



PEOPLE OF PEACE EDUCATION



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People of Peace Education

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Foreword



Against the backdrop of Germany's history, it can come as no surprise that since reunification Germany has assumed increasing responsibility for peace and security throughout the world. This engagement involves not only the government but also numerous non-governmental organizations, religious communities, academic institutions and other societal groups which are all making their own contribution to peace.

I am therefore delighted that the Federal Foreign Office was able to support the 43rd gathering of the International Institute on Peace Education 2019 in Nicosia, organized in collaboration with the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research. The gathering in Nicosia gave the participants first-hand insight into the existing divide of Cyprus and what it means in reality, but also into the work of the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research.

Since 2017, the Federal Foreign Office has had the privilege to closely cooperate with the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research through its educational program 'Imagine'. The program aims to increase contact between the two communities on the island by bringing children, teenagers and teachers from across the divide together. It offers a space to interact and get to know each other. By connecting with the 'other' and creating memories together, stereotypes are deconstructed and bonds between members of the two communities are established and fostered. This is true peace education and leaves an impression not only on the participants themselves but also on their families and friends. Peace education aims at a long-term effect and educating young people lays the foundation for change to a – hopefully – more peaceful world. In view of many millions of people who still have to flee from war and violence, the sentence of Peace Nobel Prize

winner and late Chancellor Willy Brandt has lost nothing of its accuracy and relevance: “Peace is not everything, but everything is nothing without peace.”

This publication tells the stories from peace educators from Cyprus and around the world, on how they address division, how they cope with the good and the bad moments, how they keep up their spirit. Their example encourages us and their continuous engagement remains more necessary than ever.

Franz Josef Kremp

Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Republic of Cyprus

Introduction



PEOPLE OF PEACE EDUCATION showcases the global efforts of Peace Educators and seeks to bridge the division that separates practitioners from the general public, in order to raise awareness of the importance of working together for more peaceful societies and alternative futures free from violence and injustice. This publication is an inspired effort to creatively document the experience of the 43rd gathering of the **International Institute on Peace Education (IIPE)** that took place in July 2019 in Nicosia, Cyprus. It is also the result of the collaboration between the **Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR)** and the IIPE Secretariat. It is a collection of good practices, life stories and memories of Peace Educators from all around the world and will hopefully reach a wide audience and inspire change.


The first IIPE was held in 1982 at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York City. It was organized by Professors Betty A. Reardon, Willard Jacobson and Douglas Sloan in cooperation with the United Ministries in Education. These professors came together to apply their collective knowledge, wisdom and experience toward addressing the problem of nuclear proliferation. Over the years the IIPE has evolved into a weeklong residential experience for educators hosted in a different country every other summer. The Institute facilitates exchanges of theory and practical experiences in teaching peace education and serves to grow the field. In serving the field, the IIPE operates as an applied peace education laboratory that provides a space for pedagogical experimentation; cooperative, deep inquiry into shared issues; and advancing theoretical, practical and pedagogical applications. Since 1982, the IIPE has been hosted in over 18 countries, gathering hundreds

of peace educators together for cooperative learning toward advancing the field of peace education in theory and practice.

The Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR), the host of IPE 2019, is an inter-communal organization whose mission is to contribute to the advancement of historical understanding amongst the public and more specifically amongst children, youth and educators by providing access to learning opportunities for individuals from every ethnic, religious, cultural, social, and ability status. Since its inception, the AHDR, founder of the Home for Cooperation (H4C), has initiated several local peace-building actions and has assisted local peace educators, activists, researchers and academics in having access to numerous opportunities pertaining to the fields of history and peace education. Only in the last three years - through the 'Imagine' Project - the AHDR has educated over 5091 students and 961 teachers in Peace Education, while inspiring a culture of peace and non-violence.

In July 2019, peace educators and teachers from across the existing divide in Cyprus had the privilege to interact with a diverse, global community of peace educators, peace studies scholars, practitioners, activists, teachers and policy makers as co-learners. The week-long experience in Nicosia, Cyprus has been one of the most diverse learning communities in IPE history, featuring participants representing identities and affiliations from 33 different countries.

The theme of IPE 2019 had a special relevance to the host region, being "Educating for a Culture of Peace in Divided Societies: History, Dialogue, and Multiperspectivity Toward Reconciliation." This theme presented an opportunity for peace educators to



examine the role of education in helping to overcome and transform divisions creatively and a platform for IPE and AHDR to engage further in history as a vehicle for reconciliation and education for a culture of peace in divided societies. The theme has also been relevant to circumstances of exclusion and division exemplified by the refugee crises being experienced globally; issues of racial, gender, sexual, and religious identity; and heightened nationalism in an increasingly interdependent world struggling to deal with a climate crisis that threatens extinction of life on Earth. During the week-long experience, participants were encouraged to fully immerse themselves in a shared inquiry, and to dive head and heart first into the many pedagogical experiences and diverse approaches to transformative peace pedagogy that have come to exemplify the IPE experience.

People of Peace Education will be complemented by an interactive website that will be regularly updated with new profiles and videos, and provide more information on the work of peace educators, including details of past and present activities as well as future plans. As the final outcome of the IPE 2019 experience, this project aims to motivate others to undertake transformative action in their schools, neighborhoods, communities, towns and countries, and connect with others that share the same vision for sustainable peace.

We are deeply grateful to all the supporters of IPE 2019, especially the Federal Foreign Office of the Republic of Germany for funding the event; H.E. the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in Cyprus, Franz Josef Kremp for his perpetual support; the President of the European Parliament, Antonio Tajani, for his

patronage; the Head of the European Parliament Liaison Office in Cyprus, Andreas Kettis; the Officers of the Civil Affairs Section of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), Arzu Çağın and Marina Vasilara; the Cyprus News Agency (CNA) for the media sponsorship; The Samuel Rubin Foundation and The Virginia Wellington Cabot Foundation, for their ongoing support of the IIPE; the IIPE Secretariat; the Board, staff and interns of the AHDR; and the staff of the Home for Cooperation and the Home Café.

Loizos Loukaidis
Educational Programs Officer &
'Imagine' Project Coordinator (AHDR)

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Adhila Hassan



India/ Global Citizen

My work in Peace Education in India encountered major divisions in religious, racial and economic areas. However, growing religious hatred is a big problem, which has affected me mostly throughout my life and it is also the root cause of many conflicts India is currently facing. In my personal life, I continue to engage deeply with people regardless of their religion and to be a role model for respecting human dignity through love and compassion. I also provide emotional support and mental health guidance for people who face discrimination due to their choice of inter-religious marriage. In my professional life, I constantly use the potential of education in developing skills of Empathy and Critical Thinking in every possible scenario through dialogue and transformative pedagogies in learning settings. Though the journey is very challenging, the changes I witnessed in my community and family setting towards religious harmony keep me motivated to continue the work.

Adrian Viesca Gold

México



People in my context have many differences among them, not all of them divide them, like the differences in customs that we share and exchange, remarkably so in the culinary front, to give a commonplace example. Some of them divide them greatly, like poverty and gender, but in my specific line of work the difference that brings them apart is the difference in opportunities and in particular their access to wisdom about getting to know themselves and their relationship to otherness.

