

# Transforming conflict through stories: Peace, power and narratives



ROTARY PEACE FELLOWS  
**CLASS XVII**

ANNUAL SEMINAR BOOKLET 2020

# Remarks from the Director



# Associate Professor Morgan Brigg

Director, The University of Queensland  
Rotary Peace Centre

I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands on which The University of Queensland and the Rotary Peace Centre operate. On behalf of Centre staff and Fellows, I pay my respects to the Traditional Owners' Ancestors and their descendants who continue cultural and spiritual connections to Country. I recognise their valuable contributions to Australian and global society.

It is my pleasure to write to you in my first year as Director of UQ's Rotary Peace Centre. I stood in as Director when my colleague Dr Melissa Curley was on leave in 2017, and with that experience as a foundation, I am excited to have the opportunity to serve on a more ongoing basis. As I take up the role, I want to acknowledge Melissa's unstinting contribution to the Centre. The UQ Rotary Peace Centre rests on pillars of excellent relationships with Rotarians and The Rotary Foundation as well as first-rate institutional standing at The University of Queensland. The strength of these foundations are testament to Melissa's sustained efforts.

I also write to you with mixed feelings because in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic we are unable to hold our Annual UQ Rotary Peace Fellows' Seminar. This year's seminar would be our 17th. To miss the seminar and all it brings in collaboration and partnership is frustrating and saddening. The disappointment hit home to me when I caught sight of the fellow's poster advertising the seminar on my last day on UQ campus before the university instituted work-from-home arrangements. At that point, we knew that we could not hold a face-to-face event but we were planning to pre-record high-quality video by Class XVII Fellows and hold an online version of the seminar. However, as with so much in recent times, the requirements to respond to the pandemic



overtook our plans such that the document that you are reading is the primary output in place of the usual Annual Seminar.

In these trying circumstances, I want to pay tribute to Class XVII, and particularly to the organising committee for the seminar. Their key priorities in recent months have been the safety and welfare of others as well as honouring their commitments to Rotary and Rotarians. They have had to change directions several times, sometimes in the space of a few days, in response to the rapidly evolving circumstances we have found ourselves in. They have remained calm and committed throughout, even as their best-laid plans were repeatedly cast aside. I also want to record my sincere thanks to Dr Linje Manyozo for his passionate and thoughtful remarks as seminar Guest Speaker, and for his flexibility and alacrity in changing circumstances.

As we grapple with the effects of COVID-19 on lives and livelihoods, the work of Class XVII Fellows and wider peace and conflict efforts are more important than ever. Those affected by conflict are particularly vulnerable in the face of coronavirus and similar crises, whether in conflict zones (where lives, services and economies are shattered by the brutality of war),

in transitional settings, in refugee camps, or in the households of apparently peaceful suburbs. These people, each and every one, command and deserve our best efforts. Some actors have already exploited current circumstances to prosecute conflict, and they will continue to do so. Others, including the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres have called upon conflict actors to respond to the COVID-19 situation by seeking nonviolent means of managing and resolving conflict. These are not mere platitudes; Guterres' call for a global ceasefire has gained traction with parties to several conflicts.

The opportunities for pursuing peace presented by even the challenging times that we find ourselves in highlight that the stories we tell ourselves about conflict and peace do make a difference. Class XVII's theme for this year's seminar, "Transforming Conflict through Stories: Peace, Power and Narratives", challenges us to turn our attention to questions of what stories we will tell of this time, and to how we can continue to become better at strengthening the cause of peace and conflict resolution. In this context, I want to acknowledge and celebrate a remarkable resource that we share: the partnership between Rotary and the School of Political Science and International Studies. The School is delighted to continue to partner with The Rotary Foundation in the Peace Centre's Programme, and to collaborate with partner centres around the globe. We are fast approaching the 20th Anniversary of the UQ Rotary Centre in 2022, and I look forward to deepening our partnership as we approach that remarkable milestone.

The theme chosen by Class XVII Fellows also naturally directs us to their individual engagement with the peace and conflict field, their studies at UQ and, most particularly, their Applied Fieldwork Experiences. I invite you to turn to the Fellows' engaging reflections, beginning from page 16, which stand in for the Fellows' usual presentations at the Annual Seminar. I am sure you will agree that these reflections are testament to the learning and growth of Class XVII Fellows, and their potential to strengthen peace and conflict resolution efforts into the future.

Thank you to everyone involved with the Rotary Peace Fellowship for contributing to the stories of Class XVII Fellows, including Rotarians, counsellors, volunteers, community members and UQ staff. I particularly want to thank Host Area Coordinator Doug St Clair, members of our Rotary Advisory Board, Graduate Centre Manager Diana McCluskey and the administrative support of Tara Henry.

To Class XVII, congratulations on your success in your studies, and my sincere thanks for managing those studies and your contributions to the fellowship with calm and resolve in recent times despite the stressors brought on by the COVID-19 situation. My sincere best wishes for your future efforts in the field of peace and conflict resolution, whatever form they may take.



## Statement from the Host Area Coordinator

# Doug St Clair

Host Area Coordinator,  
Rotary Peace Fellow Program,  
The University of Queensland



Welcome to the Rotary Peace Fellows' Seminar presented by Class XVII. The theme for this year's seminar is "Transforming Conflict Through Stories: Peace, Power and Narratives". As you are aware the format of the seminar has taken on a different look due to current protocols as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Rather than scrapping the seminar totally, the Class XVII fellows have worked together to develop an interesting, informative and thought provoking booklet which can be used in a variety of ways to inform, encourage and enhance interest in, without a doubt, the shining light of all of the programs supported by the Rotary Foundation.

The seminar reflections draw from their studies, and in particular from their Applied Fieldwork Experience (AFE) that individual students undertook over their summer break in a variety of locations around the world. The AFE allows the students to put into practice some of their course learnings. Through sharing their experiences through activities such as this seminar, they can not only involve others, including the Rotarians who have supported them, but also enhance their learnings.

Ultimately when they leave us sometime mid-year, we will be farewelling ten young people who can go out into the world and work to promote peace and reduce conflict and support the ideal of the Rotary Foundation – "Doing Good in the World."

This is my first year in the position of Host Area Coordinator for the Rotary Foundation having taken over from Shaughn Forbes who devoted so much to the program over many years. Shaughn's job was, as mine is, made very easy due to the tremendous support of The University of Queensland Peace Centre Staff, in particular the members of the Rotary Advisory Board, our Director, Associate Professor Morgan Brigg; Graduate Centre Manager, Diana McCluskey; our District Representatives David Field and Leslie Smith; Alumni Representative, Luisa Ryan and of course our Student Representatives Peter Lindsay and Erika Yague.

I also want to thank outgoing Director, Dr Melissa Curley, who guided and supported the Class through 2019 and played a key role in getting the students to where they are today.

I know you will enjoy reading their reflections, and like me, join in wishing them all the best in their future endeavours.

## Annual trip to Canberra

Each year the Rotary Peace Fellows are hosted in Canberra by Rotary clubs. This visit enables the Rotary Peace Fellows to visit our nation's Capital and learn some Australian history, make connections with Rotarians outside Brisbane and present their work to the Canberran Rotarians. For the last few years Garth Britton has organised this trip, and together with his team, the Fellows enjoy a packed itinerary - here are the highlights:

- Visit to Mt Ainslie
- Guided Tour of War Memorial
- Ringing the Peace Bell at Canberra Nara Peace Park
- Visit to the National Museum with a focus on Indigenous displays
- Visit to the Aboriginal Tent Embassy
- Tour of Parliament House with Andrew Leigh, Shadow Assistant Treasurer
- Visit to ASPEN Medical and Australian Civil Military Centre for Career talks
- Visit to Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
- Visit to Development Policy Centre ANU



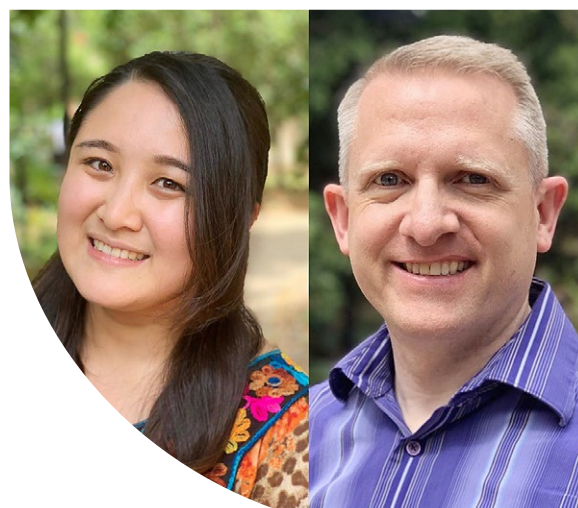
Welcome  
from the  
Peace Fellows  
Class XVII



# Erika Isabel Bulan Yague and Peter Lindsay

Rotary Peace Fellow Class XVII  
Representatives

Class XVII



On behalf of the Rotary Peace Fellows of Class XVII, we express sincere gratitude to the Rotary Foundation for providing this extraordinary opportunity to pursue a Master in Peace and Conflict Studies at The University of Queensland in Meeaan-jin, the Turrbal name for Brisbane, which is the place where we have gratefully come to build our knowledge and skills in pursuit of peace and justice in this world.

Our cohort is a diverse group comprised of activists, practitioners, scholars, and politicians from five continents. Even so, we are bound by common values of leadership and commitment to address the world's injustices and opportunities. This deep personal commitment to peace has given us purpose and strength to push through rigorous coursework and still devote ourselves with enthusiasm to a variety of Rotary engagements and intense practical and professional work during our Applied Fieldwork Experiences. One of the reasons we have been united stems from the individual passion and expertise of each of the fellows that Rotary brought together. Our desires for peace have grown in ways that inspire each other to move forward and achieve more. A second reason is surely because of the support that the Rotary community provided by cultivating the soil which allowed us to grow.

In particular, we recognize a cadre of caring people who have tirelessly made the Rotary Peace Centre and the Peace Fellowship successful. As such, we thank Melissa Curley, Morgan Brigg, and Diana McCluskey for their daily personal investment and support. We thank Doug St Clair and before him Shaughn Forbes. Coordinating the fellowship might be a thankless job at times, but we thank you. 'Also, we warmly acknowledge Leslie Smith, David Field, and our Rotary counsellors and clubs who have opened their arms and hearts to welcome and support us throughout our stay in Brisbane.

This year will be remembered as the year the Peace Fellow Seminar was cancelled due to COVID-19, and yet until recently our cohort has been actively engaged in inventing and planning various online versions of the seminar. But as conditions have rapidly evolved and as we have isolated ourselves at home, the program planning has also undergone several iterations. In the end, we hope to convey through this booklet the astonishing experiences and learnings that have come to us as a result of the fellowship.



Our seminar's theme came about from our own stories of building peace wherein we realised that violent conflicts are not black and white, and yet it is so easy to assume that we know the answers and can provide solutions without often knowing the right questions or the perspectives of populations affected by the conflicts or challenges which we aim to repair. The normal answers and solutions might not be the best answers and solutions, even if they are the ones we come to most eagerly. Poet Laureate Maya Angelou has said, "If you are always trying to be normal, you will never know how amazing you can be", and the Peace Fellowship has opened our thinking to alternative understandings and answers, beyond those we might have assumed to be 'the only way' or 'the right way' or 'the proven way.'

The stories that we will tell reflect a deeper process of challenging the ways things are commonly done and questioning the limitations imposed by constructing narrow views. We've discovered that stories of peace are not just conceptions of one point of view, but rather they reflect positions, interests, needs, and values of many. The way we tell (and retell) stories has the power to destroy or to build, to wound or to heal, and to oppress or to liberate. We would like to share our stories.

As a cohort of Rotary Peace Fellows, we welcome you to our lived experiences where we share stories of learning and reflection in building and sustaining peace. As we share our stories, we also thank you for being part of our stories now and in the future.

*Below: Peter Lindsay (left), Nery Ronatay (centre) and Erika Isabel Bulan (right). Nery organised elements of the seminar and brought attention to both details and broader considerations that made our planning extraordinarily smooth.*



Guest  
Speaker

Dr Linje Manyozo



# Linje Manyozo

Senior Lecturer in Communication  
for Development at RMIT University  
Melbourne, Australia



Linje Manyozo is a community development practitioner and a student of society, who currently teaches Communication for Development in the School of Media and Communication at RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia. He is also a Research Associate of the Department of Development Studies, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa. Linje has also taught and directed the MSc Programme in Media, Communications and Development in the Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science.

Linje's extensive professional profile includes grassroots and international development interventions. His praxis revolves around the generation and utilization of subaltern voices in development. He is enthused with learning the communicative actions that shape the class contestation of power during the violence, the theatre, the deception that oftentimes characterize orthodox development policy formulation and implementation.

## Colour of Words

Transcription of an address by Dr Linje Manyozo, a Senior Lecturer at RMIT University.

Prepared for the Rotary International Class XVII Peace Fellows' Seminar that was cancelled due to the global Covid-19 pandemic but which has been memorialised as printed reflections of the Peace Fellows and as a collection of seminar-related elements saved online, including this pre-recorded presentation by Dr. Manyozo. Read the synopsis and transcript of Dr. Manyozo's remarks below.

