning, and conflict resolution come together.

Above all, protect your integrity. Money, politics, and pressure will test you. But if you keep your mission clear and celebrate small wins, you'll discover what I've learned: peace is not given—it is built, patiently, joyfully, and together.

Beliefs can be limiting, but it can be changed by building a communication path.

THE HAGUE CENTER FOR GLOBAL GOVERNANCE INNOVATION AND EMERGENCE / MESHWORKING

Country:

Netherlands

Since when:

2014

WWW
Head of organisation/ persona:

Manjula
Dissanayake /
Founding Executive
Director

Main projects:

- ONE World Convergences
- Solstice Unites
- World Peace Forum— how can we do peace differently?

Practice regions:

South Africa,
Europe, Egypt,
Mexico, Brazil,
Canada

Impact chain:

5 000

Target Audience:

Broad range of citizens
(everyone), local community, professionals

- Adults (36–60)
- Seniors (60+)

Audience size per intervention

Large Groups
(50–100 people)

Type of Delivery:

Blended (hybrid)
delivery


Facilitators/ mentors

2–5

Special training or supervision

necessary

Specific digital tools

No

This practice is

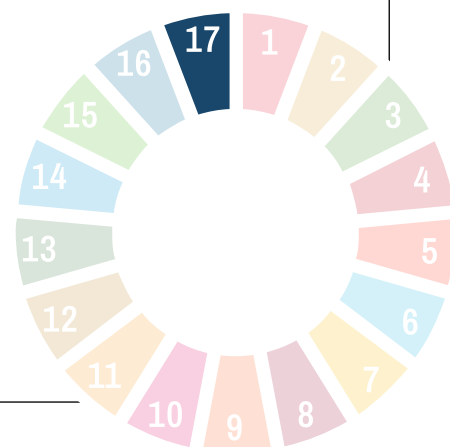
a series of
interventions

3 keywords:

Collaborative Systems
Change

Type of conflict:

- Pre-conflict condition
- Conflict Development/ Crisis
- Post-Conflict Reconstruction



This practice is implemented in the following fields: *economy and entrepreneurship for peace, art and culture governance and policymaking, climate actions gender equality, city planning and urban development.*

It uses *practical conflict resolution or transformation, interest-based negotiations or mediation, facilitation, foresight and community dialogues, volunteering, trainings, workshops, other educational interventions.*

This practice draws from *Integral theory, Spiral Dynamics, Art of Hosting Meaningful Conversations, Mediation techniques and theories, basic psychology.*

This practice aims to develop *collaboration, taking responsibility for higher order goals together, sharing power and resources for the whole.*

Expected outcomes and benefits for participants and communities are: convening stakeholders of the system, further learning journey to understand the system better, building trust and relationships among participants, accessing resources to meet collective goals, funding and coordinating projects to reach systems changing goals. “When we change the systems all the parts are still there, just the relationships are different.” —Nora Bates

The outcomes of this process are empowered local people able to effectively collaborate on projects that work towards new conditions that reach higher order goals like the Sustainable Development Goals, increased equality and care for the environment.



Kara Stonehouse

**THE HAGUE CENTER
FOR GLOBAL GOVERNANCE
INNOVATION AND EMERGENCE
FOUNDING MESHWORKER**

Q: What is your personal story towards peacebuilding? How did you get engaged in this work?

Kara:

I began my career as an industrial designer. I wanted to create playful items, including toys. Soon after, I started making soap dispensers and noticed how mass production can leave a substantial environmental impact. This awareness led me to pursue a master's in strategic sustainability. The key lesson? You can't fix one part of a broken system and expect the whole to improve. Biodegradable plastic isn't effective if no one can compost it. One country's regulations don't work if others don't follow suit.

So I wondered: how can we transform entire societal systems? I explored methods such as Theory U and learned from communities like the eco-village "Findhorn"—places where people listen intently, work gently, care for the earth, and show compassion for one another. These experiences touched my heart. Although I was never a "hugger," I found myself crying, embracing others, and realising how our culture conditions us to toughen up, compete, and ignore our inner selves.

Over time, my connection to the spiritual began to intensify. I became involved with The Hague Center and the broader networks associated with World Unity Week. I started to view peace not merely as a single goal but as something that arises when we transform systems—by aligning the mind, heart, and hands. Inner peace and outer peace, both, are the results of genuine systems change.

Q: What methods are you using and implementing for peacebuilding?

Kara:

Our core process is called Meshworking. To describe the process, we use the image of the Magic Canoe, based on a true story told by Eric Young in Canada: a canoe that accommodates everyone to paddle. Politics often puts us against each other—sometimes intentionally. The Magic Canoe fosters the opposite environment. We bring all stakeholders together, including government, business, NGOs, community voices, elders, and youth, into one space. Everyone belongs; everyone paddles.

This practice was developed by Dr. Don Beck, who encouraged us to found the Center and to apply the Meshworking process with large stakeholders, including the national governments.

With meshworking, you bring a “microcosm of the whole” into the room, slow down together (that’s where Theory U assists), and listen to the real stories behind the labels. So it’s not “those corporations” or “those naive NGOs,” it’s real human beings who care.

From there, we identify the overarching goal—the bigger purpose we all share. We specify the conditions necessary to achieve it. Then, we align projects and roles with those conditions. The shared map (the mesh) allows us to work together like a flock rather than compete for scraps. I have facilitated this in places like Ottawa, focusing on climate action. The shift from finger-pointing to co-creation is crucial: “You’re not doing enough” becomes “Let’s pool resources and prioritise what matters most.”



Q: Why does this work for peacebuilding?**Kara:**

Because it shifts blame into shared responsibility. Closed hearts say, “It’s not my problem,” or “They’re evil,” or “I’ll just escape.” Open hearts say, “These are human-made systems—human agreements. We can make better ones.”

The Magic Canoe fosters the relationships that help us hold pain, fear, and anger with wisdom. When we remember we’re responsible together, solutions cease to be weapons and become bridges. That’s how we plant Peaceful Futures: we cultivate a culture of co-stewardship now, and we forge new agreements that support life.