I work on a consultancy project based on Popular Education, Meditation, Tea, Community Development and Sociocracy. This is a proposal to address the issues mentioned by establishing a themed encounter that promotes awareness through practice. This collective awareness is our goal. The practice we promote is the same one that we keep practicing ourselves. It relates to delving on what is sacred, meaningful and dignified. Discovering and engaging with that. It is meant to do exactly this, going through all and any moments in your life, peacefully.

Alden Jacobs

United States of America



I find it interesting to consider division in its multiple forms. Divisions that would benefit from the opportunity for an exchange of perspectives but instead perpetuate each other. Currently, working in Cyprus, there is of course the physical division between communities. Beyond the physical, our peace education context is confronted by divisions in understanding and awareness. We see this very clearly between communities in conflict. From the arts-based peacebuilding perspective, we also see a division in communication between artists and society in general. Our hope is that through peace education for artists, we can help them communicate with communities affected by conflict in a way that helps others overcome the existing divisions in their lives. The bridge that we have found is 'strategic social art' because it has the capacity to share perspectives in a way that encourages engagement and reflection. We believe that sharing these perspectives is an invaluable way of increasing awareness and understanding.

Alejandra Barrera

Mexico, Austria



Mexico City is full of contrasts and with a very high degree of inequalities. The rich people live in privileged communities where private security takes care of them. Usually they have all services first class and are located in green areas where the air is cleaner. Living in this socio-economic and cultural framework, the peace work I do aims at understanding these phenomena in order to support the transformation of the inequalities that cause a myriad of conflicts at different levels and in different arenas. I work by facilitating workshops in civil society and schools, I mainly work with representatives of the indigenous communities who have an alternative perspective which differs from the dominant worldview. The task is to create channels of intercultural communication between parties of the conflict as well as to create awareness of non-violent transformation for the construction of a better world.

Alicia Cabezudo



Argentina

As any Latin American country, Argentina has a strong gap within social classes which is evident from the economic, social and educational perspective. This leads to the existence of huge groups of poor populations and a small streap of rich and powerful not only from the economic point of view but also in relation to access to politics and rights. This gap increases the differences and creates anger, distrust and disappointment amongst the society and towards government and public policies, even those developed by democratic authorities. When working on Peace Education, the issues related to social differences, inequality, injustice and the lack of access to education and social benefits are present in all educational levels starting from primary school education to postgraduate studies. There is a need to tackle these issues while planning curriculum design and developing activities, and during “on-field projects” where students have the opportunity to observe, reflect and practise concrete problems and needs that are part of their daily life by following the theory of Paulo Freire.

Amada Benavides de Pérez

Colombia



Colombia is a highly divided country for different reasons like the differences between urban and rural contexts. In urban scenarios you can find, between others, dissimilarities at economic levels, an inverted pyramid scale in the concentration of wealth with a little rich population and a big mass of people living at poverty or below poverty level, with few possibilities of democratic participation. Other issues, more related with rural contexts, are the concentration of land possession in the hands of the few, lack of development in many territories, and an underground racist society. Many of those divisions are the causes of 60 years of armed conflict, linked to other issues like drug trafficking, illegal mining and the renascence or appearance of new armed groups. Our peace education related goal is to empower the population in order for them to have more capacities to claim their rights and promote skills for constructing their individual and community life projects. Our job puts emphasis on young people, women, school environments and rural communities.

Anita Yudkin



Puerto Rico

The work on peace education that we engage in at the University of Puerto Rico has focused on, since the foundation of the UNESCO Chair on Peace Education, to make peace a less abstract concept and undertaking, to make it relevant to our particular political, cultural, educational context and, at the same time, to bridge these realities to global issues and knowledge on peace education. So, we have focused on overcoming multiple forms of violence, while disseminating, supporting, creating educational initiatives geared towards a culture of peace based on human rights and sustainable futures. What has kept us going for over twenty years has been the support of a wonderful group who comprise the UNESCO Chair, the contributions we have made to the field both at the local and regional level, the marvelous research/creative work generated by University of Puerto Rico students in their commitment to a more inclusive and just peace and the Freire-inspired conviction that change towards justice is hard, but possible.

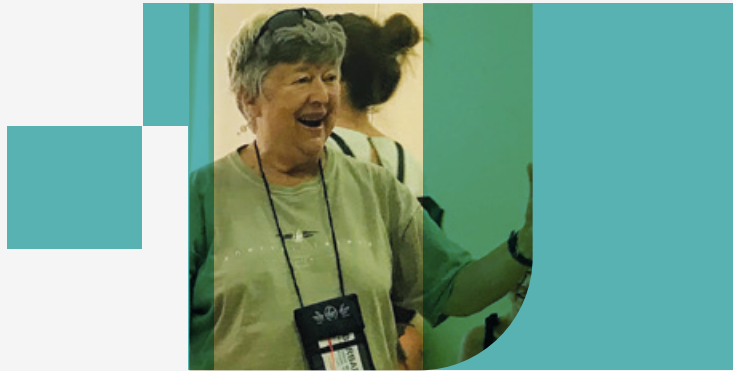
Apostolos Skouroupatis



Cyprus

In my work in Peace Education we deal with the division among Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities caused by the Turkish Invasion. Through our work we aim at bringing together students from both communities in order to bridge the gap established by the division of our country. What gets me going is my desire to see my country reunited through a viable solution.

Barbara Barnes



United States of America

In the context of my work, in addition to the existing racism and white supremacy, class distinctions which lead to issues of poverty, result in divisions within the society. My peace education work helps me be more effective in organizing interactive engagements with others around these issues. I have increased my communication and pedagogical skills and expanded the methodologies I use in facilitating and organizing gatherings.

Benedict Weiss

German constantly lost
in Latin America



In the Bolivian Andean Region, the patterns of colonial past are still present in a society that is strongly divided by ethnic and cultural distinctions. The identity divisions are not permanently the main source of division, nevertheless they pop up in moments of political tensions. The Peace Education project I participated in aims at mainstreaming a culture of peace in Potosí, Bolivia and tackles the different roots of division working with state and non-state actors. We have gathered together a group of individuals from different institutions that participate in our training courses. The interchange of the IPE 2019 inspired me in my daily work. Last October we had an outbreak of political violence after the Bolivian elections. The change in political violence could be observed on social media networks in which political differences transformed into xenophobic narratives against indigenous people. Our peace project started a communication strategy to tackle these narratives and invited people to use non-violent communication and dialogue.

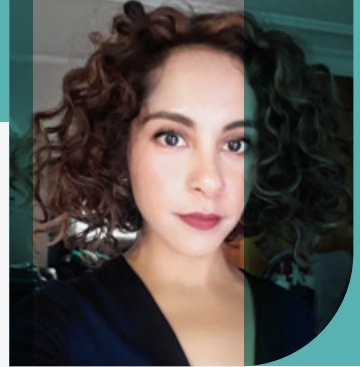
Brigid Glustein

Canada



In my community there are many higher income families and pockets of low-income families who live “together but separate”. The realities of struggling families are very complex (finances, immigration, adapting to cultural differences, education, new language etc). I am the director of a small community centre for vulnerable youth and their families. The preliminary intervention is to support the family in linking them with resources to meet immediate needs (food banks, emergency shelter, support for victims of abuse, health care etc.). Youth are involved in programming to accompany them to learn skills and build community and eventually become agents of change through steps of critical questioning and developing initiatives to better their community. Especially in this moment during the COVID-19 epidemic, work is challenging. Vulnerable families are even more isolated than before. The youth are examples of resilience, and their determination in the face of personal and systemic barriers is the motivation during difficult moments.