## Synopsis

Dr Manyozo, a Senior Lecturer at RMIT University, reflects about peace and specifically about storytelling as an approach that connects people in different ways. The notion of difference is central in his remarks because, he points out, that peace is possible only when we make space in our own storytelling to meaningfully include the perspectives of people who are different, who may not appear or act as we do, and who look at the world differently than we can imagine. For your part in peacebuilding, Dr Manyozo suggests easy-to-understand strategies. At the top of his list is a call to action - to learn about other cultures in order to enrich the ways through which you can make sense of the world. As you would visually perceive colours, people similarly perceive meaning in the words you choose when you speak, especially about conflict. Thus, a simple way for each of us to promote peace is to shape the language we use to genuinely reflect the lived experiences and perspectives of others. How well do you capture the voices of people with whom you seem to share little in common? Rather than allowing

your own biases and attitudes and, perhaps, lack of understanding for what is going on to shape what you say, apply the strategies suggested by Dr. Manyozo to reimagine kinder and more inclusive narratives about what is possible that might lead more intentionally toward living together in peace. Therefore, colour your words with hope, love, and empathy.

## Full Video Transcript

Hi, my name is Linje Manyozo, a Senior Lecturer at RMIT University. My research, my scholarship, and my pedagogy are all fascinated by one fundamental question. How do we capture, how do we make sense of, and how do we utilize citizens' voices so that they inform dominant and orthodox policy development, formulation, implementation, and evaluation? As a result of this interest, I am fascinated by the notion of listening as well as the notion of storytelling. I know that [the 2020 Rotary Peace Fellow seminar theme] is looking at ways through which storytelling and narratives can contribute to peacebuilding.

The question is, "Why do stories matter?" Why should we be interested in examining, in contesting, and in looking at the role of storytelling when it comes to peacebuilding? I want to take you back to September 11, 2001, when there was a terrorist attack in New York City, in the United States. In the aftermath of that tragedy, there were so many discourses within our public spheres and in our public media, which demonstrated that there was a lot of anger, perhaps within certain groups of people regarding traditions and ways of looking at life. As a result of that anger, that discourse of anger and disappointment, the media picked up and mobilized narratives that were very toxic—narratives that pushed the Western governments to go to war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Now, those wars have not brought about any peace. In fact, they have brought more devastation. They have created more mistrust between civilizations. The most important aspect that I'm trying to point you to is the role of storytelling in what Mahmood Mamdani describes as the "Politics of Naming." It is this "Politics of Naming" that push politicians and policy makers to declare wars that they should not have.

What is interesting, however, is that we've been hearing in our media that the U.S. government has decided to talk to the Taliban. The question, rather than why are they doing it now, should be why didn't they think of this a long way back, before lives were destroyed, before cultures were uprooted before more mistrust across and between cultures civilizations was allowed to occur?

I'm not here to contest the moral justification or the moral conversation around intervention. I am more interested in having a conversation about how stories can challenge or how stories can poison the way we look at the world. The question I would like us to answer is, "What is the role of stories and narratives in peacebuilding, especially in conflict or post-conflict societies?"

One of the ways in which stories can contribute to peacebuilding is through demonstrating to us about the depth of the lives of people who are different. In the introduction to the beautiful book, *Orientalism*, which Edward Said wrote after the September 11, 2001 attacks, Edward Said emphasizes the importance of learning about other cultures... He said we should be motivated to learn about other cultures in order to enrich our understanding and in order to enrich the ways through which we make sense of the world.

So, there we have it. By using knowledges and by building stories that promote peace in conflict and in post-conflict societies, we are able to draw upon all of our understanding, knowledge, information, and research that is [accessible] about other cultures. It helps us to celebrate people who are different, people who look different, people who walk different, people who look at the world in different ways than we can imagine.

The second point I'd like to draw your attention to is the issue that concerns stories as facilities for allowing people to create. This reminds me of a verse in the Bible when [God] says, "Let there be light" and day was created. Stories give us that Godly character, but not to create just the characters themselves. [Stories] allow us to create the identities [of characters] and to create their histories, to give them emotions, and to give them what the writer-philosopher Hannah Arendt describes as "the human condition."



When it comes to peacebuilding, [stories] allow us to celebrate the voices, to celebrate the identities, and to celebrate the identities of people who are oftentimes left behind by modern civilization. That is the power of stories. They are imbued with the ability to define. Words have colour. They have their smell. And stories allow us to celebrate this aspect, this creative attribute, this Godly attribute that we have as writers as well as imaginaries.

The third aspect that I think is also important is that narratives and storytelling allow us to listen to what is going on around us. I think one of the most important and critical aspects of narrative is that we try as much as possible to deflect the imperial world in which we find ourselves. And for us to do that, to construct realistic narratives, we must be able to carry out background research in order to enrich the characters and the storylines that we are [raising].

Narrative, and of course, storytelling enables us to construct the world based on the lived experiences of the people we are writing about. People are able to see themselves in the stories we write. People are able to imagine themselves in the stories that we come up with. Another important factor that I want to share with you is this notion of storytelling being able to capture some alternative voices. You might think that 'alternative voices' encompasses all voices out there, especially in marginalised groups.

Within marginalised groups there are certain voices that are harder to make sense of. A very good example comes from the community where I was born. My father, as a man who lived very close to the power structures and traditional institutions, found himself in forums where my mother could not be found. Many times [in those forums] men described certain conundrums and challenges they were facing, and my father would bring these issues home. Oftentimes, I remember when we were growing up that he would explain these issues to my mother who took a number of days before coming back to him. By the time she had come back, she would have thought through these issues and would actually have come up with an analysis of what she thought.

My father would listen attentively and then go back to the men's forums and present the analysis in his own words. Rather, he was presenting it as if it was his own.

The question is, "Who was speaking?" Was it my mother, or was it my father? Stories allow us to go into these liminal spaces. In order to unpack the whole notion of speech, stories and narratives allow us to make a distinction between who is speaking and who is not. And these are small nuances that may not seem important [in the big picture], but when it comes to the presentation of people who are often marginalised from history, it is very critical that their views are reflected. I want to imagine the smile on my mother's face or on my grandmother's face to see stories that reflected their kind of thinking, even when dominant history has oftentimes discarded or disregarded their perspectives.



Another important consideration that I want us to think about is that if these are the advantages of stories and narratives when it comes to peacebuilding, how do we do this? How can we ensure that our stories reflect the viewpoints and experiences of people who are different, of people who look different, of people who think differently, of people who may even have antagonistic feelings toward each other? How do we ensure that this happens? I think the answer lies in the words of the Italian social theorist, Antonio Gramsci, who writing in the Prison Notebooks says that history has left within us an infinity of traces (marks of heredity, collective experience, individual experience, family experience, and relations between one individual and another closely linked to our personal and family histories and to our nation's history and to the history of our traditions), but without an inventory.

I think what Gramsci actually says is that men and women—the tall ones and the short ones, the big ones and the small ones—have the capability to make history. All we have to do is cultivate the spaces where they can contribute to making this history. In my opinion, when we write stories, when we tell stories, when we construct narratives that we share, we can give life to people who have been forgotten in history and, in so doing, allow them to exercise their agency in a way that allows them to contribute to the construction of this inventory. But how do we do it? How do we bring people together to contribute to the creation of this inventory?

Perhaps the first strategy concerns building long-term relationships with people. I'm not talking about relationships that are motivated by extractive benefits—getting information, getting knowledge—but rather long-term, sustainable relationships. For instance, even if there is no other reason, a person can make a phone call to ask how the children are doing. Are we able to make a phone call to ask how someone who is sick is doing? Or, if we go to them and discover that they are constructing something beautiful in their community, are we going to contribute to that beauty instead of expecting management to solve all problems? Because when we talk about building long-term, sustainable relationships, these are mutually-beneficial relationships. So, on one hand, we are

educated and kept informed about what goes on in a particular community. Most importantly, there is a kind of cultural transaction wherein we offer something back symbolically to their community.

Perhaps the second strategy would be to learn about other cultures with the aim of enriching our own understanding, as pointed out by Edward Said. We need to travel the world. We need to learn things with people. We need to talk to people. We need to try to speak different languages. If we are visiting a particular community or living in a particular country, the least we can do is to practice talking to people in their own language. It feels good if even if your pronunciation may not be perfect, but we should be sure that we are appreciating local cultures and local traditions. It helps us to appreciate the totality of the way people live their lives.

Perhaps another strategy is to reflect other people's ways of looking at the world. There is this notion of perspective. The philosopher, Immanuel Kant, talks about the way people look at things. Do our stories reflect the way people look at the world? The British writer and historian, Edward Palmer Thompson, writes in the introduction of *The Making of the English Working Class*, "I am seeking to rescue the poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper... from the enormous condescension of posterity." I don't believe that Thompson was dismissing the agency of marginalised groups, rather he was encouraging us to celebrate their stories. So, when he says, "I am seeking to rescue..." he was not referring to rescuing working class people as human beings but rather to rescuing their stories and experiences from being left out of history, so that they are included. But, the most important aspect of Thompson's work was that the writing of history had to be done tactically so that it... presented history from the viewpoint of the people that he was writing about. That's a huge challenge. Because when we write history, when we write a story, when we construct a narrative, we may present a view from here rather than a view from there. Moving from a view from here to a view from there requires a number of things. It requires that our ways of looking at the world be educated and be cultivated by the stories, by the nuances, and by the cultures and traditions of the people we are [talking] about.

There is something magical about the world, as I remember growing up a long time ago, gathering as children around my grandmother and great grandmother. We would come to listen to their stories. Their stories captured our imaginations, not only because they were beautiful stories (because they were) but because there was something magical about words. American writer, Maya Angelou, describes words as being “things” that grow into our clothes and “get on the walls” in our homes. They are walking everywhere around us. These are the words that we speak. So, in a way, [our] words have a colour. They have a smell.<sup>1</sup>

As we [create] narratives, especially of conflict and post-conflict societies, let us not just imbue them with our own biases and attitudes and lack of understanding for what is going on. [Our] words should stand the test of time. They should be able to celebrate the rich experiences of living life and support one another. In fact, if we are able to [tell] beautiful stories, they will not only be able to inspire people to do better and not only be able to inspire peace, but [storytelling] can open up new horizons. The magic of words—the colour of words—does that. Words can show people a world which may not have existed to them at a particular point in time. Think about Tutsis and Hutus in Rwanda, killing each other and hating each other for a long time. And could you imagine stories and narratives that show them a future that is possible, where both of them can live together peacefully? Marrying and intermarrying and having children and building their society together? That’s what our stories should be about. They should be about hope. They should be about love. They should be about empathy.

I encourage you, as we think about the role of stories and narratives in building sustainable peace and sustainable societies, to think about the colour of words... the smell of words... the scent of words, so that one day we should all be equal.



Full video available to watch via the following link: [rotary.centre.uq.edu.au/fellows/peace-fellows-seminar-programs](https://rotary.centre.uq.edu.au/fellows/peace-fellows-seminar-programs)

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<sup>1</sup> Maya Angelo has written, “Words are things. You must be careful, careful about calling people out of their names, using racial pejoratives and sexual pejoratives and all that ignorance. Don’t do that. Someday we’ll be able to measure the power of words. I think they are things. They get on the walls. They get in your wallpaper. They get in your rugs, in your upholstery, and your clothes, and finally in to you.”

Class XVII  
Peace Fellows  
2019 - 2020





# Alexis Ayamdor

Ghana



Alexis is a social scientist by training and a Programme Management Specialist with over fourteen years of work experience. He has particular interests in local governance, peacebuilding, and public services. He is also a practicing local politician.

Alexis started his professional career with a local NGO and worked for organisations such as Catholic Relief Services/Ghana Program, IBIS (Danish-based Ghanaian NGO) and USAID-Ghana program. In 2013 he was appointed by the President of the Republic of Ghana as the District Chief Executive for Bongo District Assembly, where he worked as a public servant for four years. At the municipality, he headed several committees including the District Security Council, the District Education Oversight Committee, and the Executive Committee of the Assembly.

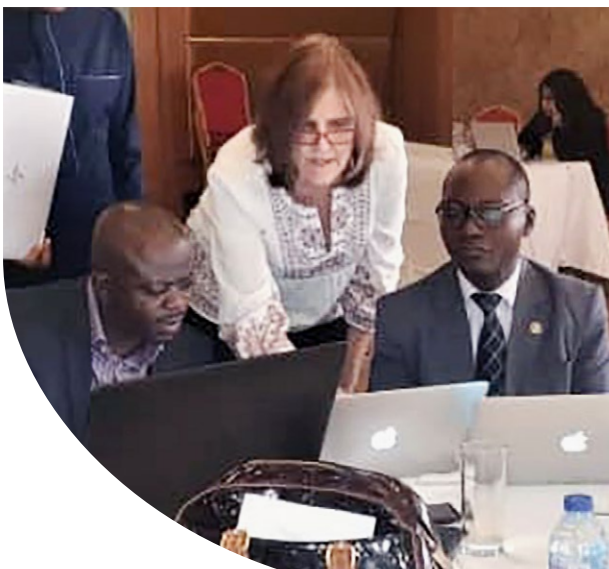
Alexis holds an MBA in Corporate Strategy and Economic Policy from Maastricht School of Management (The Netherlands) and a BA Hons in Geography & Resource Development from the University of Ghana.

**Sponsor Club:** Rotary Club of Accra South,  
District 9102

**Host Club:** Rotary Club of Sunnybank Hills,  
District 9630

**AFE Country:** Nigeria

*Below: ECPF/USAID Planning Workshop*



## ECOWAS Making a Difference in Conflict Prevention and Management in West African states: Learnings from Parliament and the Commission

My choice of an AFE organization was partly informed by my interest in Africa political development and peacebuilding. I worked with the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS), which is a 15-member sub-regional inter-governmental organisation.

