



PORTRAITS *of Artisans of Peace*



Introduction

Portraits of Peacemakers

Peace is built every day through the courage, compassion and perseverance of ordinary people who choose dialogue over division, justice over indifference, and hope over despair. The Peacemakers' Portraits celebrate these remarkable individuals and initiatives whose lives bear witness to the transforming power of peace.

These portraits present two peacebuilders connected to one of the Society's New Provinces*, bringing together different generations, cultures and experiences. Their stories reveal diverse paths toward justice, reconciliation and non-violence, while reminding us that the call to be peacemakers transcends borders, cultures and historical periods.

Designed for readers of all ages, these portraits invite us to discover that every person can become an artisan of peace. They encourage reflection on how small acts of courage, solidarity and respect for human dignity can contribute to building a more just and peaceful world. Their engagements touch also many aspects of peace (resolution of conflicts, ecology, advocacy, gender equity, education, technology). It invites us to get involved according to our realities and our centers of interests or skills.

These inspiring portraits have been beautifully written by Yolanda Jiménez, from the Mother House & JPIC international team, whose thoughtful work brings to life the witness of activists committed to peace.

As Pope Leo XIV reminds us:

"The memory of the saints, righteous people and the oft-forgotten peacemakers, shows us that grace does not magically eliminate conflict, but instead it inspires active resistance to evil and an astonishing creativity in doing good. Christians see the darkness and acknowledge it for what it is, yet they do not merely gaze upon it passively, for they know the light and understand that the darkness has not overcome it and cannot defeat it (cf. Jn 1:5). For this reason, even when suffering seems to have the last word, Christians serve the good and are sustained by a theological hope that gives reality both meaning and direction."

Magnifica Humanitas, §211 (2026)

May these portraits inspire us to recognise the peacemakers among us, to honour their witness, and to embrace our own vocation as artisans of peace.

In communion!
JPIC team for "Artisans of Peace"

*New Provinces :

- AFRICA - Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Uganda
- ANAM - Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, United States of America
- CEI - Austria, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Malta, United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales,)
- ESP-POL - Poland, Spain
- EURO-NIL - Belgium, Egypt, France, Italy, Netherlands
- NEANZ - Australia, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Taiwan
- ROSA FILIPINA SUR - Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela
- SE-SASIA - India, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam

Artisans of Peace



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Artisans of Peace

MIRNA EL HELBAWI

EURO-NIL Province

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Egypt in 1992, El Helbawi was deeply affected by the conflicts in the Middle East from a very young age. At eight, she recalls witnessing the horrors of violence during the Second Intifada through the widely circulated image of 12-year-old Muhammed Al Durrah, lying dead next to his father next to his father.

A graduate of Alexandria University in Tourism and Hotel Management, she ultimately found her calling in journalism. Early in her career, she distinguished herself through high-profile interviews, including one with the internet pioneer Vinton Cerf, earning recognition with a nomination for the Arab Journalism Award in 2016.

Her passion for writing and storytelling led to the publication of her debut novel *Bitter Like Coffee, Sweet Like Chocolate* (2018) followed by her second novel *Kundalini* (2024). She also hosted the podcast *Helbing*.

In 2023, her path took a decisive turn toward activism. It began with the first telecommunication and internet blackout in Gaza on October 27th. The idea came out of rage and anger [...] I felt so helpless that people were being killed and isolated, and they could not even share the truth of what was happening. The only support I was given was the international efforts of ordinary people and citizens from all around the world who donated eSIMs.

CHARACTERISTICS | EXPERTISE

She is highly adaptable, moving from journalism into novels, and ultimately channelling all her skills into humanitarian activism. She demonstrates innovation by leveraging technology to achieve meaningful humanitarian impact. A strategic thinker, she coordinates complex efforts across borders and serves as a bridge-builder connecting people, ideas, and communities in pursuit of justice and human dignity. Her work reflects a deep empathy and ethical awareness, helping to mitigate the consequences of conflict by ensuring access to information and communication.



QUOTES

"The right to telephone and internet access is a basic human right just as important as food and water."

"After all this pain, they [Palestinians] can't even share their grief with the world or scream for people to demand a ceasefire. They have to endure bombardment and attacks in absolute silence. It is like being murdered while someone is putting a hand over your mouth, so you can't even scream for help."

(CNN interview 4th December 2023)



ORGANISATION | ACTIVITIES

She discovered that eSIMs could be used to reconnect people in Gaza by enabling them to connect to remote cell phone networks whilst roaming (primarily Israel and Egyptian networks). This insight led her to found Connecting Humanity (www.connecting-humanity.org), a NGO advocating for internet access as a human right, particularly for freedom of expression and access to information.



The grassroots initiative works directly with individuals in conflict zones, especially in Gaza, providing eSIMs to journalists, medical professionals, aid workers, and families, allowing them to stay connected with the world and with one another as well as facilitate coordination of relief efforts on the ground, and supports the documentation of events and human rights conditions.



Palestinians charging their mobile phones.
Ahmed Zakot/SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images

By restoring communication in moments of extreme isolation, the initiative not only responds to urgent humanitarian needs but also contributes to longer-term peace efforts, amplifying voices, fostering global awareness, and enabling accountability. In this way, technology and activism come together to form a vital humanitarian lifeline.

By December 2023, around 10% of Gaza's population had received internet access through an eSIM, and by September 2024 that number had doubled.

PUBLICATIONS

Her novels explore issues of identity, human connection and personal and social transformation.



Kundalini
(2024)



**Mor Methl
Al Qahwa,
Helw Methl
Al Chocola**
(2018)

**#Amor
forPeace**

RECOGNITIONS



In 2016, she was nominated for the Arab Journalism Award for her work conducting exclusive, high-profile interview with major figures, ultimately securing second place.

In 2024 she received the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) award for "championing internet access in Gaza".



"People in crisis zones rely upon the free flow of information to survive, and restoring internet access in places where other communications infrastructure has been destroyed helps with dissemination of life-saving information and distribution of humanitarian aid, ensures that everyone's stories can be heard, and enables continued educational and cultural contact. EFF's mission is to ensure that technology supports freedom, justice, and innovation for all people in the world."



Connecting Humanity was recognised by the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Prize in 2025. The WSIS is a UN-sponsored summit focuses on bridging the digital divide and promoting technology for sustainable development.



Artisans of Peace

HIDOU OUMAROU IBRAHIM

Africa Province

BIOGRAPHY

Hidou Oumarou Ibrahim was born in 1984, into the semi-nomadic Mbororo pastoralist community and is the third of five children. In a context where girls' access to formal education was not automatically guaranteed, her mother played a decisive and courageous role in ensuring that she attended school. She grew up moving between traditional rural life and the urban environment of N'Djamena, where she pursued her education. Her upbringing exposed her to two contrasting realities, the resilience and ecological wisdom of Indigenous communities, and the systemic discrimination they faced, especially women and girls. These experiences shaped her lifelong commitment to justice, inclusion, and peace.