Carolina Torrico Sánchez



Mexico

My context entails historical divisions that originate from colonial times. Colorism and classism are two elements that created such divisions among the society which triggers even more disadvantage among vulnerable groups like indigenous communities and migrants. My Peace Education work creates a more positive intergroup climate through education and integration. Being part of a teaching staff enhances the flexibility of providing equal status among students, implementing and developing an inclusive curriculum that facilitates positive change in the classroom. Something that gets me going through good and bad moments is that I am not alone since there are more people in this field working towards a shared goal.

Dr. Colins Imoh

Nigeria, United States of America,
United Kingdom



My work focuses mainly on the Niger Delta. The intractable conflict there is between various parties: community against community, youth against elders, community against oil companies, militants against government forces, etc. In the midst of the wealth exploited in the region and the development budget funds, people are lacking the necessary infrastructures. The district, although rich in natural resources, is sadly among the poorest parts of Nigeria. This poverty can be largely attributed to the pollution of most farmlands and rivers. The traditional means of livelihoods have collapsed; there's little social structure like health, education and sanitation to cater the people's needs. Multiple factors are fueling the conflict which is not just over resources and their control. Our work in Peace Education focuses on the need for youngsters to appreciate that the reality in their area is not fair, right and just, while understanding that violence is not the solution. We focus on young people for they are the future of the area and the country. If youngsters embrace a culture of peace, then there can be transformation in the society. The calls we receive from people about the effect of our activities is an inspiration for us to continue the work.

Dana Kristiawan



Indonesia

In the Indonesian education system, from kindergarten to university level, there is no program or educational service that explicitly develops values of peace. In my work, I focus on empowering Islamic teachers to be peace leaders through developing English language materials related to Peace Education. I have been implementing workshops for 24 Islamic schools in Banyuwangi city. The workshops focus on assisting the Islamic teachers to create English material which promote peace education for Muslim students.

A key challenge emerging from the workshops was the difficulty in encouraging leadership in staff in terms of drawing on the skills developed during workshops and developing their own materials, and in supporting others to develop their own materials within a peace education framework.

Donna Mc Innis



United States of America

The divisions that exist in academia have always been a source of frustration for me. Compartmentalization thwarts so many gorgeous possibilities for learning and connecting, and more importantly, for bridging differences. Dismantling the “silos” erected across and between disciplines has always been a secret Modus Operandi for me! “Action” and “service” weigh heavily in each and every one of my courses. Learners are encouraged to “find their way” to becoming agents for positive social change. With the expanded curriculum launched last year at my university, I am seeing a more diverse representation of nationalities and majors in my Peace Studies and Peace Education classes. Explicitly exposing learners from all disciplines to the “interdisciplinary possibilities” for nonviolence, conflict resolution and dialogue, human rights and social justice, compassion and caring, mindful social action, and environmental sustainability, can only serve to make for a more lush, rich, and hope-building learning experience for all!

Eamon Rafter

Ireland



Ireland is still divided by a border though since 1998 we have a peace agreement and process to offer hope for the future. Northern Ireland remains divided with miles of walls separating communities so there is a lot of work to do. A key part of our work is about bringing people, especially young people, together from north and south of the border and across the communities in NI. We focus on what we share and explore understandings of the past. Working together to create a shared future is the goal. What gets me through is the belief that dialogue and shared understanding is the only way forward. Going back to violence is not an option. There are many great organizations, projects and people who keep me inspired.

Elena Antoniadou



Cyprus

In Cyprus, we are challenged to experience the division of communities and the conflict that comes with it. I always believed that multiculturalism is one of the main characteristics of our island and schools and that's what triggered me to study Peace Education. I am eager to continue working in such a challenging environment and offer new ideas and concepts both to children and adults from both communities, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. My focus is on Identities and Peace Education and I believe that with our work, we provide hope and light at the end of the 'conflict and division' tunnel. This is what gives me strength and courage to continue promoting my Peace Education work.

Elena Papamichael

Cyprus



Coming from the conflict-ridden society of Cyprus, child of refugees, born and raised without any contact with the 'other' and taught history from only one perspective, my context could not have been more relevant to peace education. Cyprus is characterized by social divisions, inequalities and multiple racisms as every society; however, the national issue has been prioritized in public and academic discourses in such a way that other forms of inequalities have been largely neglected. In my work, as a teacher trainer at the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute and as an Adjunct Lecturer at the Open University of Cyprus, I aim to promote awareness and understanding of an intersectional perspective in identifying and challenging the multiple racisms and oppressions. I also train teachers and other groups in teaching and dealing with controversial issues, in the context of human rights education and democratic citizenship. What gets me through the bad moments are actually the good moments, and these are usually the 'aha moments' in the eyes of the people I work with, when they come to realize how deep their prejudices are and how by being aware of them, we can change our behaviors for a more socially just society.

Elissavet Karamichail



Greece

The major division that exists in my context in Greece is that of the right and access to education between the local population and the refugees and migrants who have reached Greece in the last few years. This is, unfortunately, a division which can be observed in many places around the world. My work as the Education Assistant and Greece Lead Coordinator of Amala addresses precisely the need to close the gap of quality secondary education for displaced youth. On the ground, I work to facilitate the delivery of various courses to displaced learners in Athens. At the same time, I support the development and launching of the Amala Diploma Programme, which is the first globally recognized secondary education specifically designed for displaced learners. Therefore, I feel that my efforts are both directed towards supporting young people in Athens to continue their education and to addressing an issue of global significance. Working with such resilient, bright and energetic young people is definitely the most motivating aspect of my work.

Ellada Evangelou

Cyprus



In the context of Cyprus, a division is being made by Cypriots to remember or to forget, to remember the chance for unification and laboring towards a peaceful society, and the option to forget that, and stay in a permanence, infused with priorities related with materialism and consumerism. It has become a struggle, especially as one goes through time, indifference and a distance from remembering has become normalized more and more. Divisions between people, lifestyles and their priorities is now how we chose to live, no longer imposed by external forces. In the context of Peace Education, I start addressing these issues firstly by adopting the correct geographical definition, referring to the island as a whole (and not only mentioning half of it), and defining its inhabitants as multilingual and multicultural (as opposed to Greek speaking and Greek Cypriot culture). This way, we offer the possibility to construct an artistic reality through this spectrum with the inclusion of multiple narratives and an acknowledgment of their value.

Elma Tahmaz



Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is a country in which richness in culture, different traditions, religions and nations is being misused for creating conflict for centuries. The most recent 1992-1995 war left large-scale consequences on our society. I addressed the existing tension among Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs by creating activities in which they would need to pass the entity borders and participate together. During our workshops people understood that all human beings can be targets of discrimination, even by “our own people”. Besides, I organized trainings for police officers, judges and prosecutors. Though peace needs to be wanted by the people, it needs to be protected by a system that functions without bias. Sometimes I felt that I haven’t achieved enough. But, I figured that it is wrong to consider that healing the wounds of one person isn’t an achievement just because you didn’t reach the four million left. The moment when a crying girl says “thank you” as she is lying on a hospital bed is a moment that gives me the will to continue fighting windmills of BiH.

