

# PEACE PROSPECTS

Advancing peace leadership scholarship and practice



The Peace Leadership  
Collaborative

Peace Leadership  
Theory & Scholarship

Peace Leadership  
in Action

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# WELCOME!

## Welcome to the first issue of *Peace Prospects*, the Peace Leadership Collaborative magazine!

The Peace Leadership Collaborative (PLC) is a global hub for the theory, practice, and collective wisdom of peace leadership. We launched in 2023 with the goal of advancing peace leadership by bridging the gap between theory and practice, fostering mutual learning, and encouraging collaboration between scholars and practitioners. The *Peace Prospects* magazine is just one of the ways we do this.

In this inaugural issue, we center on the question: *what is peace leadership?* It begins with a short introduction to the Peace Leadership Collaborative to learn more about our growing organization and community. The “Peace Leadership Theory and Scholarship” section provides an overview of the field of peace leadership from an academic perspective, followed by a deeper dive into the Integral Peace Leadership model. The “Peace Leadership in Action” section moves from theory to practice, sharing stories of peace leaders in diverse contexts around the world. Among the peace leaders you will meet in this section, you will learn about Oluchi Uzodimma’s work with youth in Nigeria through her organization, Child Shield Initiative, and her Peacebuilding Academy, and you will read about the incredible experience that led Reverend Ebenezer Joseph to peacebuilding and interfaith work.

We hope the articles and stories in this issue increase your understanding of peace leadership and the multitude of ways it can be practiced in our work and everyday lives, and that you are inspired by these stories to join us and other peace leaders worldwide in this powerful work.

In peace,

*Lisa Hilt* ◆ *sylvia murray* ◆ *Whitney McIntyre Miller* ◆ *Tareq Layka*

and the rest of the PLC team



# The Peace Leadership Collaborative

The Peace Leadership Collaborative (PLC) was founded in 2023 to serve as a global hub for the theory, practice, and collective wisdom of peace leadership worldwide.

## Our Story

To counter the violence and conflict happening worldwide, we believe we need a global movement of leaders approaching peacebuilding and leadership differently. The Peace Leadership Collaborative began when a small group of practitioners, researchers, evaluators, and funders came together to do something about this. From our different vantage points, we each saw the value and transformational potential of peace leadership theories and lessons to peacebuilders and, at the same time, the wealth of knowledge and experience

peacebuilders could offer to the field and one another. We decided to dismantle our siloed work and take action together to create an ever-growing space that welcomes peace scholars and practitioners around the world to collaborate and learn together.

Following consultations with academics, community peace leaders, and other stakeholders to validate and gather input on our plans, we publicly launched the Peace Leadership Collaborative in 2023 with support from Euphrates Institute, our fiscal sponsor; The Miner Anderson Family Foundation; and Chapman University's Attallah College of Educational Studies.

“Peace leadership is a proactive and intentional approach to individual and collective action that challenges violence and aggression to create peaceful, positive, just change”  
~ Whitney McIntyre Miller

## Our Mission

The Peace Leadership Collaborative’s mission is to bridge the gap between the theory and practice of peace leadership, and to provide opportunities for mutual learning and collaboration among peace leadership scholars and practitioners around the globe.

We aim through our work to promote and advance the field of peace leadership globally, and to provide a space of belonging for peace leaders and scholars from all identities and contexts to learn with and from peace leadership communities around the globe.

## Our core practices:

- We promote peace leadership to support a movement of global leaders who approach leadership and peacebuilding differently, countering violence & promoting positive peace.
- We recognize that we can all be peace leaders in our work, communities, and in systems large and small.
- We center the voices and experiences of grassroots peacebuilders, recognizing their lived experiences are critical sources of knowledge, alongside scholarship.
- We center storytelling and dialogue to gain deeper insights into the practice and heart of peace leadership.

## Our Work

The PLC provides a range of opportunities for scholars and practitioners to learn about peace leadership from and with one another, including virtual gatherings, an online peace leadership resource library, a newsletter which includes links to stories, new research, and events, and the Peace Prospects magazine.

We are continuing to develop our offerings, and invite you to create with us. Future opportunities include additional platforms and avenues for peace leadership scholars and practitioners to connect and collaborate; workshops and trainings on peace leadership-related topics, and research to advance the field.

## Who We Are

The Peace Leadership Collaborative is a member-based organization, with a diverse community of individuals who are interested in and involved in peace leadership in a variety of ways, including community and faith leaders, academics, and activists.

Since we launched last year, the PLC team has grown to an amazing team of peace leaders representing five continents, multiple sectors and diverse issue areas. They bring a wealth and diversity of experience and knowledge to our work.

*Acknowledgement: Thank you to Cristal Flores for contributing to this article.*

# Meet the PLC Team



## **Dr. Amjad Mohamed Saleem | PLC Advisor**

Amjad is the manager of the Volunteering, Youth and Education Development at the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies based in Geneva. He is also a Research/Fellow of the Faculty of Education, Universiti Malaya, Malaysia and non resident fellow at the Centre for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies in Doha. He has worked in different perspectives of humanitarian work, interfaith engagement, and peace building.



## **Fran Farazdaghi | Co-founder & Steering Committee Member**

Fran is an Associate Professor of Global and Peace Studies at Golden West College. She specializes in Conflict Resolution, Social Justice, Environmental Justice, Nonviolent Activism, and education in conflict zones. For 15 years, she led the college's International Peace Conference and organized peace-themed events. She is a board member of U.C. Irvine's Center for Citizen Peacebuilding and Euphrates Institute.



## **Ion Vlad | Co-founder & PLC Advisor**

Ion Vlad is the director of The Miner Anderson Family Foundation and a writing consultant and guest lecturer at The University of San Francisco's School of Education. His research background and interests are in human rights and peace education, particularly third spaces of learning such as museums and memorials.



## **Janith Prabashwara Perera | PLC Advisor**

Janith is a peacebuilder, development practitioner, and educator with extensive experience in peace activism, advocacy, research, and education. His focus areas include youth empowerment, nonviolent communication, and servant leadership. He is currently pursuing a PhD at the University of Leeds and holds leadership and advisory roles in several local and international peacebuilding organizations.



## **Kaleem Hussain | PLC Advisor**

Kaleem is a multi-disciplinary change management consultant, geo-political observer, author and analyst with a research focus on conflict transformation, risk, peace and reconciliation initiatives. He is a RANE Network Affiliate Expert, Euphrates Peace Practice Alliance and Global Diplomatic Forum Alumnus, Fellow at Better Climate Governance and an Honorary Fellow at the Edward Cadbury Centre for the Public Understanding of Religion, University of Birmingham, UK.



### **Katy Lunardelli | Co-founder & Steering Committee Member**

Katy is the Executive Director of Euphrates. She is a global leader and listener, having worked in multicultural settings for the last two decades. Before Euphrates Katy worked for eighteen years in the field of corporate social responsibility and ethical sourcing where she worked for Reebok International, Hasbro, and most recently the Fair Factories Clearinghouse (FFC).



### **Dr. Lazarina Topuzova | PLC Advisor**

Lazarina is a Professor of Communication and Organizational Leadership at Robert Morris University. Her research interests and expertise are in developing leadership capacity in community and grassroots organizations, leadership for peace, and women in leadership. Dr Topuzova is the former coeditor of the Journal of Hate Studies and past Chair of the Leadership for Peace Community of the International Leadership Association.



### **Lisa Hilt | Co-founder & Director**

Lisa is an independent evaluator, researcher, and facilitator who works primarily with organizations and foundations focused on peace, social justice, and bridging divides. She is dedicated to supporting the work of changemakers worldwide and advancing transformative models and initiatives. Lisa brings knowledge and skills from multiple disciplines including peace studies, psychology, sociology, public policy, and contemplative practice.



### **Oluchi Achi Uzodimma | PLC Advisor**

Oluchi is the Founder of Child Shield Initiative, an organization that addresses issues that concern children and teenagers, and runs a Peacebuilding Academy for Children. She's a Peer Mediator, a Teen coach and a Humanitarian. She's a passionate Peacebuilder endorsed by the Euphrates Institute USA, an alumnus of African Civic Engagement Academy at University of Georgia, and a Goldin Global Fellow (Chicago, USA)



### **sylvia murray | Co-founder & Practice Lead**

sylvia murray serves as the Head of Programs and Strategy at Euphrates Institute. She designs and holds spaces for personal and community healing, transformation, and movement building, and supports individuals and communities to transform systems and conflicts with curiosity, connection, and courage.



### **Dr. Tareq Layka | Fundraising & Partnerships Lead**

Tareq is a Syrian dentist, peacebuilder, and global health expert working at the intersection of health, peacebuilding, politics, and security, particularly in conflict zones. An MSc graduate from King's College London and a TEDx speaker, he advises international organizations and lectures globally on innovative approaches to today's complex challenges.



### **Ugo Egbuta | PLC Advisor**

Ugo is an electrical/electronic engineer dedicated to empowering the next generation to become champions of peace and equity. Born into a gender-biased culture, she witnessed injustices faced by women and girls. This sparked her passion to challenge societal norms and foster inclusive environments through educating and mentoring children and teenagers in cultivating empathy and non-violent ways of communication to help build a more harmonious world.



