

'Peacehub Campaign'
**COMMUNITY-DRIVEN
PEACEBUILDING**

A SMALL GROUP STUDY SERIES



 <https://globalpeace.info/peacehub>





COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PEACEBUILDING 'PEACEHUB CAMPAIGN' A Small Group Study Series

SESSION 1

Understanding Peace in the 21st Century

SESSION 2

Our Shared Humanity

SESSION 3

Successful Models of Community Peacebuilding & The Art of the Dialogue

SESSION 4

Service; A Powerful Tool of Peacebuilding

 <https://globalpeace.info/peacehub>



INTRODUCTION

OUR WORKBOOK USES THE “SMALL GROUP” METHODOLOGY, a highly interactive system of education and outreach. You will notice on the cover of your workbook a reference to “small group study series.”

Typically, the small group plan involves multiple sessions (the Community-Driven Peacebuilding study series is four sessions) that focus upon a theme. This of course requires a weekly commitment of time and effort; it is this exact element that binds the group together and forms a meaningful and trustful bond between those participants within the group.

The four sessions collected within this workbook are focused upon the mindset and work of peacebuilding on a grassroots level. Throughout history, peacemaking has been the purview of diplomats, yet today the role of civil society in peacebuilding has gained increased recognition for its efficacy and efficiency. It is time to go to the next level, for peacebuilding to happen on the grassroots, civil-society levels to gradually work to include communities and families in the same.

Peacebuilding is defined as preventing conflict, or preventing the resumption of conflict, by creating a sustainable peace. Peacebuilding activities address the root causes or potential causes of violence and create a societal expectation for peaceful conflict resolution and social cohesion. This is education or training that is desperately needed in our communities today. We need to cultivate a deep

longing, a desire, vision and understanding of peace, peace in our hearts, in our families, our neighborhoods, in our communities, in our nations; then, and only then, can we make peace a reality.

We believe this group process will help you to do the following:

- Educate your local team/community about peacebuilding on a community level, cultivating the desire to understand the “other” and build peace. Your community can become a “PeaceHub” today!
- Provide tools and mechanisms for resolving conflict, reducing potential violence, increasing social cohesion and furthering a harmonious future for our children and families.
- Build trustful relationships and commitment which will serve to enhance your community.
- Provide training for small group leaders who can further educate leaders to extend the PeaceHubCampaign in the surrounding community.
- Serve our greater society by being educated citizens, vigilant, aware, and able to promote peace and resolve conflicts within our neighborhoods and larger community.

We are committed to help you in any way we can.



HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

The small group study series workbook is structured to help facilitate a comprehensive initial understanding of Peacebuilding. It does so not only by providing well-researched materials but also by incorporating a dynamic process of learning. The “small group” process allows for each member of the group to pro-actively engage in the learning process rather than just passively sitting back and hearing factual data. Thus, each session is a journey of experiential learning. The workbook that you hold in your hands is the map that points the way forward through each phase of the group meeting. Getting to know and trust the members in your group will be a key component for learning and having a positive group experience.

The next step of the group meeting is the session summary, “About Today’s Topic” (see the first session on page 5). These first few paragraphs can be read aloud by the group facilitator to help everyone in the group understand the specific subject matter of the particular session.

The next step is the section entitled “Get Connected with Each Other,” with some discussion questions. This will give everyone in the group the opportunity to open up and share their thoughts and feelings about issues that are relevant to that session’s subject matter. By “breaking the ice” right up front, the cohesiveness of the group is expedited. This creates a much better environment for learning.

The next section is “Learn and Grow Together.” This is a brief interlude of reflective thought and contemplation as the group listens to and considers words of wisdom from various sources. The wise words can be read by the group facilitator, or someone in the group can be called upon to do the reading.

From here we move to the nearest viewable television or computer screen and watch a 15 to 20 minute online video presentation, the link is on the cover and throughout the workbook. In your workbook there are several “fill in the blank” notes related to each session



presentation. So listen well, take notes and at the end of the presentation you can go over the “fill in the blank” questions together as a group. This is not a test, don’t worry. . .it is just an exercise to help you retain the material. (Also the transcripts of the narration are in the back of the booklet for further study.)

From here, the next phase of the meeting is most important. Based on the new understanding provided by the presentation, the group discusses the issues brought to light. The group facilitator will coordinate the discussion, making sure that everyone gets a chance to speak, share their feelings and realizations.

After a rich discussion, it’s time for the meeting to wind down. The final section is interactive group work to evoke experiential learning of the material, and/or further individual study. This will be an opportunity for independent study to carry the knowledge and inspiration forward through the week by taking action steps related to the discoveries made during the meeting time.

The key to the success of this small group is the commitment of each member to attend each of the four sessions and to complete the study course. In fact, if the group prefers, an additional session meeting can be scheduled to celebrate the course completion and discuss next steps. Good luck, and may this series be of immense benefit to you, and that your community be well on its way to becoming a PeaceHub for the surrounding society.

SESSION 1: UNDERSTANDING PEACE IN THE 21st CENTURY

About Today's Topic

In our world today there are three main approaches or dimensions of peace. Unlike peacekeeping or peacemaking, which typically involve military and diplomatic efforts to end conflict, peacebuilding is an ongoing process of addressing the root causes of conflict and bringing reconciliation and forgiveness through full acknowledgement of shared human aspirations.

Session one examines the impact of rapid change and globalization, particularly the growing interchange among diverse peoples and cultures over the last century. Most conflicts the world over can be seen from the lens of, “us vs. them” identity conflict. This mentality divides us, keeps us apart, and subsequently directly contributes to war, conflict, and corruption. And by destroying opportunities to share and collaborate, this mindset continues a vicious cycle of underdevelopment, poverty, environmental degradation and more. The most pressing challenge today is finding common ground in our shared “human identity” and developing an ethical awareness that all people belong to one human family.



Get Connected with Each Other

1. If this is the first time to meet together, take a few moments for everyone to be introduced to each other. This is a good time to gather basic contact information, such as phone numbers and e-mail addresses.
2. Share some of your concerns about conflict in your communities and globally. What do you hope to accomplish through this course of study?



“If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.” —Mother Teresa

“Different creeds are but different paths to reach the same God.”
—Sri Ramakrishna

“Our world and our lives have become increasingly interdependent, so when our neighbor is harmed, it affects us too. Therefore, we have to abandon our dated notions of ‘them’ and ‘us’ and think of our world much more in terms of a great ‘US’, a greater human family.”
—Dalai Lama

“Differences are not intended to separate, to alienate. We are different precisely in order to realize our need of one another.” —Desmond Tutu



Please watch the video presentation now. Follow along in your study guide and take notes together after the video.

Session 1 Review

1. Establishing a barrier to keep the opposing sides apart, often by forces from the United Nations or other neutral nations is called _____. These forces do not attempt to settle differences or have negotiations, they just keep the sides separated.
2. Building an agreement between the opposing group, through a third-party mediator who assists with communication problems, facilitates the negotiations, and drafts the agreement, is called _____.
3. Governments, treaties, and diplomacy do not remove resentments or help those on either side who have been wronged or victimized to forgive. The process of _____ works to establish mutual respect and strengthen a sense of social cohesion between different people, resulting in an environment in which violence is less likely to erupt.
4. Today the role of _____ in peacebuilding and peacesharing has gained increased recognition for its efficacy and efficiency.
5. The work of _____ is significant because it takes the struggles of a people and transforms it into a contribution or gift for the global community.
6. Science and technology have transformed modern life, but have not been able to resolve racial, religious, national, and tribal or ethnic _____.
7. Despite the great advances of the 21st century, conflict and corruption on every continent cripple human progress, indicating that our most pressing challenge today is an _____ challenge.
8. _____ groups such as ISIS provide a persuasive, yet deeply flawed, sense of certainty, belonging and identity.
9. Elevating some while denigrating others, _____ - _____ conflict divides the world into “us vs. them.”
10. According to Abraham Maslow’s theory on the Hierarchy of Needs, humans need to feel a sense of _____ and _____ among their social groups.
11. When we understand and think of ourselves _____ as a member of a group, this invariably breeds a negative, competitive or suspicious attitude towards others who are not members of the group.
12. As we gain a deeper sense of our own _____ as humans and members of the human family, with a common origin, common experiences, hopes and dreams – we might experience a transformative understanding.