A decisive turning point in Ibrahim's life occurred during her adolescence, when she recognised that environmental degradation and social conflict were deeply interconnected. The shrinking of Lake Chad, intensified by climate change, led to increasing competition over land and water between farmers, herders, and fishing communities across Chad and neighbouring countries. She observed how environmental scarcity could quickly escalate into violence, displacement, and insecurity. This led her to reframe climate change solely as an environmental issue, but also as a matter of peace and human rights.

At only fifteen years old, she founded the Association for Indigenous Women and Peoples of Chad (Association des Femmes Peules et Peuples Autochtones du Tchad – AFPAT), aiming to protect Indigenous rights and empower women through education and leadership. Over time, her activism gradually evolved into peacebuilding convinced that sustainable peace could not exist without environmental justice and equitable access to natural resources.

Today, Ibrahim is recognised globally not only as a climate advocate but also as a peacebuilder who bridges Indigenous knowledge, environmental stewardship, gender equality, and conflict prevention.



QUOTES

When communities have secure land rights and the means to manage their territories, deforestation drops. Biodiversity thrives. Conflict decreases. [...] This is not ideology. It is evidence, and I have experienced it.
(Time, March 2026)

The barrier to this future is not knowledge. It is political will. It is about how we relate to land. To one another. The future we need is not a technological miracle. It is a moral one. And if we choose that path, if we trust Indigenous Peoples' leadership, secure land rights, fund communities directly, and redefine well-being beyond profit, then the future is not something we fear. It is something we build together.
(Time, March 2026)

When communities learn to map, protect and share natural resources, all together, they are not only protecting nature, they are also building peace.
(Conversation International, Nov. 2019)



ORGANISATION | ACTIVITIES

Hidou Oumarou Ibrahim's work is closely associated with her leadership of the Association for Indigenous Women and Peoples of Chad (Association des Femmes Peules et Peuples Autochtones du Tchad – AFPAT), which she founded in 1999 to promote Indigenous rights, women's empowerment, and sustainable environmental governance.



Through this organisation and related partnerships with international bodies, she has consistently worked to reduce conflict linked to climate change and resource scarcity, particularly in the Lake Chad basin and surrounding regions.

One of AFPAT's most significant initiative is the development of a participatory mapping as a peacebuilding methodology. While maps may appear simple or even insignificant at first glance, Ibrahim recognised that they have historically been sources of dispute, especially in regions where borders, grazing routes, and access to water are contested. Her idea was therefore to transform maps from instruments of division into tools of reconciliation. By bringing conflicting populations together around the process of mapping, she aimed to enable them to collectively plan a safer and more prosperous future. In 2013, in collaboration with UNESCO and the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC), she tested this concept with 500 Indigenous pastoralists to collaboratively map the natural resources of their territory. The process was carefully designed to ensure inclusivity and balance of knowledge. Men identified and recorded features such as ridges, plateaus, rivers, and sacred sites. Women, whose environmental knowledge is often overlooked in formal planning processes, contributed crucial knowledge by mapping water sources, particularly wells and springs. The project produced 2D and 3D maps of those natural resources that communities can share.

The participatory nature of the exercise encouraged cooperation among groups that had previously experienced friction. By working together on shared maps, participants were able to visualise their interdependence and better understand how resource use could be coordinated rather than contested. This process helped transform mapping from a technical exercise into a platform for dialogue, trust-building, and collective problem-solving.

The impact of the project extended beyond the participating communities. The initiative attracted the attention of the national government of Chad, which recognised the value of the maps as a source of locally grounded knowledge.



Ibrahim and pastoralists in the mapping activity. Credit: Rolex.org

CHARACTERISTICS & EXPERTISE

Hidou Oumarou Ibrahim is widely recognised for a distinctive combination of leadership qualities, technical expertise, and cultural insight.

Her effectiveness as a peacebuilder stems from her ability to connect local realities with international policymaking while remaining deeply rooted in her Indigenous identity. She translates Indigenous experiences into policy language understandable to global leaders while simultaneously ensuring that local voices remain central to discussions.

One of Ibrahim's defining characteristics is her inclusive leadership style. She consistently seeks to involve marginalised groups, particularly women, Indigenous peoples, and rural communities, in decision-making processes. Rather than imposing external solutions, she encourages collaborative dialogue grounded in local knowledge and shared responsibility. This participatory approach has enabled her to build trust among communities experiencing conflict over natural resources.

Her work demonstrates an advanced understanding of how environmental management can support peacebuilding.



PUBLICATIONS

Hidou Oumarou Ibrahim has contributed to numerous publications, articles, interviews, and public discussions focused on Indigenous rights, climate justice, environmental governance, and peacebuilding.

One notable contribution is her participation in the collective volume *This Is Not a Drill: An Extinction Rebellion Handbook* (2019). In this publication, Ibrahim contributed perspectives on Indigenous knowledge and the disproportionate impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities. Her contribution highlighted the importance of grassroots action and Indigenous leadership in responding to environmental crises.

**THIS IS
NOT A
DRILL**



**#Amor
forPeace)**

RECOGNITIONS

Hidou Oumarou Ibrahim has received numerous international honours recognising her leadership in environmental protection, Indigenous rights advocacy, women's empowerment, and peacebuilding.



One of Ibrahim's most significant recognitions came in 2019, when she received the Pritzker Emerging Environmental Genius Award from the UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability.

The award acknowledged her innovative efforts to reduce conflict around Lake Chad through participatory mapping initiatives involving farmers, herders, and fishing communities. The judges particularly praised her capacity to unite communities facing environmental stress and resource competition.

In 2021, Ibrahim became a laureate of the prestigious Rolex Awards for Enterprise. This recognition celebrated her work using Indigenous knowledge and collaborative mapping to manage environmental resources and promote peaceful coexistence in climate-vulnerable regions. The Rolex foundation highlighted how her projects foster dialogue among communities while empowering women as environmental leaders.

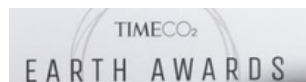
In 2018, she was included in the BBC's 100 Women list, which recognises influential women worldwide who are driving social change, for her influential leadership in linking Indigenous knowledge, climate justice, and peacebuilding.



In 2019, TIME magazine named her among fifteen women leading the fight against climate change.

In 2020 Refugees International awarded her the Richard C. Holbrooke Award for advancing the rights of vulnerable and displaced populations affected by climate change and conflict.

More recently, she received a TIME Earth Award in 2026 for her leadership in promoting Indigenous approaches to climate resilience and peace.