### **Whitney McIntyre Miller, Ph.D. | Co-founder & Research Lead**

Whitney is an Associate Professor of Leadership Studies at Chapman University who centers her scholarship on peace leadership and community development and leadership. She has experience in international development, refugee resettlement, nonviolence, and elections monitoring. She is the Co-Director of Chapman's Panther Experiential Philanthropy Project and former co-convenor of the International Leadership Association's Peace Leadership Affinity Group.

Acknowledgements: We are incredibly grateful to Hollister Thomas, our other co-founder, and to all of the other individuals who have shared their time and wisdom with us during this journey!

## **Join us!**

### **Join our growing network**

[Join our mailing list](#) today to stay updated on our latest initiatives and other peace leadership events and resources.

Follow us on Instagram & Facebook [@peaceleadershipcollaborative](#)

### **Join our team | Partner with us**

Email us at [info@peaceleadershipcollaborative](mailto:info@peaceleadershipcollaborative) if you are interested in partnering with us or joining our team. We welcome new members and partners, whether you are a peace professional, academic, or just passionate about peace and positive change!

# What motivates us to be peace leaders?

from the Peace Leadership Collaborative team

My commitment to peace leadership is driven by a profound belief in resilience and empathy to transform adversity into hope and empower communities through building bridges and meaningful change.

~ Tareq

I'm motivated by the fact that, when I rest from work at the end of the day, I know I've helped make a difference in the lives of the girls I came in contact with and their families. Seeing the smiles on their faces and watching them improve makes me look forward to work. ~ Oluchi

I'm inspired by the many incredible community peacebuilders engaging in this work around the world and by anyone who aims to lead with and for peace. ~ Whitney

I'm motivated to create peaceful educational and social environments by the hope that transformative pedagogical experiences can be really impactful and empowering. ~ Ion

I am inspired to be a peace leader by my vision of a future where every individual, irrespective of gender or background, can be given equal opportunity to thrive.

~ Ugo

I am inspired to be a peace leader because I believe in the transformative power of youth as catalysts for lasting peace.

~ Janith

I am inspired by the brave people around the world who are standing up to injustice and working for peace, even in the most dire situations. These individuals and the peace leaders before them give me hope for the future.

~Lisa

I am inspired to be a peace leader to connect people wanting to make change on the ground.

~ Amjad

I'm inspired and motivated by people around the world relentlessly dedicated to collective liberation, and the deep love, belonging, and flourishing that is possible.

~ sylvia



# Peace Leadership Theory & Scholarship

This section focuses on peace leadership as an academic field of study. It begins with an overview of the field, including summaries of eight peace leadership theoretical models, and concludes with a deep dive into one of the models - Integral Peace Leadership.

# The Emerging Field of Peace Leadership

Written by Cristie Suzukawa Clancy and Dr. Whitney McIntyre Miller

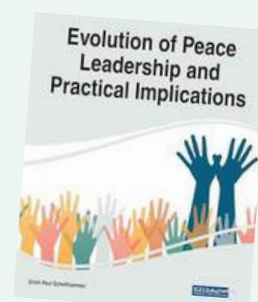
**Peace leadership is the intersection of individual and collective capacity to challenge issues of violence and aggression to build positive, inclusive social systems and structures.**

Peace leadership, as defined by McIntyre Miller (2016), is “the intersection of individual and collective capacity to challenge issues of violence and aggression to build positive, inclusive social systems and structures.” Ultimately, this means that peace leadership is the opportunity to, as individuals and as groups, find ways to resolve both small-scale and large-scale conflicts; push back against violence and discord where it exists; and work to bring about positive, systemic, global change by examining and creating alternate ways of operating within the world.

Peace leadership draws from various fields of study, such as peace and conflict studies, leadership studies, peace psychology, and criminal justice. It has evolved over the last decade to become a recognized sub-field in leadership studies. While the area of peace leadership is still relatively new, the principles of peace leadership and its practitioners have been present in literature for far longer. This includes the practices of mindfulness, nonviolence, compassion, and unity, as exemplified in leaders such as

Mahatma Gandhi, Thich Nhat Hanh, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

As the literature and scholarship around peace leadership have grown, there has been a clear shift away from a focus on the skills and practices of individual leaders to a more collective, collaborative framing toward a more holistic leadership approach. Diverse perspectives have and continue to shape the ways scholars think about and define peace leadership and how it is conceptualized in theory and practice. However, many peace leadership scholars utilize Galtung’s (1996) distinction between positive and negative peace as a guiding frame, where negative peace marks the absence of violence, and positive peace expands to include the absence of indirect and structural violence. In the descriptions below, we highlight some of the emergent peace leadership models and ideas. While there are distinct differences in each, these ideas reflect the collective nature of peace leadership and highlight the need to address both negative and positive peace.



# Overview of peace leadership scholars and ideas

## Integral Peace Leadership

Conceived by McIntyre Miller and Green (2015), and then honed by McIntyre Miller and colleagues in additional publications, the Integral Peace Leadership framework considers the relationships between four interrelated sectors of peace skills and practices: Innerwork, Knowledge, Community, and Environment. Within these distinct areas, individuals strengthen personal peace practices through self-reflection, apply conflict transformation practices through mindful interaction with others, engage the community in peacebuilding through collective action, and address peace at the systemic and structural levels. At the nexus of these sectors, peace leadership occurs when individuals and groups are intentionally and actively operating in all four areas. Through an interview with Dr. Whitney McIntyre Miller in the next article, you can learn more about this framework.

## The 4Hs and Peace Dwelling

For Amaladas (2024), peace leadership is the interaction between four ways of being: being a guardian, being a curator, being a welcoming presence, and being a neighbor. He maps these principles of being alongside what he calls the 4Hs: the Head, the Heart, the Hands, and the Holy. Amaladas uses this structure to invite us to live into the ways of being and the 4Hs to create spaces where we might all dwell in peace, with this peace dwelling being the ultimate goal for humanity and the world.

## Culture of Peace

Schellhammer (2018) promoted an approach to peace leadership that sets the goal of creating a Culture of Peace, including respect for life and non-violence, acknowledgment of human rights and freedoms, and dialogue and understanding across societies and nations (See: United Nations Resolution 53/25, 1999). Where traditional leadership favored a top-down, authoritarian, linear style, Schellhammer sees current leaders as now needing to unify diverse individuals and communities with varied worldviews under a shared vision of peace. This requires leaders to align their personal values with those of the larger society, and in so doing, a leader must employ both humility and self-awareness.

## Intergenerational Peace Leadership

The Intergenerational Peace Leadership model was formed by Lee-Koo and Pruitt (2024) and serves to recognize the importance of engaging members of society across generations to produce strong communities of peace for all. Within the model, peace initiatives are inclusive and collaborative and recognize the unique contributions across generations and contexts, including women and youth who are habitually excluded despite their many contributions to peace efforts worldwide. This model includes both formal and informal leadership positions, creating opportunities for members of all generations.



Conscious Peace Leadership Model  
Photo credit: Deeper Leadership Institute

## Conscious Peace Leadership Model

Dinan's (2018) Conscious Peace Leadership model highlights the importance of positive intention, methods, and values; self-awareness; and deep connection with others, all to create harmony, interconnectedness, and the higher evolution of humanity. Based on the principles of Ubuntu, this model emphasizes leading with compassion, reciprocity, dignity, and humanity. It highlights the critical task of collaboration within economic, social, and environmental contexts to sustain forward movement, change, and justice for all humanity; leans on concepts found in systems and relational theories; and shares facets of servant and transformational leadership.

## PEACE Powers Model

Chinn and Falk-Rafael (2018) created the PEACE Powers model to reflect a notion of critical caring, or a sense of strongly prioritizing the care for others. PEACE is an acronym for Praxis, Empowerment, Awareness, Cooperation, and Evolvment, and involves powers of the whole, sharing, nurturing, and consciousness. These PEACE

Peace Prospects

powers prioritize inclusive and collaborative empowerment rather than power-over practices. PEACE leaders are, therefore, those who are reflective change-makers who build solidarity to transform conflict.

## Indigenous Ways of Knowing

Higgins Parker's (2018) Indigenous Ways of Knowing principles emphasize a deep respect for and recognition of the connections between all living beings and the environment, underscoring the practice of storytelling in preserving traditions and information across generations. Proponents of Indigenous Ways of Knowing acknowledge the active role all individuals within society play in cultivating and sustaining peace. It is rooted in a deep appreciation of the land, and reminds individuals of the importance of maintaining an internal balance of physical, spiritual, and emotional selves and a connection to the greater whole.

## Servant Leadership Perspective of Peace Leadership

The Jesuit Worldwide Learning's Peace Leadership Certificate program, based in refugee camps around the world, utilizes a servant leadership view of peace leadership. As described by Topuzova and Horsman (2022), this peace leadership lens prioritizes servant leadership values and skills as foundational principles for establishing a culture of peace. These principles align with a notion of heartfulness, or the centering relationship between the heart and the mind, and Jesuit education ideals around educating the whole person. Taken together, these ideas present a view of peace leadership that is holistic and collective in its efforts to promote justice and peace.