Interactive Exercises



In the vision of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam or “One Family Under God” the challenge is to translate these abstract ideals into practice, strategic plans and policies. And in this important work, we start first from what we share to then be able to move into a celebration of difference.

Our Common Identity in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding

Objectives:

- To stimulate awareness and deepen understanding of one’s own identities, answering the question, “Who am I?”
- To help participants understand how honoring a common identity of “one human family” encourages the choice to focus on commonalities in a positive and respectful way.
- To clarify that choosing the opposite—focusing on differences—creates an “us versus them” mentality which could result in conflict.

Instructions:

1. Each participant is instructed to write three answers on paper to the question, “Who am I?” They can, for example, use religion, race, nationality, family, gender, identity as a participant, hobby/club, etc.
2. Divide participants into small groups. 5-6 people per group are the ideal size. This activity works best with a group leader for each group.
3. Each participant shares their three answers with the group. Participants then discuss any common identities they have found.
4. Each participant is asked to share how they make new friends, and how the idea of a “common base,” “common interest,” and “common identity” apply.
5. Emphasize that we have differences and those differences are meant to bring varieties which is necessary for life.

6. After identifying three examples, participants discuss how the “us vs. them” identities should be avoided.

Large Group Discussion:

(A Facilitator should be designated beforehand and prepare.)

With entire group

Material: Large sheet of paper, personal writing materials

1. The facilitator should ask the group: What causes conflict? What causes corruption?
2. The group will inevitably list out a long list of reasons for both. The facilitator should write out these responses on the large sheet of paper. Some answers might include:
E.g., Greed, selfishness, power, lack of knowledge, race, religion, etc.
3. The facilitator should be able to break each suggestion down into the idea that it actually comes from the simple idea of “us” (or me) versus “them” (others).
E.g., greed, selfishness assumes that I/me is more important than them/others; race, religion, politics can be the same but more around the thinking that I am “right” others are “wrong” or less worthy of consideration.
4. When and if every single category fails to stand this test and that the real problem is one that starts in our minds (us vs. them mentality as the cause) – we want the group to see that peace is possible and requires a change in heart and mind. The way we want to introduce is a change in perspective: when we begin to see each other as part of one whole – the one human family.

SESSION 1: UNDERSTANDING PEACE IN THE 21st CENTURY

A few notes of caution:

We don't have to come from perfect families to know the importance of family.

Whatever kind of family we have, what kind of family do we think would be an ideal family to have?

A not-so secret secret, the spiritual traditions have taught this through the ages in different ways.

Even science has begun to show this, calling the fact of a "Genetic Adam and Eve" and recording the birthplace of all humanity in Africa. If we all share a common origin from one man and one woman – can we begin to look deeper to our core identity, putting aside what we think are our most important identities to work together for peace and harmony?

The facilitator should then ask participants to reflect on these ideas and invite them to write down the following question and answer it accordingly. Volunteers are welcome to share their response if they feel called to:

If I am part of one human family, how would I live differently?

Fill in the Blank Answers:

1. Peacekeeping
2. Peacemaking
3. Peacebuilding
4. Civil Society
5. Peacesharing
6. Divisions
7. Ethical
8. Extremist
9. Identity-based
10. Belonging and acceptance
11. Exclusively
12. Identity



SESSION 2: OUR SHARED HUMANITY

About Today's Topic

History has shown that, despite best efforts, political and economic strategies have repeatedly failed to truly resolve identity-based conflicts. We need to develop alternative approaches as a way out of this quagmire such as aligning with the principle of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam” which resonates deeply within India’s multicultural and diverse society.

Many cultures have similar ethical frameworks that have served as the underpinning of building inclusive and peaceful societies. These ideals are similarly expressed in the African ethos of “Ubuntu,” the Indonesian ethic of “Pancasila,” and the ancient Korean ideal of “Hongik Ingan” among others and encapsulated in the expression that we are all one family under God.

Religious and wisdom traditions have both unique insights into transcendent truths and shared values and codes of conduct that provide practical guidance on daily life and fostering peace in society. Session II explores the importance of this “civic” mission and finding common ground in shared values as a basic for peace.



Get Connected with Each Other

1. What major conflicts or wars today are based on identity or separateness?
2. How about your neighborhood, community or city? Are there any groups that may feel marginalized? Share any thoughts on how to build more inclusive neighborhoods.



“As out of one gold, ornaments of various forms are made; so it is the same God that is worshipped by different nations under different names and different forms.”

—Sri Ramakrishna

“I believe in the fundamental Truth of all great religions of the world. And I believe that if only we could, all of us, read the scriptures of the different Faiths from the stand-point of the followers of those faiths, we should find that they were at the bottom, all one and were all helpful to one another.” —Mahatma Gandhi

“I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things.” —Mother Teresa

“The need of the moment is not One Religion, but mutual respect and tolerance of the devotees of the different religions. We want to reach not the dead level, but unity in diversity. The Soul of religion is One but it is encased a multitude of forms. Truth is the exclusive property of no single scriptures.”

—Mahatma Gandhi

SESSION 2: OUR SHARED HUMANITY



Please watch the video presentation now. Follow along in your study guide and take notes together after the video.

Session 2 Review

1. History has shown that, despite best efforts, _____ and _____ strategies have repeatedly failed to truly resolve identity-based conflicts.
2. The ideals implicit in Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam are _____, and hence resonate globally.
3. Shared values are the _____ that can bind together any level of society, whether a neighborhood, a nation, or the entire global community.
4. Leaders of the world's faith and wisdom traditions have a shared _____ to transcend religious divides and work collaboratively to build ethical, just and cohesive societies.
5. Though the world's religious traditions may differ greatly in doctrines and modes of worship, they _____ on the essentials of how people should treat each other.
6. A diverse, pluralistic society does not need or require unanimity of belief, but recognition of shared _____ and common humanity.
7. Defining its unique path toward God, ecclesiastical structure and sacred liturgy, teachings and Holy Scriptures is the "_____ focus" of religions. Affirming standards of moral conduct, social justice, and good citizenship is the "_____ focus" of religions.



Interactive Exercises



We have often mentioned in this study the importance of highlighting universal principles and shared values that all religions hold dear as our common ground. The following is a list of the principles that GPF has identified and utilized as a common platform for people of different faiths to be able to dialogue and work together:

- All people have intrinsic value, dignity, and fundamental rights, as endowed by the Creator.
- Every person has, as his or her highest attribute, a spiritual and moral essence.
- People develop their innate potential through their choices and actions. Freedom and responsibility are intrinsically linked.
- Our human nature finds its fullest expression and meaning in relation to others.

Instructions:

1. Write one principle on each of 4 flip chart papers, and paste on the wall in four different parts of the room.
2. Have the participants walk around and choose the principle that “speaks” most to them. This should result in four groups. If this method doesn’t work out somewhat evenly, just create 4 groups and assign each group to discuss one of the four principles in depth.
3. Encourage each group to answer some of these questions:
 - Can you think of a story or a saying that expresses this principle? Share a personal story as an example.
 - Why would this principle be important for a family or a community?
 - What would happen if this principle was not honored or was ignored?
 - What are some ways we could make this principle guide the way a family or community lives in their everyday lives?

Fill in the Blank Answers:

1. Political, economic
2. Universal
3. Glue
4. Responsibility
5. Agree
6. Values
7. Religious, civic



SESSION 3: SUCCESSFUL MODELS OF COMMUNITY PEACEBUILDING & THE ART OF DIALOGUE

About Today's Topic

The human family is a group that we all belong to, and just as we value unique characteristics and gifts among immediate family members, so the diversity of the human family can be an enriching source of strength and a basis for mutual respect and peace. The Global Peace Foundation has applied this vision of the human family to reconcile animosities among Christian and Muslim peoples in conflict zones in Nigeria through its One Family under God campaign. This beginning of Session 3 explores what is possible when people come together based on a shared vision, principles and values.

The remainder of this Session focuses on the art of dialogue and the approaches to peacebuilding. Motivation is emphasized, and a change of heart as more significant than facts, logic and information in peacebuilding. Motivation derives from personal values, which ultimately guide attitudes and behavior. Recognition of shared values across cultures and religions is thus essential in guiding attitudes and behavior in diverse societies.



“If you want peace, you don’t talk to your friends. You talk to your enemies.”