Emilia Demetriou

Cyprus, Bulgaria



Growing up in Nicosia the division of societies and opinions of people around me were quite rigid. My dad would always send me to mixed summer camps with Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot participants; so when attending a Greek Cypriot public primary school, as well as a private high school later on, the way I was taught history and the perceptions of history of my fellow classmates and friends felt strange to me. I remember the phrase 'I don't forget' printed on each of my textbooks which I felt to be uncanny but I never really expressed my thoughts. As a multidisciplinary artist and arts facilitator I have developed a practice with Turkish artist Naz Balkaya. Our respective homelands claim that we should be enemies, so we have employed the model of friendship to counter such national barriers, as well as to test the limits of collaborative practice. Our artistic work as well as our event facilitation perceives and promotes collaboration as a learning environment; using collaboration as an internalised policy and a tool to rediscover the political and emotional joy that appears when we share our lives. Those magical moments where people come together in joy is what keeps me going.

Erin Dunlevy



United States of America

In my context in NYC public schools, the clearest division is one of racial equity in education. Our schools that serve young people of color are highly policed, deeply segregated and often staffed with the least experienced educators. The school to prison pipeline is structural and designed to keep young Black and Brown students in a cycle of enclosure and institutional control. My work in peace education, specifically the work of restorative justice and anti-racist education, is an attempt to help school communities and districts organize, manage conflict and make decisions through democratic, human-centered models of engagement. What gets me going through good and bad moments in my work is community; an understanding that people around the world are working towards a new future and that we are all in that struggle together.

Evi Eftychiou

Cyprus



Growing up in Cyprus in the 1980s, I found myself internalizing as a child the dominant nationalistic narrative of my social environment. As an anthropology student, I started reading independently and along with my studies I was able to challenge the nationalistic narratives previously imposed on me as a child. Today, I feel that I have the responsibility as an adult to provide younger generations a society that is reproducing an inclusive sense of belonging that allows people to thrive independently from their cultural, national and religious background. My life choices as an adult are driven by this need. I am a Lecturer at the University of Nicosia and I try to incorporate in my teaching, theories and content that challenge the reproduction of fixed and monolithic identities. In addition, I am the co-founder of the first primary school in Cyprus which has peace education as one of its basic pillars. Morningside Montessori Primary School creates the conditions for co-learning in a space that is not identity-based but human-based.

Evie Grouta



Cyprus

Looking through the lenses of division the most prominent to me are: the physical and mental division of the island of Cyprus, gender inequality, the persistence of focusing on experts and non-experts, on various topics, and the inter-generational gap. I look at my work in peace education as the challenging of the perception of 'Us and Them'. I think that inviting people to explore the complex and interconnected nature of our realities on a personal, local, regional and global level is an important component in tackling stereotypes about the 'Other', creating doubts about our belief system, questioning the status quo and, eventually, taking one brick down from the pre-constructed walls. When I am posing the question to myself 'Why do you do this?' I always receive the response: 'This is the best answer to all challenges around you and the best platform to work on social change'. That's quite a motivation!

Francesca Fragkoudi

Cyprus



The island of Cyprus is in a post-conflict state, with its two main ethnic communities, the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots living physically separated for over 45 years. To increase interaction and break down barriers between the two communities, we implement the “Columba-Hypatia: Astronomy for Peace” project, in which we use astronomy as a tool to promote a sense of global citizenship and a culture of Peace and Non-Violence. The global and humbling perspective that astronomy imparts us with, the fact that we are all “under the same sky”, as well as the interest of the general public and students in the cosmos, make astronomy an effective tool in pursuing peace. The experiences and relationships established through our work keeps me going: seeing children respond and be amazed by the wonders of the Universe, as well as the blossoming of friendships between children from the two communities makes it all worthwhile.

Francesco Pistolato



Italy

Racism against refugees has been a major problem in Italy even before the crisis of coronavirus: despite our common sense, as people we can be very nasty. My Peace Education work is based on philosophy and is disseminated through a newsletter/broadcast via WhatsApp and public lectures. In the bad moments there is always someone who reminds me that my efforts are not useless.

Hakim Mohandas Amani Williams

Trinidad & Tobago



Trinidad & Tobago is a small and multi-racial, multi-religious society. The society today is as a result of colonialism, slavery and indentureship. There exist lingering colonialities that affect society. My work is with youth and socio-economically depressed communities. I share knowledge with youth and adults about restorative circles so that they can reflect on their histories, heal themselves and together envision and hopefully enact more just and sustainable futures. Working with youth keeps me going. When they invite me back to continue sharing knowledge with them, my fire remains alit.

Hale Silifkeli

Cyprus



I was born in a divided country. I grew up hearing stories and imagined how the other side looked (picturesque), smelled (jasmine), sounded (lively) and felt (home). Our role and work in Peace Education include promoting meaningful contact between the two communities and in this respect, the implementation of Imagine - Education for a Culture of Peace project proved to be a success in bringing students and teachers together across the divide. More frankly, the “Imagine” project has reengineered the minds by responding to the 21st century educational needs of teachers, students and the society at large. Having witnessed the enthusiasm of the participants motivates me to do more in the field of Peace Education. I am hopeful for the future as we are aware of the tools to use to bridge this division.

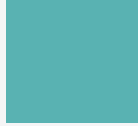
Heather Kertyzia



Costa Rica, Canada

As the students I work with come from all over the world, with different political, cultural and religious perspectives, we experience a lot of ideological conflict on campus. I find that working through these different perspectives in the classroom while practicing empathy and active listening allow students to gain important skills in conflict transformation and nonviolent communication. When students are able to connect with each other on a human level, they are often able to transform their relationships from ones based on ideological judgement to one based on mutual respect built on their shared humanity. At the end of the year when I see those that originally disliked each other taking photos together and hugging, it makes all the difficult conversations worth it.

Hilmi Tekoğlu



Cyprus

Cyprus has a special condition as the island is divided by the Green Line with the Turkish Cypriot community in the north and the Greek Cypriot community in the south. This division simply discourages people to cross to either side because of both the physical checkpoints and the idea of checkpoints as barriers in people's minds. Furthermore, the division creates obstacles for development of trust, dialogue, and collaboration between Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). In my working environment, we work on these issues by organizing multi-communal festivals, forums, exchange visits, trainings, info sessions for CSOs and activists island wide. In addition, we provide accessible direct support with the Grow Civic programme to small scale rights-based measures that activists or organizations can implement for promoting, advocating or raising awareness on different concepts and methods for peace and trust-building. Lastly, working with a great team, and knowing the purpose in what we do is to contribute to peace and trust-building between all communities in Cyprus help me continue.

Hogai Aryoubi

United States of America,
Afghanistan



The context of my research is the conflict-affected setting of Afghanistan, where I was born. In Kabul, many communities are divided by ethnicity and religious sects. My work in peace education addresses these divisions by focusing on the national education curriculum. The possibility of positive changes for students in Afghanistan in their national curriculum keeps me going through the good and bad moments of my peace education related work.