Q: Where can we observe the effects—short-term, mid-term, and long-term?**Kara:**

Short term: People feel seen and supported. In spaces like World Unity Week, someone who has been carrying a quiet vision finally says it out loud. “Oh, I have a home. You get me.” That spark leads people to take their next step—to collaborate, to host, to lead.

Midterm: Networks and projects cohere and scale. We pool funding and partners and launch things like Living Cities Earth, the Conscious Media Lab, or Solstice Unites. We show up on larger stages; our messages reach institutions and influencers. When unity-based governance and wisdom practices start appearing at forums—even alongside presidents and UN gatherings—you can feel the narrative shifting: systems change is not fringe; it’s sane and necessary.

Long term: We build what I call Love Organised—parallel, life-giving systems for the next century. If mainstream institutions can’t redesign themselves fast enough (their job is to keep today’s system running), then we, the systems-change community, shoulder responsibility. We prototype regenerative currencies, governance models, and business architectures. Over time, these become living alternatives—practical, humane, and ready.

Q: How do you measure the impact?**Kara:**

We start with coherence and resonance—felt sense as data. Coherence isn't soft; your body knows when something is off. If people push through incoherence, conflict tends to grow. If we name tensions and restore coherence, collaboration deepens.

We use practices like ECOintention—a disciplined way of sensing the “field” of a project. We ask: How grounded is the vision? How is communication? Over time, we can graph these dimensions and see whether our inner architecture is strengthening.

We also track meaningful collaborations and outputs: Did the media lab launch? Did cities and communities start a joint pilot instead of arguing? Are partners staying energised rather than burning out? Audience numbers matter, but we don't mistake clicks for connection. We care about vitality in the people and integrity in the projects.



Q: What could youth leaders do as first steps toward peaceful futures?**Kara:**

Find your learning field. In many cities, there's an Art of Hosting community—people who practice dialogue where everyone's voice counts. Show up, learn, try things, facilitate. These rooms are safe spaces to cultivate genuine leadership.

Come to serve, not to win. Don't make anyone the villain. If you walk in with "you're wrong," doors close. If you come with a gift—a pilot idea, a small grant, a case study—doors open. When our charity approached the City of Ottawa, we arrived with resources to help them achieve their climate engagement goals. That shifted the energy from "convince us" to "let's partner."

Name the shared goal. In any issue—waste, water, safety—ask, "What's the superordinate purpose we all care about?" Map the conditions for success. Then align projects to those conditions so people see how their piece fits the whole.

Protect coherence. Start meetings with a pause or a bell. Let everyone arrive as their highest self. Talk about tensions; don't weaponise them. This is peace in practice.

Build the canoe. Invite unlikely allies. Create a microcosm of the system and host honest story-sharing. People change when they meet as humans, not as labels.

Care for yourself. Lead from love, not exhaustion. Peace work that burns you out becomes part of the problem. Guard your vitality so you can paddle for the long journey.



PEACELAB / CO-LEARNING COMMUNITY HUB FOR PEACEBUILDERS

Country:

Russia

Since when:

2024

[www](#)**Head of organisation/ persona:**Vlad Sakovich
Co-founder**Main projects:**

- PeaceLab's series of workshops on "civic peace-building"
- PeaceLab Circle as a community space for those interested

Practice regions:

Russia

Impact chain:

1 000

Target Audience:Broad range of citizens (everyone), young leaders, professionals
All ages**Audience size per intervention**

- Medium Groups (11–50 people)
- Large Groups (50–100 people)

Type of Delivery:

Online

**Facilitators/ mentors**

A small multi-competent agile team

Special training or supervision

No

Specific digital tools

Zoom, social media, website

This practice is

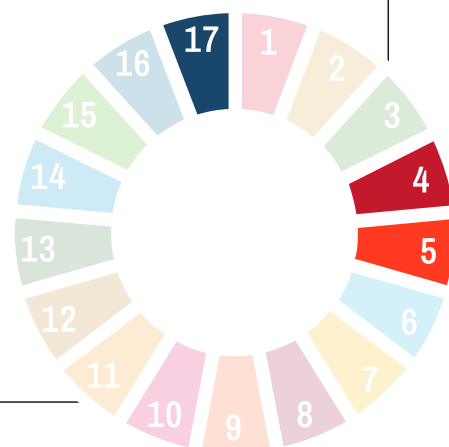
a series of interventions

3 keywords:

civic, co-learning, peacebuilding

Type of conflict:

- Pre-conflict condition
- Conflict Development/ Crisis
- Conflict Escalation
- Post-Conflict Reconstruction



This practice is implemented in the field of *learning and community building*.

It uses *facilitation, foresight and community dialogues, volunteering, trainings, workshops, other educational interventions*.

Theories or frameworks used:

- *New wars / old wars and Human Security concepts by Mary Kaldor;*
- *Deep Democracy approach (by A. Mindell, et al);*
- *Collective trauma;*
- *Intractable conflict transformation;*
- *Narrative mediation;*

These and other frameworks are intrinsically included by the team and/or the experts to form our community's common view, but not as specific applications so far.

This practice aims to develop *broad understanding of peacebuilding scene and especially civic (grassroots) peacebuilding, and revive hope that peacebuilding is possible, urgent and feasible nowadays*.

YOUTHX YOUTH / WEAVERSHIP

Country:

USA

Since when:

2021

[www](#)

**Head of organisation/
persona:**

Zineb Mouhyi
Co-Founder

Main projects:

Weavership

Practice regions:

80 countries

Impact chain:

200

Target Audience:

local community,
young leaders,
students

- Young Adults (18–35)
- Adults (36–60)

**Audience size
per intervention**

Medium Groups
(11–50 people)

Type of Delivery:

Online


**Facilitators/
mentors**

Needed

**Special training
or supervision**

No

**Specific
digital tools**

No

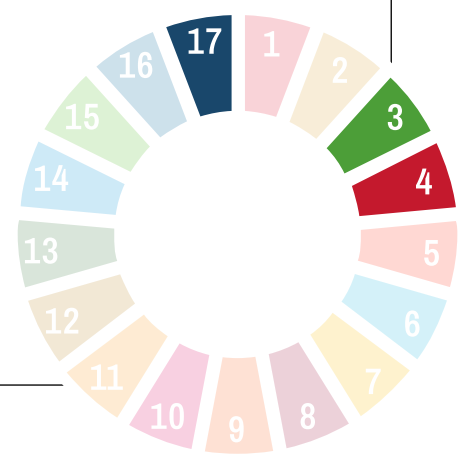
This practice is
a series of
interventions