—Bishop Desmond Tutu

“God can be realized through all paths. All religions are true. The important thing is to reach the roof. You can reach it by stone stairs or by wooden stairs or by bamboo steps or by a rope. You can also climb up by a bamboo pole.”

—Ramakrishna Paramahansa

“The moment I have realized God sitting in the temple of every human body, the moment I stand in reverence before every human being and see God in him, that moment I am free from bondage, everything that binds vanishes, and I am free.” —Swami Vivekananda

“If you judge people, you have no time to love them.” —Mother Teresa



Get Connected with Each Other

1. Values are at the root of motivation, which is at the root of character and, ultimately, behavior. Yet our values—what we actually believe about the way the world is ordered, our place in it and our role in daily life—often are unexamined. Take time, either in pairs or in a small group, to examine what motivates you. What do you believe, not doctrinally but as a person with life experience?



Please watch the video presentation now. Follow along in your study guide and take notes together after the video.

Session 3 Review

1. GPF-Nigeria program participants reported shifts in _____ towards people of other tribes and religions, along with an opening for a parallel shift in behavior and social organization.
2. GPF Nigeria's vision is to build and _____ diverse and marginalized peoples into strong, resilient and prosperous communities.
3. The real causes of movements of social transformation start not through a process of cognition or logic but are rooted in the _____.
4. Social scientists have begun to recognize that shifts in attitudes and behavior can be caused by addressing _____ rather than logical reasoning.
5. Values are what people find important and are what ultimately guide _____ and _____.
6. Change that transformed societies for the better were often preceded by a rise in _____ of the people.
7. _____ is a two-way communication between persons who hold significantly differing views on a subject, with the purpose of learning more truth about the subject from the other.
8. Mastering the art of dialogue is essential as we work to resolve _____-_____ conflicts, whether they be religious, racial, ethnic, or social class.
9. Interreligious dialogue operates in three areas: the _____, in which we collaborate to serve the greater good of humanity; the _____, through which we attempt to experience another's religion or personal beliefs from within; and the _____, through which we seek understanding and truth.



Interactive Exercises



For this study course, a useful explanation of suggested ground rules are found in the ten principles of dialogue, or the “Dialogue Decalogue,” gleaned from forty years of intensive experience by Dr. Swidler. Go to the website of the Dialogue Institute and view the ten dialogue principles:

<http://dialogueinstitute.org/dialogue-principles/>

The Art of Dialogue

Instructions:

1. Create groups of 4 and read through the 10 principles together. Have each person choose 2 principles that they can relate to and tell a personal story of a situation or relationship in which the principles came into play, or perhaps the situation needed to adhere more to the principle.
2. Encourage each group to answer some of these questions:
 - Why would this principles be important for a family or a community?
 - As was discussed, interreligious dialogue operates in three areas: the practical, the spiritual dimension, and the cognitive. Which of these three types of dialogue do you enjoy the most and why?
 - What would happen if these principles are not honored or are ignored?
 - What are some ways we could make this principle guide the way a family or community communicates in their everyday lives?

Further Study:

- KAICIID Center for Dialogue: <https://www.kaiciid.org/knowledge-hub/mapping-dialogue-peace>
- Sustained Dialogue Institute: <https://sustaineddialogue.org/>

Fill in the Blank Answers:

1. Attitudes
2. Empower
3. Heart
4. Values
5. Attitudes, behavior
6. Consciousness
7. Dialogue
8. Identity-based
9. Practical, spiritual, cognitive



SESSION 4: SERVICE; A POWERFUL TOOL OF PEACEBUILDING

About Today's Topic

Session 4 examines the significance of a Global Ethic as the basis for dialogue and cooperation among religions, among communities, and in society. The session provides some background on the original formulation of a Global Ethic by theologian Hans Küng at the 1993 Parliament of World Religions in Chicago. The session looks closely at the values that are shared across religious traditions and importance of building dialogue and cooperation to advance the acceptance of a Global Ethic to foster peace in diverse world.

One proven way to become aware of our “shared identity” is through service or volunteering. Do we naturally feel empathy towards someone who is suffering and who looks very different than we do, speaks a different language, or has different perspectives on real life issues? Doing service and volunteering is a concrete way to grow our emotional sense of belonging to another group and to the larger human family.



Get Connected with Each Other

1. Partisan, ethnic, and religious divisions are increasingly extreme today among people globally and in our country. Adopting the principles discussed in Session 4 and using a deeper understanding of dialogue, practice transcending divisions among your own communities.
2. Where is the common ground? Let your discussion be a pilot program for bringing the nation together.



“An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind.”
—Mahatma Gandhi

“Why is it important to learn that there is in fact a Global Ethic, a set of Basic Ethical Principles, which practically every human affirms? Because it makes real our Human Oneness, thereby helping us to not fear the stranger, but to begin to welcome he/him as fellow person leading us all thereby to dialogue and joint action to make this world not just a house but a home for all of us to live in as sisters and brothers.”
—Dr. Leonard Swidler

“It’s not how much we give but how much love we put into giving.”
—Mother Teresa

“Due respect and reverence should be paid to all religions, all preachers, and to the deities worshiped in all religions.” —Swami Vivekananda

“Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.”

“I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.” —Mother Teresa



Please watch the video presentation now. Follow along in your study guide and take notes together after the video.

Session 4 Review

1. A roadmap to realize “unity in diversity” needs to be formulated. A proven method at the _____ must be developed.
2. In the last two decades, many faith leaders have worked towards building partnerships for the common social good. For such efforts to be effective and sustainable in the long term, consensus around a _____ is essential.
3. “In this age of globalization,” the Dali Lama said, “the time has come for us to acknowledge that our lives are deeply _____ and to recognize that our behavior has a global dimension.
4. Doing service and volunteering is a concrete way to grow our _____ of _____ to another group and to the larger human family.
5. The transformative power of engaging with people from diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences is _____.
6. _____ provides each of us with a renewed sense of _____.
7. Through their unwavering commitment to service, Langar, the _____ community is a beacon of _____, demonstrating that acts of kindness and selflessness can positively impact the world and contribute to a more peaceful and equitable society.
8. People who want to be of service can change the _____.



Interactive Exercises



Today we will work in groups conducting a community mapping exercise. Our goal in this exercise is to ultimately find a project that our PeaceHub participants could work together on. We intend to work on a project together to “rub elbows” by participating in a team-building exercise. As we conclude our PeaceHub Campaign training, we hope to implement the education and goals of becoming a PeaceHub through such a project.

Community Mapping Exercise

Mapping Exercise:

- Decide whether the group wants to focus on the immediate neighborhood or the larger city in general. Each group is encouraged to draw a map of the area of focus.
- Have groups of about 8 with poster paper and markers on their tables.
- As you draw out this diagram, think about areas of need.
- With our vision of the city, what are some specific challenges and issues to be addressed in our city?
- As we identify some possible projects, discuss how they can be accomplished.

Purpose:

We intend to collaborate on a project that will both help us meet our mission statement and be visible to the community so that others can learn about and benefit from our PeaceHub Campaign:

Some Guidelines and Parameters:

- A project that is doable within a relatively short timeline.
- A project should include the entire group in some service activity. Preferably one that can facilitate all group members, depending on each other, socializing, and deepening relationships.
- It can be an indoor or outdoor project.
- Create a project within a budget that the study group can raise.

Fill in the Blank Answers:

1. Grassroots level
2. Global ethic
3. Interconnected
4. Emotional sense, belonging
5. Undeniable
6. Service, purpose
7. Sikh, hope
8. World

RESOURCES



SESSION 1: UNDERSTANDING PEACE IN THE 21st CENTURY

Introduction

What is the realistic meaning of peace in our lives? In our world today there are three main approaches or dimensions of peace. These three frequently used terms—peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding—are easily confused. Peacekeeping means keeping people who are, or would be, in active conflict, apart. This is done by establishing a barrier to keep the opposing sides apart, often by forces from the United Nations or other neutral nations. These forces do not attempt to settle differences or have negotiations, they just keep the sides separated.

Peacemaking is the task of building an agreement between the opposing groups. This can be done directly, but often there is a third-party mediator who assists with communication problems, facilitates the negotiations, and drafts the agreement. An example would be the Good Friday Agreement, which was a major political achievement in the Northern Ireland peace process of the 1990s. The agents of peacemaking are official diplomats, although citizens are increasingly involved in the peacemaking process.