Ilenia Pappalardo



Italy, Cyprus

I live in Cyprus, where a physical/social/economic/political/linguistic and sometimes cultural division between the communities of Cyprus, located north and south of the Buffer Zone exists. In my work, I use culture, education, and economic initiatives to try to demolish that wall brick by brick. Education gifts us with critical thinking, keeps us away from the danger of brainwashing and passivity, and makes us curious, thus pushing us to discover new worlds made of different and beautiful people. Culture knows no language. Anybody could feel connected to each other by a piece of music, a painting, a dance. The economy has the dangerous power to separate people and create social differences with all its negative effects. Try to imagine what a country would look like if instead of investing in weapons, it invested in job creation, access to education and health for all to mention only some.

Iryna Brunova-Kalisetska

Ukraine



I educate adults about various aspects of peace building in identity-based conflicts. This work includes ethnic minorities and cultural sensitivity; conflicts of various ethnic and linguistic groups; the new division in the East of Ukraine and the consequences of war; the reform of decentralization and dialogue and conflict prevention in amalgamated communities; and in general enhancing social cohesion in Ukraine through educational means. I'm a trainer for journalists, teachers, police, local and central authorities, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and activists, and community leaders. In training and dialogue work, I touch upon the topics of re-humanization and diversity, memory of conflicts and conflicts of memory, moral dilemmas in conflict, and media in conflict and peace building. In addition, I conduct conflict analysis and other related research. An understanding that this is a kind of Sisyphus's work helps me get through the moments of uncertainty and disbelief in myself.

Janet Gerson



United States of America

I live in New York City, an urban complex with continuous tensions in class, language, status, religion, and political orientation. These un-reified divides are evident riding the subway. Direct violence is a serious problem, currently relatively low. Structural violence is more threatening as luxury corporate businesses and skyscraper residences replace local, affordable neighborhoods. My Master's Thesis on Reconciliation was ethnographic research on a NYC German-speaking Stammtisch of WWII exiles from my community. As a choreographer with the Arts Council of Upper Manhattan, I co-produced outdoor free performances, interethnic arts festivals, and public access television programs. I taught mediation skills in schools to teachers, students, and parents, worked at the Bronx Court appointed Mediation Center, organized colloquia, symposia, and taught courses in conflict resolution, peace education, and "Race, Class, and Gender". Family, friends, reading groups, farmers market, sense of community, meditation, yoga are the things that get me going.

Jody Çiçek

United States of America



I have worked in a variety of contexts but most recently I have been in western China. There are social, religious, and ethnic conflicts here that simmer under the surface. Minorities are increasingly disparaged and there are disparities in educational attainment, income, and social advancement opportunities. There is no safe outlet to express their concerns and fears under the current Chinese regime. Therefore, there is a legitimate concern that their marginalization will turn into cultural extermination. The Chinese education system doesn't provide opportunities for deep critical thinking or outside perspectives so I am able to introduce these concepts. By providing a safe space where people can discuss their fears, the definition of security, and ideas about peace, students can analyze if the status quo is equitable and how to be more inclusive. If we can prevent an escalation of the current situation to what is happening in Xinjiang, that would be a fabulous outcome. I am spurred on by hope. I have to believe that our work- the work of peace educators around the world- makes a difference. If I only looked to grand outcomes, I would be disheartened. By celebrating and relishing the small victories, I keep my momentum.

Joe Jukes



United Kingdom

My peace education work involves educating students about nuclear weapons issues. There's a division here along the lines of who knows about nuclear weapons and who doesn't, which can be gendered itself - schoolboys tend to be more fascinated than girls, for example. But this division is also more structural, as nuclear weapons issues tend to highlight governments, scientists, military advisers and world leaders as key actors, most of whom are male, instead of those affected by the impact of nuclear weapons. We hear more about threats and warmongering than communities affected by uranium mining, feminist organising for peace, or the activism of atomic bomb affectees. Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) Peace Education tries to combat this by bringing the issue right into the classroom. When we do this, it's a wonderful feeling to hear a room explode into chatter when you reveal the number of nuclear weapons in the world (approx. 14,000) and how unevenly they are distributed! It's certainly different from the stuffiness of my classroom memories.

Julia Danalevich

United States of America



Ever since the election of President Trump, racial tensions and acts of domestic terrorism against minority communities have risen. Many people of color are feeling more unsafe under this presidency and its policies as we have begun to progress back instead of forward. Racism in the United States is an extremely intersectional issue, which through my work, I have attempted to tackle through the projects I am a part of at the Center for Social Justice at Georgetown University. Here, I mainly focus on educational equity within underserved areas of Washington DC. In these schools, I work to implement restorative justice, peace education techniques within the classrooms, and I try to shift the mentality of education away from a teacher bestowing knowledge. Instead I try to push the idea of education and learning as being a dynamic experience between students and teachers. What keeps me motivated to continue this work is knowing that there are thousands if not millions of other people striving for a better future.

Kemal Aşık

Cyprus



Cyprus is an island with multiple divisions. While the physical division restricts movement and leads to obstacles for meaningful interaction; sexism, racism, xenophobia, homophobia and other forms of discrimination result in further divisions in each community. I am part of the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research team, which focuses on history teaching/learning and peace education. We are located at the Home for Cooperation, a space which can be enjoyed by everyone regardless of their differences. In our work, we promote diversity as a source of richness, and critical thinking as an essential value for coexistence. We bring individuals from all communities of the island to be part of a shared experience. Despite the difficulties faced in the field, the willingness of individuals who are open to explore a better understanding of both each other and themselves strengthens my belief in the future possibility of living in a more peaceful world.

Kevin Kester

United States of America



There are several divisions in the Korean context that are noteworthy to my work, including the North/South Korean division; Korea/Japan historical animosities; Global North/South divide; and new migrants from conflict-affected contexts. In my work, I address these conflicts and some possible pedagogical responses to them, primarily through teaching and scholarship. I teach courses on these themes, including postgraduate courses on Education, Conflict and Peace building; Education and International Development; and Comparative Education, as well as undergraduate courses on Peace and Multicultural Education. The coursework involves discussions, readings, essays and experiential activities around themes of inclusion, wellbeing, reunification of the Koreas, reconciliation between Korea/Japan, and critical multiculturalism within Korea. My scholarship further explores these topics using critical and postcolonial theories. What gets me going through the good/bad is turning to the counsel of trusted colleagues. They provide me inspiration to keep moving forward.

Khushdeep Kaur



India

The work I do pertains with religious divides in India. At this moment, India is witnessing a resurgence of right-wing ideologies such as Hindutva, which have a very narrow and dangerous conception of India as a nation. Through political tactics, brute force and a blatant disregard for India's constitutional values, these ideologues are dismantling the idea and lived experience of India as the world has known it. My work looks at inter-communal (inter-religious) solidarities between Sikhs and Muslims, and through ethnographic evidence, counters these hateful narratives, and challenges these myopic conceptions of being Indian. What gets me through bad situations, ah, that is a tough one. It is peoples' willingness to let me into their lives to share their stories with such honesty, their unbelievable kindness despite facing hardship, that makes me want to tell their stories. I am also grateful to the wonderful network of academic peers and mentors who constantly check on each other, family, friends and my sweet dog!

Kyriakos Pachoulides



Cyprus

Cyprus is an island where two ethnic groups/communities are divided geographically and politically. I work with an NGO - Association for Historical Dialogue and Research - which is working with a variety of educational and cultural/artistic tools to create opportunities for people - especially youth and children - to come together in a variety of settings. The belief that sustainable peace is founded on cooperation, mutual respect and understanding is what gets me going in my Peace Education related work.