3 keywords:

Life-affirming, Kinship,
Youth power

Type of conflict:

- Pre-conflict condition
- Post-Conflict
Reconstruction



This practice is implemented in the following fields: *governance and policymaking, family and social sphere Education.*

It uses *facilitation, foresight and community dialogues, trainings, workshops, other educational interventions, embodiment, radical imagination.*

This practice draws from *Integral theory, Spiral Dynamics, Art of Hosting Meaningful Conversations, Mediation techniques and theories, basic psychology.*

This practice aims to develop: *Embracing & Embodying an Interbeing Worldview, Creating & Growing Collaborative Communities, Cultivating Learning Ecosystems, Understanding the separation worldview and its impacts, Recognizing and shifting cognitive frames, Practicing continuous inquiry.*



Zineb Mouhyi

**YOUTHXYOUTH
CO-FOUNDER**

Q: What is your personal story towards peacebuilding? How did you get engaged in this work?

Zineb:

I have to be honest: the word peace doesn't sound the same to me anymore. In the past few years, it has felt heavy, even hypocritical, because it is often used while real violence continues. That pushed me to go deeper into what peace actually means in practice. I grew up in a big family "village" in Morocco. That experience of being surrounded by care and community shaped me.

Later, I co-founded YouthxYouth because I saw how young people, like myself, carry both wounds and wisdom. We want to create spaces where we can learn, unlearn, and act together. Moving my family to Canada was also a turning point. It made me ask what "safety" means when systems, borders, and politics can harm us. For me, peacebuilding is not just about stopping wars. It is about naming the violence—physical, economic, cognitive, and spiritual—that shapes our daily lives, and finding ways to unlearn it together.

Q: What methods are you using and implementing for peacebuilding?

Zineb:

At YouthxYouth, we practice what I call weavership. It is a 10-month journey where young people learn to create change through relationships. We move in a spiral—from weaving the self, to relationships, to communities, organisations, ecosystems, movements, and even with nature and technology. Every session includes embodiment practices because peace has to

be lived in the body, not just the mind. Participants are placed in multiple layers of support: a cohort, a study group, a buddy, and an “uplifter.”

This builds care and accountability into the structure. We also examine the systems I call ‘empire’—institutions, ideologies, and tools that normalise domination. Together we map harms: military and borders (physical), debt and exploitation (economic), education and media (cognitive), and isolation or dehumanising language (spiritual). Then we learn to resist and unlearn them. For me, it is not about telling youth what to do but helping them build the clarity and confidence to act in their own contexts.

Q: Why does this work for peacebuilding?

Zineb:

It works because our means and ends are the same. If we want peaceful futures, we need to practice them now. Embodiment helps us release trauma. Community scaffolding builds trust. Sharp analysis enables us to identify the root causes of violence, not just its symptoms. Together, this makes us less afraid, more connected, and clearer in our choices.

Peaceful futures are built step by step: when we slow down, when we refuse dehumanising language, when we make decisions by consent, when we repair harm instead of hiding it. This may sound small, but it grows. I have seen young people start projects that combine efficient actions with bigger narratives—for example, setting up a community kitchen while also hosting dialogue circles and media-literacy workshops. In this way, peace becomes real: people eat together, learn together, and begin to trust again. For me, this is how we contribute to peaceful futures: by aligning practice with vision and keeping life sacred at the centre.



Q: Where can we observe the effects—short-term, mid-term, and long-term?**Zineb:**

In the short term, I see people feeling calmer and clearer. A simple breath practice at the start of a meeting, or agreeing on a few words like “life is sacred,” already shifts the atmosphere.

In the mid-term, practices travel. In our hubs, for example, youth in the Nakivale refugee settlement have used these tools to build understanding between refugees and local residents. They train teachers, host bridging dialogues, and prevent cycles of violence from repeating.

In the long term, these habits start to change the culture. Organisations adopt restorative practices, alumni mentor new cohorts, and communities design their own roadmaps for safety, dignity, and food security.

Over time, I see less tolerance for hate speech, stronger alliances across groups, and projects that connect material care with deeper story-changing work. This is slow work, but it is real. Step by step, it reshapes how we live together.



Q: How do you measure the impact?**Zineb:**

The impact of peace work is hard to measure, but we try. On a personal level, participants reflect on how they respond to conflict before and after the program. On a relational level, we look at trust, belonging, and how well groups repair harm when it happens. On a community level, we count concrete actions—dialogues hosted, teachers trained, projects sustained. But numbers are not enough. We also collect stories, reflections, and examples of change.

For me, the real measure is durability: do practices survive pressure? Do people keep using them when the program ends? Do young leaders feel confident enough to share them in their own communities? If the answer is yes, then impact is there. Of course, we also face challenges: many youth burn out because resources are limited. That too is an impact measure—if the system cannot sustain us, then the system itself must change.

Q: What could youth leaders do as first steps toward peaceful futures?**Zineb:**

My advice is: start small and start close.

Begin with your body: take one minute of breath before meetings, and end with gratitude.

Pay attention to your words: never use language that dehumanises, and always ask, “Does this honour life as sacred?”

Build a tiny circle: one buddy, one small group, and one elder you trust. Meet weekly. Map the harms and helpers in your community—physical (safety), economic (hunger), cognitive (media), and spiritual (belonging).

Choose one lever you can move in the next month. For example, run a listening circle at school, start a peer mediation team, or combine a community kitchen with a space for dialogue.

Practice prefiguration: rotate roles, decide by consent, and repair harm quickly. And don’t do it alone—connect your struggle with others, whether they work on food, housing, or climate.

Peace is not abstract. It is the meal we share, the rumour we repair, and the meeting that ends with less fear than it began.