However, peacemaking is not the final step in the peace process. Governments, treaties, and diplomacy do not remove resentments. How do you remove hatred from the human heart? How does one help those on either side who have been wronged or victimized to forgive? The peace agreement is just a beginning, which must be followed by long-term peacebuilding; the process of normalizing relations and reconciling differences between all the citizens of the warring factions.

Global Peace Foundation is doing the work of peacebuilding, which is necessary before the breakout of violence as a means of prevention; during the conflict to attempt to contain the violence; and after a conflict to create sustainable social cohesion.

Peacebuilding can also help to prevent further conflict by fostering relationships of

trust among people living in diverse communities. The process of peacebuilding works to establish mutual respect and strengthen a sense of social cohesion between different people, resulting in an environment in which violence is less likely to erupt.

For example, the “One Family Under God Campaign” in Kaduna state, Nigeria, started with peacebuilding work in communities which had become “no go” zones due to the hostilities between different groups. Based on the success of those efforts, people started to return to their homes and businesses. Word of the effectiveness of the GPF approach soon reached Southern Kaduna, where there was an ongoing, hot conflict between Fulani herdsman and the native tribesmen. The GPF team was invited to work with the different groups in a “peacemaking process.” Two ceasefires were negotiated, and the team began a more intensive process to ensure that the groups began to work with each other for the sake of peace for all people.

Peacesharing is a fourth term promoted by GPF’s longstanding partner, Cooperation Ireland. Headquartered in Belfast, Cooperation Ireland is a 30-year-old nonprofit that has promoted dialogue and reconciliation during the time of “The Troubles” in Northern Ireland. Such peacebuilders hope to share lessons learned and best practices cultivated through years of experience with peacebuilders in other countries. Cooperation Ireland has advised GPF work in New Jersey as well as with our peacebuilders in Nigeria. The work of peacesharing is significant because it takes the struggles of a people and transforms it into a contribution or gift for the global community.

Throughout history, peacemaking has been the purview of diplomats, yet today the role of civil society in peacebuilding and peacesharing has gained increased recognition for its efficacy and efficiency. Civil society is comprised of groups or organizations working in the interest of the citizens but

operating outside of the governmental and for-profit sectors, including nonprofits, faith communities, and civic organizations. It is time to go to the next level, for peacebuilding and peacesharing on the grassroots, civil-society levels to gradually work to include communities and families in the same.

U.S. Senator George Mitchell, who helped to negotiate the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland, was later asked by President Obama to serve as special envoy to the Middle East. This was perhaps a more difficult conflict than even Northern Ireland was, yet in an acceptance letter to the president he expressed his full effort “in the search for peace and stability in the Middle East.” He also stressed that the most important criteria is to “be firmly rooted in a shared vision of a peaceful future by the people who live in the region.” This statement may sound simple, yet it is clearly the first step to attain peace.

To cultivate a deep longing, a desire, vision and understanding of peace, peace in our hearts, in our families, our neighborhoods, in our communities, in our nations: then, and only then, can we work to make peace globally a reality.

Changes Presented by Globalization

There have been dramatic changes around the globe within just a few decades. Technology and globalization are impacting the lives of people everywhere, driving change at a breathtaking pace. We can communicate, transact business, and travel with previously unimaginable ease. At times it seems that the power of human creativity and innovation is boundless. How does this impact the work of peacebuilding around the globe?

The world has changed and yet our sense of identity and connection to others often has not. This is to say that while science and technology may have bridged external barriers, they have not been able to take away the racial, religious, national, and tribal or ethnic identities that continue to drive conflict and corruption in every aspect of society. We are now interacting with the whole world, and all its differences. As a result, we affect each oth-

er much more than ever before. In the age of the 24/7 news cycle and with the “flattening” power of new and social media, local issues can quickly escalate into global concerns. The attitudes, actions, and behaviors on one area of the globe can positively or negatively impact other regions in ways that we still struggle to understand.

Despite the great promise of the twenty-first century, we continue to face dire realities and ominous challenges everywhere. Conflict and corruption on every continent cripple human progress towards peace and prosperity. Our most pressing challenge today is an ethical one. Our technology can gather massive data on our browsing habits and consumer preferences, but cannot help us to understand each other, respect each other, or forgive each other.

We are faced with a significant gap between our external development and our ethical maturity. This is a “values deficit” far more alarming than any trade or budget shortfall. Technology has driven rapid development, but technology is itself value neutral. It has the potential to improve the quality of life, but it can also be used for the development of weapons of mass destruction. Likewise, globalization amplifies both negative and positive developments.

Identity-based Conflict

With dramatically changing social institutions and norms, and uncertainty about the future, it is understandable that some individuals may face deep struggles about meaning, purpose and identity. One of our great dilemmas today is the attraction of many youths to radical groups like ISIS. Such groups provide a persuasive, yet deeply flawed, sense of certainty, belonging and identity. With explanations framed in religious terms but twisted by extremist interpretations that justify violence and inhumanity, such groups present a dangerous challenge to modern civil society that must be addressed.

These violent, extremist groups represent what we call “identity-based conflict” at its

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very worst. Groups such as ISIS exemplify what happens when identity-based conflicts are taken to their logical end. These extremists have divided the world into “us vs. them” – the kind of view that divides and elevates some while dehumanizing others. We maintain that limiting, self-reinforcing identity is not only the root of extremist violence but essentially every challenge that we can observe in our world today.

The us vs. them mentality divides us, keeps us apart, and subsequently directly contributes to war, conflict, corruption. And by destroying opportunities to share and collaborate, this mindset continues a vicious cycle of underdevelopment, poverty, environmental degradation and more.

We have mentioned a dramatic example of identity-based conflict, yet actually most conflicts the world over can be seen from this lens of identity. Identity is “the set of behavioral or personal characteristics by which an individual is recognizable as a member of a group.”

There is a comfortable sense of belonging when we are within our own circle or group. According to Abraham Maslow’s theory on the Hierarchy of Needs, humans need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance among their social groups, regardless of whether these groups are large or small. For example, some large social groups may include religious groups, ethnic groups, professional organizations, clubs, co-workers, sports teams, and gangs to name a few.

Yet it is when we understand and think of ourselves, exclusively, as a member of a group, this sows the seeds of “the others,” which invariably breeds a negative, competitive, or suspicious attitude towards those outside “my” group. There can be a tendency of individuals to view the social world in terms of an ingroup (“us”) and an outgroup (“them”). Consequently, people prefer to associate with those who are similar over those who are different. Today neuroscience tells us that we are wired in our primal brain to fear difference for our survival. Oftentimes,

this causes us to see others as lesser or even as a threat to my group. This division can be exacerbated by a history of resentment or revenge. It breeds the “us vs. them” perspective and it is the seed of conflict that has wreaked havoc in our world to this day.

All of these things make it difficult to welcome the stranger. There is no “quick fix” in peacebuilding. Peacebuilding takes time and requires a deep well of patience. Ultimately, however, the resolution of identity-based conflict, the “us vs. them” struggle, is that in reality... there is only us.

The good news is, we have a shared identity already: our common humanity.

Our Shared Identity

We urgently need a unifying vision that affirms the self-evident, transcendent truths that define our common humanity, grounded in universal principles that support fundamental human rights and the spiritual and moral essence of all people. Such principles are practically applied in shared values that guide how we live and relate with each other. Shared values are the “glue” that provide social cohesion, whether in a neighborhood, a nation, or the entire global community.

The Global Peace Foundation (GPF) promotes such a vision—that “all people regardless of nationality, race, ethnicity or religion belong to One Family under God.” All people share a common essence and heritage – our “humanness,” which extends beyond even our most pronounced external differences. Because we share a common origin, the Creator, we are all part of one human family. This simple yet powerful vision statement can inspire our common effort to build a world of sustainable peace. And from this values-based approach GPF is addressing critical issues of peace and opportunity in communities and nations around the world, and working to build consensus around shared values to advance the creation of vibrant, prosperous, ethical societies.

Cohesion in diverse and pluralistic societies is possible based on universal principles and

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shared values. Though the world's religious traditions may differ greatly in doctrines and modes of worship, they share broad agreement on the essentials of how people should treat each other and live together. The essence of our humanity— and of life itself—is intangible or, we could say, spiritual in nature. We naturally and intuitively recognize that every person has inherent value, endowed by the Creator. In the next Session let's explore; what are these Universal Principles and shared values that we all hold dear?