## Closing

It is clear to see, then, that peace leadership takes up the work of creating collective and collaborative spaces to bring about positive social change. These models demonstrate that we must work together to address the challenges we face in our world and create places and spaces that are more reflective of the world we wish to see. These models

contain a variety of examples and practical focus that could be utilized by peacebuilders the world over but still require more empirical testing and applied experiences, as empirical scholarship is less available than theoretical literature. The Peace Leadership Collaborative, therefore, becomes an ideal place to form and experiment with the relationships between theory and practice to help us grow the field of peace leadership.

## Suggested Reading

Amaladas, S. (2024). *Peace leadership: A story of peace dwelling (Elements in leadership)*. Cambridge University Press.

Chinn, P. L. & Falk-Rafael, A. (2018). Critical caring as a requisite for peace leadership. In S. Byrne & S. Amaladas (Eds.) *Peace leadership: The quest for connectedness*. pp. 195-211. Routledge.

Dinan, A. (2018). Conscious peace leadership: Examining the leadership of Mandela and Sri Aurobindo. In S. Amaladas and S. Byrne (Eds.), *Peace leadership: The quest for connectedness* (pp. 107-121). Routledge.

Higgins Parker, L. (2022). Peace leadership and Indigenous ways of knowing. In E. Schellhammer (Ed.). *Evolution of Peace Leadership and Practical Implications* (pp.197-211). IGI Publications.

Lee-Koo, K., & Pruitt, L. (2024). Prospects for intergenerational peace leadership: Reflections from Asia and the Pacific. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 1–21.

McIntyre Miller, W. (2016). Toward a scholarship of peace leadership. *International Journal of Public Leadership*, 12(3), 216–226.

McIntyre Miller, W., & Green, Z. (2015). An integral perspective of peace leadership. *Integral Leadership Review*, 15(2).

Schellhammer, E. P. (2018). Meaning and concept of peace leadership. In A. H. Campbell (Ed.), *Global leadership initiatives for conflict resolution and peacebuilding* (pp. 27-47). IGI Global.

Topuzova, L. & Horsman, J. (2022). The refugee experience and peace leadership education: A case study from the margins. In E. Schellhammer (Ed.). *Evolution of Peace Leadership and Practical Implications* (pp.142-162). IGI Publications.



# Dr. Whitney McIntyre Miller and Integral Peace Leadership

By Omar Zuwayed

Despite the surge in conflicts, there is a compelling reason for optimism. A new wave of peace leaders is emerging, armed with an innovative framework called integral peace leadership, sparking hope for positive change. The integral peace leadership framework, developed in 2015, is a framework for peacebuilding that aims to create positive systems and structures by challenging violence and aggression. This summer, I interviewed Dr. Whitney McIntyre Miller, Associate Professor of Leadership Studies at Chapman University and the lead co-creator of the integral peace leadership framework, to learn more about the framework and her ongoing work to improve and learn from the application of the framework.

## What was the inspiration for developing the integral peace leadership framework?

According to McIntyre Miller, the initial idea for the integral peace leadership framework began during a conversation with the co-author of the original article, Zachary Gabriel Green, nearly a decade ago. McIntyre Miller shared, “I realized that there wasn’t anything out there that aligned leadership studies and peace studies. So, the two of us mapped it out on a napkin during lunch one day. We were able to put together the first piece on integral peace leadership, published in 2015, which spawned from that conversation.”

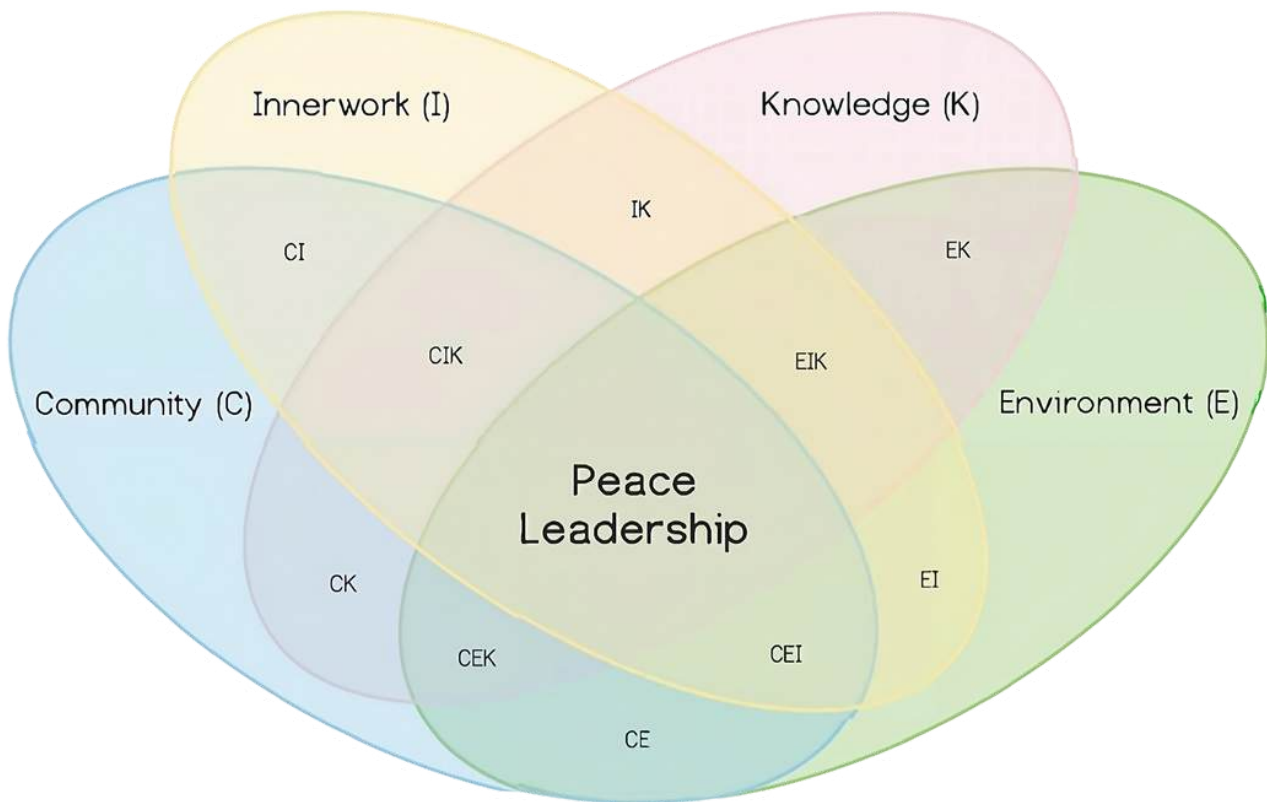
Inspired by the work of Ken Wilber, the integral peace leadership framework takes a holistic approach to providing a structure for individuals and organizations working to create a more peaceful and just world. Wilber’s understanding of reality is divided into four quadrants: individual interior, individual exterior, collective interior, and collective exterior. “Wilber’s idea is that for us to be effective in getting anything done, we need to do things in all four areas. So, the idea was to think about how to bring this all together and make it a comprehensive way of thinking about peace and leadership in

the world,” McIntyre Miller explained. Over the last ten years, the framework has been refined by utilizing existing research and through conversations with peace leaders working in communities the world over. The hope is that it will continue to evolve by regularly integrating feedback from practitioners, allowing it to remain relevant and adaptable to diverse audiences.

## What are the key elements of the integral peace leadership framework?

In their integral peace leadership framework, McIntyre Miller and Green discussed the four areas of peace leadership as they saw them: Innerwork, which involves self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and a deep understanding of one's values and beliefs; the building of spaces for creating and maintaining Community; the Knowledge of the skills, behaviors, and practices to make this work come to life; and the ability to be aware of the systems and Environment which surrounds us. Although each of these areas is plotted separately in the framework, it is important to underscore the interrelationship and overlap between them, making the framework much more holistic than it appears when one looks at the four distinct areas separately.





Integral Peace Leadership Model, ©2022, Whitney McIntyre Miller

The framework shows that effective leadership is pivotal in the quest for peace. Leaders have the power to shape attitudes, behaviors, and systems, fostering a peaceful community. This underscores the empowering role of leadership in peacebuilding efforts. Therefore, the integral peace leadership framework provides peacebuilders with a common language and foundation to explain their efforts and intent to funders and collaborators.

The integral peace leadership framework stands out because it bridges the gap between theory and practical application, making complex ideas accessible to a broader audience, particularly at the community level. The framework emphasizes the importance of considering all aspects of a situation: the individuals, the communities, and the systems at play.

The goal for McIntyre Miller is to make the integral peace leadership framework available beyond academic circles through books and practical field guides. Making peace leadership more accessible for real-world application helps to ensure that the framework remains relevant and impactful in both academic and community settings.

## How has the framework been applied and tested in real-life situations?

McIntyre Miller shared that there have been several ways that the framework has been applied and tested over the years. First, together with colleague Dr. Mizah Omair Alomair, they used the integral peace leadership framework as a means to analyze the narrative of women peacemakers around the world.