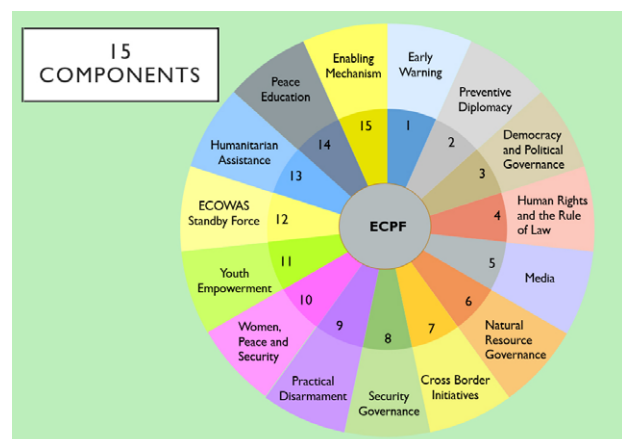
My AFE's objectives included learning more about ECOWAS, its working relations with member states, and its role in conflict prevention and management. My first assignment was at the ECOWAS Parliament, where I worked closely with the Parliamentary Business Division but was attached to the Committee on Political Affairs, Peace and Security. At the Commission, I was assigned to the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) secretariat, which is leading the implementation of relevant protocols and regulations on Conflict prevention in the West African sub-region.

My experience at ECOWAS was very fulfilling as it helped deepen my understanding of the political and security situation in member states and efforts being made by ECOWAS in creating sustainable Peace Architecture. The conception and operational architecture of ECOWAS still relies heavily on the Inter-governmental system, whose decisions are facilitated through consensus building from each member state. The inter-governmentalism arrangement has had challenges with decision making as was the case with the European Community (EC) in the 1980s.<sup>1</sup> I observed compartmentalisation of programmes and policy implementation with limited synergy across commissions, directorates and units. Equally, the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) is helping to address this challenge as briefly discussed in subsequent paragraphs. Other insights into conflict management in West Africa is discussed in the video attached via this link .<sup>2</sup>

1 Birol A. Yeşilada, David M. Wood, "Theories of European Integration", in the emerging European Union, 5th ed. Yeşilada, & Wood (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016). 11-26

2 Conflict Management in West Africa-Challenges and prospects for 2014 and beyond (video); debate sponsored by Friedrich

In addition, the diagram overleaf represents the 15 components of the ECPF, which now leads CP & BP efforts in West Africa and indicates the synergy being fostered across the various units of ECOWAS. The adoption of this holistic approach from previous piecemeal interventions has promoted cross-learning of strategies and helps fast track interventions. Timely interventions are now carried out through its Preventive Diplomacy approaches based on information gathered, analysed and shared by the Early Warning units.



Furthermore, as an Inter-governmental Organisation (IGO) with diverse member-states, diplomacy is the main instrument in managing members' concerns, and this is affected by the varying levels of power and power plays in matters affecting the so-called 'big-states'. The case of the recent closure by Nigeria of its border with Benin has come to pass with little or no sanctions on Nigeria for its unilateral decision- one that contravenes ECOWAS protocols on free movement of goods and services. More broadly, protocols and regulations may be endorsed by the Community Parliament & member states only to be implemented unevenly. Notwithstanding this, there has been appreciable compliance and enforcement of protocols and implementation of policies in recent times by member states or their organs, including through the enhanced oversight role of ECOWAS Parliament.<sup>3</sup>

Ebert-Stifung (FEF). [youtube.com/watch?v=T2I9ADL\\_ebY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2I9ADL_ebY)

3 Supplementary Act A/SA.1/12/16 Relating to the enhancement of the ECOWAS Parliament

ECOWAS adopts a “multi-actor & multi-dimensional approach” to CP. One other novelty which is of importance to the successes of ECOWAS CP is the use of Eminent Personalities, or Local Expertise, known as the ‘Council of the Wise’ in Preventive Diplomacy (PD) work. In this way ECOWAS makes use of former Heads of States, Speakers of Parliament, and Members of Parliament as well as respected Traditional Authorities and Eminent retired Diplomats from the region for mediator and similar roles. They are deployed by the Mediation and Security Council (MSC) of ECOWAS on ‘fact-finding missions or to mediate in on-going conflicts and disputes in the region. The reliance on Indigenous experts/citizens has been advantageous in utilising the context experiences in its mediation, conciliation & facilitative processes and this has worked perfectly in post-election disputes in Gambia (2016), Sierra Leone, Senegal, Mali, G/Bissau & Nigeria. This corroborate the literature as studied in UQ/CR course (POLS7502), which emphasised also the role of socio-cultural and the ethno-psychological dimensions of conflict and conflict resolutions processes as discussed in the work of scholars such as Avruch.<sup>4</sup>

Elections in the sub-region continue to be fiercely contested by political parties. Therefore, operationalizing provisions of the ECOWAS supplementary protocol on Democracy and Good Governance<sup>5</sup> has been important to undertake Election Observer/Assistance missions to member states before, during & post-elections periods to ensure that credible elections are run, and democracy is deepened. Recent elections benefitting from this assistance have been undertaken in Togo (2020) and Nigeria (2019). These missions have helped manage otherwise latent conflicts that would likely have escalated in these countries, especially in the context of an election.

Whilst in a learning mission to ECOWAS, I contributed towards the organisation’s technical and administrative preparations for committee meetings and parliamentary plenary sessions. I also supported Programme teams of ECPF towards its preparation and facilitation of technical seminars for staff and MPs. I have established a pool of networks with ECOWAS officials and Partners, which would be useful in future collaborations and personal career growth. Through my AFE I now have a better appreciation of how IGOs, and ECOWAS operationalise its policies (including through protocols and regulations) to achieve CP. I am now better prepared to contribute actively in regional governance processes in conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes. Through this experience, I am convinced that there are potential collaborative opportunities between UQ & ECOWAS; Australia Government & ECOWAS; Rotary International & ECOWAS in areas of research, capacity building, exchange of security intelligence, and peacebuilding programmes.

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4 Avruch, K. “Introduction: Culture, Conflict, and Conflict Resolution” In *Context and Pretext in Conflict Resolution: Culture, Identity, Power, and Practice* (Routledge, 2013). 17–34

5 Protocol A/SP1/12/01 on Democracy and Good Governance Supplementary to the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security

# María Fernanda Félix de la Luz

Mexico



At the age of fourteen María started working with sex trafficking survivors in Puebla, Mexico - one of the worst cities for sex trafficking in the world. Since then, she has continued her work on preventing sex trafficking and women disappearances, as well as in providing legal services that bring justice to the victims. She has a Bachelor in Economics, a Master in Economics, a Master in Law, and a Certificate in law against 'revenge pornography' and other online crimes in Mexico, and in the establishment of youth parliaments. She has collaborated in projects with International Law and Contemporary Issues. In the last 10 years, she has worked in national and international campaigns for the promotion of gender equality and youth participation, including the creation of a national international entities like the United Nations, the World Bank, the World Economic Forum and the Y20. She has also published four textbooks for middle schools in subjects of Mathematics, Research Methodology, and Civic Education.

During her AFE María worked at Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF) one of the shelters for human trafficking victims, which is run by the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP.) Human trafficking is a very serious issue in Nigeria, especially due to abductions by the terrorist group Boko Haram. María's work consisted of reviewing victims' case files from the last 20 years, and interviewing sex trafficking victims to write a report on their stories. She also helped in the development and implementation of programs to prevent sex trafficking and to help rescue victims, especially those at risk of HIV. She participated in awareness campaigns in primary and secondary schools.

**Sponsor Club:** Club Rotario Puebla Centro Histórico, District 4185

**Host Club:** Rotary Club of Paddington, District 9600

**AFE Country:** Nigeria



*Prevention Campaign  
in Abuja, Nigeria*



## The Untold Stories

CAUTION: Some content here may trigger readers. I reflect on details of sex trafficking and sexual abuse. I leave it to you to decide whether to read on.

I was sitting in a two square meter room on the third floor of a building, no windows, no fan and only one lightbulb above my head. The intense heat of that afternoon made me feel dizzy. The light was intermittent, and the constant power cuts left us in complete darkness sometimes for several hours a day. By then, I was already used to working like this, reading police reports and the medical files of victims in the gloom, talking to the girls with little air in the high humidity.

The first thing that I noticed when she arrived were the scars on her arms. I wanted to ask her about them, but I was afraid of the answer. She sat next to me, barefoot, a purple dress covering her knees, nervously playing with her fingers while I talked. Six or seven years old, this beautiful Nigerian girl was one of the sex trafficking victims in the safe house where I was working.

During my AFE I worked at Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF,) one of the shelters for trafficking victims of the Nigerian National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP.) Nigeria is currently in the midst of violent conflict. We can forget about it when we hear that Nigeria is a rapidly growing nation with a thriving economy, the biggest in Africa. The country is still struggling with the repercussions of years of systematic terrorism fuelled by ethnic and religious divides. This has caused thousands of deaths and millions of displacements.

The roles of women in armed conflicts are varied and complex. Sometimes they are active participants, sometimes they are passive victims or bystanders. As Hilary Matfess notes, they are variously “wives, weapons and witnesses.”<sup>1</sup> The use of sexual violence as a weapon of war is common in conflict scenarios. Women and girls are often raped, sexually enslaved, forced into marriage or subject to many other forms of brutality. The United Nations, NATO, and other international organizations have codified these abuses as some of the most serious violations of International Humanitarian Law.<sup>2</sup>

1 Hilary Matfess, *Women and the War on Boko Haram: Wives, Weapons, Witnesses* (United Kingdom: Zed Books, 2017).

2 NATO, “Sexual Violence in Conflict,” September 20, 2017. Accessed April 20, 2020. [www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2019\\_07/20190709\\_1907-factsheet-sexual-violence-in-conflict.pdf](http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2019_07/20190709_1907-factsheet-sexual-violence-in-conflict.pdf)

In Nigeria, the terrorist group, Boko Haram, has specifically targeted women as part of its war. Two of the most known episodes of the conflict are the abduction of 270 schoolgirls in 2014 in Chibok, and of 110 schoolgirls in 2018 in Dapchi.<sup>3</sup> But the total number of women kidnaped to be forced into marriage, prostitution, terrorist acts or given as a price for combatants, is hard to determine. In addition, the general devastation that conflicts bring and the conditions of poverty, domestic violence and child abuse, put women and girls at further risk.<sup>4</sup>

During my AFE, I heard dreadful stories: female genital mutilation, girls as young as six years old raped with instruments, markets where people claimed they were selling human parts, and declarations of organ harvesting and baby factories, where women are supposedly being forced to deliver babies to be sold.

But in spite of all this, the country's national agencies were working in collaboration with national and international organizations to implement the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish

3 Zama Neff, “Girls Kidnapped by Boko Haram Share Their Stories at UN. Countries Should do More to Protect Schools from Attack,” October 16, 2017. Accessed April 20, 2020. [www.hrw.org/news/2017/10/16/girls-kidnapped-boko-haram-share-their-stories-un](http://www.hrw.org/news/2017/10/16/girls-kidnapped-boko-haram-share-their-stories-un)

4 UNHCR, “SGBV Prevention and Response,” October 2016. Accessed April 20, 2020. [www.unhcr.org/583577ed4.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/583577ed4.pdf)



Above: Prevention Campaign in Abuja, Nigeria

Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children.<sup>5</sup> Through this, I witnessed some successes: children were rescued, lives were saved, and prevention campaigns were created. In the time that I spent in Nigeria, I met some of the most committed, benevolent, and caring people-- people who sacrificed their liberty so others could have freedom, people living away from their families so others could be reunited with their loved ones, people who have dedicated their lives to save the lives of others.

In those moments I realized that peace is a collaborative effort. Each of us in the field is just one link in a long chain of efforts to build a better world. I was not a person alone on an assignment. I was the result of thousands of Rotarians all over the world living their lives for this cause. My actions were not those of a single person but part of a collaborative effort of people who have worked on this before me. And for that I am eternally grateful.

My four months in Nigeria brought me years' worth of lessons about compassion, strength, collaboration and peace. At the end, I felt confident that the girl in the purple dress will have a better future because people



*Above: Maria with WOTCLEF Director Imabong Ladipo Sanuso*

around the world are working together. When I finally left, I knew I was not saying goodbye to the people I met there. I am sure that I will be seeing them again in another field, in another mission, in another effort to build peace in this world.

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<sup>5</sup> United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, Resolution 55/25 (200) Adopted by the General Assembly at its 56 Session on 15 November 2000, A/55/383 (New York: United Nations, 2000).



*Above: Prevention Campaign in Abuja, Nigeria*



# Cora Lavin

USA

Cora was born and raised in Durham, North Carolina, although she quickly became a fan of the Tar Heels and received Bachelor of Arts degrees in Interpersonal and Organizational Communications, as well as Spanish, from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

She spent six years working in Latin America, including Mexico, Venezuela, and Colombia. During her four years in Venezuela she worked at a Binational Center with oversight and funding from the U.S. Embassy. She assessed the needs of at-risk youth and developed projects/programmes to create inclusive spaces for community development and capacity building for youth, and to give youth the tools and knowledge to promote equality and address concerns encompassing the economic, social, and emotional impacts of the Venezuelan humanitarian crisis.

Cora spent her AFE at the UNESCO Bangkok regional office working within the department of Social and Human Sciences (SHS.) Her role included helping with the creation and organization of the “Together for Peace Regional Dialogue on the role of education in building a Peaceful and Sustainable Future in Asia-Pacific.” She collaborated in researching and writing the background paper for the dialogue. The paper includes background on UNESCO’s previous work, the major concerns impeding peace in the Asia-Pacific, and what has thus far been successful in each context. This paper will be used to help inform the recommendations created at the dialogue, which aim to highlight UNESCO’s work that can be upscaled, and other flagship projects using education to build a sustainable and peaceful Asia-Pacific.