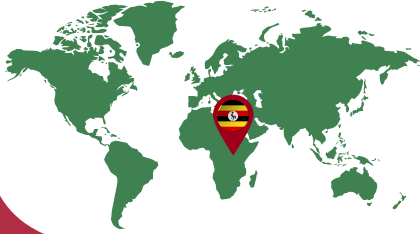




Artisans of Peace)

HASSAN NDUGWA

Africa Province



BIOGRAPHY

Born in Uganda in 1986. Studied at Makerere University, Kampala, where he earned a Bachelor's degree in Social Sciences, specialising in Political Science and Public Administration.

Survivor of the 2010 Al-Shabaab bombings in Kampala during a FIFA World Cup screening – a life-changing moment that shaped his path as peacebuilder. He felt extremists had hijacked the religion he loves by killing in the name of Islam.



QUOTES

“We must engage all society in the fight against extremism – religious leaders of all faiths, women leaders, youth groups, leaders in the arts, music and sports, as well as the media and private sector.”

“Climate change effects have exacerbated the problem of violent extremism by affecting people's livelihood and making them more vulnerable to extremist narratives.”

“To counter religious radicalisation, reach out to vulnerable people in all types of institutions, including schools, universities, hospitals, barracks and especially prisons.”

“...believing that the future belongs to those who see possibilities before they become obvious”

(extract from Prospect Initiative team presentation)

“Once we recognise these biases in ourselves, we can take steps to create a more equal and accepting environment.”

CHARACTERISTICS | EXPERTISE

Terrorist-attack survivor turned peacebuilder: transformed lived experience into action. Deep belief in the power of young people to shape peace.

Ability to bridge divides: engaging marginalised communities, religious leaders and institutions in constructive conversation and practical, community-led solutions.

Expertise in conflict resolution and analysis, interfaith dialogue and understanding, mediation, negotiation, peacebuilding with a focus on prejudice awareness.

Contribution to shaping both grassroots initiatives and broader policy discussions.



ORGANISATION | ACTIVITIES



As a response to the Al-Shabaab bombing, Hassan Ndugwa co-founded the Uganda Muslim Youth Development Forum – UMYD (2011), which rebranded in 2025 as Prospect Initiative (www.prospectinitiative.org); he is currently the Executive Director of Prospect Initiative.

UMYD primarily work with Muslim youth communities. Strong emphasis on countering violent extremism and shifting narratives around Muslim youth, who were unfairly stereotyped and marginalised after the 2010 Al-Shabaab attack. Promotion of interfaith dialogue and community cohesion among youth and religious leaders.



Prospect Initiative integrates its emphasise on preventing extremism and peacebuilding in a wider framework, including civic engagement and governance, livelihoods and economic empowerment, climate security and resilience, social inclusion and leadership development targeting a broader youth population.

UMYD-Prospect Initiative: from a community-specific response to extremism to a holistic youth-led development and peacebuilding approach. Some partners or donors: Kofi Annan Foundation, European Union, Teachers without Borders.

Prospect Initiative key activities, all of them with a peace approach/component, include:

- Vocational skills and youth empowerment programs: vocational training combined with entrepreneurship and peace education for vulnerable youth from high-risk urban areas: to reduce unemployment and prevent recruitment into violence.
- Community peace and anti-extremism awareness: large public sensibilisation meetings targeting boda-boda drivers, landlords – focus on everyday actors as peacebuilders.



"Before this training, I would have been among those taking part in these [Mpondwe Town Council election] violent incidents, but I stayed away"



- Radio drama and storytelling campaigns: producing radio series (Kambaale the Undercover Agent), through storytelling, the radio drama reveals how hidden narratives, false promises, and everyday struggles are used to draw people into violent extremism and how communities can stop it before it starts. Broadcast in local languages for mass outreach.

- Youth exchange and international dialogue: organisation of youth exchange seminars across countries, bringing together young peace builders to share best practices, build cross-border partnerships.

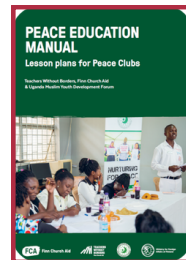
PUBLICATIONS



Locally Led Peacebuilding. Global Case Studies. Contributor



Empowering young people to prevent violent extremism. Training Guide. Extremely Together Initiative
[English here.](#) | [French here.](#)



Peace Education Manual. Lessons plans for Peace Clubs: UMYDF

RECOGNITIONS



Recognised as a global advocate in youth-led peace initiatives by the Extremely Together initiative (a Kofi Annan Foundation initiative supported by the EU) to counter violent extremism and promote peace.

Selected as a Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders Fellow, highlighting his leadership in youth peacebuilding.



Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung (KAS: Selected for a leadership-focused scholarship in governance and development at Uganda Martyrs University.



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Artisans of Peace

JORGE ATILANO GONZÁLEZ CANDIA, SJ

ANAM Province



BIOGRAPHY

Father Jorge Atilano González Candia, S.J. was born in 1972 Huatusco, Veracruz, as the third of six children. During his high school years, missionary experiences exposed him to poverty and social inequality. These encounters fostered a strong sense of purpose in serving others, which led him to pursue a socially engaged priesthood. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1992.

He studied Philosophy and Social Sciences at ITESO in Guadalajara (1994–1999), where he developed a particular interest in democratic participation and local governance. In 1999, following Hurricane Mitch, he was sent to Honduras, where he was involved in major reconstruction efforts. Alongside reconstruction work, he came into direct contact with gang violence (maras) and engaged in dialogue with youth groups, linking practical development with conflict mediation and inclusion.

On returning to Mexico, he studied theology (2001–2005) and was ordained in 2004. During this period, he organised and accompanied numerous youth groups across the country, including former gang members, graffiti artists and university students, focusing on processes of social reintegration and personal healing.

His pastoral work with young groups increasingly exposed him to the growing wave of violence in Mexico during the 2010s, including disappearances, homicides, and the breakdown of community life. This led him to move from youth pastoral work toward a more systematic analysis of violence. He later completed a Master's degree in Social Ethics and Security (2013–2014) at Alberto Hurtado University in Chile, where he studied successful Latin American experiences in reducing crime and improving coexistence.

From this point onward, his work consolidated into structured peacebuilding.



QUOTES

“The first step we can take is to rebuild a sense of community in our neighbourhoods, strengthening those bonds so that we feel safer, and so that we can get involved and organise ourselves more effectively.”

(El Norte (2023/11/12), Su misión: construir la paz)

“Bad news tends to attract more attention, but there are countless examples of young people committed to peace. [...] There are a great number of people interested in peacebuilding; in fact, there are more people who want peace.”

(Aciprensa, 2026.01.28)



CHARACTERISTICS | EXPERTISE

Father Jorge Atilano González Candia's work is characterised by a combination of pastoral sensitivity, organisational leadership, and applied conflict transformation expertise. In peace processes, he emphasises the importance of structured listening sessions where victims, community members, and institutions can articulate their experiences of violence without immediate politicisation. This approach reflects a broader Jesuit methodology of "accompaniment", which prioritises presence and long-term engagement.