Based on the biographical stories written about participants in the University of San Diego's Women's PeaceMaker program, McIntyre Miller and Alomair were able to assess whether the initial version of the framework was inclusive of the women's personal experiences and then to update the key elements in each of the areas accordingly.

Second, since 2020, Euphrates Institute has implemented the Peace Practice Alliance (PPA), an annual 6-month leadership program influenced by the integral peace leadership framework (The PPA is highlighted in another article in this magazine). Through the program, peacebuilders are trained using integral peace leadership as an organizing framework and taught practical ways to implement peace leadership in their communities. Upon completion of the program, one of the peace leaders from Bosnia expressed her gratitude for the framework because it gave her the language and foundation to describe her efforts more effectively, making it easier to communicate the purpose and value of her work to funders and other stakeholders. When discussing the PPA, McIntyre Miller expressed her gratitude for her work with Euphrates Institute, stating the value of connecting with peace leaders from all over the world, "through our conversations with the participants in the program, we were able to further hone the categories in each of the four areas, and based on their experiences, we updated the framework."

Finally, McIntyre Miller and some of her Chapman University colleagues have been working to bring the ideas of integral peace leadership into local Orange County, California, USA schools.

As McIntyre Miller described it, "As many schools already use some of the principles and practices in the framework, integral peace leadership is often a natural organizing framework for schools. They are able to take what they do on campus and plot it into the four areas and then see where they might want to augment some programming." Through a grant from the Miner Anderson Family Foundation, McIntyre Miller and colleagues have been able to do this work with three schools already and will add additional schools to their program for the 2024-2025 school year.



Through the implementation and examination of the integral peace leadership framework within a variety of settings, it is clear that McIntyre Miller is committed to continuous improvement. She speaks of the ways in which she has been able to hone in on the key ideas of each of the four areas and the importance of viewing them as part of an integrated system. As McIntyre Miller described, "That has been my biggest challenge over the last couple of years. The first iterations of the framework were super heavy, academic, and not very practical."

So, having those conversations with peacebuilders allowed me to understand what pieces they used in reality – those standout pieces in each of the four areas, and how we can talk about them in a way that makes them more digestible.” By being reflective and recognizing that pursuing peace requires ongoing learning and adaptation, the framework can remain relevant and useful as the next generation of leaders is ushered into a chaotic world.

## What do you want others to understand or take away from your work?

To McIntyre Miller and many leaders worldwide, the integral peace leadership framework is more than just theoretical; it’s a call to action. It reminds us that peace leadership is not passive by nature but rather an active pursuit that requires dedication to lifelong learning, adaptation to ongoing world conflicts, and a willingness to challenge existing systems in the name of peace. With McIntyre Miller leading the way, there is hope that integral peace leadership will continue to empower individuals and communities to create positive change in the world.



“There will be a book about integral peace leadership and the peace leaders who are engaging in this work, and I hope that serves as an entrée for some people, and then we can make a field guide that is less academic and more practitioner-based because I think that’s what matters...having it be accessible,” McIntyre Miller explained. As peaceful leaders’ stories continue to be told, there’s hope that these narratives will inspire others to embrace peacebuilding and contribute to a more just and equitable world.

To learn more about Whitney McIntyre Miller and her work, you can visit her website, [whitneymcintyremiller.com](http://whitneymcintyremiller.com). There, she has additional information regarding integral peace leadership and a list of all of her publications on the topic.

# PEACE LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

This section provides stories of peace leaders from around the world. Together, these stories illuminate the dynamic and multifaceted nature of Peace Leadership as it manifests in diverse contexts, illustrating its relevance and impact in real-world contexts.

It begins with four feature stories: the inspirational journeys and work of three peace leaders - Oluchi Achi Uzodimma in Nigeria, Reverend Ebenezer Joseph in Sri Lanka, and Kaleem Hussain in the UK - and the story of Euphrates Institute's innovative peace leadership program. These are followed by "Portraits of Peace Leaders", a set of six additional snapshots of peace leaders and their transformative work.

# Guardian of Harmony: A Peace Leader's Journey in Nigeria

Written by Dr. Rabab Atwi

In the heart of Nigeria, an economically strained country, a beacon of hope has risen in the form of a peace-promoting initiative started by Oluchi Achi Uzodimma, a Nigerian peace leader who was born in Northern Kaduna before moving to Abuja, the country's capital. Oluchi's educational journey began with a degree in industrial chemistry before she uncovered her passion for peace studies and conflict resolution, leading her to pursue a Master's degree in peace studies.

Oluchi experienced the devastating effects of discord at a young age. She grew up in a family fraught with division and frequent conflicts due to her dad having multiple wives. Alongside these family conflicts, Oluchi witnessed the religious tensions in Nigeria, including the crises following the introduction of Sharia Law in 2000, which resulted in the displacement of many children, particularly young girls, who lost both their homes and parental care. Rather than allowing the personal and religious challenges to break her spirit, these events fueled Oluchi's passion for peace and catalyzed her desire to create an institution that could support, protect, and create a peaceful world for children in her community.

To fulfill her vision as a peace leader and light the way for a better world for Nigeria's



Oluchi Achi Uzodimma

youth, Oluchi started the non-governmental and non-profit organization 'Child Shield Initiative' in 2006. The organization provides interventions for Nigerian children and teenagers from rural areas, ages ranging from seven to seventeen, in the thematic areas of peacebuilding, child marriage, education, and inter-religious dialogue. A key component of



Photo credit: Child Shield Initiative

the 'Child Shield Initiative' is the 'Ending Child Marriage' coalition which aims at prioritizing the rights of children through ending child marriage in Nigeria. Another is the Peacebuilding Academy, through which children receive peacebuilding training, mentoring, and technical assistance to help them better address issues related to conflict and violence in their communities.

Thanks to Oluchi's efforts, the Peacebuilding Academy soon became a lifeline for those young people, as it was the only safe space they knew offering not just education but also emotional healing and hope for a brighter tomorrow through peace workshops, dialogue circles, and conflict-

resolution discussions. Watching the children grow, learn, and laugh in the Academy has filled Oluchi with a sense of purpose and motivated her to involve additional members of her community to strengthen the support systems around the children. Oluchi's initiative extended to include parents, whose engagement in the peace-promoting activities offered by the Academy has reinforced the peace-oriented values instilled throughout the peacebuilding activities offered through 'Child Shield Initiative'.

What makes Oluchi stand out among other members of her community is her solid belief in the transformative power of peace.

For Oluchi, peace leadership engages “a community of like-minded individuals working together to achieve their aim of living in peace”. Despite being surrounded by skeptics who often question the effectiveness of peaceful approaches in resolving conflicts, Oluchi remains a loyal champion of peace and harmony who has an unwavering conviction that peaceful approaches could, indeed, transform the world if adopted on a global scale.

In Nigeria, a country facing an uncertain future, Oluchi emerges as a reminder that even in times of conflict, peace can always find its way. Her story serves as a testament to the power of a peaceful leader’s determination to change the world, one child at a time. Through the ‘Child Shield Initiative’, Oluchi has put the young generation in Nigeria on the path that would hopefully guide them away from the darkness of conflict and victimhood to the light of harmony and peace.



Photo credit: Child Shield Initiative

**“Oluchi emerges as a reminder that even in times of conflict, peace can always find its way. Her story serves as a testament to the power of a peaceful leader’s determination to change the world, one child at a time.”**

Follow Child Shield Initiative on Facebook ([here](#)) to learn more about their work or to connect with Oluchi.

*The author, Dr. Rabab Atwi, a graduate of Chapman University, is an adamant believer in the transformative power of peace leadership. Her work and publications on peace leadership and peace education reflect her commitment to empowering the less privileged to break dominant narratives and foster collaboration across diverse communities, hoping that this shift in the narrative could contribute to a more peaceful world grounded in equity and peace.*

# A Dialogical Peace Journey: Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka

Written by Dr. Amjad Mohamed-Saleem

## Introduction

I have worked with Reverend Ebenezer Joseph, the immediate past president of the Methodist Church of Sri Lanka and the current president of the Interfaith Coalition for Peace Sri Lanka, over the last ten years. I am pleased to present this interview to motivate those who plan to work in this sector. On the surface, Rev. Ebenezer is a reticent, unassuming man, but spend some time with him, and you will understand the depth of his thinking and compassion.

## The Turning Point: 1983

The Reverend's journey towards peace and interfaith leadership is rooted in his experience of the Sri Lankan conflict, particularly during the [ethnic riots and pogrom](#) of 1983, during which hundreds of thousands from the Sri Lankan ethnic minority group Tamil were killed and displaced, and the subsequent [conflict](#) that emanated from the pogrom. In a crucial moment in 1983 that shaped his future, the Reverend, along with others, found themselves trapped in a burning building (the Church which he was responsible for) and surrounded by a violent mob. Remarkably, their lives were spared due to the brave interventions of individuals from different faiths—a Buddhist caretaker, a Hindu priest, and a Muslim beggar.