FUNDACIÓN ETICA VISIONARIA (FEV) / ENDING EXISTENTIAL POVERTY

Country:

Costa Rica

Since when:

2000

[www](http://www.fev.org)**Head of organisation/ persona:**Jan Hurwitch
Founder-Director**Main projects:**

Ending existential poverty

Practice regions:Latin America &
Caribbean region**Target Audience:**broad range of citizens
(everyone)
All ages (18–60+)**Audience size per intervention**

- 1-on-1
- Variable Groups (2–100 people)

Type of Delivery:

Blended (hybrid) delivery

**Facilitators/ mentors**
Needed**Special training or supervision**
Necessary**Specific digital tools**
No**This practice is**
a series of interventions**3 keywords:**inner peace/resilience,
ethical leadership, building cultures of peace**Type of conflict:**

- Pre-conflict condition
- Post-Conflict Reconstruction



This practice is implemented in the following fields: *economy and entrepreneurship for peace, art and culture governance and policymaking, climate actions, gender equality, family and social sphere, law and justice, values clarification/ personal insight transforming trauma/ relational encounters.*

It uses *art and culture, practical conflict resolution or transformation, interest-based negotiations or mediation facilitation, foresight and community dialogues, volunteering, psychological/ legal/ financial consulting or coaching restorative justice practices trainings, workshops, other educational interventions.*

Theories and Frameworks used:

- Trauma transformation: Gabor Mate, Tara Brach & James Gordon
- Human Rights: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Buddhist Economics, Florentin Melendez, Ending Existential
- Poverty: 15 practices to live the Way
- Nature's Rights: Declaration of Principles for the Conscious Evolution of Mother Earth (Jorge Calderon), The Earth Charter
- UN :Our Common Agenda 2030, Pact for the Future.

This practice aims to develop: *compassion, self-understanding, cross-cultural communication, empathy, community building, dialogue, values & rights clarification, innovation.*



Jan Hurwitch

**FUNDACIÓN ÉTICA
VISIONARIA
FOUNDER-DIRECTOR**

Q: What is your personal story towards peacebuilding? How did you get engaged in this work?

Jan:

I've cared about poverty for as long as I can remember. As a child in Lima, I once brought a neighbour girl home for a bath and gave her my favourite dress. That early act told me I carry what some call a "compassionate gene." Over the years, I founded NGOs, worked 23 years in an international organisation, and, 25 years ago, started the Visionary Ethics Foundation in Costa Rica. We're a human-rights, foresight-thinking group guided by the UN's Common Agenda and inspired by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights next door. I wake up believing poverty is the worst form of violence. To deepen empathy, I sometimes try living on one or two dollars a day.

At 77, my focus is simple: find ethical, compassionate people, support them, and connect their efforts without making everything "mine." I admire models like The Elders and imagine our own chorus of "youngsters." Some of us are born with a strong sense of compassion; many can cultivate it. All of us can organise better—across ages and borders—to reduce suffering and grow democratic, peaceful cultures.

Q: What methods are you using and implementing for peacebuilding?

Jan:

I start with inner work. As a psychologist and Buddhist practitioner, I see clarity as an ongoing process. I pay close attention to my emotions, apologize when I overreact, and stay committed to tough conversations. I also

adapt to different cultures: for instance, in Costa Rica, I handled a tense situation in a particular way, but in Haiti, I would approach it differently. Additionally, I believe in ‘empowering by naming’: when local officials build consensus and include everyone, I openly acknowledge, “This is democracy in action.” When people see their own power, they stand taller and more confident.

Institutionally, I believe dialogue beats control every time. When it comes to integrating AI into classrooms, I champion universities that foster a collaborative spirit—bringing students, faculty, and administrators together to set norms collectively—rather than imposing rules from above. I call this approach “transformational educators.”

Foresight is another essential tool in our kit. Through group scenario planning, we ignite complex thinking and democratic dialogue, helping us stay grounded even as we dream of better futures. I work across institutions, forging connections rather than creating silos, and I prioritise intergenerational practices: truly listening to youth and co-creating with them. For instance, imagine monthly circles where students and teachers come together to draft shared principles on technology use and conflict resolution, then test and refine them in real school settings.

Q: Why does this work for peacebuilding?

Jan:

Humility is key—especially in managing my ego. I provide tools but steer clear of rigid recipes. People need to adapt ideas to their own culture and context. I know a method works when someone comes back, smiling, saying they have tried it in their own way. Thoughtful process design is also crucial. Scenarios foster inclusive dialogue. Naming good practices boosts confidence. Prioritising co-creation over control fosters trust. These habits help us move from merely surviving in crises to fostering grounded, radical hope.

I admire Mandela’s approach of leading from behind: allowing natural leaders to step forward while I provide support and manage the background. Multicultural sensitivity is crucial. Having lived in 11 countries and worked in many more, I believe peaceful practice must align with local norms. Over time, these methods encourage everyday democratic behaviours—such as listening, inclusion, and shared decision-making—and help turn learners into leaders. This is how Peaceful Futures develops: not through a single major event, but through numerous small, human-scale changes that foster trust, amplify voices, and lessen the likelihood of violence. For example, youth might facilitate a community discussion with elders, providing context and memory; I stay in the background, offering prompts only when necessary.

Q: Where can we observe the effects—short-term, mid-term, and long-term?

Jan:

In the short term, I observe improved conversations and attitude changes, such as someone apologising and reopening dialogue, and educators shifting from policing to facilitating. A local official realises that daily choices already support inclusion. Over the medium term, practices spread: scenario workshops inspire action, teams adopt co-creation norms, individuals begin identifying democratic behaviors in meetings, and trust starts to rebuild especially in regions like Latin America, where mistrust is common. I've returned years later to find schools being constructed or programs launched, often inspired by ongoing discussions after workshops. Long-term, these efforts strengthen democracy and resilience, helping people resolve conflicts peacefully, resist authoritarian tendencies, and maintain complex thinking during crises. Cultural change happens as daily behaviors shift, like incorporating popular theater into schools to practice voice, rights, and anti-authoritarian skills. Effects tend to develop gradually and unevenly, with many stories emerging years later, such as "That one line you offered changed how we led." I accept this emergence. Peaceful futures grow naturally, not through engineering, and are reflected in both visible initiatives and deeper, more durable habits.