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SESSION 2: OUR SHARED HUMANITY

Any global perspective or approach based solely on political or economic considerations is inherently limited and insufficient. We cannot legislate trust, legally mandate maturity, or purchase the “habits of the heart” that we can learn in healthy families and vibrant communities. History has shown that, despite best efforts, political and economic strategies have repeatedly failed to truly resolve identity-based conflicts. This affects the way that nations continue to vie and jockey for their own political, social or economic benefit, much to the detriment of the global community. This is because nations, like the people that constitute them, have not developed the insight and capacity to move beyond narrow self-interest or perceived self-identity. In short, no one has effectively put forth a moral and spiritual justification for a new dimension of international engagement. With conventional narratives such as power balance, clash of civilizations, realistic conflict theory, etc. dominating our worldview, we have not been able to find any solution to conflicts raging in our world. Conflicts don’t reduce by themselves; they are increasing every day. It is quite clear that an alternative narrative is required.

Human society therefore needs to develop alternative approaches as a way out of this quagmire and align with the truth of oneness of existence, embodied in the principle of ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam’ which resonates deeply within India’s multicultural and diverse society.

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is a profound Vedantic thought from the Maha Upanishad, an ancient Indian scripture. The phrase ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’ comes from a verse in the ancient Hindu scripture Maha Upanishad (ayaṁ bandhur ayaṁ neti gaṁanā laghucetasām / udāracaritānām tu vasudhaiva kuṁumbakam), which means: “This one is my relative and that one is not: this is the

calculation of small-minded people. But for noble-minded people, the whole world itself is a family.” It essentially signifies the eternal truth – oneness of the universe – ‘One World, One Family, One Future.’ Mahatma Gandhi’s Ahimsa (non-violence) both as a creed and a strategy is considered an extension of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. It envisions the unity of mankind as one family which offers a compelling foundation for peacebuilding.

The ideals implicit in Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam are universal, and hence resonate globally. Along with Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, another moral imperative that further expresses the ethos of compassion and the oneness of all is the Golden Rule. Many cultures have similar ethical frameworks that have served as the underpinning of building inclusive and peaceful societies. These ideals are similarly expressed in the African ethos of “Ubuntu”, the Indonesian ethic of “Pancasila”, and the ancient Korean ideal of “Hongik Ingan” among others, and encapsulated in the expression that we are all one family under God.

While these ideas are articulated in various languages, they ultimately recognize the same ideals: that we, as human beings, share a common humanity and oneness on the basis of our aspiration to strive towards the universal good and harmony. These universal themes and vision statements affirm the self-evident, transcendent truths that define our common humanity, grounded in universal principles that support fundamental rights and the spiritual and moral essence of all people.

How are these principles lived each day? How do we expand the boundaries of our sense of belonging, how do we expand our circle of compassion? Maybe it is already latent within each one of us....

Let us look at one of those universal princi-

ples.

Remember the tragedy of the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, and the days that went by after the worst tremors had ceased? Rescuers from around the world worked tirelessly looking for people, finding many people who had died, yet miraculously on the eighth day of searching they discovered a little boy still alive in the rubble. Remember this picture: the determination of the rescuers who had labored so mightily for so long was evident, sweat creasing the dust that lined their faces after their heroic efforts to find another survivor. The little boy's name is Kiki. He was seven years old and his smile of joy was as wide as his outstretched arms. We can see the suffering of the past eight days in his sunken eyes, but his smile is like sunshine. Did anyone ask about his religion, race, or his social status? Did the rescuers, from various countries and backgrounds, care about any of these differences? That he was alive and well was what mattered; all rejoiced and as this story and picture swept the world, people everywhere applauded and even wept with joy. By the eighth day, so many bodies were being found, but not this time, even some of the rescuers stretched their arms out wide, wanting to embrace the life of this little boy. In moments like these we all know in the depths of our being that life itself is sacred.

Global Peace Foundation affirms the importance of universally recognized principles and shared values as essential to building social cohesion within nations and the global community. Among these principles are:

Among these principles are:

1. All people have intrinsic value, dignity, and fundamental rights, as endowed by the Creator.
2. Every person has, as his or her highest attribute, a spiritual and moral essence.
3. Our human nature finds its fullest expression and meaning in relation to others.
4. People develop their innate potential through their choices and actions. Free-

dom and responsibility are intrinsically linked.

When viewed from the ideal that we are all part of one human family, each principle makes an important contribution to the well-being of the whole. This all may sound too broad or too simple, but the realization of shared values and our common humanity is profound, and can actually bring perpetrators and victims to sit together at the "peace table." When relationships are built based on mutual respect for each person's innate dignity, when there are the beginnings of solid relationships, the peace process begins and goes forward. Even lengthy sustained dialogue, and difficult conversations ultimately can build relationships. The work of peacebuilding is not fast, it takes time and commitment. Once a relationship has begun, trust begins to grow, and the hard work of negotiation and compromise can begin.

We will dig more deeply into these universal principals in the Interactive Exercise section of this Session.

Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion: The Role of Spiritual Leaders

Highlighting and emphasizing the universal principles and values that all faith and wisdom traditions embrace, and building lasting social cohesion based on these shared ideals, are central to GPF's interreligious approach. In a diverse, pluralistic society, we do not need or require unanimity of belief; we need only to acknowledge our shared values and common humanity. While there may be great differences in religious doctrines and liturgies, what is most important is how people live together every day. Basic human values – respect and compassion for all people, honoring the family, living with integrity – are vitally important to people of all faiths and backgrounds. Thus, it is essential that faith leaders stand together and advocate for such time-honored principles and shared values in society at large.

Each religion has a duty to its adherents to define its unique path toward God. They

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establish ecclesiastic structure and nurture their adherents through sacred liturgy, teachings and Holy Scriptures. This is the “Religious Focus” of all religions. Of course, each religion will have its unique components; its own doctrinal perspective and articulation of faith and, whereas differences can lead to religious conflict, such differences are not the essential cause of conflict. In view of this, unanimity of belief is not the essential solution and, thus, not the purview of GPF.

There is another important expression of faith that GPF focuses on and brings all who affirm God, or the Transcendent, into partnership. The wisdom traditions, in addition to their aforementioned “Religious Focus”, have an additional mission as well: what we call a “Civic Focus”. Typically, faith traditions have provided the moral underpinnings of societies, as well as the impetus for compassion and service to others. In other words, there is a profession of faith that is purely civil; not expressed strictly as religious dogma, but rather as expressions of social conscience and rules of conduct without which it is impossible to be a good citizen in a civil society.

Spiritual leaders from traditions that span continents and centuries have affirmed this “civic focus.” For example, the Swami Vivekananda said:

“Which of these would be the more beloved of Shiva? Certainly he that serves His children. He who wants to serve the father must serve the children first. He who wants to serve Shiva must serve His children — must serve all creatures in this world first. It is said in the Shâstra that those who serve the servants of God are His greatest servants. So you will bear this in mind.”

And on the other side of the world in USA, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. noted:

“But a religion true to its nature must also be concerned about man’s social conditions. Religion deals with both earth and heaven, both time and eternity. Religion operates not only on the vertical plane but also on the horizon-

tal. It seeks not only to integrate men with God but to integrate men with men and each man with himself.”

These two very different men from very different backgrounds and times demonstrated in their lives and works that to live out one’s faith meant to serve the greater good. From these two exceptional spiritual leaders and models, we can extract lessons for our global community today. To live out our faith requires us to act in ways that puts those beliefs into practice. This very simple idea can become a lasting basis for interreligious partnerships: the agreement that a world of peace is comprised of moral and ethical societies. There can be powerful multi-faith cooperation and collaboration based upon a common vision and shared values. Lasting friendships and deep bonds of love and mutual respect can be established through engaging in projects and programs that benefit and inspire personal empowerment and social transformation.

And so, what is needed, and what is actually happening in some pockets of our global society, is a shift in our mindset, our consciousness of our self and others. Even while we are confronted with war, poverty and corruption in some corners, in others we have begun to see and build attitudes where differences are honored and celebrated as a source of enrichment and expansion of one’s reality and consciousness. We have seen that by discovering a deeper, common identity that transcends all lines of division, we can begin to sow the seeds of peace and reconciliation.