Loizos Loukaidis

Cyprus



My work in Peace Education is trying to address issues of anti-racism, xenophobia, and hatred while bringing students and teachers in contact across the existing divide on the island of Cyprus. Through my role as the Coordinator of the 'Imagine' project, implemented by the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research under the auspices of the Bi-communal Technical Committee on Education, I am trying to suggest a paradigm where children, young people and educators become agents of change and try removing one-by-one the bricks of the wall that is separating our country.

The interconnectedness between both the challenges humanity is facing as well as the successes we share as peace educators give me hope that our struggle for sustainable peace and social justice will derive through constructing a sense of common humanity. This goes hand in hand with my conviction that our peace education interventions should be based on the understanding that education's role is to change the world rather than replicate it. One of the greatest moments in my work is when teachers and students collectively reach this understanding.

Maria Paula Unigarro Alba



Colombia

In Colombia, my home country, and in other Latin-American countries where I have worked, I have seen deep social divisions based on political ideologies and cultural identities. Broadly speaking, I have witnessed how social tissue is destroyed, even at the family level, because of fear – fear of difference resulting in the denial of rights to others as a mechanism to protect their own. My experience in peace education is related to research and the design of pedagogical resources. I have conducted studies about violence and social conflicts and, based on the results, I have elaborated recommendations to address such issues from the policy level. Additionally, I have designed pedagogical material on peace culture to promote conflict transformation between communities and government officials. In bad moments, I remind myself that even though I cannot see the changes I would like to, the best I can do is to try to positively impact my community.

Marios Antoniou



Cyprus

I work to help create a world in the way that I envision it. In my mind that is a better world than what we are currently experiencing in our global neighborhood. I work to promote a culture of peace in Cyprus, my divided homeland, by bringing people in contact across the island's buffer zone. I use peace education activities in non-formal education settings for students and young people to meet and engage with each other. I write tri-lingual context specific children's books to promote the idea of contact with people from the other community. I work with immigrant and refugee students, teaching them at school and at Sistema-Cyprus, a non-profit that strives to offer a better opportunity to students of such background through music education. Overall, I believe that access to good education contributes to the reduction of poverty, the increase of opportunity for a better quality of life and the strengthening of a civil society that lays the foundation for the creation of peaceful democracies.

Max Ieligulashvili

Ukraine



I mainly work with topics of value conflicts, divided communities, and unfortunately for the last 6 years with the consequences of armed conflict. It seems to me that peacebuilding education together with dialogue, negotiation and conflict analysis is one of the tools to build the foundation of stronger peace, social cohesion and resilience. Indeed, peacebuilding education allows us to develop a mutual understanding of the importance of working with interests and needs, and build a consciousness of the equity of values, creating opportunities for more effective humanitarian interventions and dialogue. That's why, I often involve educational components into dialogue processes, as a tool for developing this common ground and building the necessary group dynamics.

Mica Segal de la Garza



United States of America

In my identity, in my daily work, and in my global community, there are divisions galore and there are also an abundance of wonderful bridges that transform them. Peace Education encourages our humanity and our world to become the focus and impetus for learning.

Michalinos Zembylas

Cyprus



My context of origin is Cyprus. Over the last six decades, Cyprus has been deeply marked by what has become known as the Cyprus Issue, which refers to the intractable ethnic conflict between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Public and political consciousness in each of the two communities in Cyprus has been dominated by narratives that violence, trauma and suffering have been caused by the other side. The educational systems in both sides reflect this national consciousness and have aimed consistently over the years to cultivate the collective memory of conflict, and the accompanying collective emotions of national trauma as well as animosity and even hatred for the other community. My work in peace education engages with how school practices and discourses are entangled with emotions in relation to issues of ethnicity, peace, human rights, mourning, memory, and reconciliation; this work attempts to develop research-based pedagogies and policies that take into consideration the affective complexities involved in efforts to engage students and teachers in peace education. What gets me going through good and bad moments in my peace education related work is that a thoughtful, stepwise approach can indeed have profound impact on social and political transformation, even if it takes a lot of time and effort to see these changes.

Monisha Bajaj



United States of America

Some divisions that I see in peace education work are along the lines of class, race or gender in different contexts. In the courses I teach, we examine how these conflicts emerged, who benefits from them, and critically analyze how to dismantle and address them. I teach peace and human rights education to students in higher education settings from around the world so I see it as a space for students to interrogate, analyze, collaborate, and problem-solve together. What motivates me through good/bad moments is the tremendous energy and work being done on the ground against all odds.

In Memoriam

Natalie Christopher

Cyprus Girls Can & Columba-Hypatia:
Astronomy for Peace Project, Cyprus



Natalie Christopher was a Cypriot Astrophysicist (Oxford PhD), working on Astronomy for Peace and a keen sportswoman. Frustrated at the lack of female participation in sports and the lack of recognition of female athletes in Cyprus, she founded the Cyprus Girls Can (CGC) campaign in 2017. CGC carries Natalie's legacy and aims to get women and girls, of all ages and abilities, all across Cyprus more involved in sports. CGC provides the opportunity to try new sports, visit new places across the island, and make new friends. Many women have crossed the divide or met someone from the other community through CGC.

Natalie's contribution was also of paramount importance for the success of the Columba-Hypatia: Astronomy for Peace Project. Natalie, as part of a bi-communal team, reached out to primary schools across the divide and facilitated workshops and science activities that laid the foundations for deconstructing stereotypes and creating long-lasting friendships. Following her involvement in the aforementioned project, Natalie initiated a series of educational activities – such as camps and observations – aiming mostly at the active involvement of youth and women in peacebuilding through astronomy.

The peace building community in Cyprus and beyond will always remember Natalie as the powerful woman she was and her example will guide us to carry on working for change!

Nena Mocnik

Slovenia



I am mostly dealing with the social divisions that resulted from the conflict in the 90s. Although there is mostly tension on the assumed ethno-religious differences, in my work I focus on intergenerational dialogue and the efforts of preventing the trauma transmission from traumatized parents that survived the war to their offspring born in the aftermath. In this work, I focus mostly on the 'body' and 'emotions', using different drama and theatre techniques. With the support of those approaches, we try to access the non-verbal and non-cognitive aspects that are usually also very deeply and strongly embedded and therefore hard to process. Every time I experience burnout or emotional exhaustion, I try to remember all the 'aha' moments with the youth. Throughout the years, I also learnt to commit time to my own recovery and self-care. This is usually sport, and a lot of alone time - to be sure that I can process everything in peace.

Özge Özoğul

Cyprus



The first and obvious divide in Cyprus stems from our protracted conflict. However, as the years go by, we are faced with further divides within each community. Educational systems fall short of addressing linguistic and cultural diversity in a fair and inclusive way, and undermine the damage caused by stereotyping, discrimination and racism. I work at the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR) which through its work, empowers the whole school community, mainly teachers and students, by instilling critical thinking and putting an emphasis on respect, dialogue and cooperation. We are always trying to find novel ways to contribute to a positive transformation within the society and to a culture of peace. I work at what I call “the future I want to see in Cyprus” – a multi-communal, trilingual workplace, embracing people from all walks of life. What gets me going through good and bad moments in my work in this field is my wish to contribute to making this example a reality for more people on the island.