Reverend Ebenezer Joseph

First, a Buddhist caretaker of the Church they were living in stood up to the mob trying to enter the burning building, affirming his religious values of the sacredness of life and risking his own life to protect others. Next, a Hindu priest provided shelter for the Reverend and other displaced Christians in his temple. Then, after the riots subsided, a Muslim beggar who sometimes slept on the porch of the Church and for whom the Reverend would occasionally bring tea, went from camp to camp to ensure the Reverend was safe and to offer him a simple act of kindness - a cup of tea.

These acts of humanity, carried out by individuals of different faiths and emerging from their shared sense of humanity, provided the Reverend with an alternative narrative to the violence surrounding him and profoundly impacted his life. Rather than succumbing to vengeance or perpetuating hatred, these events served as a source of inspiration and led him to dedicate himself to peacebuilding and fostering dialogue between faith communities.

His life story from these experiences exemplifies the complexity of peace as a process and a journey and highlights the vital role of interfaith collaboration and leadership in post-conflict environments.

## Faith as the Foundation of Peace

Faith has been at the core of the Reverend's peacebuilding journey, serving as a guiding force and a source of strength in the face of adversity. His Christian faith, particularly the teachings of Christ about loving one's neighbor and forgiving one's enemies, has been instrumental in shaping his approach to peace. His Christian upbringing and deep theological education instilled in him the values of compassion, forgiveness, and reconciliation, leading him to be open to working with leaders of other faiths and communities. The incidents of 1983 cemented the importance of these values and were instrumental in shaping his perspective on life and faith.

The Reverend emphasizes that true faith is not about theological or ritual practice. It transcends boundaries, finding its highest expression in acts of love, kindness, and

solidarity. Thus, the Reverend's faith is not confined to narrow doctrines or exclusive belief systems. He believes that religious convictions should not oppose others' beliefs. It should embrace a broader sense of shared humanity, enabling collaboration across religious divides and fostering understanding, unity, and shared action towards the common good.

In addition, the Reverend also sees faith as a source of inner peace, a foundational aspect of his commitment to peacebuilding. According to the Reverend, inner peace is essential for anyone who wishes to engage meaningfully in reconciliation and conflict resolution. As the Reverend says "You can not have outer peace if you are not at peace within yourself". This inner peace, rooted in faith, has allowed him to remain steadfast in his work despite his many challenges.

## Interfaith Collaboration and Trust

Interfaith relationships have been a central component of the Reverend's peacebuilding efforts, demonstrating that collaboration between religious traditions is possible and essential in post-conflict societies. His work with senior Buddhist monks and leaders

**"...true faith is not about theological or ritual practice. It transcends boundaries, finding its highest expression in acts of love, kindness, and solidarity."**

from other faiths is a powerful example of how trust can be built between individuals of different religious backgrounds, even in contexts marked by deep divisions.

The Reverend's approach to interfaith collaboration is based on mutual respect and recognizing shared values rather than theological agreement. He recounts working closely with senior Buddhist monks whose perspectives may have initially been shaped by their religious and cultural contexts. However, they found common ground in their shared commitment to peace through consistent dialogue and developing personal relationships.



Rev Ebenezer speaking at a panel with the author in April 2024 at an event on faith and planetary health.

According to the Reverend, trust is not built through formal agreements or theoretical discussions but through developing personal relationships, acknowledging lived experiences, recognizing humanity in one another, and committing to a shared goal of peace. Over time, he and these religious leaders have developed a bond beyond doctrinal differences. This trust has allowed them to work together on projects that

**“trust is not built through formal agreements or theoretical discussions but through developing personal relationships, acknowledging lived experiences, recognizing humanity in one another, and committing to a shared goal of peace.”**

promoted peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka, creating a model of interfaith collaboration that could be replicated elsewhere and sustaining long-term collaborations.

## The Role of Storytelling

Central to the Reverend's approach to peacebuilding is the power of storytelling as a tool for personal and collective healing. He believes that sharing personal narratives can unlock the 'heartbeats' of people, and the deeper understanding and empathy among divided communities even in the midst of conflict. These heartbeats, as he describes them, represent the deep-seated desires for peace and understanding that often go unacknowledged amidst violent conflict. By tapping into these personal stories, the Reverend feels there is an opportunity to foster a more profound sense of empathy among people from different communities. This is what inspired him to set up the Interfaith Coalitions for Peace in Sri Lanka which undertakes a [healing of memories](#) project.

For the Reverend, storytelling is not just about recounting past events but about

“sharing personal narratives can unlock the 'heartbeats' of people, and the deeper understanding and empathy among divided communities even in the midst of conflict.”

sharing the emotional and human experiences beneath the surface of conflict. By telling these stories, individuals can connect on a personal level, breaking down the barriers of prejudice and fear that often perpetuate violence. It starts with a humanization of the other, which is the first step in building relationships on the journey of trust building.

## The Challenges of Peacebuilding

Despite the Reverend's optimism, he acknowledges the significant challenges that remain. One of the greatest obstacles he identifies is the tendency for people to see peace as a quick fix or a project with a clear endpoint. In reality, he emphasizes that peace is not just about agreements made in formal settings or projects but about the relationships nurtured over time. He insists that peace is a long-term process that requires sustained effort, patience, and the willingness to engage with complex, deeply rooted issues—one that involves slow and steady progress rather than quick solutions.

While the civil war officially ended in Sri Lanka in 2009, it did not automatically

resolve the divisions and animosities that had developed over decades of conflict, and deep-seated issues of division, mistrust, and hate still continue to simmer below the surface. The Reverend points out that, although there is no longer active warfare, the underlying social and political issues—such as ethnic divisions, economic disparities, and the lack of a shared national identity—remain unresolved. These unresolved tensions continue to pose a significant challenge to peacebuilding efforts.

The Reverend is also concerned that Sri Lanka has not yet developed a collective national consciousness, which he views as essential for building a united future. He believes that while individuals and communities may have made some progress in healing from the war, the nation as a whole has not yet fully come to terms with its past or developed a clear, united vision for the future. He suggests that collective reflection and grassroots dialogues, especially those addressing economic and social issues, are critical to fostering unity.



Rev Ebenezer speaking at a conference on local actors in humanitarian action in 2017 organized by the joint learning initiative on faith and communities.

“peace is a long term process that requires sustained effort, patience, and the willingness to engage with complex, deeply rooted issues— one that involves slow and steady progress rather than quick solutions.”

## Future Vision: Youth and Community Integration

Looking ahead, the Reverend is focused on building a future that prioritizes the role of young people and community-level integration. He believes youth are key to sustaining peace in Sri Lanka and other post-conflict societies. However, he also recognizes that young people need to be equipped with the right tools, skills, and opportunities to become effective peacebuilders, investing in their leadership potential, and enabling them to create alternative spaces for dialogue and transformation. This involves a space for intergenerational learning and co-creation.

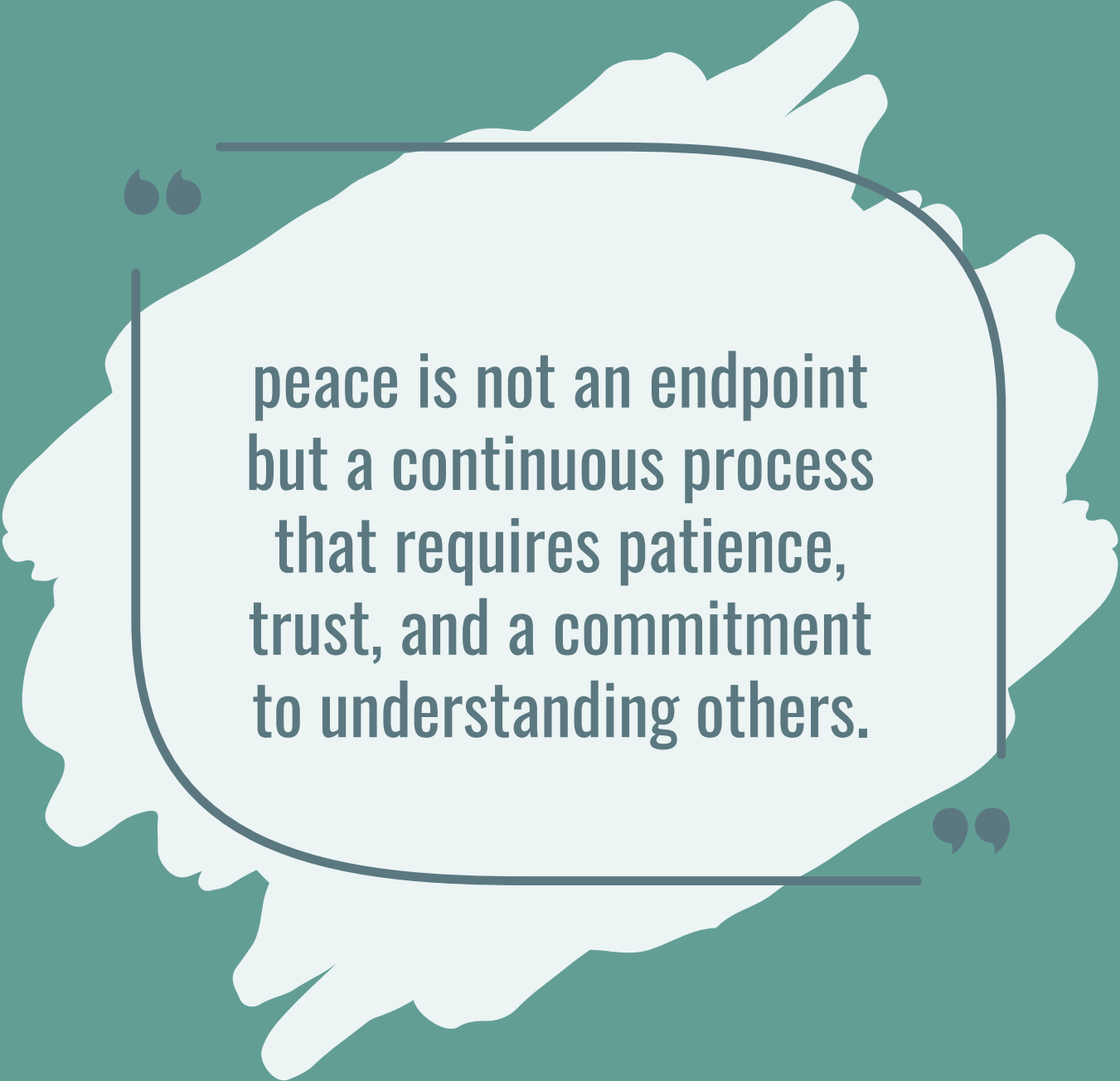
One of the Reverend's current projects involves working with former militants and military personnel to promote community integration. This initiative is particularly significant because it brings together individuals who were once on opposite sides of the conflict to work collaboratively on rebuilding their communities. By engaging in joint efforts, such as community