He also demonstrates strong expertise in community-based peacebuilding, particularly in contexts affected by organised crime and institutional fragility. His work focuses on rebuilding social cohesion at the local level, including strengthening neighbourhood networks, fostering youth participation, and supporting local leadership structures. Rather than viewing violence solely as a security issue, he approaches it as a breakdown of social relationships and institutional trust.

Another key area of expertise is multi-stakeholder dialogue facilitation (forums). Through the Diálogo Nacional por la Paz, he has helped design processes that bring together actors with often opposing perspectives, including government officials, civil society organisations, and victims' groups. His role involves creating frameworks where dialogue is possible despite deep mistrust.

His work reflects a strong integration of ethical, spiritual, and practical dimensions of peacebuilding. He combines Jesuit theological insights with applied social analysis, making him effective in both ecclesial and secular environments. His overall approach can be described as relational, systemic, and long-term, focusing not only on reducing violence but on transforming the underlying social conditions that produce it.



ORGANISATION | ACTIVITIES

Father Jorge Atilano González Candia has played a foundational role in shaping Jesuit-led peacebuilding structures in Mexico and Central America, particularly through the integration of research, fieldwork, and community intervention.

One of his most significant contributions is the founding and direction, from 2014 to 2020, of the Centro de Investigación y Acción Social por la Paz (CIAS por la Paz), a Jesuit social action and research centre dedicated to rebuilding the social fabric in territories affected by violence. CIAS operates through a combination of ethnographic research, community accompaniment, and applied policy recommendations, aiming to understand violence not only as a security issue but as a breakdown of social relationships, trust, and institutional legitimacy.

Father Jorge Atilano González Candia is closely linked with the Diálogo Nacional por la Paz (National Dialogue for Peace), a large-scale civic initiative launched in 2022 in response to escalating violence in Mexico and the assassination of two Jesuit priests in northern Mexico.



Sponsored by the Society of Jesus, the Mexican Episcopal Conference and the Conference of Religious of Mexico, the initiative seeks to bring together civil society organisations, victims of violence, academic institutions, religious groups and public authorities. As a key coordinator and leading figure within the process, Father González Candia has helped shape its methodology, which emphasises listening processes, territorial dialogues and participatory analysis of violence. His approach highlights the importance of justice, institutional responsibility and shared social commitment, arguing that sustainable peace can only be built through the cooperation and partnership of all sectors of society.

PUBLICATIONS

Father González Candia has developed a substantial body of written work that bridges ethnographic research, social ethics, and applied peacebuilding. In addition, he has published multiple articles on security, drug trafficking, gang dynamics, and social reconstruction, often in Jesuit and academic outlets. Across his publications, a consistent intellectual thread emerges: violence is understood as a multi-layered social phenomenon requiring integrated responses that combine ethics, policy, community engagement, and long-term institutional transformation. Some of his writings include:



Rebuilding the social fabric: a commitment to peace, co-authored with Gabriel Mendoza (2016)

It draws on field experience and research to propose strategies for rebuilding community trust in contexts of violence. It emphasises participatory approaches, social cohesion and long-term processes aimed at fostering peace and restoring fractured social relations.



The Path to Peace: Experiences and Challenges in Rebuilding the Social Fabric (2019)

Reflects on practical experiences of peacebuilding in violent contexts. It explores key challenges and lessons from community-based initiatives aimed at rebuilding trust, strengthening social cohesion, and fostering long-term peace.



Local Police and Community Organisations: A Path to Peace (2022)

A study examining policing practices in municipalities with reduced crime rates. It analyses the relationship between local police forces and community structures, highlighting collaborative approaches that strengthen public safety, improve trust, and contribute to sustainable peacebuilding at local level.



10 models of good governance, co-authored with Oscar D. Torres Rosales (2023)

Ten local governance experiences across Mexico that demonstrate how citizen participation, community organization, and collaborative municipal leadership can strengthen democracy, rebuild social trust, and contribute to peacebuilding in contexts affected by violence.



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Artisans of Peace)
**COMUNITÀ DI
SANT'EGIDIO**
EURO-NIL Province



QUOTES

"Peace is always possible... we need to find ways to make peace happen..."

(Official Sant'Egidio peace reflection web page)

"War is the mother of all poverty."

(Official Sant'Egidio peace reflection web page)

"We have placed our primary faith in prayer... Religions do not want war but peace!"

(Interreligious Peace Declaration, Peace in the name of God 1996)

FOUNDATION

The Comunità di Sant'Egidio is an international lay Catholic community founded in 1968 in Rome by a group of secondary school students led by Andrea Riccardi. Emerging in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council, the movement was shaped by a renewed emphasis within the Catholic Church on lay engagement, social responsibility, and dialogue with the modern world. Its origins lie in voluntary service among marginalised communities in Rome, particularly in the Trastevere neighbourhood, where members began by assisting children in need through informal educational support and social accompaniment. The name of the Community comes from the former church of Sant'Egidio in Trastevere, which became its first place of gathering and prayer, and it also evokes Saint Giles (Sant'Egidio), a medieval hermit associated with the poor and excluded, reflecting the Community's enduring commitment to simplicity, service, and proximity to those in need.

From these modest beginnings, the Community gradually expanded its activities and membership, evolving into a global network present in over 70 countries. Despite its growth, it has retained a strong local identity rooted in prayer, friendship with the poor, and grassroots solidarity. Spiritual life remains central, with daily prayer forming the foundation of its communal ethos, complemented by active engagement in social service.

The Community's identity is often summarised by its commitment to "prayer, the poor, and peace". This reflects a synthesis of spiritual devotion and practical action, where religious life is closely linked to service and advocacy. Over time, Sant'Egidio has become widely recognised not only within Catholic circles but also in international diplomatic and humanitarian contexts, particularly for its role in conflict resolution and its work with vulnerable populations.



ACTIVITIES

The activities of Comunità di Sant'Egidio span across social assistance, education, healthcare, and sustained engagement in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. While its work with marginalised communities remains foundational, its international profile has been shaped largely by its ability to connect grassroots solidarity with diplomatic mediation and interreligious dialogue. A central educational initiative is the Schools of Peace, which operate in many countries as community-based learning spaces for children in socially and economically disadvantaged areas.



School of Peace in the Ugandan Nyumanzi's refugee camp.

These schools provide literacy support, language teaching, homework assistance, and recreational activities, but their purpose extends far beyond education alone. They are designed as environments of inclusion where children from migrant, refugee, and low-income backgrounds can integrate into local society. Importantly, they also function as formative spaces for peace education, encouraging values such as non-violence, empathy, intercultural understanding, and respect for diversity. By engaging children early, the Schools of Peace aim to counter cycles of exclusion and foster long-term social cohesion within fragmented urban communities.