Additionally, Cora was in charge of youth outreach and engagement for the project. She created a social media campaign, including videos highlighting youth in the Asia-Pacific who have worked towards peace. The videos were used as a way to connect to youth and launch a survey asking youth how education has influenced peace in their context and what barriers

need to be overcome. Cora hopes the skills and knowledge obtained during her AFE and in the Master of Peace and Conflict Studies programme will enable her to continue to work in the fields of education, peace building, conflict resolution, and sustainable development, focusing on making them inclusive for young people, women, and other marginalized sectors.

**Sponsor Club:** Southwest Durham, District 7710

**Host Club:** Brisbane River City, District 9600

**AFE Country:** Thailand



*Below: Cora, standing with the Together 4 Peace (T4P) peace sculpture, which was created with the help of youth from Bangkok. The peace sculpture highlights the work done by youth in the region to build lasting peace and represents the links between peace and sustainability.*



## Youth Engagement and the Need for Participatory Social Change Practices

When I first started the Rotary Peace fellowship, I was nervous, excited, scared, overwhelmed, anxious and inspired. At times I felt as if I did not know as much, I could not keep up, or I lacked the foundation that others had. Yet not once did other Fellows make me feel that way. Through this time, I have been surrounded by supportive experts who have become supportive friends. Getting the chance to sit down and share views about readings, essays, and experiences has made this much more than just a Master's degree. My course on The Power and Politics of Nonviolence was particularly useful in my growth as a writer, and Communication for Social Movements allowed me to connect participatory communication with effective change.

Understanding participatory communication and studying the power of voice and storytelling created invaluable skills that I was then able to use during my Applied Field Experience (AFE) at UNESCO, Bangkok. While at UNESCO my main work revolved around doing research and outreach for the "Together for Peace Regional Dialogue on the role of education in building a Peaceful and Sustainable Future in Asia-Pacific." I not only felt confident doing research and providing insight into the main factors that create barriers to peace in Asia-Pacific, but I was also able to create my own project which focused on youth empowerment and engagement within the larger realm of peacebuilding.

My main focus for the youth engagement project was to create a participatory channel of communication where youth could raise their concerns and actually be part of the process from beginning to end. In many of the conferences I attended during my AFE, there was a perception that youth are apathetic and do not have the necessary skills to usefully participate in any peace building programs. However, I found youth eager to make positive changes. The Asia Pacific has one of the strongest youth networks around the world, namely Asia Pacific Interagency Network on Youth (APINY). Erika Yague, another Peace Fellow, is part of the network and kindly answered all of my questions and immediately put me in contact with inspiring youth from within the network who helped create the project as well as connect me to youth around the region.

We wanted to create a participatory environment where youth could provide their own views in a fluid way. We therefore decided to use videos as a way for youth to highlight their own work and reflect on what peace means to them. Instead of telling youth how they should feel, the videos allowed them to tell their own stories and connect with other youth around the region. UNESCO ended up publishing five of the videos as a 'call to action' for other youth to participate and provide their own insight about which needs are most relevant and pressing. In this way, it was youth engaging other young people rather than creating a top-down approach which can narrow the scope of who is involved.

We have not had much of a focus on youth engagement during our coursework at UQ, so the AFE was a way to enhance my skills and complement the theoretical foundations, such as emancipatory and participatory peacebuilding, which I have learned while attending UQ. My AFE showed me how energized, powerful and smart youth are and the importance of providing them a platform for sharing their voices, as well as the need to genuinely listen and respond to their concerns. It is the younger generations that will inherit our current global landscape and it is therefore essential that they participate in the process of creating social change.

The internship was a perfect combination of my past work experience in communication and education combined with a focus on building peace and working towards sustainable development. Both the Peacebuilding and Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies courses helped prepare me for this job because both introduced me to some of the challenges that UN Agencies face when implementing policies. While it is not perfect, UNESCO aims to be a normative UN special agency, which sets standards and creates policies that reflect the best way forward. In terms of working towards sustainable development, my courses in Security and Development and Communication for Social Change have been vital for me to build an understanding of what sustainable development means. In addition, the Contested Peace course made me reflect on divergent views and the necessity to critically reflect why dominant structures are in place. Overall, my courses helped me reflect on the importance of local peacebuilding approaches. Gëzim Visoka and Oliver Richmond, among many



authors, describe how efforts to build peace in places like Kosovo have fallen short of providing rights, justice, and reconciliation.

The authors also suggest that peace has not led to higher standards of living.<sup>1</sup> I have learned about the reasons why we pursue emancipatory and participatory approaches to local peacebuilding, but I have also discovered why romantic views that urge local participation often confront difficult problems in practice.

I have enjoyed the chance to grow and learn at UQ so much that I switched to a dual program (Master in Peace and Conflict Studies and Master in International Relations) so that I can continue my studies and deepen my understanding of both micro and macro landscapes within peace and conflict. In the future, I look forward to continuing to work in the peace field through a focus on participatory social change.

<sup>1</sup> Gëzim Visoka and Oliver Richmond, "After Liberal Peace? From Failed State-Building to an Emancipatory Peace in Kosovo," *International Studies Perspectives* 18(1) (2017): 110, accessed April 21, 2020, doi:10.1093/isp/ekw006.



Above: Cora shows off the 'Youth Participation and Empowerment' infographic created by UNESCO Bangkok. The poster highlights the reasons why youth participation and engagement are vital for peaceful and sustainable development.

Below: Cora at UNESCO Regional Office, Bangkok





# Estefanía Lay Guerra

Peru



Estefanía was born and raised in Lima, Perú. She is a social manager interested in community development, gender, human rights advocacy, and grassroots education for peace.

She has worked in different development projects related to rural health, education, and risk management of disasters. Her main expertise is in community arts for social change, social participation, and collaborative work between governmental institutions and civil society. Estefanía worked for almost six years in the Ministry of Culture of Perú, in the project “Puntos de Cultura,” an initiative focused on strengthening grassroots cultural organizations whose work contributes to citizen empowerment, social equity, and peacebuilding. She is pursuing the Master of Peace and Conflict Studies degree because she is interested in learning about different perspectives for promoting peace and social justice from community-based approaches.

Estefanía spent her AFE with the non-governmental organization This Life Cambodia, which works toward sustainable community development in Cambodia. Estefanía supported the project “This Life Without Violence,” which responds to domestic violence in rural

areas of Siem Reap. During her AFE, she supported capacity-building activities of the local staff through a series of workshops related to community engagement and gender-sensitivity planning. She also had the opportunity to join the team in different local events during the international campaign “16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence,” which included meetings with the Women and Children Commune Committees, school training, and community awareness-raising activities related to domestic violence. This experience helped her to continue her reflection process on how to design responses to gender-based violence in post-conflict settings.

**Sponsor Club:** Rotary Club of Barranco, District 7634

**Host Club:** Rotary Club of Paddington, District 9600

**AFE Country:** Cambodia



*Above: Community session about domestic violence*

## How narratives about peace and harmony can ‘play against’ women? Reflections about the efforts to counter domestic violence in Cambodia

Cambodia is a society that struggles in its efforts to build peace, despite its current ‘stability’. Within this struggle, violence against women is an ongoing issue of concern that extends from the crimes committed during the Khmer Rouge regime (1975-1979) until the present. My Applied Field Work was located in this context, and through this opportunity, I had the chance to build upon my academic studies and previous experience to reflect on how peace is understood from a gender perspective. In particular, is returning to a previous ‘peaceful’ time always desired? What are the gender implications of aspirations for peace and harmony based on nostalgic understandings of the past?

According to the National Survey on Women’s Health and Life Experiences in Cambodia Report (2014),<sup>1</sup> one in five women have reported experiencing violence by their intimate partner at least once in their lifetime. Within this context, Cambodia’s main effort to counter violence against women relies on the approval of the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims (2005). This law represents the governmental commitment to advance women’s rights and gender equality. Legal responses – like the approval of this law – are usually seen as an important step for shaping a more gender-responsive State. However, from a legal perspective, one of the most challenging issues when tackling violence against women is overlooking local practices and mechanisms that communities usually deploy to manage disputes. In the context of post-conflict transitions, local mechanisms tend to provide a more sensitive and relevant way to respond to the challenges of post-conflict societies.

Following this understanding, Cambodia’s Law against Domestic Violence aims to “protect the victims and preserve the harmony within the households in line with the Nation’s good custom and tradition”.<sup>2</sup> In that vein, the law also incorporates local figures of authority of rural areas of Cambodia, such as the village chiefs, elders and Buddhist monks, by empowering them to respond to domestic violence.

One aspect to highlight from the Law against Domestic Violence is the core role that the notion of harmony, custom and tradition have gained when thinking on domestic violence. However, to what extent does nostalgia about ‘pre-conflict peace’ hide gender inequalities? In Cambodia, gender norms that place women in a subordinated role are rooted in some customary norms, such as the “Chbab Srei” also called “Rules for Women.”<sup>3</sup> The Chbab Srei is a poem dated from the 16th century, which is based on a mother’s advice to her recently married daughter. Through the Chbab Srei, girls have learned what is considered ‘proper’ behavior, such as walking slowly, obeying the husband, and furthermore their responsibility on maintaining the ‘peace’ within the family. According to tradition, everyday peace has been built over women’s silence and obedience, even in situations of violence.



*Above: Estefanía with This Life Cambodia Team during the campaign “16 days of activism against gender-based violence”*

1 Cambodia Ministry of Women’s Affairs, National Survey on Women’s Health and Life Experiences in Cambodia. (Phnom Penh, 2015), 46. Accessed 09 April 2020. <https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20easia/docs/publications/2015/11/national%20survey%20on%20womens%20health%20and%20life%20experiences%20in%20cambodia.pdf?la=en&vs=512>

2 Kingdom of Cambodia, Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims. (Phnom Penh, 2005), Article 1. Accessed 09 April 2020.

3 S. Eng, Y. Li, M. Mulsow, M. and J. Fischer “Domestic Violence against Women in Cambodia: Husband’s Control, Frequency of Spousal Discussion, and Domestic Violence Reported by Cambodian Women,” *Journal of Family Violence* 25(3) (2010): 237–246.



Despite the fact that the “Chbab Srei” is no longer taught in schools, in Cambodia, as in most countries, prevailing social norms restrict the freedoms of women and girls. Within this context, the adoption of ‘harmony’ as a guiding principle when dealing with domestic violence raises alerts. Why? How does harmony play out against women? In some cases, violence against women is still seen as an act that can be justified in the private sphere when a woman does not comply with “her duties.” Moreover, as one NGO reports in Gender and Development for Cambodia 2010, in some cases village chiefs’ personal beliefs (e.g., on the importance of forgiving) are used when dealing with domestic violence cases.<sup>4</sup> Here, forgiving is meant to ease the way to reconciliation – a reconciliation that in some cases may go against women’s will. Therefore, in some cases, taking harmony as the paramount and overall goal has led to privileging a household’s harmony above women’s safety and desires. This shows how the struggle against domestic violence is complicated by encounters between policy reforms, prevalent social norms and gender inequalities.

In this way, being involved in a project that dealt with everyday violence helped me get a closer understanding of the gaps and challenges that the implementation of national-level policies could have. Researching the Cambodian case helped me be more aware of the potentialities of local values and practices to build a pathway to reconciliation and promote non-violent ways to address conflict. However, it also allowed me to realize the necessity to interrogate from whose perspective these values are seen as positive. What voices and experiences might remain muted when assuming general positive outcomes of a given approach? In this sense, I am grateful to have had the opportunity provided by the fellowship to develop my understanding of the complexities embedded when working with conflict and peace.



*Above: Estefanía with members of This Life Cambodia team*

Moreover, as one NGO reports in Gender and Development for Cambodia 2010, in some cases village chiefs’ personal beliefs (e.g., on the importance of forgiving) are used when dealing with domestic violence cases.<sup>5</sup> Here, forgiving is meant to ease the way to reconciliation – a reconciliation that in some cases may go against women’s will. Therefore, in some cases, taking harmony as the paramount and overall goal has led to privileging a household’s harmony above women’s safety and desires. This shows how the struggle against domestic violence is complicated by encounters between policy reforms, prevalent social norms and gender inequalities.

<sup>4</sup> Gender and Development for Cambodia-GADC, Deoum Troung Pram hath in Modern Cambodia. A qualitative exploration of gender norms, masculinity and domestic violence. (2005). Accessed 09 April 2020. <http://www.partners4prevention.org/resource/deoum-troung-pram-hath-modern-cambodia-qualitative-exploration-gender-norms-masculinity-and>

<sup>5</sup> Gender and Development for Cambodia-GADC, Deoum Troung Pram hath in Modern Cambodia. A qualitative exploration of gender norms, masculinity and domestic violence (2005). Accessed 09 April 2020. <http://www.partners4prevention.org/resource/deoum-troung-pram-hath-modern-cambodia-qualitative-exploration-gender-norms-masculinity-and>



# Peter Lindsay

USA

Peter is not a peace activist. He sees himself as a peace rationalist who is most interested in creating bridges of understanding between people or groups that are at odds. Peter pairs US military command background with global corporate experiences in the area of leadership development. He expects to work in roles that impact others and society through peace education but also sees himself engaging as a political advisor and in senior leadership at the national level.

During his AFE, Peter spent several months in Sydney at the Institute for Economics and Peace. His time at IEP enabled him to intimately understand their Positive Peace Workshop and the peace education relationship that IEP has with its global partners, including Rotary International. Peter spent 304 hours doing instructional design and an additional 36 hours as a live-facilitator for IEP's Positive Peace Workshop. The hallmark of his experience came during three days of Rotary International workshops preceding a Rotary World Peace Conference held in California in January.