Q: How do you measure the impact?

Jan:

I'm honest: strict evaluation can overlook important aspects and even distort practice. However, I believe in measuring both attitudes and behaviors. Psychology provides tools for attitude change, but behavioural change is the true indicator. Did people act differently—speak more openly, reduce domestic violence, include new voices, or start that school? Counting elections or attendance alone isn't enough; we need to assess how daily freedoms evolve and whether institutions act more democratically.

I no longer conduct large-scale evaluations due to resource limitations and security concerns in some countries that prohibit recordings. Instead, I develop culturally respectful tools that connect attitudes with behaviours. I value qualitative methods like interviews, observations, and follow-ups months later, which reveal the lasting impact beyond immediate surveys. Ensuring confidentiality is crucial; in places like Haiti, avoiding recordings helps people speak freely.

My approach is "good-enough" mixed methods- tracking specific behaviours and gathering stories of practice change without forcing everything into narrow metrics. For example, monitor instances of shared decision-making in a school over six months, along with brief narratives from students and teachers about how conflicts were managed differently.

Q: What could youth leaders do as first steps toward peaceful futures?**Jan:**

Start internally by acknowledging your emotions, apologising when necessary, and returning to challenging conversations, understanding that clarity is cultivated through practice.

Manage your ego by sharing tools and allowing others to adapt them, leading subtly from behind. Foster dialogue instead of control by bringing peers, elders, and officials together to collaboratively set norms on pressing issues like AI, safety, or student voice.

Practice foresight collectively through simple four-scenario exercises—comparing best- and worst-case outcomes—to develop complex thinking and realistic hope.

Use the approach of “Empower by naming”: clearly tell people when their everyday actions reflect democratic practice, changing how they view themselves.

Work across institutions by connecting and amplifying existing efforts across generations instead of rebranding everything.

Maintain resilience by clearly seeing the crisis and moving forward—avoid stagnation. Begin with small, daily, local actions, such as hosting monthly open circles at school, tracking behavioural changes, inviting allies from different organisations, and recognising democratic behaviours after each gathering. Over time, create a brief practice log for others to replicate and tailor.





Jon Ramer

**COMPASSION GAMES
FOUNDER**

Q: What is your personal story towards peacebuilding? How did you get engaged in this work?

Jon:

My story is shaped by both my family and by what I've seen in our culture. My father was willing to die for this country, and that gave me a strong sense of responsibility and obligation to serve. Over the years, I have watched as broadcast media evolved into social media. It promised connection, but what it really created was isolation, comparison, and despair.

I realised we needed another way—what I call “collaborative media”. Instead of scrolling and streaming, we need to start dreaming and creating together. That became my life's work: to build platforms and experiences that bring people together in meaningful ways. That's why I helped found the Compassion Games, the Synergised Impact Network Exchange (SINE), and now the One World platform. There are ways for us to collaborate and evolve our potential as one human family.

Q: What methods are you using and implementing for peacebuilding?

Jon:

In One World, people are invited to declare their purpose, form teams, and take on missions together. The design is influenced by the Radical Collaboration by TEEMING Up course, which helps people articulate purpose, look at the paradigms they operate in, and move towards the paradigm we call “evolving potential.”

Another important part of our practice is ceremony. Every day my wife Sommer and I begin with what we call a Harmony Huddle. We turn to the east to affirm “balance in living”, to the south to affirm “harmony in communication”, to the west to affirm “peace in the family”, to the north to affirm “beauty in the environment”, and then above and below we affirm joy in our hearts, our hearth and our home. Starting the day this way grounds us and brings us into balance with each other and all life.

We also create collective experiences through the Compassion Games, through Peace Week, and now through One World Rising with a global powwow. The drumbeat is the heartbeat of Mother Earth. These gatherings bring people together across cultures and distances. They are a kind of social medicine.

Q: Why does this work for peacebuilding?

Jon:

What works is that these practices bring us back into balance. We are living in a time of great disconnection—from ourselves, from each other, and from the natural world. When we gather in ceremony, when we share missions, when we know our watershed and act as stewards of it, we remember who we are.

For me, it starts with the inner work—what Patricia Anne Davis calls “intrapersonal holiness” for “interpersonal wholeness”. We self-regulate, then co-regulate. From there, we can act locally, scale bioregionally, and synergize globally. That pattern makes it possible for us to learn from each other and weave a culture of peace. That is how we contribute to Peaceful Futures.

Q: Where can we observe the effects—short-term, mid-term, and long-term?

Jon:

In the short term, the change is immediate: people feel connected. They share a rhythm, they laugh, they tell a story, they realize they are not alone.

In the mid term, the practices take root. People begin to ground themselves daily, they form teams, they take care of their local environments. Communities move from isolation into collaboration.

In the long term, the vision is cultural transformation. We want to see resources redirected from war-making to life-making. We want to see bioregional governance, with people acting as stewards of their watersheds while connecting globally. And we want networks of solidarity that endure, so peace becomes the way we live, not just something we talk about.

Q: How do you measure the impact?**Jon:**

We look at impact in different ways. Right after events and missions, we collect reflections and testimonials. We also track participation, pledges, and the number of teams formed.

Over time, we ask whether the practices last. Are people still grounding themselves? Are communities still collaborating? Are stewardship projects expanding? We also partner with researchers to study these shifts.

And now we are using AI to help us hear our collective voice. For example, when hundreds of people signed the Binding Planetary Peace Treaty to End War, AI summarized their words into a statement everyone could recognize as their own. That ability to hear ourselves together is a powerful form of measurement.

Q: What could youth leaders do as first steps toward peaceful futures?**Jon:**

First, take back your attention. Don't waste your life on endless scrolling. Use your time to create and collaborate.

Second, begin a daily practice that grounds you. It can be as simple as a few minutes to breathe and affirm balance.

Third, know your watershed. Find out where your water comes from. That simple knowledge connects you to the land and to life.

Fourth, gather peers and form a team. Declare your purpose, take one action, and support each other.