Petroula Antoniou



Cyprus

As a person living in Cyprus, a divided, conflict affected society, and as a second-generation refugee, I was always interested in issues of peace and reconciliation. I have a vision of a re-unified Cyprus, where all people will live peacefully. Based on this, I have been involved in several conflict resolution projects from a young age. Nowadays, as an elementary school teacher and a trainer for adults in the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, I work to build an understanding about how our choices can lead to peace. I strongly appreciate how one's identity is intersectional and complex. In particular, existing stereotypes and prejudices are considered one of the most serious challenges in Cypriot education. What motivates me, is the people's demand for a peaceful and fair society in respect to every single one's traumas, hopes and aspirations.

Qasim Aslam

Pakistan



Pakistan presents an interesting case study. One of the younger nation states in this club of 195 and pretty much hosts most types of conflicts that you can imagine, be it religious, conflicts with our neighbours, socio-economic, colour or gender-based conflicts... you name it. Pakistan's creation story heavily depends on vilifying the British colonial carnage and the two-nation theory where the muslim minority in India was destined to face if Pakistan hadn't separated into a separate nation state. This foundational notion of intolerance without critical thought is systematically ingrained amongst the youth as they go through the schooling system and manifests in a variety of different forms as people clash across lines of religion, ethnicity, socio-economics et al. Beyond the Classroom (BTC) education focuses on empowering Pakistanis to solve Pakistani problems with particular focus on training students on understanding their identity, engaging in dialogue/ facilitation and inspiring students to understanding/solving their local social problems.

Rajib Timalcina



Nepal

Nepal is diverse in terms of caste/ethnicity, geography, language, class, religion and race. Gender, so called untouchability, ethnicity and regionalism are four notable divisions in Nepali context. These divisions are clearly reflected in the schools. While growing up in this society, I witnessed the divisions and discrimination in schools and Nepali children experiencing violence in many different forms, from corporal punishment to bullying to sexual abuse. Most school violence occurs among students, while physical and sexual violence are sometimes perpetrated by teachers or other school staff. Thus, it is very important to make schools safe spaces for learning. I am involved in peace education activities which aim to make the schools safe, dignified, and peaceful through the use of nonviolent communication methods and mobile arts. Many teachers resist the new approach and feel comfortable with the conventional way of doing things. At the same time, many teachers are excited and support the “promoting culture of peace in schools” idea.

Rosie Manmeet Chawla

United States of America,
China, Nepal



Peace Education in China is a sensitive topic and it is not taught in formal school structures. Many minorities in China do not have equal rights and services as citizens, including limitations to their lower and higher education, healthcare, travelling in and out the country and social status. As a Global Project Advisor, I create initiatives on peace-building and conflict resolution, as well as working on raising awareness. My work includes partnering with both US and UK consulates to create events, conduct lectures in various institutions where students and teachers invite me due to my social impact work, and I develop training programs and projects on various topics both for teachers and youth impact groups, ranging from gender equality to ecological activities. I am also active as a speaker and participate in forums, along with a continuous effort to build China's global partnership with stakeholders to continue Peace Education initiatives. In the last two years we collaborated with an NGO in Nepal to stop child marriages and foster access to education. I am also a guest lecturer on Conflict Resolution and I organize events and workshops on topics such as Social Inclusion.

Şener Elcil

Cyprus



Peace education in Cyprus, to my understanding, is based on the idea of integrating Cyprus and bringing Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots (who are culturally similar yet have been detached due to education which has been provided to the communities on the basis of ethnicity) closer. The “divide and conquer” principle of imperialism has led to ethnic conflicts and divisions in various regions during the 20th century. We continue to see such conflicts in Israel/Palestine, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Burma and many other contexts. There is also an acceleration in conflicts based on religious beliefs and sects besides ethnic divisions.

In Cyprus, we experience a division which is dominated by ethnic differences and nationalism while religion has not been one of the primary reasons for conflict. The educational systems are mainly responsible for this division. The issue began with teachers who arrived in Cyprus from Turkey and Greece at the start of the 1900's. With nationalism, racism and chauvinism entering official teaching, divisions which later developed into physical conflicts, started in minds. During the period in which ethnic division was not the case in Cyprus, people showcased great examples of working and living together and a big part of people's lives was based on collaboration. The most significant thing is to break down these barriers in people's minds and eradicate discriminatory elements through peace education.

Sergio Andres Sanchez Sanjuan

Colombia



One of the most affected areas in Colombia is education, mainly due to violence. Currently, those regions dominated by the armed conflict do not have important access to any activity related to science and technology. According to local childhood foundations, 40% of children in Colombia do not have opportunities to attend high school due to living in vulnerable places (primarily in the countryside) and to the existence of a huge inequality gap in the country. I am serving as a science communicator at an astronomical observatory dedicating a big part of my time performing space-related activities for the general public. Colombia is going through a very special moment in its history after the signing of the peace agreement; this represents a big chance to start bringing education into vulnerable communities where astronomy can play an important role. What gets me going through good moments is the happiness of people when learning something new about the Universe. On the other hand, the lack of support in science and education is a bad thing to deal with.

Sharon Hollombe



Israel

It's hard to know where to start when considering the divisions that exist in my context - living in Israel, working on Teacher Education, at a research unit that is housed at a religious university, and is funded by the Israeli Ministry of Education. Often, when I think about the number and the scale of conflicts that exist in this broad context, it is overwhelming. The work that I do developing content and training on conflict transformation and social and emotional competencies for teachers across the spectrum of Israeli society bridges some of these divisions by focusing directly on one of the only things that is within each and every one of our control - our own responses in interpersonal conflict situations - and trying to give tools to teachers to learn about and improve their relationships with their students, their colleagues, their communities and themselves. Seeing the impact that our workshops have on teachers and educators from all backgrounds and social groups gives me hope and keeps me going.

Shenel Husnu



Cyprus

I live in the north of Cyprus, a context known for its prolonged and intractable conflict between Turkish and Greek Cypriots. My area of expertise is the use of intergroup contact as a peace education tool to reduce prejudice between the two communities. Despite the partial opening of checkpoints, psychological barriers remain intact, therefore bringing groups together and training them from a peace education perspective is vital for the future generations of our island. As part of my work I have had a number of positive and negative experiences - I know changing the hearts of people will take time, so I focus on the good things. For instance, after a training session with Greek and Turkish Cypriot youth, when they are about to part (perhaps never to see each other again) they often embrace, hug and frantically exchange telephone numbers or Instagram accounts! I watch them with tears in my eyes and hope in my soul - that's what gets me through the bad times!

Shereen Aly



Egypt

In Egypt, there are huge gaps among socioeconomic classes and between urban and rural settings. The gaps include the lack of basic human rights, such as education, healthcare, clean water, sewage systems, electricity, etc. I work in a rural area on the outskirts of Cairo, where access to schools is very difficult, therefore the NGO I work with has built 2 community schools in 2 villages where kids have to walk 7-8 kilometers every day to go to school. When I joined the NGO, I started focusing on the quality of education we offer, because I believe access is not enough, and I also believe that “the poorest among us desperately need the best quality education possible to be able to survive”. In the span of 1.5 years, we now have raised the capacity of the teachers significantly, so they become more facilitators than teachers. Kids are discussing, asking questions and working in groups in our classes. Also, we offer several activities, such as arts, crafts, physical education, library and reading and integrated learning classes.