1990 Mozambique negotiations held in Sant'Egidio Rome headquarters

Sant'Egidio is internationally recognised for its mediation in armed conflicts, most notably its pivotal role in facilitating the negotiations that led to the 1992 Rome General Peace Agreement in Mozambique, which brought an end to sixteen years of civil war. The talks, hosted in the Community's headquarters in Rome, were characterised by informal dialogue, confidentiality, and sustained trust-building between the Mozambican government and the RENAMO dissidents. This landmark achievement established Sant'Egidio as a credible non-state actor in international mediation.

Building on this experience, it has since supported or facilitated dialogue processes in contexts such as Guatemala, Algeria, the Balkans, and various African nations, often acting as an intermediary when official diplomatic channels were stalled.

The International Meetings for Peace, promoted by Comunità di Sant'Egidio, are annual gatherings inspired by the Spirit of Assisi (1986) that bring together religious leaders, political figures, scholars, and civil society representatives from across the world. Held in different cities each year, these meetings provide a platform for interreligious dialogue, reflection on global conflicts, and the promotion of non-violence and coexistence.



2023 Berlin Peace Meeting

They are structured around panels, testimonies, and shared moments of prayer, reflecting Sant'Egidio's conviction that peace requires both spiritual engagement and practical cooperation. The initiative has become an important forum for informal diplomacy, fostering trust and dialogue across cultural and religious divides while addressing urgent global issues such as war, migration, and social inequality.



War-torn families arriving at final airport destination with Humanitarian Corridors

Complementing its diplomatic and educational work is the Humanitarian Corridors programme, one of its most widely recognised initiatives. Developed in partnership with faith-based organisations and European authorities, it creates safe and legal pathways for refugees escaping conflict zones. Vulnerable individuals are identified in transit countries and brought legally to Europe, avoiding dangerous migration routes. Upon arrival, they are supported with housing, language courses, and integration assistance. This model has been praised internationally as an innovative and ethical alternative to irregular migration, combining humanitarian protection with structured social inclusion.

RECOGNITIONS

Comunità di Sant'Egidio has received widespread international recognition for its contributions to peace mediation, interreligious dialogue, humanitarian assistance, and social solidarity. Its awards reflect the global impact of its work in conflict resolution, refugee protection, and the promotion of coexistence across cultural and religious boundaries.

Its role in facilitating the negotiations that led to the 1992 Rome General Peace Agreement in Mozambique marked a defining moment for Comunità di Sant'Egidio, establishing its international reputation as a mediator in armed conflict.



In recognition of this achievement and its broader commitment to dialogue-based peacebuilding, it was awarded the World Methodist Peace Award in 1997 by the World Methodist Council, honouring its grassroots peace efforts and growing international role in mediation and reconciliation between divided communities.



In 1999, it received the UNESCO Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize, which recognises exceptional contributions to peace, democracy, and international cooperation, again highlighting its pivotal role in Mozambique while also acknowledging its wider dedication to non-violence, solidarity with vulnerable populations, and the promotion of peaceful coexistence.

In 1999, the Japanes Niwano Peace Foundation awarded Comunità Sant'Egidio its Peace Prize, which recognises efforts in interreligious cooperation and peacebuilding.



The Community was honoured for demonstrating how faith communities can play an active role in conflict resolution and the promotion of social harmony. Particular emphasis was placed on its interfaith dialogue initiatives and its practical engagement in humanitarian and reconciliation work.



In 2023, the Abu Dhabi-based Human Committee of Human Fraternity awarded Comunità Sant'Egidio the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity in recognition for its longstanding commitment to humanitarian service, peace diplomacy, and the protection of refugee. Particular recognition was given to its Humanitarian Corridors initiative, which provides safe and legal routes for refugees fleeing war and persecution.

PUBLICATIONS

Comunità di Sant'Egidio produces a wide range of publications that reflect its commitment to peacebuilding, interreligious dialogue, and social solidarity. These include reports, reflections, and thematic works drawn from its humanitarian experience and international meetings. Its publications serve both as documentation of its activities and as tools for promoting a culture of peace globally.



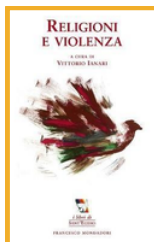
Making Peace! (2010)

The book sets out the vision and practical approach of the Community's peacebuilding work. It reflects on decades of mediation experience, including the Mozambique peace process, and emphasises dialogue, prayer, and friendship as essential tools for resolving conflict. It presents peace not as an abstract ideal but as a concrete process built through patience, encounter, and sustained relationships between divided communities.



Humanitarian Corridors: A model of Solidarity (2023)

The book presents safe and legal pathways for vulnerable refugees fleeing war, persecution, and hardship. It highlights how the initiative protects families, children, the elderly, and other at-risk groups by offering an alternative to dangerous migration routes and exploitation by traffickers. Promoted by civil society with state support, it combines humanitarian admission with community sponsorship and integration, enabling beneficiaries to be welcomed and supported within local societies.



Religions and Violence (2014)

The book examines the complex relationship between faith and conflict. It argues that while violence is a recurring historical phenomenon, it is not inherently theological, and that all religions have both been affected by and challenged by it. The book brings together leading religious and academic voices to reflect on how faith traditions can draw on their own heritage to oppose violence and promote peace, emphasising that religions can contribute to peace only by rejecting all forms of domination and coercion.

A full list of publications on peace produced by Comunità di Sant'Egidio can be consulted at the following link:

<https://libri.santegidio.org/pageID/4/langID/it/category/5/PACE.html>

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ForPeace**

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*Artisans of Peace)*

REVOLUTION OF LIGHT (CITIZENS COLLECTIVE)

NEANZ Province

CHARACTERISTICS & EXPERTISE

The defining characteristics of the movement were peaceful resistance, decentralisation, mutual care, digital coordination, and powerful symbolism. Without formal leadership, citizens created a unified presence through simple, shared actions, in particular standing together, holding light, and refusing to disperse until their voices were heard.



BIRTH

On the 3rd of December 2024, the then president of South Korea, Yoon Suk Yeol, unexpectedly declared martial law, citing threats to national stability. In his justification, Yoon pointed to alleged anti-state forces, legislative obstruction by the opposition-controlled National Assembly, and rising social unrest. He framed these issues as risks capable of paralysing governance. Citizens broadly understood these threats as domestic political tensions rather than immediate security dangers.



The announcement triggered immediate shock across South Korea. Within hours, citizens gathered around the National Assembly in Seoul, while lawmakers swiftly voted to overturn the martial law decree the same night. From this moment of crisis, the Revolution of Light began to take shape. Protesters, especially young people, flooded the streets carrying LED lights, smartphone flashlights, and K-pop light sticks. These luminous objects became a new symbol of collective resistance.