Let us look at some examples of Community-driven Peacebuilding based on this methodology.

SESSION 3: SUCCESSFUL MODELS OF COMMUNITY PEACEBUILDING, AND THE ART OF DIALOGUE

Interreligious Peacebuilding

Nigeria is Africa's most populous country, almost evenly divided between Christians and Muslims. Long-standing tribal loyalties and political, economic, and environmental stresses have intensified violence and radicalization. There is an urgent need to build sustainable, community-led peace.

The One Family Under God (OFUG) Pilot project was initiated in Kaduna state primarily because of its unique population distribution and for its reputation in the past as a flashpoint between its Muslim and Christian citizens. The northern area of Kaduna State has a Muslim majority and Christian minority; the southern area has the reverse with a Christian majority and Muslim minority; the central part of the state has a relatively equal mix of the two groups.

In 2015, a pilot program was launched in six communities in Kaduna State. Tensions were so high in these communities that there were "no-go zones" where people of one group feared being attacked by those of the other group. In all of these communities, people had fled to other areas because of fear for the safety of their families and because the instability presented serious challenges to business and employment.

As a result of the Campaign, tensions were reduced to such an extent that some of the no-go zones have disappeared and residents have begun to encourage those who had left to come back to their hometowns since peace had been restored. Christians and Muslims now meet and work together to improve their communities.

Recently, as a result of the remarkable transformations seen thus far in Nigeria, GPF Nigeria has also been involved in peace talks between groups in conflict as well as held the first of an annual One Family Under God festival in two of their local peacebuilding

communities.

GPF Nigeria brings together local leadership, extensive field experience and a strong network of local stakeholders and partners, including government officials, NGOs, elders, religious leaders, women and youth.

In recognizing that social and political change and economic development needs to be undergirded by the will of the people, the Global Peace Foundation engages in a process of "national transformation" by first engaging the people in a new framework for understanding their self-identity and responsibility to one another.

Program participants reported shifts in attitudes towards people of other tribes and religions, along with an opening for a parallel shift in behavior and social organization. One participant, Abookie Galadima from Kaninkon community reflects:

"The coming of Global Peace Foundation and all the activities that had been carrying out in this chieftdom has shown the people that, really, there are people out there who truly care about them, they should start caring for themselves and hold one another. Christians, Muslims, Dangoma and Kaninkon should all come together as one, the land is theirs."

As an organization that works to become a catalyst for transformation, the GPF team primarily works to empower local citizens and to promote community-driven change. Happily, these efforts are likewise reflected in the qualitative evaluations following the capacity building and community empowerment programming. Victoria Yusuf from Gerti reports:

Seriously before today, I was still very bitter concerning what happened and the lack of peace in Kaninkon, but, with the teachings today, I understand that we are all one, both Christians and Muslims and

we are supposed to put our heads together to ensure the progress of our lives.

GPF Nigeria’s vision is to build and empower diverse and marginalized peoples into a strong, resilient and prosperous community through its innovative peacebuilding and community empowerment models. In this, we see the natural pathway that would lead not only to peace but vibrant opportunities for social and economic development. This peacebuilding work is continuing successfully to today, 2023, and exploration into social and economic development has begun through the entire diverse community cooperating together on building new business endeavors.

While there is still much work to be done in Nigeria and beyond, GPF is working to build models that can scale to other contexts. The lessons learned in Nigeria have already begun to inform projects and programs from the U.S, India, Indonesia and more.

Most importantly, the work here goes far beyond conflict resolution or preventing violent extremism in actively engaging local citizens to renew families, community and the entire social fabric in ways that also transform existing paradigms about what is possible when people come together with a shared vision, principles and values.

A Change of Heart and Shared Values

The UNESCO preamble states:

Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men and women that the defenses of peace must be constructed.

Yet, we might instead locate the real cause as one rooted in the heart. In both new discoveries made through social science research and our direct experience with people around the world, a change in people’s heart towards the “other” creates an opening to change attitudes and behaviors. Social scientists have begun to recognize that shifts in attitudes and behavior can be caused by addressing values rather than logical reasoning.

Therefore, when it comes to motivation, logic

is less significant than personal values. Put simply, values are what people find important and are what ultimately guide attitudes and behavior. And when we challenge ourselves to think in terms of shared values— “what’s best for everyone” and “what do we all value or aspire to”—as the starting point of discourse and dialogue, we draw out our human potential in service to greater humanity.

Once we begin the process of engaging people with the general framework and understanding of being as one human family, we begin to be able to engage in discussions on the “bigger picture” of our common identity and shared values. It is with this first critical shift in terms of common human identity, shared values and connection to “the other” that we begin the process of building peace and positive relations between people of all different backgrounds and cultures.

Transforming Relationships

The transformative power of genuinely engaging with people from different backgrounds, perspectives and experiences is undeniable. When we relate with others as members of our human family, we can change our minds, our attitudes and behaviors, which can then lead to changes in the community, to institutions, business and more.

The Chairman of the Global Peace Foundation, Dr. Hyun Jin P. Moon, outlines the efforts of the organization in this way:

“The GPF model starts with the social side. The importance of civic and NGO engagement to create national transformation is critical. It starts with social engagement that builds reformation and transformation, building the foundation for economic development.”

A simple formula, but we can see it in other moments of great social change in history, from the Indian independence movement, South African anti-apartheid movement, and the abolitionist and civil rights movements in the United States that led to important and lasting social change.

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A study of history shows that change that transformed societies for the better were often – or possibly always - preceded by “spiritual awakenings” wherein a rise in consciousness of the people worked to reform the cultural landscape.

It is from this first agreement, which starts from the heart, to engage across lines of identity that leads us towards the next steps – of changing our minds, attitudes and behaviors through the sustained process of dialogue, peace building, and community building.

Dialogue in Peacebuilding

One of the most valuable and essential tools for all aspects of the peace and relationship building process is the art of dialogue. Dialogue is a word that is often misused and misunderstood as a synonym for debate or discussion. The ability to dialogue in some circles seems to be lost. In today’s polarized society when there is a difference of opinion, often the attitude is, “Okay, . . . I will take you down!” A determination to win at all costs. This type of interaction is actually the definition of debate: a formal argument through which one person wins and the other loses.

When asked “What is dialogue?” Dr. Leonard Swidler, founder of the Dialogue Institute at Temple University, says, “Dialogue is a two-way communication between persons who hold significantly differing views on a subject, with the purpose of learning more truth about the subject from the other. Dialogue is not the process of imparting truth, however gently and kindly, to the ignorant.”

One can find many instructions and guides to interreligious, or inter-ideological dialogue; there is even an online “peace map,” an interactive map of over 500 organizations working around the globe in the field of interreligious dialogue. The map can be used to find organizations using interreligious dialogue to achieve goals as diverse as conflict resolution, gender equality, and youth empowerment. Contact details for each organization are provided.¹

For this study course, a useful explanation of

suggested ground rules are found in the ten principles of dialogue, or the “Dialogue Decalogue,” gleaned from forty years of intensive experience by Dr. Swidler. (They are in the resource section at the back of the booklet.)

Better understanding and practice of the art of dialogue are sorely needed in our country and our world today, if we are to grow into a pluralistic society that is genuinely cohesive. As we work to resolve identity-based conflicts, whether they be religious, racial, ethnic, or social class, mastering the art of dialogue is essential. A robust pluralism includes a sense of adventure, curiosity, and expansion as we encounter and embrace many different cultures within our communities.

Interreligious dialogue operates in three areas: the practical, in which we collaborate to serve the greater good of humanity; the spiritual dimension, through which we attempt to experience the another’s religion or personal beliefs from within; and the cognitive, through which we seek understanding and truth.²

Global Peace Foundation engages in dialogue in the first area, the practical, for the purpose of identifying the universal principles and shared values. By establishing a common ground, with our shared identity as part of one human family as the substantial foundation for building relationships of trust, we work towards long-term community engagement and greater social cohesion.

Is there a definition of what it means to be human? Throughout history this question is evolving. In recent history there are current accepted positions made on the side of “human rights” things that are given and accepted because they are human. This has not always been so.