And finally, link up with the global movement. Join the Compassion Games, take part in Peace Week, or connect with One World missions. When you act locally and connect globally, you become part of something much larger than yourself. That is how youth can begin building Peaceful Futures.



Gaby Arenas

**TAAP
CO-CHIEF FACILITATOR**

Q: What is your personal story towards peacebuilding? How did you get engaged in this work?

Gaby:

I began my experience in Venezuela in 2008, a time when homicide and kidnapping rates were soaring, impacting daily life with widespread fear. The annual homicides escalated from 1,000 to between 18,000 and 24,000 during the worst years. Additionally, around 70 million illegal weapons were circulating on the streets, and over 1,191 illegal gangs operated within cities. Nearly everyone had a personal story of knowing someone who had been robbed, kidnapped, or murdered.

When I was working at a private foundation for one of the biggest TV channels, I took artists and athletes into neighbourhoods to encourage kids to stay in school and stay out of gangs. One day, a teenage boy told me, "There's no other future for us. I know that I'm gonna be part of the gang even if I don't want to". I had a six-month-old daughter at the time, and something in me said, 'We need to do something.'

My partner Carlos and I recognised this need to act and took two tracks. He explored how art can influence young people. I joined a master's degree to research what worked in approximately 30 conflict settings—Sierra Leone, El Salvador, Brazil, the Congo, Burundi, and others. Across all those places, I found one constant: arts-based programs were present wherever prevention succeeded. That insight shifted us. We learned from one of the co-creators of the Guggenheim and MoMA in New York that he turned "leader of the gang" into "artist of the block." In 2014, as government pressure and threats increased, we had to leave Venezuela and move to Colombia.

Q: What methods are you using and implementing for peacebuilding?**Gaby:**

I always start with listening. People have to speak—or draw, write, sing, or take photos—about what they’ve lived. Especially, victims of the violence need to be heard. After trauma, many don’t want to talk, so any expressive tool opens a complicated conversation and creates special spaces in the communities. You don’t need many resources—only time and willingness to listen.

Furthermore, the facilitators implement active reflection on what they hear, what the community is trying to convey, and build simple systemic maps: Who is involved? What are the sources of the problem? Then we co-create with the community—even bringing together victims and former perpetrators. Forgiveness and reconciliation are essential for co-creation and peacebuilding.

Lastly, but not least, negotiations and transformation change. I insist on inclusive negotiation tables, comprising local government, schools, parents, elders, indigenous leaders, and, crucially, children and youth. I will insist on engaging communities, youth and children in these processes. People who are omitted won’t own the outcome.

Q: Why does this work for peacebuilding?**Gaby:**

It works because it shifts community values and transforms the narratives. When ‘success’ is defined by a gang leader, kids tend to follow that path. By highlighting creators, artists, and problem-solvers, we change this trajectory.

Artistic expression reduces shame, uncovers truth, and helps heal trauma, empowering people without forcing them to disclose. Co-creation fosters shared ownership, resulting in solutions that people are more likely to adopt. Inclusive negotiation ensures commitments are genuine, as all affected parties—including children and young people—are involved.

Lastly, violence has become a profitable industry, unfortunately. Many violent groups are linked to lucrative sectors, and a lack of diverse income streams fuels this cycle. Peace can flourish when violence is no longer a profitable option. We educate young people to develop a range of skills and tap into innovative, often digital, resources that don’t need infrastructure, allowing them to earn a living without resorting to armed groups.

Our approach is open-source, translated, and adaptable—from refugee camps to urban schools. Currently, our tools aid conflict-affected communities such as Ukraine, refugees in Bangladesh and Thailand, and victims of school bullying in Ireland and Qatar.

Q: Where can we observe the effects—short-term, mid-term, and long-term?

Gaby:

Creating opportunities for people to express themselves and work through trauma is essential for initiating peace-building efforts. In the short term, art provides a safe outlet for expression without the pressure to share personal details. Listening circles that incorporate expressive activities help participants open up and start communicating.

Our strategy emphasises co-creation over direct intervention—bringing people together for forgiveness and reconciliation. In the mid-term, we've seen young individuals shift focus from violence to creative pursuits. Not everyone needs to own a farm; we can support photographers, producers, and videographers. For instance, a young leader with millions of YouTube followers now earns 10 times more than he did as part of a gang.

Looking ahead, community investments in healing, narrative change, and new income sources can sustain peace for decades. Ignoring forgiveness often leads to conflicts reemerging under different names. Our network has helped over 200 young people leave violence and start businesses, and that means thousands of lives are saved.

Q: How do you measure the impact?

Gaby:

As a researcher, I am passionate about measurement. We employ a mixed-methods approach and triangulation to gather data. Quantitatively, we monitor indicators specific to each site, such as homicide, kidnapping, sexual harassment, and bullying rates. Since we conduct extensive geographic research within communities, we usually remain there for at least 5 to 10 years to understand how the community evolves.

On the qualitative side, conduct interviews and try to track the differences in the roles of the people who have been involved in the process, triangulating that with other data. Communities that change their mindset related to innovation have less possibility of having conflict because they are more focused on how to improve the life for everyone than extracting resources or just trying to get more.

Q: What could youth leaders do as first steps toward peaceful futures?**Gaby:**

The first thing we always do when we arrive in a community is listen. A victim of violence needs to talk about it, and sometimes not only speak but draw, write, or sing about it. Even people who say, “I don’t draw,” end up expressing something if you give them a piece of blank paper, colours, and time.

From the facilitators’ perspective, allocate time to review what was said and develop a map of what the community is trying to communicate.

Open the door to co-creation with the community, ensuring indigenous groups, mothers, teachers, children, and youth are all included. Everyone’s voice must be heard and their needs considered in the negotiation.



Catalina Cock Duque

**MI SANGRE
PRESIDENT**

Q: What is your personal story towards peacebuilding? How did you get engaged in this work?

Catalina:

I grew up in Colombia, a country shaped by the longest armed conflict in Latin America. My childhood held beauty—family, nature—but also bombs, kidnappings, and fear. A memory that still lives in me is learning that the kidnapped neighbours had been killed. That shock taught me how fragile life is. It also gave me the energy to act now, not “someday.”