ACTIONS

The movement began with peaceful mass street demonstrations, as thousands of citizens converged in central Seoul, especially near the National Assembly, immediately following the martial law declaration by Yoon Suk Yeol. These protests were spontaneous yet orderly and disciplined.



Citizens engaged in sit-in demonstrations and overnight vigils, establishing encampments near key political sites such as the National Assembly and the presidential residence. A hallmark of these actions was the rise of night-time light protests. Participants held up smartphone flashlights, LED candles, and K-pop light sticks, transforming public spaces into glowing fields of collective presence. This use of light became a powerful symbol of unity, vigilance, and resistance, and quickly became the visual identity of the movement. Another striking feature of the protesters was the widespread use of silver emergency blankets, which protesters wore to withstand the winter cold, an image that came to represent endurance and collective resilience.



Digital technology played a central role in sustaining the protests. Citizens relied on social media and messaging platforms to coordinate in real time, exchanging information about meeting points, political developments, and safety conditions. This enabled swift and flexible mobilisation without the need for centralised leadership.

The demonstrations also integrated strong elements of cultural expression. Music, chants, and performances influenced by popular culture helped create an engaging and inclusive atmosphere, particularly for younger participants. These features blurred the line between protest and collective cultural gathering.

As the movement developed, it extended beyond immediate political concerns. Through banners, speeches, and open discussions, participants began to highlight broader demands, including government accountability, civil rights protections, and social equality.

RECOGNITIONS - NOMINATIONS



The Revolution of Light has gained notable international attention in political science, media commentary, and academic circles, especially because it is being framed as a rare case of successful, rapid civilian resistance to an attempted emergency power grab in a modern democracy.

One of the strongest forms of recognition so far is that groups of international political scientists formally nominated South Korean citizens for the Nobel Peace Prize. They described the movement as a global model of peaceful democratic defense and explicitly referred to it as the Revolution of Light.

QUOTES



*A protester's sign reads
"Democracy will not surrender to Yoon Suk Yeol!"*
REUTERS

**#Amor
ForPeace)**

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Artisans of Peace)

ANNA WALENTYNOWICZ

ESP-POL Province



BIOGRAPHY

Anna Walentynowicz was born in 1929 in present-day Ukraine (then Poland) and grew up in conditions of poverty, war and displacement during the turmoil of the Second World War. She completed primary school before entering workforce at a young age. After the war, she settled in Poland where she became a crane operator at the Gdańsk Shipyard. Her early years as a “model worker” gradually gave way to a growing awareness of injustice, as she witnessed poor working conditions, censorship, and the lack of genuine workers’ voice in the system.

The decisive turning point in her life came in August 1980, when she was dismissed from the Gdańsk Shipyard just months before her retirement. Her dismissal, widely seen as unjust and politically driven, triggered a strike at the shipyard. The call Bring back Anna Walentynowicz! became a unifying slogans that resonated across different workplaces. The strike she helped inspire led directly to the creation of Solidarność, the first independent trade union in the Eastern Bloc. From that point onward, despite repeatedly detained and imprisoned for her opposition activities, her path was defined by nonviolent struggle for workers’ dignity, civic freedom, and social justice, making her one of the key moral voices behind Poland’s peaceful democratic transformation.

She was married and had a son. She died in a plane crash on 10th of April 2010.



QUOTES

“Our main duty is to consider the needs of others.”

“Your problems are also my problems.”



ORGANISATION | ACTIVITIES



Anna Walentynowicz's early engagement with the Free Trade Unions of the Coast (WZZ) in the late 1970s marked a decisive shift from individual discontent to structured, peaceful opposition. This underground network aimed to defend workers' rights through dialogue, documentation of abuses, and civic awareness, rather than confrontation.

Her most influential role emerged during the 1980 strikes at the Gdańsk shipyard, when she became one of the key moral and symbolic figures behind the formation of Solidarity (Solidarność). Although the strikes began as a response to her unjust dismissal, she strongly supported extending the protest beyond personal demands. Importantly, Solidarność's approach, shaped by activists like Walentynowicz, was explicitly nonviolent. Workers occupied shipyards and factories, but they avoided sabotage or armed resistance. Instead, they relied on negotiation, collective discipline, and moral legitimacy. This strategy helped prevent escalation and created space for dialogue with authorities, even in a tense political climate.

At the same time, Walentynowicz played an important internal role by defending the ethical foundations of the movement. She insisted that Solidarność's remain faithful to workers' dignity and not compromise on justice or exclude vulnerable voices. Even when this led to disagreements with other leaders, her stance strengthened the union's identity as a genuine grassroots organisation committed to peaceful social transformation.

CHARACTERISTICS | EXPERTISE

Anna Walentynowicz's defining strengths were moral clarity, resilience and the ability to translate lived injustice into organised, nonviolent action. Shaped by early hardship and factory labour, she developed a strong sense of justice grounded in lived experience rather than formal education. This gave her credibility among workers and allowed her to articulate their concerns in simple, direct, and ethical terms.

Her most distinctive strength was her ability to transform personal grievance into collective, peaceful mobilisation. During the 1980 Gdańsk strikes, she demonstrated strategic restraint and inclusiveness. Rather than allowing the protest to remain a single-person demand, she supported its expansion into a broader movement, helping align diverse groups around shared principles of dignity and nonviolence.

At the same time, she was known for personal courage and resilience under repression, including imprisonment and surveillance. Despite this, she maintained a commitment to peaceful means, reinforcing the idea that lasting social change must be achieved without violence. Her legacy lies in combining moral conviction with practical organisation to advance human dignity and civic peace.

Her organisational work illustrates a broader lesson: peace is not passive, but actively constructed through courage, cooperation, and a refusal to dehumanise opponents.

RECOGNITIONS



In 1990 she was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Resituta, one of Poland's highest state orders, given for her contribution to the peaceful democratic transformation of Poland, her lifelong commitment to workers' rights, civic dignity, and nonviolent resistance.

In 2005, Walentynowicz received the Truman-Regan Medal of Freedom, awarded by the USA Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, highlighting her courage in defending worker's rights and civil liberties under communism.



In 2026, she was awarded the Order of the White Eagle, Poland's highest honour, for her role in bringing about democratic change, defending worker rights, and winning freedom for Poland.

PUBLICATIONS

Cień przyszłości, 1993 (The Shadow of the Future) is the memoir of Anna Walentynowicz. It recounts her life as a shipyard worker and her role in inspiring Solidarność (Solidarity trade union). The book highlights peaceful resistance, dignity, and workers' struggle for justice. It also reflects critically on Poland's post-communist changes and unfinished promises of social peace.