Dr. Leonard Swidler gives us this case in point,

“Only a little over a hundred years ago, for example, slavery was still widely accepted and even vigorously defended and practiced by high Christian churchmen, not to speak of Jewish and Muslim slave

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traders. And yet this radical violation of “human rights” has today been largely eliminated both in practice and law. Today no thinker or public leader would contemplate justifying slavery, at least in its directly named form of the past (see the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations in 1948; art. 4). Here we have an obvious example of the historical evolution of the understanding of what it means to be fully human, i.e., that human beings are by nature radically free”.

Other methods and forms of dialogue abound as seen by the global map mentioned previously. The Former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Harold H. Saunders developed a valuable process called “sustained dialogue” from intensive experience in nonofficial dialogues. He then founded the Sustained Dialogue Institute. He maintains that “dialogue makes relationship happen, and dialogue is the place where people change relationships”³ and that “interaction is the essence of relationship.”⁴ Dialogue and engagement can lead to new possibilities, collaboration and the constructs that support both peace and development.

When we experience our shared humanity through thoughtful dialogue, a shared meal, have an experience or work together to solve a problem, the beginnings of relationship can form. And to build this peace, to be and live as one human family, we need to learn the art of dialogue.

Civilization is the encouragement of differences.

....Mahatma Gandhi

In conclusion, it is our conviction that all people – regardless of race, religion, ethnicity or station in life – share a common essence and heritage; our “humanness” extends beyond even our most pronounced external differences. We are all part of the one human family.



SESSION 4: SERVICE; A POWERFUL TOOL FOR PEACEBUILDING

The Global Ethic, A Basis for Community Peacebuilding

We began this study series with a discussion about the pros and cons of globalization. One conclusion was that while technology has advanced rapidly to an amazing degree, we have been left with a “values deficit.” How can we bridge this gap between our technological progress and our limited progress in building a moral and ethical global society? A great and very intentional effort is needed. To engage in such a monumental task, we need a common vision that encompasses our diverse humanity and conveys the essence of our “unity in diversity.”

In India, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam envisions the unity of mankind as one family which offers a compelling foundation for peacebuilding. The ideals implicit in Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam are universal, and hence resonate globally. Similarly, in GPF’s work around the world across all varieties of religion, culture, and nationality, we have found that the vision of one family under God is generally embraced. Even while there has been a broad articulation of our interconnectedness as one human family, it is the deeper, basic realization of what fundamentally binds us together – the basis for all life and the source of our rights and responsibilities towards ourselves and one another – that brings a deeper connection.

A proven method to realize “unity in diversity” at the grassroots level is to focus on the values shared by diverse peoples. In this way, we can encourage community engagement to create trust, build social cohesion, and solve problems. We have given examples of this method within the work of GPF in specific areas and countries. How can we encourage a consensus on globally shared values, which is similar in nature to the concept of the “Global Ethic”?

The Global Ethic is not a new idea; it has an interesting history and a direct connection to

India. Chicago, USA was elected to hold the exposition of the World’s Fair in 1893. This was the backdrop for the Parliament of World Religions, along with many other formal international gatherings on different topics assembled there. On September 11th 1893 the Parliament of World Religions began the first day of speeches. In the afternoon, Swami Vivekananda spoke representing Hinduism, having made the long journey from India for this august occasion. An account of his reception by the crowd, made by an older woman who was in attendance, Mrs S. K. Blodgett later related:

When the young man got up and said, “Sisters and Brother of America,” seven thousand people rose to their feet as a tribute...⁵

The unity and equality of the world’s religions is the core of Vivekananda’s teachings. This historical gathering of the Parliament of World Religions is seen today as the beginning point of formal interreligious dialogue worldwide.

To honor Vivekananda’s contribution, the centenary of this event was held in 1993 in Chicago with a gathering of 8,000 people. It was at this commemoration that the “Declaration Toward a Global Ethic” was presented.

Towards a Global Ethic: Initial Declaration, also known as the Global Ethic, expresses a shared set of core values found in the teachings of the world’s religious, spiritual, and ethical traditions. The Global Ethic, mostly drafted by Professor Hans Küng in consultation with several hundred leaders and scholars, became an official declaration of the Parliament of the World’s Religions in 1993. For the first time in history, representatives of all the world’s religions agreed that there are common ethical commitments foundational to each of their traditions.⁶

One of the primary scholars working together with Professor Kung at that time was Dr.

RESOURCES: SESSION 4 NARRATION TRANSCRIPT

Leonard Swidler. Dr. Swidler emphasizes that the work of scholars and the endorsement of religious and ethical leaders are essential, yet they must be implemented first and foremost at the grassroots level to demonstrate the true relevance and importance of a Global Ethic. Its efficacy will be shown in time with dialogue, experiences, and engagement to deepen connections among all people. Though it is a long-term endeavor, there is particular urgency for it today.

One who took immediate action was the Dalai Lama. He was the first religious leader to sign the Declaration at the Parliament of World Religions in 1993, and he has written two books explaining and urging the adoption of a Global Ethic. The Dalai Lama calls for educators to include secular universal ethics in the education of youth worldwide. He talks about Global Ethics when he gives presentations and has even written articles for many prominent news outlets such as The Washington Post and The Times-Tribune.⁷

The Global Ethic can be read and one can even sign it at this link, <https://parliamentof-religions.org/global-ethic/towards-a-global-ethic-an-initial-declaration/>

A common thread throughout the Dalai Lama's teachings is a deep sense of our common humanity and global interconnectedness:

In this age of globalization, the time has come for us to acknowledge that our lives are deeply interconnected and to recognize that our behavior has a global dimension. When we do so we will see that our own interests are best served by what is in the best interests of the wider human community. By contrast, if we concentrate exclusively on our inner development and neglect the wider problems of the world, or if, having recognized these, we are apathetic about trying to solve them, then we have overlooked something fundamental. Apathy, in my view, is itself a form of selfishness.⁸

There have been numerous efforts to establish such a Global Ethic through projects like "Towards a Declaration of a Global Ethic,"

"Charter for Compassion," "Center for a Global Ethic," and others. Leading political, economic, and religious figures, including the Dalai Lama, Hans Kung, Leonard Swidler, Karen Armstrong, and many others, have actively advocated for such a Global Ethic, yet wider consensus has still not been achieved.

Globalization stretches us in many directions and dimensions. We can expand our thinking and our sense of belonging and begin to sense the human family as being interconnected. In the past, religions were not accustomed to working together on social problems, nor did they feel called to do so, however in recent history this is changing.

Service, A Tool for Peacebuilding

In the beginning of this study series, we discussed concepts like identity-based conflict and how focusing on our shared identity as one human family is a pathway to the resolution of this conflict. One very effective way to become aware of our "shared identity" is through service or volunteering. That is why service is a tool of peacebuilding.

It is natural to feel a sense of belonging and compassion for our own group, whether it be our ethnicity, religion, or nationality. This has been proven to be a basic need for each of us as human beings. Do we, however, feel compassion and belonging to our shared identity – the human family? Do we naturally feel empathy towards someone who is suffering and who looks very different than we do, speaks a different language, or has different perspectives on real life issues? Most likely, we would all respond differently to this question. Doing service and volunteering is a concrete way to grow our emotional sense of belonging to another group and to the larger human family.

The transformative power of engaging with people from diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences is undeniable. When we meet other members of our one human family, we can positively change our minds, our attitudes, and behaviors.

Performing collaborative acts of service, such

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as working together and building things, unites people from diverse backgrounds to work toward and achieve a common goal. As we depend on each other, working together as diverse and distinct groups achieving one purpose, we are uniting and forming relationships based on our humanity. We are generating compassion for the people we are serving and stepping out of our own “comfort zones” to have new experiences. Volunteering is a wonderful way to meet new friends as well as strengthen existing connections with friends, family, or coworkers.

Sometimes we find ourselves in painful circumstances, perhaps experiencing a tragedy in our life. In this kind of situation, it is easy to intensely focus on oneself. For example, one may become unexpectedly unemployed or lose a family member or loved one, and the act of helping others can bring one out of oneself and give life fresh meaning. It provides each of us with a renewed sense of purpose.

Mahatma Gandhi says, “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” Serving others is a substantial way to express that every person counts, demonstrating that everyone is important, each life matters, and each life has value. Service is willingly giving our time, effort, and energy; while helping others, we also receive so much back. If we ever feel that we take for granted our blessings or our good fortune, serving others in less fortunate circumstances fosters empathy.