Later, as a student, I returned to Medellín to intern in a settlement known for its association with hired killers. I felt real fear. A young man who “looked” like a sicario met me, put a hand on my shoulder, and said, “I’m as afraid to go to your neighbourhood as you are to come to mine.” That sentence cracked my world open. I saw there aren’t “good” and “bad” neighbourhoods—only people, pain, and potential. I became committed to weaving across divides.

Before engaging in peacebuilding, I worked on regenerative livelihoods in conflict zones, including establishing a global standard for ecological artisanal gold. Then a very well known musician who cared about peace invited me to co-create a foundation. We started from zero. He served as an ambassador, inspiring many and opening significant doors; I led the design and growth. That’s how Mi Sangre was born—and how I stepped fully into the work.

Q: What methods are you using and implementing for peacebuilding?**Catalina:**

Our core work is to connect and strengthen “extraordinary leaders”—people rooted in self-awareness, community care, and place. We practice what we call conscious leadership and weaving: inner development plus relationship-building across differences. In schools, we train teachers to use simple, repeatable tools: learning circles, questions at the centre, and ten “art languages” (like theatre, dance, photography) to build social-emotional skills: self-awareness, empathy, stress regulation, assertive communication, conflict resolution, critical thinking, and healthy relationships. Students then create team projects to solve a conflict they choose—bullying, gender inequality, or waste, for example—so skills become actions.

In communities, we go deeper. We help diverse cohorts slow down, be present, understand the root causes of conflict and let go of old stories before creating solutions. They map root causes, do interviews and research, and then launch initiatives—from a hip-hop “nursery” that keeps kids out of gangs to coalitions that reopen public spaces, to influencing public policy. We also convene multi-stakeholder labs on complex issues, (e.g., gender-based violence), inspired by Theory U, bringing together representatives from police, churches, teachers, the judiciary, survivors, youth, and even motor-taxi drivers to co-design shared responses. Finally, we support mental health with open practices (journaling, nature connection, meditation) so people can stay centred while they lead.

Q: Why does this work for peacebuilding?**Catalina:**

It works because we meet people where conflict actually lives: inside us, between us, and in our systems.

First, inner work: when leaders can name emotions, regulate stress, and listen deeply, they stop fueling cycles of reactivity.

Second, relational work: circles and weaving rebuild trust across lines of class, ideology, age, and past violence. When former gang members, public officials, and teachers solve a problem together, they don’t just produce a program—they rewrite the social fabric.

Third, structural work: by moving resources and rules (like reopening parks, changing complaint routes for survivors, or integrating “new masculinities” in school curricula), communities change the conditions that spark harm.

These layers reinforce each other. A student who learns empathy then co-leads a project; the project wins allies; allies change local policy; policy protects the next generation. Peaceful Futures grow when people regularly practice peace, not only negotiate it. Our approach is simple by design, so others can copy it. For example, any school can run circles; any town can

map root causes with residents; any lab can invite unusual allies. Scale comes from replication—many hands practising peace every week.

Q: Where can we observe the effects—short-term, mid-term, and long-term?

Catalina:

Short term (months): classrooms get calmer; students name emotions and resolve conflicts; teachers report easier management; young people form teams and launch projects. In communities, diverse cohorts start listening sessions, interviews, and data walks; trust rises as people feel seen. We also see quick wins, such as weekend activities in parks or basic safety fixes (e.g., lights, visibility).

Midterm (1–3 years): projects mature into programs with partners. A former gang member builds a hip-hop school serving hundreds after class; a women-led theatre group shifts machismo narratives; a city centre coalition mobilises significant public funds to reopen spaces and hires local groups to animate them. Multi-stakeholder labs co-create new protocols: e.g., a private room and trained staff for receiving complaints, a mapped route of attention for survivors, and curricula on gender empowerment and new masculinities. Youth networks self-organize campaigns against polarisation and for conscious voting across 250+ municipalities. Some alumni run for office and win.

Long term (3–10+ years): beliefs, norms, and policies shift. Public spaces stay open and lively; recruitment into armed groups drops; community media reduces polarisation; local governments budget for prevention; alumni continue as facilitators, entrepreneurs, or public servants. The social tissue—relationships—gets thicker and more resilient.

Q: How do you measure the impact?

Catalina:

We upgraded our measurement to track three layers.

Individual transformations: we use validated pre- and post-surveys (with control groups) to assess social-emotional and leadership skills, so we can compare with international benchmarks.

Relational transformations: we measure new ties, bridging connections, and trust gains—essentially social capital growth—using recognised tools from network and trust research.

Structural changes: we document initiatives that move rules, resources, and narratives—like funds mobilised to reopen parks, new complaint protocols, or school curricula adopted. We can't claim every change, so we sample rigorously and verify contributions through stakeholder interviews and records.

Across programs, we tag youth initiatives by SDG to see where impact clusters. The data loops back into practice. For example, when trust measures lag between two groups, we adjust facilitation (more presencing, smaller mixed circles). If survey data indicates stress mismanagement, we incorporate mental health routines into sessions. In short, we quantify what's measurable, narrate what's emergent, and always triangulate (self-report, observation, external validation). This helps us stay honest, improve methods, and show funders and communities what's working—and why.

Q: What could youth leaders do as first steps toward peaceful futures?

Catalina:

Start small, start weekly, start together.

First, build inner steadiness: pick one practice and repeat—morning journaling, a five-minute breath, or a nature walk. (For example, set a reminder and trade check-ins with a friend.)

Second, form a micro-circle of 5–7 peers. Meet every week, sit in a circle, and take turns speaking with a talking piece. Begin with one question: “What conflict do we feel around us?”

Third, look for root causes before solutions: interview five people you disagree with, map what you hear on a wall, and highlight shared pain.

Fourth, prototype fast: choose one leverage point you can shift in 30 days—lighting a dark path, a peer-mediation crew, or a dialogue between rival groups. (This could look like a Saturday event in a risky park run by mixed teams—youth, parents, local vendors.)

Fifth, invite unusual allies—police, faith leaders, motor-taxi drivers, artists.