development and reconciliation programs, these individuals can transcend their past differences and contribute to a shared future.

These initiatives, he believes, provide a blueprint for reconciliation and healing in post-conflict societies.

## Conclusion

The Reverend's story is one of transformation, resilience, and hope. In 2022 he was [awarded](#) the World Methodist Peace Prize for his work in this space. In his true, humble self, he takes that with a pinch of salt. His journey demonstrates that peace is not an endpoint but a continuous process that requires patience, trust, and a commitment to understanding others. The Reverend has shown that peacebuilding is possible, even in the most challenging circumstances, by fostering interfaith collaboration and focusing on shared humanity. His work provides a model for others to follow, emphasizing that peace begins with personal relationships and is sustained by collective action.



**peace is not an endpoint  
but a continuous process  
that requires patience,  
trust, and a commitment  
to understanding others.**

# United in Hope-United for Humanity: Permutations in Peacebuilding

Written by Kaleem Hussain

## My Inspiration

During the peak phase of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, many parts of the world came to a standstill and there was a lot of doom and gloom circulating due to the economic, social, health and psychological challenges that people were facing. Intertwined with this and exacerbating the situation, were the multiple periods of lockdowns that societies had to endure in different parts of the world. In fact, in March 2020 the Economist led with a headline with a picture of the world titled “Closed.”

During this period of uncertainty, I began to research how leaders can inspire hope and galvanize action that can lead to positive changes. According to Hugo Slim of the Oxford Institute for Ethics, Law and Armed Conflict, people can draw “hope” from events in the past and events that may materialize in the future, i.e. hope by looking back and hope by looking forward. In this vein, the theme of “hope” has been used by many politicians to galvanize their base by envisaging and re-imagining a brighter future for their constituents, one that improves on the conditions provided under the current and previous administrations or leaders. For example, in his successful 2008 presidential campaign, Barack Obama, the 44th President of the U.S., expounded on many subjects that were part of his

bestselling book *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream* (2006). At the same time, many politicians and scholars alike have used the phrase “Hope is not a Strategy”, emphasizing the need not just for hope, but also for strategic thinking, which can have transformative power when properly planned and executed (Weigand & Underwood, 2023).



Photo credit: The Economist, 21 March 2020

“Hope is the foundation upon which peacebuilding efforts are built. It fosters collaboration and sustains the long-term commitment needed to achieve lasting peace.”

## The crucial role of hope in peacebuilding and peace leadership

Hope is the foundation upon which peacebuilding efforts are built. It fosters collaboration and sustains the long-term commitment needed to achieve lasting peace. Hope plays a crucial role in peacebuilding for multiple reasons:

**Motivation and Resilience:** Hope provides the motivation needed to pursue peace, even in the face of significant challenges. It helps individuals and communities remain resilient, fostering a belief that positive change is possible.

**Building Trust:** Hope encourages trust among conflicting parties. When people believe that peace is achievable, they are more likely to engage in dialogue and cooperation, which are essential for resolving conflicts.

**Sustaining Efforts:** Peacebuilding is a long-term process that requires sustained effort. Hope keeps the momentum going, ensuring that people continue to work towards peace even when progress is slow.

**Creating a Vision for the Future:** Hope allows communities to envision a better future. This shared vision can unite people, providing a common goal that transcends individual differences and conflicts.

**Encouraging Participation:** When people have hope, they are more likely to participate in peacebuilding activities. This participation is crucial for creating solutions that are inclusive and sustainable.

**Direction of Travel:** Hope ensures that there is a positive direction of travel when dealing with conflict, reconciliation, and peacebuilding.

The theme of hope intertwined with the modalities of peacebuilding plays a pivotal role in the areas of conflict transformation, reconstruction, and humanitarianism.





Photo credit: Kaleem Hussain

## United in Hope-United in Humanity

Building on these lessons, I created the United in Hope-United for Humanity (UHUH) initiative, an event series in which speakers from diverse sectors (e.g., government, academia, health, NGOs, private-public sector, charity, voluntary sector) convene, share insights, and collaborate to instill hope and provide relief to those in need across multiple levels of society (during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond) and to build a more sustainable future for all. The initiative invites participants to break down the conventional barriers and ways of working that many organizations and institutions are accustomed to and adopt a joined-up approach that invites participants from a cross sector of society to come together using creative ingenuity to bring about transformative, positive outcomes for impacted populations and the organizations that are involved in the initiative.

The UHUH initiative kick-started with an event in 2021 focused on the importance of volunteering and voluntary organizations during the pandemic, conducted in

partnership with the Warwick Business School (University of Warwick, UK). The event, which coincided with World Earth Day, highlighted the work that many groups and individuals continued to do to support environmental causes, even under the incredibly difficult circumstances faced throughout the pandemic, and how this volunteer work had instilled hope for humanity and the environment.

A subsequent event titled “Is our Planet Too Big to Fail?” focused on the role of the Financial Services sector in addressing the environmental-human challenges of the future and in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs).

As people embarked on the road to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the world was affected by another global crisis - the Russian invasion into Ukraine on 24 Feb 2022. The subsequent impact and ripple effect of this protracted conflict triggered a global cost-of-living crisis, as energy prices spiraled out of control and food supplies were affected in many parts of the world. A series of events were convened through the

“...hope helps spark the light of certitude during situations of potential despair in individuals and organizations which is of critical importance as it acts as a catalyst for practitioners of peace to proactively embark on the journey of development, growth, peace, reconciliation and reconstruction...”

UHUH initiative titled “How Can We Build a More Sustainable World” and “Hope During a Cost-of-Living Crisis”, in partnership with the Royal Society of Arts (UK) and a diverse range of leading academics, corporate stakeholders, and community organizations. These events brought together leading thinkers and industry experts from a diverse range of sectors to share their insights and experiences on how to address the challenges of climate change, the energy crisis, and the cost-of-living crisis and provide hope for individuals to navigate a pathway forward during these testing times.

Following unprecedented levels of humanitarian crisis across multiple conflict theatres around the world in recent years, ranging from wars to natural and human-made disasters, UHUH hosted an online workshop in February 2024. The event was convened by Guidance Consultancy in partnership with Euphrates Institute’s Peace Practice Alliance program. During this interactive event, leading inter-faith practitioners, NGOs, humanitarian organizations, charities, peace advocates and social activists convened to highlight the humanitarian plight and challenges in providing relief in conflict zones and humanitarian hot spots around the world and to put forward practical recommendations and actions to address these concerns. The event was also interspersed with moments of reflection, thoughts, invocations of peace and a musical rendition in dedication and remembrance of

those who are suffering or who have lost their lives in the conflicts and humanitarian hot spots around the world. A debrief and recording of the [UHUH online event](#) is available to read and watch.

## Conclusion

The UHUH initiative, which is ongoing, has interfaced with multiple groups from a cross-section of society at individual, institutional, national, and international levels and plans to continue to convene timely events that instill hope in the values and virtues of our common, shared humanity and of peacebuilding.

In this article, I have attempted to demonstrate how the theme of “hope”, as espoused through the UHUH initiative, is crucial to peacebuilding in practice, including the many permutations of peacebuilding efforts. Whilst hope may not in itself exclusively be a strategy, hope helps spark the light of certitude during situations of potential despair in individuals and organizations, which is of critical importance as it acts as a catalyst for practitioners of peace to proactively embark on the journey of development, growth, peace, reconciliation, and reconstruction which would be difficult to do if there was no element of hope at the inception stage.