There are many religions that advocate a tradition of serving Indian society. For example, the Sikh community has long been recognized for its deep-rooted culture of service and compassion, exemplified through its practices of Langar and selfless volunteering. Service, or “seva,” is considered a fundamental aspect of Sikhism, emphasizing the importance of helping others and promoting equality. The Langar, a community kitchen found in Sikh Gurdwaras, epitomizes this spirit of service. It offers free vegetarian meals to anyone, regardless of faith, caste, or social status. This remarkable tradition

addresses the basic need for nourishment and creates an environment of inclusivity, fostering unity and breaking down barriers. By providing sustenance to the hungry, the Sikh community showcases its dedication to humanitarianism and peacebuilding. The Langar is a powerful symbol of Sikh values, promoting social harmony and inspiring people from diverse backgrounds to unite for the greater good. Through their unwavering commitment to service, the Sikh community is a beacon of hope, demonstrating that acts of kindness and selflessness can positively impact the world and contribute to a more peaceful and equitable society.

Service changes us and gets us out of our heads; it is experiential learning. Some things in life cannot be fully explained – volunteering is one of those things that one must do and experience in order to understand. Through service and volunteering, our hearts become engaged.

Mahatma Gandhi states:

Service can have no meaning unless one takes pleasure in it. When it is done for show or for fear of public opinion, it stunts the man and crushes his spirit. Service which is rendered without joy helps neither the servant nor the served.

Nepal Peace Home is a powerful example of service as a tool of peacebuilding. This orphanage for what Nepal refers to as “conflict victim children” lies in rural Sarlahi, 30 kilometers from the border of India, amidst fields of sugar cane, with temperatures ranging from freezing to over 37.7 degrees Celsius. The village has no running water and intermittent electricity. For 12 years, from 1996 to 2006, Nepal suffered through a violent Maoist insurgency. The fathers of the children at Nepal Peace Home, being both policemen and Maoists, were among the 13,000 that lost their lives in the struggle. The goal of Nepal Peace Home is to not only provide shelter and education for the children, but to bring about substantial reconciliation between the Maoists and Nepali civilians through the forging of deep friendships and community.

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This is deep work of reconciliation; a labor of love and more can be understood by going to the website.

Through volunteer work, you may overcome the personal challenges of leaving your comfort zone and doing something new with people you may not know. The strength and beauty of our world, of our myriad of cultures, is its tremendous diversity. Service done based on shared values is one key which has the potential to unlock the strengths of this diversity. Relationships based on universal principles and core values are the bricks that we use to build bridges over the divides that have caused conflicts.

We will understand and feel that there is not us vs. them; there is only us. We can finally discover what the common good is when we begin to know each other based on our very humanity. In this time of globalization of technology and economy, we also need a powerful, global awakening to our spiritual interconnectedness. This will enable us to unlock our potential for lasting peace and sustainable development. People who want to be of service can change the world. The good news is that this is not an overwhelming, unattainable task. We can start today in our homes and communities.

How will you begin?

Endnotes

- 1 <https://www.kaiciid.org>, Peace Map
- 2 Interfaith Dialogue at the Grassroots, Journal of Ecumenical Studies, 2008, Dialogue Institute, Temple University.
Understanding Dialogue, Leonard Swidler.
- 3 Politics is About Relationship, Harold H. Saunders, p.122, 2005 New York, NY
- 4 Ibid, p 60.
- 5 Marie Louise Burke, Swami Vivekananda in the West, New Discoveries, Vol. 1 pp. 142-43.
- 6 © Copyright 2015-2018 Parliament of the World's Religions
- 7 <http://thetimes-tribune.com/opinion/time-for-common-global-ethics-1.2268891>
- 8 Dalai Lama, Beyond Religion (New York: First Mariner Books, 2011)

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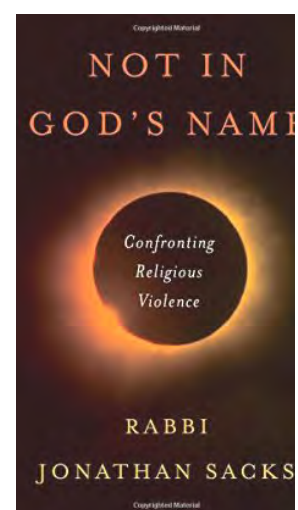
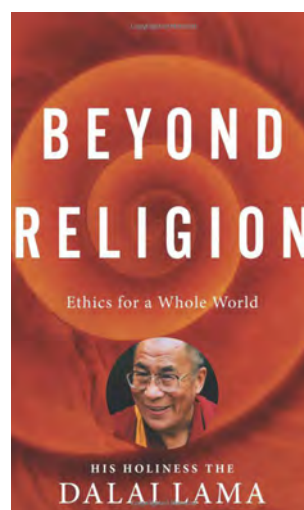
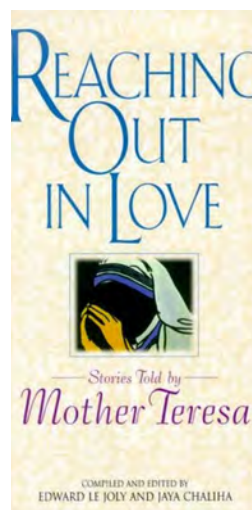
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CREDITS

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Community Peacebuilding is supported by growing numbers of nongovernmental organizations that apply many of the principles discussed in this workbook. The following are a selection that illustrate these principles in action.



The **Dialogue Institute** engages religious, civic, and academic leaders in practicing the skills of respectful dialogue and critical thinking, building, and sustaining transformative relationships across lines of religion and culture.



The **United Religions Initiative** is a global grassroots interfaith network that cultivates peace and justice by engaging people to bridge religious and cultural differences and work together for the good of their communities and the world.



The **Sustained Dialogue Institute** helps people to transform conflictual relationships and design change processes around the world. We define dialogue as “listening deeply enough to be changed by what you learn.”



Co-operation Ireland is an all-island peacebuilding charity. Since it was established in 1979 as Co-operation North, we have worked to encourage and promote dialogue and practical collaboration within Northern Ireland and between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.



The **Alliance for Peacebuilding** is a membership network of over 100 organizations, bringing together coalitions in key areas of strategy and policy to elevate the entire peacebuilding field, tackling issues too large for any one organization to address alone.



Seeds of Peace is a leadership development organization committed to transforming legacies of conflict into courage to lead change.



Friends of Roots is fostering a grassroots movement of understanding, nonviolence, and transformation among Israelis and Palestinians.

THE GOLDEN RULE

BHA'I FAITH
Lay not on any soul a load that you would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for anyone the things you would not desire for yourself
Baha'u'llah, Cleanings

HINDUISM
This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you
Mahabharata 5:1517

BUDDHISM
Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful
Udana-Varga 5:18

CONFUCIANISM
One word which sums up the basis of all good conduct... loving kindness. Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself
Confucius, Analects 15:23

ISLAM
Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself
The Prophet Muhammad, Hadith

TAOISM
Regard your neighbour's gain as your own gain, and your neighbour's loss as your own loss
T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien, 213-218

JUDAISM
What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour; This is the whole Torah; all the rest is commentary
Hillel, Talmud, Shabbat 31a

SIKHISM
I am a stranger to no one; and no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all
Guru Granth Sahib, pg. 1299

JAINISM
One should treat all creatures in the world as one would like to be treated
Mahavira, Sutrakritanga

CHRISTIANITY
In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets
Jesus, Matthew 7:12

ZOROASTRIANISM
Do not do unto others whatever is injurious to yourself
Shayast-na-Shayast 13.29

NATIVE SPIRITUALITY
We are as much alive as we keep the earth alive
Chief Dan George

UNITARIANISM
We affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part
Unitarian principle

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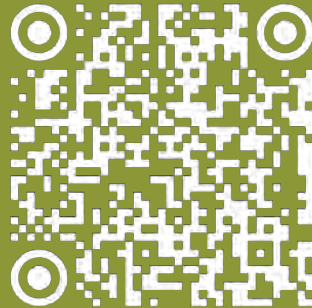
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Founded in 2009, Global Peace Foundation is an international non-sectarian, non-partisan, nonprofit organization, which promotes an innovative, values-based approach to peace building guided by the vision of One Family under God. GPF engages and organizes a global network of public and private sector partners who develop community, national, and regional peace building models as the foundation for ethical and cohesive societies.