In that forum, he was instrumental as part of a team that trained 25 newly-designated Rotary Peace Activators to understand Positive Peace from a shared IEP and Rotary Partnership perspective. That training launched a global initiative by Rotary that has the potential to grow exponentially and inspire projects that lead to structural change and greater peacefulness across societies.

**Sponsor Club:** Greensboro North Carolina District 7690  
**Host Club:** Rotary Club of Brisbane, District 9600  
**AFE Country:** Australia



*Left: Peter's AFE with the Institute for Economics and Peace included facilitating the Rotary Positive Peace Activator program in California, USA and a Positive Peace workshop in Melbourne, Australia.*

## Eight Pillars of Positive Peace

In Uganda, a Rotarian project set out to improve school attendance rates and academic performance. The local school had few textbooks or teaching aids, so an aid organisation might have been inclined to provide school materials to improve learning. However, the absence of feminine hygiene products along with product training for adolescent girls turned up as a less obvious factor that contributed to female students missing school during their menstrual periods. The project's planners followed a formula which was taught by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) for creating systemic change. Based on IEP's framework, local Rotarians simultaneously examined school attendance and performance through a variety of lenses. Their multidimensional investigation into the reasons for low attendance and poor performance brought to light institutional factors such as access to learning materials, but it simultaneously cast a spotlight on psychological factors that, if unaddressed, could make a generous donation of books and resources a nice gesture but ultimately insufficient to change the patterns that contributed to absenteeism and lower performance among school-eligible youth.

The effect of the overarching project in Uganda, which coordinated eight interrelated factors, raised student achievement scores by nearly 20 percent and boosted enrolment by 39 percent. According to teachers, the rise in academic achievement and attendance stemmed from the holistic approach, designed by local Rotarians and inspired by IEP.<sup>1</sup>

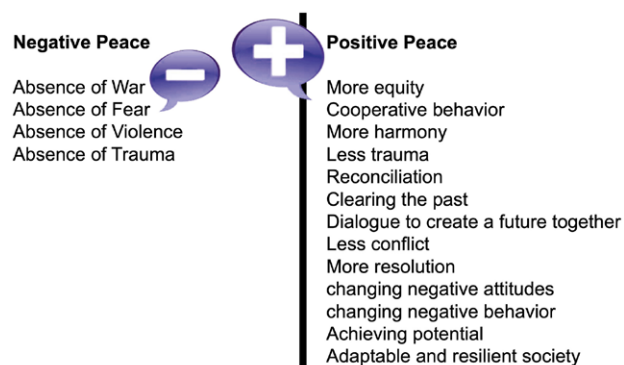
I was embedded at IEP during my AFE and worked with Charlie Allen, IEP's Director of Partnerships, to develop and facilitate ways to help people make sense of the statistical research undertaken at IEP—research which also led to the concept of Eight Pillars of Positive Peace. Global statistics tell an interesting story that can shape how we design projects, including Rotary projects. According to IEP, the world's most peaceful countries consistently exhibit eight traits: Well-functioning government, sound business environment, equitable distribution of resources, acceptance of the rights of others, good relations with neighbours, free flow of information, high level of human capital, and low levels of corruption.

Project planners in Uganda set out to involve people and institutions in each of the eight areas simultaneously. Their intention was to change conditions permanently, and IEP presented the notion that systemic change requires deliberately evaluating how to nudge a social system by acting through all eight pillars simultaneously.

The concept is fairly simple to understand. Since Eight Pillars of Positive Peace consistently appear in the most peaceful countries, it stands to reason that peace-promoting projects can pay attention to all areas. If you were interested in a project (anywhere in the world), according to the way I interpret IEP's Eight Pillars of Positive Peace, you should make an effort in the design stage to ask and answer:

In what ways should the government get involved?

- Is there a meaningful role for local businesses?
- What steps are necessary to identify needs and ensure access to resources?
- Who is included? But also, who might be excluded? Why?
- How can the project cultivate better bonds and respect within the community?
- Who needs to speak? Who needs to be heard?
- How can communication enable success?
- In what ways can we foster knowledge and skills but also invest in the future?
- Are there ways to safeguard against misuse of power or authority?



<sup>1</sup> Institute for Economics & Peace, Positive Peace Report 2019: Analysing the Factors that Sustain Peace (Sydney, IEP, October 2019, 81). Accessed January, 2020.

The Rotary Peace Fellowship helped me realise that building peace is more complex than it is simple. Context matters, and so I expect that people and organisations pursuing greater peace will approach peacebuilding from a variety of directions. Peace scholar Diane Hendrick observes that conflict resolution approaches will vary significantly depending on the frames and mental models used to organise our knowledge and how people “take in new information and process experiences.”<sup>2</sup> IEP’s approach is one model, and compelling theories give us reason to believe that the interactions among the Eight Pillars of Positive Peace can improve peaceful outcomes when approached conjunctively.

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<sup>2</sup> Diane Hendrick, *Complexity Theory and Conflict Transformation: An Exploration of Potential and Implications* (University of Bradford: Department of Peace Studies, 2009), 47.

My learning as a Peace Fellow extends beyond my AFE. In the future, I want to engage people to think realistically about how to resolve conflict and create peace. The world is a complex place with complex, interrelated factors at play. I appreciated how IEP makes an effort to explore how changing a society is rarely accomplished by narrowly focusing on a single aspect of social struggle. We need realistic approaches which consider complex interrelationships, without pretending that conflict resolution or peacebuilding is simple.

*Below: Peter performed a leading role in training Rotarian Peace Activators at the 2020 World Peace Conference in California, USA.*





# Phyusin Ngwethaw

Myanmar



Phyusin has been a humanitarian worker in Myanmar for several years. Her experiences include working with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in dissemination of international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles to armed forces and armed groups. She also worked with UN agencies including UNICEF for protection of children affected by armed conflict, at UNHCR Myanmar as a senior liaison officer for the communication with Myanmar authority, and with UNFPA as an advisor for conflict sensitivity in the National Census project. She is interested in working on issues related to culture and power dynamics, and in finding solutions through inclusive consultations and research. Her interest in working with diverse groups of people to shape public policies to achieve social justice brings her to UQ for the Master of Peace and Conflict Studies programme. Phyusin wants to expand her network with peace building professionals particularly in the Asia Pacific region to get inspiration for the positive and sustainable change in conflict-affected societies and communities. She earned her first Masters degree in public policy from the National University of Singapore.

During her AFE, Phyusin worked in the Philippines at the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute (MPI.) MPI is a regional training institute based in Mindanao, which has trained over 2000 alumni from fifty countries worldwide since 2000. Phyusin's AFE assignment was to help MPI's Documentation and Research Unit in carrying out its impact study of the annual peacebuilding trainings. Her AFE research study focused on MPI alumni of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR). Conflict analysis and personal interviews provided her with an understanding of development-induced conflict situations and related challenges of local peacebuilders who face daily struggles in their work to deal with different forms of powers in bringing social justice to diverse communities. She hopes that her work can contribute to the development of a context-specific strategy for capacity development of Laos peacebuilders at MPI.

**Sponsor Club:** Bangkok Rotary Club, District 3350

**Host Club:** Capabala Rotary Club, District 9630

**AFE Country:** Laos PDR



*Below: Together with peacebuilders from twelve countries in "Facilitation Training for Peace Builders" in MPI, Davao, Mindanao 29 November 2019, Photo credit: MPI*



## Opening Civic Space: Positive Narratives to Bring Social Justice in Laos

I chose my AFE assignment to work with Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute (MPI) in the Philippines. My main job there was assisting MPI's Documentation and Research Unit to carry out an impact study of its annual peacebuilding training. As part of the study, I interviewed sixteen peacebuilders and development workers of Laos. The findings of the interviews indicates that absence of war is not automatically peaceful and resolving conflicts peacefully requires continuous peacebuilding efforts. Peace is possible only through development which guarantees social justice and equity, which can only be constructed with solidarity and cooperation between international and local civil society organizations.

According to the World Bank, Laos PDR is one of the fastest-growing economies in East Asia and the Pacific. It has improved access to electricity, schools, and roads and has become an important energy exporter. Despite this, the Human Rights Council report on extreme poverty in Laos PDR highlights that over-reliance on foreign direct investment and the natural resource sector can have negative and even impoverishing effects<sup>1</sup>. Such over-reliance is the result of dominant understandings of development that tend to centre on state and economic indicators rather than on local communities. Most of the large international aid and business organizations, as Heloise Weber argues, “have been significant sites of struggle over development, and have been so precisely because they have operationalized a highly problematic framing of development.”<sup>2</sup> Displacement of villages and change in land ownership structure as a result of land confiscation and land ownership policy in favour of hydropower and other development projects have been the examples of creation of development-induced conflicts at the local level. Reformulation of “development” requires cooperation

between international and local actors, as reflected in the HRC report calling upon the Laos government to open civic space for this purpose.<sup>3</sup>

Chan, a Laotian woman who leads a community peacebuilding project, has seen many instances of how aid interventions create new tensions and worsen existing ones at the community level. She puts her lessons learned from the implementation of development projects into designing new phases of a peace extension project which aims to empower people locally in resolving conflicts in farming communities. Her project trains the social workers of international and local civil society organizations (CSOs) in conflict resolution skills so that they empower communities in their projects to resolve conflicts. While some CSOs find difficulties in peace extension because of lack of funding and political acceptance at the provincial level, some successfully bring skills to the community. She shared her experience of how a project village negotiates the claim of a company which was authorized to acquire village land to build an amusement park. Village leadership had a strong relationship with the provincial authority, and empowered by new negotiation skills and logistics support which aided project administrators, they were able to overturn the decision of the Mayor who signed the contract with the amusement company.

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3 Philip Alston, Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights on his visit to the Lao People's Democratic Republic, 17.

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1 Phillip Alston, Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights on his visit to the Lao People's Democratic Republic (New York, Human Right Council A/HRC/41/39/Add.2, 2019), 5.

2 Heloise Weber, “Challenges, Contradictions and Struggles for Justice.” Meanings of Bandung: The Political Significance of Bandung for Development (London, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016), 154.

*Below: Preparation for facilitator Training of Trainers, Davao City / Photo credit to MPI*



Da, a Laotian Land and Natural Resource Legal Specialist with an international NGO, promotes land rights and access to justice for farmers in rural communities. As a coordinator within a network, his role is to manage and coordinate partnership among educators, government agencies, and experts from CSOs or INGOs for the empowerment of village mediation units (VMUs,) which are essential to resolve conflicts related to land at the community level. With his coordination and support, network members can review the existing IEC materials and curriculum for the training of VMUs. He views himself as a person who is capable of engaging groups with different political and social perspectives in a positive way. He reviews the training materials of government departments and CSOs in the sector of land rights and land management to produce common guidelines and tools for land-rights training based on consultation with local communities. With his coordination efforts, conflict resolution skills have become part of a common land-rights manual.

With these materials, land rights and dispute resolution training empowers village mediation units (VMUs) to deal with land disputes more effectively. As the training has equipped VMUs with mediation skills, they have changed their way of proceeding and hearing cases. Consequently, the legitimacy and acceptance they received from villagers increased the motivation and confidence of VMUs in the process. For Da, conflict resolution becomes a cross-cutting topic in the training to bring justice, and this links with FPIC (Free Prior Informed Consent) and land rights.

The development challenges faced by Chan and Da are not limited to Laos PDR. Without the efforts of civil society to empower the communities to deal with these challenges, development can fuel conflict rather than leading to improved social or economic outcomes.

(Note: The names of the interviewees have been changed to protect their privacy.)

*Below: Phylusin, together with peacebuilders from twelve countries in “Facilitation Training for Peace Builders” in MPI, Davao, Mindanao 29 November 2019, Photo credit: MPI*





# Nery Ronatay

Philippines

For 19 years, Nery has worked in the Philippines, Malawi, Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, Costa Rica, and Japan focusing on conflict transformation, HIV and AIDS, gender, and human rights. He worked with various grassroots organizations, international NGOs, government, and the United Nations. Recently, he led conflict transformation, dialogue, and peace education interventions for the United Nations Human Settlement Programme in Marawi City, Philippines, after a devastating five-month siege of a radicalized ISIS-aligned group. With the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies in Cambodia, he supported peace processes in Southeast Asia, providing conflict transformation support to ethnic rebels, the ceasefire monitoring groups, and civil society organizations to better engage in their peace processes. He trained dialogue facilitators at the state level and coordinated a peace journalism project to help develop a nuanced narrative in the coverage of conflicts in Myanmar. He was also the focal point of the 4th Asian Peace Conference and the co-leader in 6th Peace Practitioners Research Conference in 2017 in Cambodia. Nery served as HIV and AIDS Officer of UNDP in Bangkok after a decade of working on HIV in the Philippines and Malawi-Mozambique borders.

Nery spent his AFE with the Green String Network Africa, a Kenyan peacebuilding organization that specializes in trauma-informed peacebuilding in Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, and South Sudan. Aside from supporting the organization with writing new projects and setting up policies, he back-stopped the operationalization of the Abyei Peace Project, a social healing program in the Abyei province. Abyei is a fiercely contested territory between Sudan and South Sudan, exacerbating the ethnic wars between the pastoralist Dingka (South) and the nomadic Misseriya (North). He supported a similar intervention for the Kenyan National Police. His work allowed him to engage deeply in the trauma healing discourse as it is applied in peacebuilding. Instead of purely focussing on the bio-medical standpoint, Nery is interested in the social and political impacts of trauma. Here, Nery



recognized how storytelling is central to trauma and social healing; hence the necessity to tap into the African tradition of storytelling to reframe stories of victimization into stories of resilience.