Shreya Jani

India



India, the world's largest 'democracy' is a very diverse country. It has multitudes of faiths, ethnic diversity, language diversity and a massive territory. We have at least 17 out of our 28 states having some kind of armed conflict against the government, mostly driven by ethnicity and economics and often politicised on the basis of religion. More than 60% of the population here is youth. Kashmir, Manipur and Delhi are 3 states that we work in. Both Kashmir and Manipur are considered secessionist states where the Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA-1958) is imposed. Delhi, the capital, is known as the land of opportunity, serves as a platform for youth from across the country to come study and make careers. However, the number of crimes reported and violence against women here are very high. So, it is in this context that we work through workshops, residential camps and curriculum development creating safe spaces for the youth to critically understand issues and figure out a way to work on them with compassion and self-care.

Stephanie Nicolas



Cyprus

For the last 46 years the community in Cyprus has been physically divided into two separate communities, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Many inter-ethnic tensions have been raised these last years and individuals from both communities fear, do not trust or like each other. Through initiatives such as PeacePlayers Cyprus, we use sport and especially the game of basketball as a tool to overcome inter-ethnic barriers that our community created 46 years ago. As the only year-round bi-communal youth sports organization on the island, PeacePlayers Cyprus brings together Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot youth to play, learn, and build meaningful friendships leaving behind generations of mistrust for a future of peace and unity. Observing the youth growing up with PeacePlayers and becoming young leaders and role models for younger participants and their communities, puts everything in perspective and through them you see hope that one day we will be able to coexist again and live on one united island.

Süleyman Gelener



Cyprus

I was born in Cyprus, on the third largest island in the Mediterranean Sea at the crossroads of Africa, Asia and Europe. Cyprus has become and remains divided geographically for more than half a century, however, the social and political divisions between the two major communities of the island dates even further back than the physical divisions. I studied to become a primary school teacher at a teacher-training academy and during this time, I developed a particular interest in understanding the government education policy and the educational systems in general; and learning about educational research and theories. Furthering my interest, I studied a postgraduate degree, where I gained deeper knowledge of the political role of education in developed and developing countries; and in particular the function of education in divided and plural societies. In the last decade, together with teaching, I actively took part in organizations at local, national and international level; promoting peace, democracy, social justice and equality through the development of education.

Tatjana Popovic

Serbia



In the Western Balkans (WB) ethnic divisions, which are a legacy of the wars from the 1990's, are still present within countries and local communities. I organize teacher trainings on School Mediation and Prevention of Violence, cooperate with the ministries of education in Serbia and in WB, and create textbooks. Peace Education (PE) programmes gather teachers, students, parents, and local authorities in an effort to create safe environments. Working as a facilitator of the long-term multi-ethnic dialogue and reconciliation processes taught me that these processes take time and constant investment in peace-building and building resilience of local populations. My motivation comes from the responsibility to contribute to my society. Small, significant victories occur when teachers feel happy about finding new solutions to old conflicts; when students feel empowered with mediation skills and proud to be at service to friends; and when decision-makers decide to support PE programs because they bear excellent results, such as lower number of cases of violent behavior in schools.

Tomás Darío Pérez

Mexico



Divisions in my context originate from social classification dating back to the colonial era and inherited from “New Spain” to the national identity built in Mexico. This is related to concepts of ethnic origin, social class and privilege. The work I do involves space and individuals and generates connections among people by bending boundaries in different moments discussing identities. In this way, people can share and create bonds that didn’t previously exist.

Tony Jenkins

United States of America,
Global Citizen



While my work is global, at home in the USA, I've been focusing on overcoming political polarization through conflict transformation, dialogue, and transformative learning. My students work on projects developing peace education interventions to address conflicts within the university community. This work is difficult as change is rarely immediately visible. Personal change is slow and cultural change moves at a snail's pace. It may not be satisfying to implore patience or to paint the metaphor of planting seeds that will one day grow in our absence. Even though there is truth in these platitudes, who can be patient when so many are suffering in the world? I've found hope recently in practicing micro-inclusions. I seek to encounter everyone in a way that brings them dignity. When I pass a service worker on my university campus, I greet them with a "sir" or "mam." It's these simple quotidian things that bring people into, rather than exclude them, from our moral universe.

Victoria Falcó

Spain



Now I'm working on global health projects in formal and informal education, where we address how the way of consuming in Spain, linked to the global production chain, causes pollution and contributes to the climate crisis and global health problems. We analyze how this way of consumption is based on violation of human rights, exploitation, child labor, poverty, violence, etc. in the countries of production: China, Bangladesh, Mozambique, etc. We address the inequality/division between both groups of countries, and the parties responsible for inequality and a culture of violence. In our projects, we work with different tools such as talks and workshops in schools; photography exhibitions with global health NGOs; and film festivals on global health. My bad moments happen while I research and prepare content by reading reports with devastating data on pollution, violation of human rights, etc. and when I realize that our work is a small grain of sand in the desert. Then, what gets me going is when children and adults respond positively and want to change.

Vidya Jain

India



My basic work is on Gandhian Thought, but I am focusing on understanding and resolving gender discrimination in Indian society. With my students and research scholars we work on projects related to gender, patriarchy, caste differences, violence against women and sexual violence. Peace education is a strong tool to resolve conflict in the community. By this, we sensitize both sexes to bring about psychological, sociological and cultural change. I feel that by using simple idioms and symbols the change in mindset is possible.

Werner Wintersteiner

Austria



What is my context? As a world citizen, I am concerned not only with issues in my region, but with our homeland Earth. However, my focus are current problems in my country, Austria, as well as in our transnational border region (Alps-Adriatic = Austria, Italy, Slovenia...) and finally the European Union. I am dealing with three issues – migrants and refugees; climate crisis; and memory conflicts, dating back to World War I, but shaping also all current questions... In my peace education work, I try to address all these issues both individually and collectively. For instance issues are collectively addressed in our University master programme “Global Citizenship Education”, whereas there are instances which issues are tackled individually such as in my participation with a youth group at an alternative event to COP 25 in Madrid last December. When doing practical things, I always try also to write papers upon them. What gets me going through good and bad moments? The feeling of not being alone, of having fellow peace educators who cooperate with me, who need my expertise, as I need their knowledge and encouragement.

Yaprak Parlan

Cyprus



Cyprus has been divided since 1974. Since then, a ceasefire line left Greek Cypriots in the south, Turkish Cypriots in the north. In 2003, travelling over the 'Green Line', which separates the two communities, was allowed. Also, the UN peacekeeping forces continue their effort on the 'Green Line' to this date. Despite several attempts, no agreement has yet prevailed. Two communities run their policies and laws independently. However, in 2015, the two community leaders established the 'Bi-Communal Technical Committee on Education' to increase contact and cooperation, and counter prejudice and discrimination in the context of the negotiation process. Under the auspices of the Bi-communal Technical Committee on Education, the "Imagine" Antiracist Educational Programme is being implemented by the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research. I work as one of the trainers of the "Imagine" project which brings children & teachers together from both communities to serve their needs in relation to an education for a culture of peace. We are presenting a model for the younger generation of future Cyprus by cultivating trust and respect by building bridges to fill the gap and by humanizing 'the other.'