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Artisans of Peace

LORETA NAVARRO-CASTRO

SE-SASIA Province

BIOGRAPHY

Loreta Navarro-Castro (born 1948) is one of the pioneers of peace education in the Philippines and the founder of the Center for Peace Education, based at Miriam College in Quezon City. She was born in Malabon, Metro Manila, into a context shaped by post-war rebuilding and later periods of political unrest. In the early 1970s, before the imposition of Martial Law under Ferdinand Marcos, she worked as a young history teacher and participated in protest rallies in Manila. Although she joined demonstrations, she did not use dehumanising rhetoric, reflecting early on her inclination toward nonviolent approaches to social change.

She initially studied history and education at Maryknoll College (now Miriam College) and pursued advanced studies at the University of the Philippines where she completed graduate work in social studies education. Her education and community-oriented experiences exposed her to approaches that emphasised critical thinking, values formation, and the social role of education.

A decisive turning point in her life came in 1979, after a decade of teaching, when she participated in a two-week institute in New York organised by the Global Education Associates. The institute exposed her to a holistic, humanistic, and ecological vision of education and eventually led her to recognise the importance of “educating the educators” as a strategy for societal transformation. Upon returning to the Philippines, she was invited to share this vision at Miriam College, where she maintained a continuous affiliation. Over time her role evolved from classroom teaching to leadership, culminating in her appointment as president of the college (1987–1997) in the aftermath of the People Power Revolution.



QUOTES

“Education for peace is an ethical alternative, considering the negation of life and well-being caused by all forms of violence.”

(Loreta Navarro-Castro, Jasmin Nario-Galace (2010) Peace Education: A Pathway to a Culture of Peace)

“We may not see the results in our lifetime, but we must go on believing that someday that critical mass will be reached and more meaningful change will happen.”

“Despite the challenges we meet, we need to continue journeying towards our vision of peace, with hope and courage.”



During her tenure she played a central role in institutionalising peace education by introducing peace-focused courses into the curriculum, convening a Peace Core Group, and promoting a holistic “whole school approach”. In 1991, the institution declared itself a “Zone of Peace”, committing to values such as nonviolent conflict resolution, cooperation, and social responsibility. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, she and her colleagues progressively integrated peace and global perspectives into teaching and learning processes, laying the foundation for a more structured peace education programme.

Her professional trajectory thus evolved from conventional education into peace education, further shaped by her exposure to structural inequalities and violent conflicts in Philippine society, particularly in Mindanao. She questioned traditional teaching models that overlooked issues of justice, violence, and social responsibility, and increasingly viewed education as a transformative tool capable of addressing the root causes of conflict. At the end of her presidency in 1997, she founded the Center for Peace Education to continue and expand this work beyond the college. Since then, the Centre has reached thousands of teachers and young people through training programmes on the content and teaching-learning methods associated with peace education, including conflict resolution and the over-all promotion of a culture of peace.

“Peace Education is called transformative education because it seeks changes – in people’s mindsets, attitudes, values, and behaviours that, in the first place, have either created or exacerbated violent conflicts.”

(Loreta Navarro-Castro,
Jasmin Nario-Galace
(2010) Peace Education: A
Pathway to a Culture of
Peace)

ORGANISATION | ACTIVITIES

Loreta Navarro-Castro is best known for founding and directing the Center for Peace Education (CPE) at Miriam College in Quezon City.



Building on her earlier work in curriculum integration and teacher formation, she established the Centre in 1997 to provide a more systematic and institutional base for peace education. Through this institution, she has led curriculum development, teacher training, and advocacy programs integrating peace education into formal schooling.

Beyond her institutional role at Miriam College, Navarro-Castro has been actively engaged in national and international peace networks, including the Global Campaign for Peace Education, Pax Christi International, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), and the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC). Through these platforms, she has contributed to broader policy and advocacy work, particularly in areas such as disarmament education and nonviolent conflict resolution. Her activities within these networks include facilitating international workshops, contributing to collaborative publications and policy dialogues, and supporting the exchange of peace education practices across different countries and regions.

CHARACTERISTICS | EXPERTISE

Navarro-Castro's expertise lies primarily in peace education theory and practice, curriculum development, and teacher training. She is particularly known for her concept of peace education as "transformative education," which links personal development with social change. Her work spans conflict transformation, human rights education, interfaith dialogue, and nuclear disarmament advocacy. She also has strong expertise in integrating peace concepts into formal education systems, making peace education accessible to schools and universities. Additionally, she contributes to international policy discussions through peace networks, positioning her as both an academic expert and a practitioner in applied peacebuilding and education reform.

RECOGNITIONS

Navarro-Castro has received recognition both nationally and internationally for her contributions to peace education. She was among a group of women collectively nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005 under the "1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize" initiative.



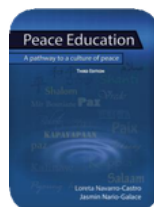
In 2014, she was also a recipient of the Peace Educator Award from the Peace and Justice Studies Association, acknowledging her sustained contributions to peace education scholarship and practice.

She has also been acknowledged within global peace education networks for her leadership role in shaping peace curricula and advancing nonviolent education frameworks. In various peace education communities, she is regarded as a pioneer in institutionalising peace studies in the Philippines, and her work is frequently cited in academic and policy discussions on transformative education.

PUBLICATIONS

Navarro-Castro is a co-author of *Peace Education: A Pathway to a Culture of Peace*, a widely used foundational text in peace studies and teacher education programs. The book outlines conceptual frameworks of peace, violence, and nonviolence, and provides practical strategies for integrating peace education into classrooms and communities.

In addition to this major work, she has produced numerous essays and reflective writings on peace education theory and practice. Among her more recent contributions is her 2020 essay, *Peace Education in the Philippines: My Journey as a Peace Educator and Some Lessons Learned*, published in *The Journal of Social Encounters*. In this piece, she offers a reflective account of her personal and professional journey, tracing the development of peace education in the Philippines and outlining key lessons from decades of practice. The essay is both autobiographical and analytical, linking her lived experience to broader themes in peacebuilding, education reform, and social transformation.



#AmorForPeace

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Artisans of Peace)

BERTHA VON SUTTNER

CEI Province

BIOGRAPHY

Bertha von Suttner was born in 1843 in Prague, then part of the Austrian Empire, into an aristocratic but financially strained family. As a young woman, she worked as a governess in the household of Baron Karl von Suttner, where she soon fell in love with his youngest son, Arthur Gundaccar von Suttner, who was seven years her junior. His family strongly opposed the match. Encouraged to seek other employment, Bertha answered a newspaper advertisement that led her to Paris, where she briefly worked as secretary and housekeeper for Alfred Nobel. During this short period, the two developed a lasting intellectual friendship, though she remained devoted to Arthur.

In 1876, she returned to Vienna and secretly married Arthur, an act that resulted in his disinheritance by his family. The couple spent several years in the Caucasus, where both began writing as a profession. There, Suttner witnessed the aftermath and human cost of armed conflict, an experience that deeply shaped her moral outlook and awakened her commitment to peace.