*The author, Kaleem Hussain, is the Founder of Guidance Consultancy, Euphrates Peace Practice Alliance Alumnus (2023) and a Peace Leadership Collaborative (PLC) Advisor.*

# Theory to Practice: Peace Practice Alliance



Written by sylvia murray and the Euphrates Team



Photo credit: Euphrates Institute

In 2019, Euphrates Institute embarked on a process to clarify and strengthen our purpose amidst evolving conflicts in the world and a growing global interest in our work. From this, Euphrates claimed its mission to equip, connect, and uplift peacebuilders worldwide. At the time, the peace leaders involved in Euphrates shared their desire for more resources, connections, and certification in peacebuilding. After deep listening, reflection, and collective imagination, the Peace Practice Alliance (PPA) emerged as Euphrates' direct response to the call made by our community of peace leaders.

The Peace Practice Alliance is a core program in serving our mission and actualizing our vision of a future in which all humanity chooses and practices peace to end violence in all forms. The PPA is a six-month online peace leadership program for individuals of all backgrounds and contexts seeking to integrate peace practice into their personal and professional lives with the support of a peer community. Through self-paced learning on an interactive platform, live group sessions, and experiential exercises, participants explore personal, interpersonal, community, and global peace practices and their interconnections. The program is designed to learn and reflect on each realm, with each module expanding to the bigger picture of integral peace leadership. The program culminates in the integration of these areas, and how we practice peace leadership throughout our personal and professional lives.



## What We've Accomplished

Euphrates launched the PPA pilot program in 2020 during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic with 17 individuals across 10 countries, providing both a space of steadfast commitment to peace practice amidst a global crisis, and a space of nourishment, connection, belonging, and sense of home amidst individual isolation. The PPA began with no secured funding or staffing model, only a small group of committed individuals eager to create and see what would emerge. Now in 2024, marking 5 years of the PPA, Euphrates has trained 163 peace leaders from 50 countries and is growing a global community of everyday peacebuilders. We have provided seed funding grants to 82 peace projects led by PPA graduates, reaching 31 countries. We have a thriving alumni community that stays active through ongoing communications, continued education, and collaboration.

Throughout the five years, participants have experienced significant increases in their understanding of and confidence in applying peace leadership theories and practices. Participants have experienced significant changes as a result of the PPA, including and not limited to deeper connection to self and improved well-being, greater commitment to action and enhanced peace practices, improved leadership and interpersonal skills, greater sense of community and support, increased sense of purpose and direction, and broadened perspective of global systems.



Photo credit: Euphrates Institute

**“Together we’re building a global community, a living system, dedicated to both our own individual actions and our collective efforts to end violence in all forms.”**

These transformations in perspective, behavior, and connection are powerful, and directly linked to integral peace leadership’s definition of, “individual and collective action...to challenge violence and aggression and create positive, just change.” Together we’re building a global community, a living system, dedicated to both our own individual actions and our collective efforts to end violence in all forms. We witness this as participants cultivate cross-continental friendships and support each other’s ongoing well-being, as participants take initiative to meet each other after the program and deepen relationships, and as they develop international partnerships and collaborations to transform shared struggles. We are in awe every day at the depth, beauty, integrity, relationship, shared power, hope, resilience, and courage of PPA peace leaders.

Through this experience, we have maintained learning as a core value and practice. We have and continue to learn a lot about incorporating a theoretical model of peace leadership into a practical, community-based leadership program, and how to design and lead a program that is useful for peacebuilders from a multitude of contexts around the world. Some key lessons we've learned include:

## Personal Peace Practice

Euphrates believes that each person's commitment to practices of inner work and personal well-being, rooted in self-reflection and contemplative practice, is foundational to practicing peace. This practice leads to continual individual growth, healing, and transformation that nourishes relationships and communities. Reaffirmed through participant feedback, the PPA emphasizes personal peace practice as a throughline in the program, continuously supporting each participant to tend to their practice. We support each individual to reflect on their own personal peace practices, process experiences that impede their individual practice, and continuously nourish their well-being, self-worth, and self-love.

**“Euphrates believes that each person's commitment to practices of inner work and personal well-being, rooted in self-reflection and contemplative practice, is foundational to practicing peace.”**

## Trust

We prioritize and invest in building trust with participants. We aim to create an intimate environment where participants are partners, there is no expert or teacher-student dynamic. The wisdom already exists in the room and we nourish the space for it to surface and be shared and practiced together and to invite leadership of participants.

## Adaptability and Collaboration

With each cohort being a unique group of peace leaders from wide-ranging identities, contexts, goals, and more, we set a strong foundation for the value, dignity, and contribution of every person in the room. While there is a structure participants enter into, we embrace co-creation and collaboration with real-time feedback that uplifts the gifts of the diverse experiences and identities of a given cohort.

## Personalization

We intentionally create diverse modalities for learning and engagement, tailoring to different learning and processing styles, and providing an accepting environment that meets individuals where they are in their peace leadership journey. We deeply invest in collaboratively translating a theory into a practical prompt or exercise for participants to reflect on themselves and their context. We intentionally invite the cohort to apply what we're learning directly to themselves as individuals and their communities, immediately putting theory into personally resonant practice.

## An Invitation

At Euphrates we believe we all have the capacity to choose peace. We invite others - organizations, scholars, practitioners, and everyday individuals - curious about and interested in integral peace leadership to partner, advocate, and connect with us and together build and nourish a global movement of peace practice.

# INSPIRING HUMANITY TO CHOOSE PEACE

To learn more about Euphrates Institute and to get involved, visit our website at [www.euphrates.org](http://www.euphrates.org).



Photos credit: Euphrates Institute



# PORTRAITS OF PEACE LEADERS



# Helder Lopez

Lawyer and Human Rights Defender



I am a lawyer, human rights defender, and work with leaders of civil society organizations, local government, and non-government organizations in Alianza, Honduras to create alliances towards a culture of peace.

For me, leadership for peace means the active participation of society members to create networks or alliances that consciously and strategically seek the decolonization of peace, respect for human rights, social inclusion, and harmonize with the practice of sustainable development objectives. Together we collectively construct parameters for strengthening communities in terms of sustainable development and peace. Through knowledge and empowerment, people become multipliers of peace in communities affected by conflicts, generating a culture of peace and social coexistence that is inclusive, sustainable, and equitable. Leadership for peace creates very positive aspects in practice by creating a collectively calm, stable, safe and well being environment where people communicate using dialogue and active listening, mutually respect diversity of opinions, and are inclusive of all contributions.

It motivates me to face diverse challenges and responsibilities, to make decisions collectively, to inspire and motivate other people and convince them of what they are capable of and the great things that can be done when working as a team. I am inspired by the possibility to create a more equitable, sustainable environment, to create a world free of violence and authoritarianism, to instill qualities that make up emotional intelligence and social intelligence for the transformation of conflicts. I am inspired by building each other up to ensure freedom, peace, social coexistence, and, above all, to build ourselves internally to be able to contribute to the world with soul, life, and heart.



**“I am inspired by the possibility to create a more equitable, sustainable environment, to create a world free of violence and authoritarianism, to instill qualities that make up emotional intelligence and social intelligence for the transformation of conflicts.”**

# Wazieh Offuh

## Wazieh Women and Children Safety Advocacy Foundation

Through the Wazieh Women and Children Safety Advocacy Foundation I work with displaced youths in Jos North, a local government area in plateau state, Nigeria, including orphans and survivors of sexual abuse, physical abuse, and trauma. We provide listening spaces for these youths to talk about their emotions, the challenges they face as young people, and the pressure within and around them. We inspire them to take the control as we give them a safe and brave space for their voices to be heard. We inspire them to tell their story as it is, knowing that we are here for them and will listen and hear them.

The listening spaces aim to build understanding and appreciation of the interconnectedness of humanity, fostering our shared accountability for each other and the environment in which we live. The space inspires them to be good listeners as it is one of the fundamentals of cultivating peace within themselves and with their peers. We also inspire them to show up for themselves and their friends. They are all advocates and should not keep quiet whenever they or their friends look troubled.



**“I keep discovering how deep my work is and I keep wanting to get deeper until everywhere is so bright by this light called ‘Peace.’”**



To me, peace leadership is the adoption of nonviolent behavior to challenge the inhumane behaviors, systems, culture and structure that is gradually leading to divisions, defensive stands against the other, and the extinction of humanity. In practice in my work, this looks like cultivating the skills of active, deep listening by being present with the whole “Being” - not being disconnected - and being fully and wholly present in the moment - not in the past - through a storytelling space that leads to healing, safety, belonging, connection and transformation.

My personal story inspired and is still very much inspiring and motivating me to do the work I do and so much more. I keep discovering how deep my work is and I keep wanting to get deeper until everywhere is so bright by this light called “Peace.”