Sixth, measure simply: count new relationships, track one behaviour change, and collect a before/after story.

Finally, mind your energy: keep a weekly mental health ritual and rotate roles to avoid burnout. Peace grows from practice.

If you repeat these steps, your circle becomes a living community—and a seed of a Peaceful Future.

**Yiannis Laouris****FUTURE WORLDS CENTER
CEO AND LEAD SCIENTIST**

Q: What is your personal story towards peacebuilding? How did you get engaged in this work?

Yiannis:

The turning point was accidental. I was “begged” to join a bi-communal workshop in Cyprus when meeting across the divide was still costly. I mainly went out of curiosity—and because they promised a rare visit to the other side. On day one, a facilitator asked someone to separate “Greeks” and “Turks” just by looking. He got it wrong, and most people raised their hands from the “wrong” side. In a second, I saw my own stereotypes cracking. It reminded me how easily stories we grow up with become “truth.”

From there, two lessons shaped me. First, most public talk is about positions (“the army must leave”), while real progress starts from interests (“we all want safety and freedom”). Second, listening changes the room. When you hear the other side’s pain, you stop arguing to win and start looking for the third path. Since then, I’ve tried to practice “methodologies of talking” or “structured methodologies”—processes that help people see common ground and design next steps. Take TV, for instance. You rarely hear someone say, ‘You’ve convinced me.’ They argue their positions, never moving to a shared ground or interest. That first workshop didn’t just teach me; it completely reoriented my life. I wouldn’t be doing this work without that week.

Q: What methods are you using and implementing for peacebuilding?**Yiannis:**

My main tool is Structured Democratic Dialogue (SDD)—a way to resolve a conflict without letting charisma, verbosity, or status dominate. We start with a triggering question (vision, obstacles, or actions). People contribute short statements in rounds, using structured brainstorming, resulting in over fifty or even hundreds of visions. Then we clarify what each statement really means (surprisingly, titles often hide very different ideas). Next, we cluster, take a preliminary vote, and map influence—which ideas enable others. The map reveals the most effective actions and their starting points, which are often opposite to the initial intuitive solutions.

As we progress, I also use SMART thinking (make actions Specific, Measurable, Assignable, Realistic, Time-bound)—but only after creativity, because feasibility too early kills new ideas. Lately, I've experimented with "triplets": each person pitches a linked vision–obstacle–action set. It's engaging and faster. Technology can help: years ago, we used IdeaPrism so participants pitched from their phones and ideas were uploaded in real time; tools like that make sessions more lively and efficient, as you're able to gather over 50 ideas within 10–15 minutes. For example, you could gather 12–25 diverse participants, two rounds of inputs, rapid clarifications, and a simple influence map that highlights three "root" actions to begin with. The method is participatory, transparent, and portable—people can keep using a "lite" version locally after the workshop.

Q: Why does this work for peacebuilding?**Yiannis:**

SDD works because it neutralizes what I call "neuropathologies of communication"—groupthink, forced decisions, voting traps, and endless position fights. We slow down the fast, binary logic of debate and let people map influences to discover connections. Often, the five actions people initially vote for are not the ones that actually unlock the system; mapping influence exposes the real leverage. Participants feel happy if they see effective results.

It also reframes the whole game: from "who wins land or credit" to center about the people living there, their dignity, their freedom, their safety. When we shift from prediction to design—from forecasting doom to constructing pathways—participants feel ownership, not paralysis. happens when people propose actions themselves, defend them, and get support. Then they make it happen.

Finally, the process is humane. It allows pain and apology to surface alongside practical steps. That combination—recognize wounds, then co-design doable projects—creates momentum. It's not magic. It's disciplined empathy plus systems thinking, and it points people toward concrete, peaceful futures they can actually build.

Q: Where can we observe the effects—short-term, mid-term, and long-term?

Yiannis:

Short-term: people walk away with a clearer understanding. Stereotypes break down, interests align, and a few high-impact actions emerge. The room's tone changes from 'convince' to 'build'. To resolve conflicts, you need to listen and find common ground. This leads to participants suggesting projects, such as NGOs for children of war or school programmes.

Mid-term: language and habits shift. In Cyprus' wine villages project, local leaders who once competed changed their language to collaborate on TV years later. Alumni of the dialogues continue to use phrases like "winner-loser is the wrong frame" or "the pie grows when we work together." This matters: a shared language helps stabilise new behaviour.

Long-term: people stay on the path. Many who participated in dialogues in the 1990s remain active. Some youth from Africa and Latin America who attended week-long "Inventing Democracy" workshops later founded NGOs, kept projects alive, and credit the process for their trajectory. Personally, that first workshop permanently re-oriented my life. Is every case a success? No. However, we observe a consistent pattern: deep, participatory design fosters durable commitment and practical collaboration, even where traditional debates have failed.

Q: How do you measure the impact?

Yiannis:

While we've often relied on observational data rather than formal longitudinal studies, we still see clear signs of impact. Alumni stay engaged years after the programme; leaders adapt their public language; concrete projects get off the ground and thrive; and collaboration between communities increases, replacing competition. For instance, in Cyprus, village leaders who once competed against each other now work together on shared development projects, and young people who participate in youth cohorts often go on to found or lead civic groups. The key takeaway remains the same: when people co-create and own the process, the result is lasting change—measured by sustained action, not only by how satisfied they are with the workshops.

Q: What could youth leaders do as first steps toward peaceful futures?**Yiannis:**

Step 1: gather a diverse micro-circle (12–20 people) who care.

Step 2: ask one triggering question (vision, obstacle, or action) and collect one-sentence inputs in rounds.

Step 3: Clarify the top ideas—titles hide different meanings.

Step 4: sketch a quick influence map (which actions unlock others).

Step 5: Choose 1–2 SMART projects you can own

Finally, don't wait for perfect tools or big grants. A "lite" SDD session in a classroom, community hall, or videocall can spark real movement. Own one action, show results, and your map—and your coalition—will grow.

Peaceful Futures—List of Partners



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ATLAS OF PEACEFUL FUTURES PRACTICES

A Practitioner's Guide to Peace-Based Civilization

By Pavel Luksha & Ilia Lysenko

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