**Sponsor club:** Rotary Club of Legazpi Central, District 3820

**Host Club:** Stones Corner Rotary Club, District 9630

**AFE Country:** Kenya

*Below: Nery with Ahmed Famau. Famau is a Muslim youth living in the border communities of Kenya and Somalia. During the height of Al Shabaab insurgency, due to his Somali features, he was apprehended by the Kenyan police four times, leading to harassment and torture. He was on his way to radicalization, ripe for recruitment. He underwent trauma-healing sessions by the Green String Network and eventually decided not to join the extremist group. Today, he is a trauma healing facilitator and has been training Kenyan police for the last three years.*



## Why Trauma Matters in Peacebuilding

Born in the middle of communist insurgency during the Marcos dictatorship in rural Philippines, I am a witness to how communities traumatized by civil war normalize violence. When I started to do peace work in 2012, I often found myself triggered and exhausted by listening to people's experiences of living in conflict zones. I struggled when facilitating dialogues among trauma-impacted communities because their trauma-related behaviours made it difficult for me to manage the process well.

Trauma fascinates me as a Rotary Peace Fellow because it raises a lot of questions and opportunities regarding how everyday peacebuilding can be improved. In my class on Peacebuilding with Dr Sarah Teitt, I reflected on how trauma disrupts reconciliation and other social processes that make everyday peacebuilding unsustainable. Peacebuilding, both as theory and practice, struggles to incorporate trauma because its applications in the field are sometimes subsumed under a "psycho-social support" programming, which can never sufficiently address the structural roots of trauma such as racism, colonialism, sexism, or massive economic inequities.

Trauma is generally understood as a 'wound' brought about by exposure to natural disasters, personal violence, and war. Historically, trauma was first used to describe the abject conditions of injured railroad workers seeking compensation from construction companies, and later to describe shell-shocked soldiers.<sup>1</sup> It gained attention during the rise of psychoanalysis, the scrutiny of the aftermath of World War 2, and eventually with the entry of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* in 1980, mainly due to the advocacy of Vietnam War survivors and the feminist movement pushing for conversation on the trauma impact of sexual abuse and violence. In her ground breaking work, Judith Herman defined psychological trauma as a sense of being completely overwhelmed by a very stressful event, in which 'the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection, and meaning' are destroyed.<sup>2</sup>

1 Rosemary Nagy, review of *Therapeutic Nations and Empire of Trauma* by Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman and *Therapeutic Nations: Healing in an Age of Indigenous Human Rights* by Dian Million, *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 9 (2015): 528.

2 Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Abuse and Political Terror* (New York: Basic, 2015), 33.



*Above: Nery, together with Director Angi Yoder-Maina of the Green String Network, speaks with Rotarians in Nairobi to share the trauma and peacebuilding projects of the organization.*

In the bio-medical realm, trauma has been treated as personal injury, hence it has been largely pathologized and depoliticized. Since trauma often manifests to be intelligible, nebulous, and incoherent, it is a challenge to consider trauma as a legitimate object of study by political science thinkers who largely favor a positivist and rationalist approach. As a result, trauma has been generally excluded in the study of political science and international relations.

However, trauma gained serious consideration in social science as its impacts began to be analyzed in post-colonial and indigenous societies. In "Trauma: A Social Theory," Joseph Alexander described how personal suffering, when it is conceived as a wound to social identity, becomes a collective trauma.<sup>3</sup> This collectivizing process is a massive cultural work that reinterprets social significations, meaning-making, and identity formation which inform how we organize our society, including war-making. Through collective traumatic narratives, we construct our ideas of who we are, our 'enemies,' and the meanings that we give to

3 Joseph Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012 ), 2.



our moral past and future. For communities impacted by violence, traumas become transgenerational forces that are reproduced through a cyclical form of violence. In effect, trauma has ceased simply as an individual injury but becomes an insidious political weapon.

This inspired me to spend my Applied Field Experience at the Green String Network (GSN) Africa in Nairobi, Kenya. GSN is a peacebuilding organization that focuses on trauma and social healing. It uses the trauma as a guide to both understand and challenge cycles of violence in communities impacted by violent extremism and political violence. GSN primarily uses story-telling and embodied practice approaches (meditation, drumming, dances, yoga, etc.) through their well-being and resilience workshops. Their intervention requires tapping into the African tradition of story-telling, arts, and individual and collective reflections that promote connections between people. It comes from a recognition that healing and resilience in African context requires a more holistic ethno-medical model that utilizes cultural resources, individual agency and peer-to-peer support in psychosocial healing and wellbeing.<sup>4</sup>

I witnessed how these transformed the trauma of people. A young Muslim Kenyan who was tortured repeatedly by Kenyan police and military during the height of insurgency but is now facilitating trauma healing for the police (See link here<sup>5</sup>); a South Sudanese veterinarian who was bent on denying services to a pastoralist “enemy” tribe but had a change of heart after undergoing trauma-healing workshops; an old woman who lost her son to Al Shabaab has started to organize community women to face their grief and move forward (See link here<sup>6</sup>). GSN conducted a year-long study<sup>7</sup> that revealed when trauma is addressed among communities, it increases the people’s (1) trust in members of one’s community and members of “other” groups, (2) willingness to forgive someone who has harmed them even if they

*Below: Nery facilitating a workshop with Green String Network, Kenya*



do not regret what they have done, and (3) belief that former members of armed groups should be allowed to return to their communities.

My Rotary journey, particularly my AFE, teaches me to reflect harder on my practice as a peacebuilder vis- a-vis trauma: How will my own trauma as a person affect the way I design and implement peacebuilding actions? In what ways can I design and deliver peacebuilding programs that are responsive to traumas, not just for the community I work with but also for me and those for whom I am responsible?

<sup>4</sup> Green String Network, Muamko Mpya: Healing the Uniform (Nairobi, 2019), III.

<sup>5</sup> Visit [m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=3110284948998572&id=1351413414885743](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=3110284948998572&id=1351413414885743).

<sup>6</sup> Visit [www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=13&v=CYDc9\\_6dxyY&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=13&v=CYDc9_6dxyY&feature=emb_logo).

<sup>7</sup> Belkys López, Biren Nagda, Angi Yoder-Maina, Bonface Njeresa Beti, Hazel Spears and Halima Rahma Yassin, Growing Connection, Agency, and Resilience: The impact of community-led trauma-informed peacebuilding in response to violent extremism in Kenya, (Nairobi: Green String Network, 2019), 22-35.

# Nico Schneider

Germany



Nico Schneider is an activist, educator, and conflict transformation practitioner. Before coming to Australia Nico was engaged in social movements, trade unions, and NGOs in Europe and the Middle East. Between 2015 and 2018 Nico worked as a Project Manager in Jerusalem, focusing on conflict analysis, capacity building, and strategic planning in cooperation with grassroots organizations.

Nico holds an M.A. in Political Science, Sociology, and Public Law. In his research, he seeks to understand the entanglement between socio-political power relations, digital technologies, and social change.

Nico spent his AFE at ACCORD – The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes in Durban, South Africa. ACCORD is a civil society organization working throughout Africa to bring creative African solutions to the challenges posed by conflict on the continent. At ACCORD, Nico joined the Training & Innovation department. As part of his AFE, he conducted collaborative research on the post-electoral dynamics in the Democratic Republic of Congo, together with Professor Martin Revayi Rupiya.

As a highlight, ACCORD invited Nico to present the Rotary Peace Fellowship program and his research on technology and peacebuilding to members of the Rotary E-Club of South Africa One from the Durban area.

He also represented UQ at Rotary's academic peace conference in Cairo, Egypt, where he joined a panel with fantastic Fellows and alumni from the peace centers at Uppsala, Duke-UNC, and Bradford. Nico is particularly excited to promote the newly-established and first African Rotary Peace Center at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda.

**Sponsor Club:** Sankt Goarshausen-Loreley, District 1860

**Host Club:** Bribie Island, District 9600

**AFE Country:** South Africa



*Left: Nico during a conversation with a Rotary Peace Conference participant in Cairo on 13 February 2020.*

## Improving Peace Work Means Provincializing Western Peace

My AFE at ACCORD<sup>1</sup>, a professional peace organization in the Global South located in Durban, South Africa, led me to grapple with the question of why, after decades of research and practice, 'Western experts' still regularly fail in helping to create lasting peace abroad. To help me with this, I drew a lesson from Contested Peace, a postgraduate course I took at UQ that emphasized the value of scrutinizing dominant concepts, including the prevailing idea of peace.

Before joining ACCORD and in my professional experience with Western-style peace organizations, I often encountered a discrepancy between strong rhetoric about change and actual efforts to create change – especially if change would bring into question dominant Western lifestyles and ways of thinking about and operationalizing peace in practice. In these organizations, creating peace seemed to be about pacifying and ordering the 'unruly and unlawful places' of the Global South while leaving Western lifestyles and ways of operating untouched in a state of harmony and privilege.

ACCORD, in contrast, was established against the backdrop of social change in its home society. The organization's founding members were actively involved in overcoming the South African apartheid regime. Learning from ACCORD's experience provided me the opportunity to consider the changes necessary for peace from within a dynamic setting where dominant Western concepts do not limit possibilities.

I used the time in Durban to learn about what distinguishes conventional Western ways of understanding peace from the South African experience. One key difference that struck me was that the Western version of peace I grew up with relies on notions of certainty and stability. In contrast, the idea of peace in the South African context, and perhaps also within other societies in the Global South, appears more dynamic. The reason for this, I came to understand during my AFE, is not that there is a permanent threat of open conflict on the African continent. Rather, it is that peace is necessarily an ongoing process of building and rebuilding.<sup>2</sup>

1 For more information, visit [www.accord.org.za/](http://www.accord.org.za/).

2 Karl von Holdt, "Prologue," in *Conversations with Bourdieu: The Johannesburg Moment*, ed. Michael Burawoy and Karl von Holdt (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2012), 6.



*Above: Nico, facilitating a joint workshop with ACCORD staff members and the Rotary E-Club of South Africa One on 12 February 2020.*

Western approaches to peace, in comparison, appear pacified, even lethargic. Some critical scholars suggest that Western liberalism – and the idea of peace – has fundamentally depoliticized social relations and thereby produced apathetic societies.<sup>3</sup> A common theme shared by critical scholars from different disciplines points to the transformation of governance under liberal economic and social values as a source of political apathy. Paradoxically, the idealization of individual liberties can negatively affect people's autonomy by replacing political self-determination with paralyzing measures of self-regulation and control.<sup>4</sup> If this observation holds true, the Western peace practitioners may not yet have developed a vocabulary for the dynamics involved in the transformation of societies from war to peace that stand outside of their own historical experiences. Western concepts of peace are falsely universalized.<sup>5</sup> They have a tendency to create generalized models based on observations that account only for the most privileged parts of the world.

3 Sadie Plant, *The most radical gesture* (London: Routledge 1992), 12.

4 Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, Volume 1 (London: Penguin Books, 1984), 93; Oliver P. Richmond, "Foucault and the Paradox of Peace-as-Governance versus Everyday Agency", *International Political Sociology* 4(2) (2010): 200.

5 Raewyn Connell, *Southern theory: the global dynamics of knowledge in the social sciences* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2007), 212.





*Above: ACCORD and Rotary Members Rotary E-Club of South Africa One on 12 February 2020.*

Alternatively, scholars from the Global South challenge us “to disorder and reorder Western theory so that ... it enables a renaming of what appears solid and dominant.”<sup>6</sup> This would mean, following Chakrabarty’s arguments, ‘provincializing Europe’ in our practice and study of peace.<sup>7</sup>

In other words, Southern scholars urge us to learn new peace languages. ACCORD helps with this task, fulfilling a teaching role on the African continent by promoting African solutions to African problems. Instead of focusing on outcomes, ACCORD’s approach encourages the embrace of the dynamism of the social world and focusing on local experiences in peacebuilding processes.<sup>8</sup>

Of the many ways forward in the peace field for Western scholars, Connell highlights three.<sup>9</sup> First, we should start by acknowledging that the existing vocabulary of South/North, East/West, Periphery/Metropole is analytically still insufficient and needs further refinement. A second requirement is to equip peace work with “the capacity to recognise the

dynamism of the periphery”<sup>10</sup> and the West. In general, the ambition must be to get away from all too stable ‘well-cemented’ views.

Thirdly, Connell seeks to link research to the ‘experience of the oppressed’ in non-Western societies. What seems to unite formerly-colonized people and peoples is the experience of loss – be it the loss of land, loss of religion, loss of faith, loss of hope, or loss of energy.

Ultimately, learning new peace languages requires making conceptual space for the study of alternatives. This demands a partial disintegration and ‘provincializing’ of Western frameworks and approaches as the universal model for peace. Practical and engaged peace work rarely provides us with ready-made concepts – this is potentially the most important lesson I have taken from the Rotary fellowship program at UQ and my AFE. It is up to us to experiment with ideas while engaging societies in the processes of ongoing change and the challenge of constantly building and securing peace. In this regard, ACCORD’s approach is an inspirational example from which we can learn.

6 Karl von Holdt, “Prologue,” in *Conversations with Bourdieu: The Johannesburg Moment*, ed. Michael Burawoy and Karl von Holdt (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2012), 6.

7 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe* postcolonial thought and historical difference (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000)

8 Cedric de Coning, “Adaptive peacebuilding,” *International Affairs* 94(2) (2018): 317.

9 Raewyn Connell, *Southern theory: the global dynamics of knowledge in the social sciences* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2007), 212.