# Ratu Bintang Assyifa

## Leadership Lens

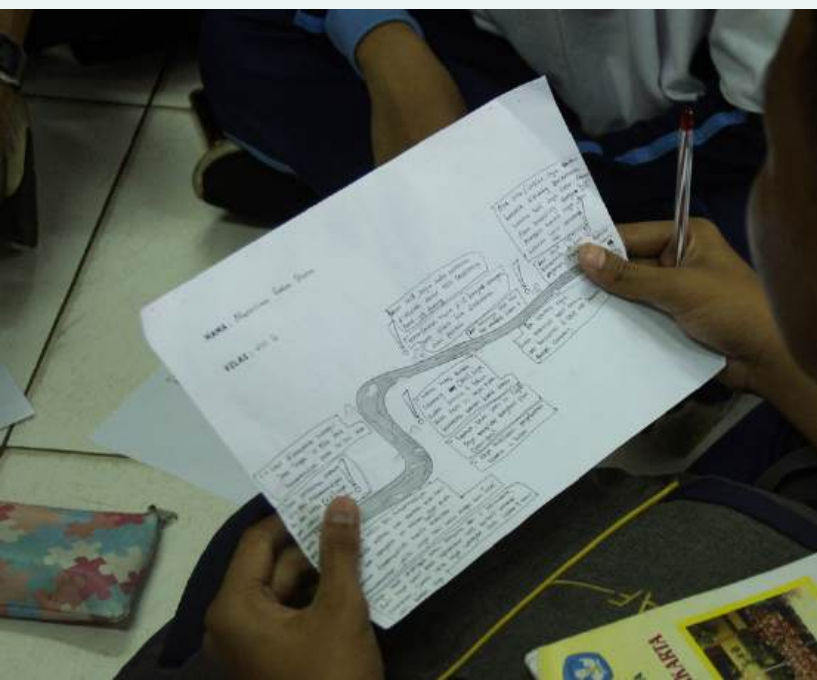
Along with a group of close friends, I co-founded and lead Leadership Lens, a volunteer group of peacebuilders and activists in Jakarta, Indonesia. At Leadership Lens, we promote peace leadership based on empathy, gender equality, and conflict resolution through activities with art and sport. We specifically target Student Council members in secondary schools so they can integrate these values into their activities.

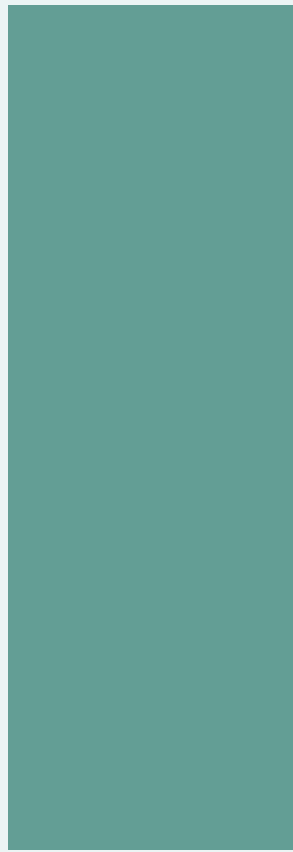
To me, peace leadership means engaging with every aspect of society, including ourselves. Our program starts with empathy practices, including River of Life, an exercise in which students reflect on and draw a picture representing the significant experiences and milestones in their life; and a deep listening activity to listen to their peers with no follow-up questions or reactions. The students continue to group-based activities such as roleplay and gender-mixed futsal. Through roleplay, students choose their own story by deciding what actions to take, drawing parallels to real life situations in which conflict worsens when you don't listen. With gender-mixed futsal, we create a world where boys and girls work together and utilize teamwork. After our workshop, 100% of participants believe that empathy is an important pillar of leadership and 66% believe that boys and girls can lead effectively.



**“To do this work I’m inspired and motivated by my community!”**

To do this work I’m inspired and motivated by my community! I am who I am because of the people in my life - my schools, friends, teachers, and so on. I have been very blessed to learn about peace in various avenues, and I want them to experience the same. Furthermore, the experience of having a friend being radicalized affirmed my commitment to continue this work for my community.





# Ion Vlad

Teacher Training Programs



I began my involvement with teacher-training programs in human rights and sustainability in 2018. In my current work at The Miner Anderson Family Foundation, my biggest projects are weeklong intensive trainings for teachers in which they listen to lectures, participate in workshops, and go on field trips to deepen their understanding of educating for sustainability and equity. Topics covered include introductions to human rights and peace education, neoliberalism, global citizenship, and the UN sustainable development goals. After completing the training, teachers are expected to implement their newly gained knowledge by designing related classroom projects.

While putting together and conducting such programs with schools and universities, it quickly became apparent that peacebuilding and developing peaceful classrooms and institutional cultures were equally important topics to cover. The concept of peace leadership is closely connected to many of the precepts in the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, and many teachers have noted that teaching about, through, and for human rights involves not only discussing problems that take place outside of the classroom - in communities and elsewhere - but also creating peace-centered learning environments within the confines of their schools. As a result, we have started to give equal weight and attention in our programs to pedagogical practices that are student-centered and conducive to dialogism, while emphasizing the importance of forging a constructive working relationship with school administrators.

**“What motivates me to do this work, building on previous pedagogical experiences and initiatives, is the enthusiasm that I see on the faces of teachers - their joy in developing their understanding and in being understood.”**

Furthermore, scholars have underscored that human rights and peace education require a twofold approach, one that is values-based and structural; therefore, emphasis on a fair distribution of resources and the need for systemic equity has been at the center of my efforts with teacher training. What motivates me to do this work, building on previous pedagogical experiences and initiatives, is the enthusiasm that I see on the faces of teachers - their joy in developing their understanding and in being understood. Many of these educators have to operate amidst multiple professional constraints. Providing them with a space where they can freely develop structural understandings and strengthen critical thinking, including about peace leadership, has been priceless.

# Kaleem Hussain

## Planting For Peace

The Planting for Peace (PFP) initiative is a volunteer-led initiative, that I curated and launched in 2023, to create echo chambers and environments for peaceful contemplation, mindfulness, and mutual exchange and dialogue that will have the reciprocal benefit of facilitating peace and protecting our environment. In collaboration with organisations focused on protecting the environment and the natural ecosystem, volunteers plant flowers and trees at schools, hospitals, and other venues, in designs aimed at promoting contemplative reflection and protecting our ecosystem. So far the initiative has been well-received.



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**...I felt there is no better way to do this than by connecting with nature, planting the seeds of hope, and laying the foundations for sustainable cooperation, contemplation, peace, and dialogue.”**



My inspiration for the PFP initiative came about after I visited the United Nations Meditation Room, “A Room of Quiet”, in New York. The room was opened in 1952 as a silent space dedicated to peace and people who give their lives for peace. I wanted to create a similar ecosystem and enabling environment in an outdoor setting that orientates towards conflict de-escalation, peace, and reconciliation. I felt there is no better way to do this than by connecting with nature, planting the seeds of hope, and laying the foundations for sustainable cooperation, contemplation, peace, and dialogue.

The PFP initiative kick-started on International Peace Day 2023, observed around the world every year on 21st September, which the UN General Assembly has declared this as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, through observing non-violence. The first PFP activity took place at Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust in the West Midlands, England: a Peace Garden was set up on the hospital grounds that provides doctors and patients with a space for mindfulness, contemplation and recentering, connecting with nature, and a chance to break out from the stresses and strains of the hospital ward. Seeing the positive impact the PFP initiative had in the UK, I decided to bring the initiative to South Asia. To date, three PFP activities have taken place across school and hospital settings in Pakistan. The aim is to expand the initiative further in the future.

*If you would like to connect with Kaleem Hussain to arrange an activity under the PFP banner, please get in touch with us at [info@peaceleadershipcollaborative.org](mailto:info@peaceleadershipcollaborative.org).*



# Janith Perera

## Empowering Youth Leadership for Peace

Through my role as Director of Capacity-Building at Citizens, an international youth-led movement originating from Sri Lanka, I coordinated and participated in the International Youth Workshop, “Leveraging the ‘Youth, Peace, and Security’ (YPS) Agenda to Champion Localized Efforts for Sustainable Development” in August 2024. The workshop, organized by Citizens in partnership with ten other organizations, brought together over 150 participants from diverse backgrounds

and showcased the collective commitment of youth from around the world to advance peace and sustainable development at the local level.

The three-day event served as a platform for young leaders, activists, policymakers, and experts to delve into the critical role youth play in peacebuilding and community resilience. Participants engaged in dynamic sessions that explored how the YPS agenda can be applied to tackle local and global challenges such as conflict, inequality, and environmental degradation. Through interactive workshops and collaborative discussions, the participants were empowered to develop localized strategies for promoting peace and sustainable development in their respective communities.

By the conclusion of the workshop, participants had not only gained practical insights but also built strong networks to continue their efforts beyond the event. The initiative demonstrated the power of youth-led collaboration and reinforced the idea that young people, when given the right tools and platforms, can be transformative agents of change. The workshop, held in recognition of International Youth Day, stands as a testament to the growing global movement for peace and sustainability driven by the energy and vision of youth leaders.

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