10 Connell, *Southern theory: the global dynamics of knowledge in the social sciences*, 213.



# Chiaki Takenouchi

Japan



Chiaki is a (child) protection and human rights professional in the context of humanitarianism and migration. She works to create an inclusive society where every child enjoys a healthy and peaceful life. She is also a legal anthropologist with a passion for putting the power of law into people's hands. She completed an Honors B.A. in International Relations and Anthropology and an Advanced LL.M. in International Child Rights. She has conducted participatory research in the field of humanitarian assistance, rule of law, and human rights. Most recently, she worked at a local NGO in Lebanon, providing technical oversight and training on psychosocial support and case management in response to the needs of survivors among conflict-affected populations in/from Lebanon, Turkey, Syria, and Palestine.

Chiaki's AFE was at the International Development and Law Organization office in The Hague in The Netherlands. IDLO works to enable governments and empower people to reform laws and strengthen institutions to promote peace, justice, sustainable development, and economic opportunity. She worked primarily with the Research & Learning team, supporting ongoing research on alternative dispute resolution, customary and informal justice, and legal aid and paralegal services in the East and Horn of Africa region. During this experience, she had an opportunity to reflect about the messy work of promoting social justice in conflict-affected societies from two lenses – a child-rights centred lens, which understands the value in promoting 'universal' standards, and an anthropologist's lens, which understands the various realities on the ground. The project in Somalia particularly highlighted the complexity of navigating through various pathways to justice, and challenged her to ask whether our frames of reference, value systems, and perspectives correspond with realities of people on the ground. To reimagine access to justice for all, we need to start by asking what we mean by "justice" and accepting that there may be other ways to achieve it. To borrow Paulo

Freire's words – listening as a form of tolerance allows us to "discover the rich possibility of doing things and learning things with different people."

**Sponsor Club:** Saitama South-East Club,  
District 2770

**Host Club:** South Brisbane Rotary Club,  
District 9630

**AFE Country:** The Netherlands

*Below: Chiaki (far right) attended the Innovating Justice Forum at the Peace Palace in the Hague, hosted by HiIL on 3-4 February 2020. She discussed with inspiring panels and innovators the nexus between innovation/technology and access to justice for all. See more on the event here.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> For information visit: [innovatingjusticeforum.hiil.org/](https://innovatingjusticeforum.hiil.org/)





Above: #16Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence IDLO Branc Office, The Hague, Netherlands.

## Reimagining Access to Justice

CAUTION: Some content here may trigger readers. I reflect on my experiences in conflict-affected Lebanon and leave it to you to decide whether to read on.

Coming from a background in law, I felt frustrated and powerless working in the context of Lebanon, where disorder, corruption and everyday violence are reinforced by systemic oppression. It felt like there was no way out for people, including my friends and colleagues. We were doing what we could to respond but addressing the root causes of violence seemed almost impossible.

I made a heart-breaking decision to leave the job and team I loved in order to become a Rotary Peace Fellow after a six-year-old boy told me his dream was to become a gun-seller and after a 13-year-old girl committed suicide because she was forced to marry a 60-year-old man. In both cases, and with countless others, the parents of these youths had their own traumas, including not being able to provide even basic needs for their children. I desperately wanted to learn how to prevent more people from falling into the vicious cycles of deprivation and violence, because for all of the talk of human rights and security, we were failing.

The first semester at UQ was emotional and difficult. I felt irritated discussing humanitarian issues, conflicts and violence, and peacebuilding in a classroom. It felt so far from realities I left behind, and I was not ready to reflect on the everyday violence I had witnessed, especially in theoretical terms. I regretted abandoning Lebanon as I continued to feel heavy responsibility for the lives of women, youth and children there. I often asked myself: Why do I get to enjoy such surreal peace in Australia when they are still fighting? There must have been more that I could have done in my capacity.

In time, the value of the fellowship became clear for me personally and professionally. I grew from seminars and from encounters with instructors and Fellows. Some of my best lessons came from heated conversations, and having space and time away from the field enabled me to accept my limitations and come to terms with what I witnessed. I also realized that despite persistent challenges that continue in Lebanon and elsewhere, the aid work that we do is meaningful.

Accepting this helped me return to my passion – law and human rights – and to start over in a sense. By joining the Research & Learning team at the International Development and Law Organization (IDLO) during my AFE, I discovered how much

I had learned about mediation and alternative dispute resolution, and how I might contribute toward constitutional reforms in transitioning states, transitional justice and Islamic Laws. My contributions focused on ensuring that gender sensitivity and child rights are protected and promoted within the complex settings of community-based customary and religious justice systems in Somalia.

During this experience, I had an opportunity to reflect on the messy work of promoting (social) justice in conflict-affected societies. In absence of functional, trustful and/or accessible law enforcement, many – especially vulnerable and/or marginalised populations – navigate their ways through various pathways to claim their rights. For example, over 80 percent of people in fragile and post-conflict states seek justice outside of formal courts or without reporting to police.<sup>1</sup> Recognising this reality, the framework of Sustainable Development Goal 16 has been expanded from traditional focus on state institutions to include the essential roles religious and customary leaders play in promoting ‘justice for all’ at community levels.<sup>2</sup> Despite this advancement, projects like the one in Somalia also make salient the complexity of international, regional and national (state) actors working with community-based traditional/religious leaders to resolve conflicts. Promoting the rights of most marginalised populations and responding to the needs of survivors require a balancing act of respecting state sovereignty and customary/religious practices – both of which are potentially harmful and/or abusive – and finding entry points to reform and strengthen justice systems.

Having been a Peace Fellow, I am more capable of finding the middle ground. I’ve learned to question whether our references, values, and perspectives make sense to people on the ground. What do we

mean by ‘access to justice’ and how can we enhance it further? To what extent are human rights perceived as ‘foreign’ or ‘Western’ concepts? How do we best collaborate with state actors, community-based initiatives, and sometimes armed groups while upholding humanitarian principles?

I now believe that it is possible for me to influence system change by promoting ‘justice’ in a way that resonates with the realities of people affected most by conflict. My AFE research projects at IDLO and courses like Islamic Law at UQ have created great opportunities to learn how to listen, which is an immeasurable form of tolerance.

I hope to work as a facilitator who creates safe spaces for people to reflect on their own assumptions, overcome differences in value systems, and understand and respect each other on a deeper level. As a legal anthropologist, I will continue to explore alternative approaches to promote justice and human rights, such as Islamic Law, customary justice mechanisms and art.

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1 International Development and Law Organisation (IDLO), “Navigating Complex Pathways to Justice: Engagement with Customary and Informal Justice Systems,” Policy and Issue Brief, 2019. Accessed 22 April, 2020. [www.idlo.int/sites/default/files/pdfs/publications/IDLO-Policy-and-Issue-Brief-Customary-and-Informal-Justice-web-FINAL.pdf](http://www.idlo.int/sites/default/files/pdfs/publications/IDLO-Policy-and-Issue-Brief-Customary-and-Informal-Justice-web-FINAL.pdf)

2 For information regarding the UN goal: [sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg16](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg16)



# Erika Isabel Bulan Yague

Philippines



Erika, a young female leader from the Philippines, is passionate about peace and human rights. She worked as a youth specialist on topics of development, humanitarian, peacebuilding and civic engagement in the Asia-Pacific Region. She has worked with United Nations Population Fund Asia and the Pacific Regional Office (UNFPA) in Thailand and UNFPA Headquarters in New York on programmes related to Youth Peace & Security, Comprehensive Sexuality Education, young key populations, innovation in youth leadership and participation.

Before working with the UN, she worked with local NGOs to respond to humanitarian crises in disaster and conflict areas in the Philippines. Erika has also held leadership positions in civil society groups such as the International Youth Council Philippines, the 10th National Youth Parliament, Kabataan, and the UN Major Group for Children and Youth. She also served as an elected official in the Philippines as Chairperson of the Community Youth Council and Vice-President of the City Youth Council Federation in Las Piñas City.

Erika spent her AFE in UNICEF Headquarters in New York supporting adolescent and youth initiatives in humanitarian and peacebuilding contexts. Young people are often seen as threats or victims, which trivialises their opportunities to contribute to matters affecting their lives and creates a stigma that exacerbates their marginalisation in society. This exclusion is even more prevalent in conflict-affected and emergency situations. Erika's work during her AFE contributed to changing this narrative by providing policies, guidance, and avenues to work with and for young people as agents of change. She believes that it is precisely in these settings that investing and engaging with adolescents and youth should

be practiced in order to foster peace and improve the quality of response for long-term development. Through the AFE, she gained skills to continue her contribution in the humanitarian field and in the areas of development and peacebuilding by shaping it to be more rights-based and people-centred.

**Sponsor Club:** Rotary Bangkok, Thailand, District 3350

**Host Club:** Rotary Club of Paddington, District 9600

**AFE Country:** USA

*Below: Erika, presenting "HER-story" in a brown bag session on inspiration and innovation with UNICEF Staff.*



## “Nothing About Us Without Us” – Inclusive and Meaningful Participation for Just and Lasting Peace

“Young People are our future” – this old saying is a truism. However, I believe that young people are not just for the ‘future’ but also for the ‘now’ - a fact that is also backed up by ample evidence from around the world. As a young leader and activist, I have always been passionate about youth civic engagement and meaningful participation. My leadership started when I was elected as president of my first grade class at age 6, and then elected as a youth counselor by age 17. However, regardless of the space made for young people, I always found my experience beset with problems whether because of the tokenistic perception for youth participation or for other reasons such as systems and cultures of corruption. I have found this to be the case in my home country of the Philippines, but also in other settings in Asia and the world.

I always aim to work with organizations whose mandate works for young people and their wellbeing in pursuit of their full potential. For this reason, for my Applied Field Experience (AFE) I worked with UNICEF, one of the largest organizations creating change for children and youth. I worked with UNICEF in delivering its mandate for adolescents and youth in humanitarianism and peacebuilding. I chose to work with UNICEF Headquarters in New York to learn and gain experience about the processes happening at the international level in a way that it affects the decisions happening on the ground. This option complemented my previous experience of working at the local and regional level, thus helping me to build a more holistic understanding of working for young people.

Youth is a time of transition that is critical for human development.<sup>1</sup> The transition is already challenging in an individual's life, and even more so in cases where the structural and environmental context is not conducive for development such as in settings of conflict and disasters. In these contexts, young people are paradoxically either seen as perpetrators and

potential threats or as mere victims or beneficiaries.<sup>2</sup> Both perspectives trivialize the capacities young people have to contribute to matters affecting their lives, thus creating a stigma that exacerbates their marginalization. This exclusion is even more prevalent in fragile and conflict-affected settings and in emergencies.<sup>3</sup> However, it is precisely in these settings that investing in and engaging with young people should be practiced to foster peace and improve the quality of humanitarian response for sustainable development.

The role of young people in peacebuilding and humanitarian action has received acknowledgement and recognition throughout the years. A collective effort by young people and other stakeholders developed global frameworks for inclusion and empowerment, such as the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action and the UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth Peace. These frameworks highlight the importance of investing in young people - of considering them as agents of change and addressing issues around their health and wellbeing, education, safety and protection, and their meaningful participation. The crucial challenge, though, is the operationalization and translation of these policies into action. This is what I was fortunate enough to work on during my AFE.

In my work with UNICEF I brought the added value of a ‘youth perspective’ from my experience as a young activist and peacebuilder in the field.<sup>4</sup> Having a young person as part of the team shows that organizations should be able to practice what they preach by working with and for young people, wherein the greater goal is to empower young people to be able to contribute and create change.

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1 United Nations Children's Fund (2019) UNICEF Programme Guidance for the Second Decade: Programming with and for Adolescents. United Nations, New York.

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2 United Nations. (2018). *The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study Youth, Peace and Security*. United Nations, New York.

3 Codreanu T. A., Celenza A., & Jacobs I. 2014. ‘Does disaster education of teenagers translate into better survival knowledge, knowledge of skills, and adaptive behavioral change? A systematic literature review’, *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine* 29(6), 1–3.

4 For this, I would like to thank my supervisor Priya, ADAP Chief Jumana, and the team (Fabio, Marcy, Kristine, Ellen, Fatene, and Gitti), for giving me a good balance of guidance and freedom to innovate during my time in UNICEF.

Below: Erika presenting in an inter-agency meeting on Youth Peace and Security. Photo by Julius Kramer.



This includes the acknowledgement of participation through indirect engagements, informal alternative approaches, and in formal decision-making.<sup>5</sup> These approaches open windows towards addressing structural barriers of participation.

By combining my experience of working in the field with the theories I learned in my Master's programme, I was able to contribute a lot to the initiatives being undertaken by UNICEF. I was able to use theories from my classes in Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies and Peacebuilding and Contested Peace to suggest ways of addressing power dynamics for young people's meaningful participation. I was able to use theories and skills from my class in Communications for Social Change for my work regarding protection and digital civic engagement of adolescents. And the knowledge I learned in my classes International Crisis Management, Humanitarian Emergencies, and Women Peace and Security was crucial in giving me the theoretical background necessary for the work I completed on policy briefs and strategic frameworks.

<sup>5</sup> Altioik, A. & Grizelj, I. 2019 'We are here: An Integrated approach to youth-inclusive peace processes', Global Policy Paper on Youth Participation in Peace Processes. New York: United Nations Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth .Available at [www.un.org/youthenvoy/peace-processes/](http://www.un.org/youthenvoy/peace-processes/)

A crucial learning that I would like to share is that language carries meaning and thereby shapes the way issues are perceived and treated. In changing the language to working 'with and for' young people, the mindset of setting goals and initiatives shifts to be more empowering. The behavior change induced by altered communication is essential to shape enabling environments for empowerment and to create more sustainable development.<sup>6</sup> In this case, using 'with and for' young people prompts policymakers and practitioners to think more critically about the approaches and initiatives to be pursued with this population. Such a simple shift in language helps to steer practice away from tokenistic approaches to participation, and to encourage a more proactive and empowering approach.

After all, acknowledging young people's capacity to change the world must start from addressing young people in adequate terms, to reflect their capacities to create change in their own lives and their communities.

I spent the three-months of my AFE dedicating myself to learning, experiencing and contributing to change in society. Working at the global level of the UN further fueled my activism and aspiration for change by reminding me that bottom-up participation is crucial for creating tangible change. My experience has increased my knowledge and strengthened my resolve to continue working in the fields of peace and security, development and humanitarianism through a rights-based and people-centred approach.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas, P.N. 2018 'Communication for Social Change: Context, Social Movements and the Digital' SAGE Publications. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.uq.edu.au/lib/uql/detail.action?docID=5573615>.





Class XVIII  
Peace Fellows  
2020 – 2021



# Rachel Buchan

USA

Rachel Buchan is a Rotary Peace Fellow at the University of Queensland from the USA. Previously, she was Vice President of Government Relations at Capstone LLC, a policy analysis firm in Washington, DC that helps institutional investors understand how geopolitics impacts large industries. Rachel also served in The Office of Barack and Michelle Obama, for the U.S. Congress, and at Human Rights First.

Rachel discovered a passion for peace while completing a 2015-2016 Fulbright Scholarship in Turkey, and she owes her deep love of learning to her alma mater,

Birmingham-Southern College, where she graduated with honours and Phi Beta Kappa in 2015. Rachel is granddaughter to former Tuscaloosa, Alabama USA Rotary Club President, Donald Brown.



# Molly Ferguson

USA

Molly Ferguson joins the Rotary Peace Fellow Class XVIII from Pennsylvania, in the United States. She has a Bachelor's degree in International Studies and Women's and Gender Studies from the University of South Carolina. Molly started her career as a Global Health Extension Agent with the U.S. Peace Corps, serving in Togo, West Africa from 2013 to 2015.

She went on to continue to work in international development and global health with a Washington, D.C.-based NGO called John Snow, Inc. She has mostly supported immunization programs in Africa and Asia and was also honored to support post-Ebola efforts with a USAID-funded project in Sierra Leone in 2019.





# Maya Glassman

Israel

Maya is an Israeli peace activist who works for promoting the two-state solution. Maya worked for various peace-focused NGOs, such as “Peace Now” and “Geneva Initiative” as a project manager and has extensive experience as a facilitator of Israeli-Palestinian dialogue groups.

In recent years, Maya also worked in the Israeli Parliament as a political advisor for MPs Michal Rozin and Mossi Raz. Maya has a BSc in Politics and Government and Management.



# Megan McKeown

Mexico

Megan was born and raised in Xalapa Veracruz. She graduated from Chapman University with a degree in Peace Studies and Women’s Studies. She is interested in peacebuilding through education, wisdom of crowds and the role of the arts in reconciliation and social regeneration.

She has observed learning and teaching in Mexico, Georgia, Morocco, India, Turkey, and Jordan. She has facilitated peacebuilding workshops in Mexico in private, public and alternative schools, governmental agencies, NGOs and citizen collectives.

Before starting her Rotary Peace Fellowship, she collaborated as a mediator, case manager and online outreach coordinator for non-profit Project Sentinel.



# Belén Harb

Ecuador

Belén is from Quito, Ecuador where she grew up before completing her undergraduate in Business and International Relations at the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador. She also has complementary studies in gender and peacebuilding topics.

She is passionate about human rights and has worked and volunteered with international NGOs in projects related to children's rights, inclusive education and youth projects to reduce violence.

Belén worked as National United Nations volunteer as part of the humanitarian assistance team after the 2016 earthquake in Ecuador. She then started working

as Programme Assistant with UNICEF Ecuador, supporting adolescents and youth participation programmes and supporting peacebuilding in schools' projects.

As a Rotary Peace Fellows at UQ, she intends to learn more about how to build sustainable and participatory peace processes.



# Tesfaye Ayalew Mekonen

Ethiopia

Tesfaye has nine years' experience in academia and public service. For the last six years, as well as teaching public law modules at the College of Law, Debre Berhan University, he was providing pro bono legal aid services for disadvantaged individuals.

Previously, he was a legal advisor for a government office engaged in land administration and a legal intern in the African Union Commission.

He graduated with a Master of Law (LL.M) and a Bachelor's Degree in Laws (LL.B). He is currently studying the Master of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Queensland, Australia.



# Linh Nong

Vietnam

Linh works in international development, and is based between Vietnam and the United States. Her main focus is Southeast Asia. She has a BA in Economics and a MA in International Development from American University, Washington D.C.

Since 2012, she has worked as a determined advocate for the rights of women, children and LGBTIQ+ people. Linh's experience ranges from local and international NGOs to intergovernmental organizations including the United Nations.



She has managed and participated in a number of projects centred around gender equality, gender-based violence, women's economic empowerment as well as water and sanitation for the poor.

# Ramanathan Thurairajoo

Singapore

Ramanathan is the founder of Enviro Peace, an NGO working towards environmental sustainability and promoting peace for sustainable development. He has been proactively involved in numerous youth leadership and community engagements at ASEAN and global environmental and peace projects such as the UN-Habitat Asia Pacific Urban Forums, UNFCCC COP summit, UNEP Tunza Conferences and ASEF meetings.

As a sustainability consultant, he served as a Professional Young Southeast Asian Leader (YSEALI) in the US, Colorado, City of Boulder's formulation of the Resiliency Masterplan Strategy.



He has a Bachelor degree in Environmental Policy and Management from the University of Adelaide and a postgraduate qualification from the University of South Australia in Environmental Management and Sustainability. More recently he attained the Advanced certification in Sustainability and Sustainable Businesses from the Singapore Management University. He is also a certified auditor for EMS and assessor for integrated carbon footprint assessment.



# Anthony Pemberton

UK

Anthony has nine years of experience in working in the peace and conflict and international development sphere with international and local NGOs, primarily in North Africa and the Middle East.

His professional experience has encompassed conflict research and learning, supporting network-building and community dialogue processes for conflict-affected communities, advocating for conflict-sensitive approaches to development and capacity building to help people to find alternative solutions to solving



conflict. Anthony holds a BA in Arabic, Spanish and French from Durham University in the UK and attributes his interest in peace, conflict and development work to the range of experiences he has had and people he has met living internationally.

# Elly Torres

Honduras

Elly Torres is a Honduran human rights advocate. She has a B.A. in International Relations and a background in social development, security, anti-corruption and international cooperation. Furthermore, she was selected in the “Centroamerica Adelante Fellowship”, a prestigious and innovative leadership development program working in the different drivers of forced migration; and in the “Organization of American States (OAS) - Fellowship on Open Government in the Americas”, a unique initiative at the global level to exercise the principles of transparency, collaboration and participation for democracy.

Before joining the Rotary Peace Fellowship, Elly collaborated as a Project Management and Grant-Making Specialist in several international entities like CARE International, Transparency International, International Cultural Youth Exchange, among other civil society organizations. With over fifteen years of professional experience designing strategic peacebuilding projects, she has led advocacy,



grantmaking, capacity-building and project managements for social policies to promote women’s rights, safety and justice at a local, national and regional level. Additionally, she participated as a National Observer of the 2017 General Elections of Honduras under the Lima Agreement for the promotion of democracy and became member of the Network for Gender Equality promoted by the Government of Canada. Due to her commitment to create a more just society, she is co-founding a grassroot organization: Foresta Honduras. This initiative develops local capacities for social entrepreneurship, environmental protection and a culture of peace.

By pursuing a Master in Peace and Conflict Studies, Elly aims to promote inclusive and equity practices by gaining a deeper understanding of the intersections between human rights, conflict resolution and peacebuilding through civic engagement.

UQ Rotary  
Peace Fellow  
Alumni



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Matthew Bright *USA, District 6440*  
Francesca Del Mese *UK, District 1260*  
Carolyn Fanelli *USA, District 7710*  
Path Heang *Cambodia, District 3350*  
Ryan Hendy *Canada, District 6400*  
Amy Kay *USA, District 7600*  
Sophia Knöchel Ledberg *Sweden, District 2350*  
Rebecca Milligan *USA, District 6310*  
Christian Oakes *USA, District 6970*

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Yoshio Chikamatsu *Japan, District 2580*  
Noëlle DePape *Canada, District 5550*  
Mariano Griva *Argentina, District 4880*  
Sanjana Hattotuwa *Sri Lanka, District 3220*  
Josephine Manuel *Philippines, District 3790*  
Colin Spurway *UK, District 1010*

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Santosh Mehra *India, District 3150*  
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Vikas Gora *India, District 3020*  
Sheunesu Hove *Zimbabwe, District 9210*  
Christopher Moore *USA, District 5340*  
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Ryan Moore *Northern Ireland, District 1160*  
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Tamara Turcan *Netherlands, District 1600*  
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Marcos Zunino *Argentina, District 4820*



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Joseph Hongoh *Kenya, District 9200*  
Fanney Karlsdottir *Iceland, District 1360*  
David Kozar *USA, District 5710*  
David LaMotte *USA, District 7670*  
Jeneice Olsen *USA, District 5950*  
Pamela Padilla *Phillippines, District 3800*  
Zuzana Petovska *Slovak Republic, District 2240*

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Bryn Cain *USA, District 5750*  
Joseph DeVoir *USA, District 6360*  
Yuka Kaneko *Japan, District 2750*  
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Jake Kurtzer *USA, District 7620*  
Humaira Shafi *Pakistan, District 3270*  
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Casey Crocket *USA, District 6290*  
Chantelle Doerksen *USA, District 5300*  
Erica Rose Jeffrey *USA, District 5150*  
Naing Ko Ko *Myanmar, District 9920*  
Nissa Rhee *USA, District 3650*  
Ana Maria Rodriguez Contreras *Colombia, District 4290*  
Richard Roeder *Germany, District 1840*  
Rabi Shah *Nepal, District 3292*  
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Ioannis Marios Sarikas *Greece, District 2481*  
Omayma Sawaed *Israel, District 9600*  
Christophe Stiernon *Belgium, District 2170*  
Shruti Upadhyay *India, District 3050*

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Devin Biviano *USA, District 5080*  
Katharina Dechert *USA, District 5440*  
Sai Won Latt *USA, District 6630*  
Melanie Lindayen *Canada, District 7070*  
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Gina Kar-Lay Fu, *USA, District 5170*  
Saila Huusko, *Finland, District 1420*  
Kate Rougvie, *Scotland, District 1040*  
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Katsa Brenneman, *USA, District 5470*  
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Nicholas Drushella, *USA, District 7610*  
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Mohamed Yussuf , *Kenya, District 9212*

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Phyusin Ngwethaw, *Myanmar, District 3350*  
Nery Ronatay, *Philippines, District 3820*  
Nico Schneider, *Germany, District 1860*  
Chiaki Takenouchi, *Japan, District 2770*  
Erika Yague, *Philippines, District 3350*

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Molly Ferguson, *USA, District 7430*  
Maya Glassman, *Israel, District 2490*  
Ana Belén Harb, *Ecuador, District 4400*  
Megan McKeown, *Mexico, District 4185*  
Tesfaye Ayalew Mekonen, *Ethiopia, District*  
Linh Nong, *Vietnam, District 7620*  
Anthony Pemberton, *UK, District 1285*  
Ramanathan Thurairajoo, *Singapore, District 1285*  
Elly Torres, *Honduras, District 9600*

## Staff and support

# Diana McCluskey

I started with the Graduate Centre in its introduction year of 2016, and have thoroughly enjoyed working with all the student cohorts across the various postgraduate programs we run.

Prior to working at UQ, I coordinated mentor programs for QUT (matching final year students with industry mentors to assist with launching their careers) and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (the John Flynn Placement program – a national mentor program matching medical students with GP mentors in regional, rural and remote Australia). My career before working



in the tertiary education space was in program management of disability employment programs.

My husband's previous membership of the Bardon Rotary Club gives me insight into the wonderful work Rotarians do – and I view working with the Rotary Peace Fellows a privilege here at the UQ Rotary Peace Centre.

# Associate Professor Morgan Brigg

Morgan Brigg blends theory and practice in examining the interplay of culture, governance and selfhood in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, governance, and international development. He worked in conflict resolution and mediation prior to his academic career, and he continues to practice as a nationally accredited mediator and facilitator. His research develops ways of knowing and working across cultural difference which draw upon Indigenous approaches to political community.



Current projects examine ways of recuperating Indigenous forms of governance and conflict resolution, and the promise of ideas of relationality for making the field of conflict resolution a genuinely global endeavour.



## Additional thanks

We deeply appreciate all the hard work that has gone into the success of our Rotary Peace Fellowship, especially during this time of uncertainty.

To all of those who have helped us on our paths to success – we thank you.

### UQ

Head of School, Professor Katharine Gelber

Associate Professor Morgan Brigg

Dr Melissa Curley

Associate Professor Nicole George

Associate Professor Marianne Hanson

Ms Bronwyn Crook

Ms Tara Henry

Ms Diana McCluskey

Ms Ros Roche

Ms Luisa Ryan

### Rotary

District Governor Darryl Iseppi and members of District 9600

District Governor Ros Kelly, and members of District 9630

Mr Doug St Clair

Mr David Field

Mr Leslie Smith

Rotary Host Counsellors