Her first major political work, *Inventarium einer Seele* (Inventory of the Soul), published in 1883 in Leipzig, marked a turning point. In it, she advanced progressive and pro-disarmament ideas, arguing that technological progress could make large-scale war increasingly untenable. Her most influential work, *Lay Down Your Arms – Die Waffen nieder!* (1889), vividly portrayed the suffering caused by war and resonated widely across Europe, establishing her as a leading voice in the peace movement. The novel marked a decisive turning point, transforming her from an observer of conflict into an active campaigner against it. From that point onward, she dedicated her life to promoting disarmament, international arbitration, and peaceful cooperation between nations. Her correspondence with Alfred Nobel further amplified her influence, as her ideas are believed to have contributed to the creation of the Nobel Peace Prize. Through her writing, public speaking, and advocacy, Suttner emerged as one of the most significant early figures in organised international pacifism.

She died in 1914, after rapidly developing cancer, two months before the outbreak of the First World War, which she had warned about and struggled against.



QUOTES

“One of the eternal truths is that happiness is created and developed in peace, and one of the eternal rights is the individual's right to live.”

“War is a crime against humanity.”

“The idea of peace is not an empty dream, but a necessity of civilisation.”

(Lay Down your arms, 1899)

“War is not a law of nature, but an institution created by humans.”

(Memoiren, 1909)

“The future belongs to peace.”



ORGANISATION | ACTIVITIES

In 1891, took a decisive organisational step in institutionalising the peace movement by co-founding the Austrian Peace Society (initially known as the Austrian Society of Friends of Peace, Österreichische Gesellschaft der Freunde des Friedens). This organisation became a central platform for pacifist activity in Austria at a time of growing European militarism. Its core mission was to promote international arbitration, disarmament, and public education against war, achieved through lectures, pamphlets, and journalistic outreach. Suttner served as its president from its foundation until her death in 1914, ensuring both intellectual direction and public visibility. Under her leadership, the society became a key hub linking Austrian peace activism with wider European movements.



International Peace Bureau council meeting 1899

Beyond Austria, Suttner extended her organisational impact through her involvement in the Permanent International Peace Bureau, established in Bern, Switzerland. As an Honorary Vice-President, she played a significant role in strengthening transnational cooperation among peace advocates. The Bureau functioned as a coordinating centre for international pacifist efforts, connecting intellectuals, activists, and political reformers across Europe. Through this position, Suttner helped develop early networks that sought to replace military conflict with legal and diplomatic mechanisms for dispute resolution.

Her influence also extended into high-level diplomatic arenas, particularly the Hague Peace Conferences (1899 and 1907), where she participated as one of the most prominent civilian advocates of arbitration and disarmament. Although she held no official governmental mandate, her presence was symbolically significant – she was among the few women engaged in these largely male diplomatic forums and served as a visible representative of organised civil society. At The Hague, she consistently argued for the establishment of legal frameworks to prevent war, reinforcing the same principles she promoted through her organisations.



CHARACTERISTICS | EXPERTISE



Suttner giving a lecture on peace and the women's movement 1913

Suttner combined intellectual rigour with emotional clarity, making her one of the most effective peace advocates of her time. She was a skilled writer and journalist, able to translate complex political critiques into accessible and persuasive narratives.

Her expertise lay in linking ethical arguments with practical proposals for international arbitration and legal dispute resolution, rather than abstract idealism alone.

She was also a highly effective networker, building connections across national borders at a time when such cooperation was rare, particularly for a woman in public intellectual life. Her personality was marked by persistence and moral conviction, allowing her to continue advocating for disarmament even in politically hostile environments dominated by militarism. These combined traits, literary talent, strategic thinking, and moral determination, made her a foundational figure in modern peace activism and a key influence on the early international peace movement.

RECOGNITIONS



Bertha von Suttner received extensive recognition during her lifetime and posthumously for her pioneering role in the international peace movement, and she remains one of the most widely commemorated figures in the history of pacifism.

Her most important honour was the Nobel Peace Prize in 1905, making her the first woman to receive this award and only the second woman ever to receive a Nobel Prize. The prize recognised her lifelong advocacy for disarmament, international arbitration, and her influential writings.

Her legacy is also preserved through state-issued commemoration, most notably the Austrian 2-euro commemorative coin (2005), which was released to mark the centenary of her Nobel Prize. The coin features her portrait and symbolically highlights her contribution to European peace culture, reinforcing her status as a national icon in Austria.



In public space, Suttner is widely honoured through, names of streets, monuments and statues across Europe. One of the most significant is the statue of Bertha von Suttner in front of the Peace Palace in The Hague, located at the seat of international law and arbitration. The Peace Palace in The Hague is one of the most important global symbols of peace and justice, and her presence there reflects her deep intellectual influence on early international legal institutions and peace advocacy.

PUBLICATIONS

Bertha von Suttner developed her literary career gradually, moving from early journalistic sketches to influential political and pacifist writing that helped shape the modern peace movement. In her earliest phase, she published short stories and feuilletons in Austrian newspapers, sometimes under the pseudonym “B. Oulot” (derived from her nickname “Boulotte”). These early works, such as *Fächer und Schürze* (1878), focused on social observation and personal reflections rather than politics, but they already demonstrated her narrative skill and sensitivity to human relationships. During this period, she also wrote romanticised prose inspired by her personal life, including *Es Löwos*, which reflected her relationship with Arthur Gundaccar von Suttner and their shared experiences abroad.



Her literary trajectory changed significantly with the publication of *Inventarium einer Seele* (Inventory of the Soul, 1883), in which she began to articulate more explicitly philosophical and political ideas. In this work, she reflected on human progress, morality, and the possibility of a future without war, influenced by technological and social development. This marked her transition from literary writer to political thinker.

Her most influential and defining publication was *Die Waffen nieder!* (Lay Down Your Arms, 1889), a powerful anti-war novel that brought her international recognition. Written in the form of a fictional autobiography, the book portrays the devastating human consequences of war from a woman's perspective, making it both emotionally compelling and politically persuasive. It became a foundational text of the peace movement and was widely translated across Europe.



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Artisans of Peace)

ANITALIA CLAXI PIJACHI KUYUEDO

Rosa Filipina Sur Province

BIOGRAPHY

Anitalia Claxi Pijachi Kuyuedo was born in 1978 in the territory of Leticia, in the Colombian Amazon, about 40km away from the nearest river, in what she describes as “deep jungle” (“selva, selva”). She belongs to the Okaina-Huitoto Indigenous peoples of the Amazon basin, a cultural background that has profoundly shaped her worldview, identity, and lifelong commitment to defending her territory.

She grew up in close connection with the forest, where her family played a central role in transmitting both practical and spiritual knowledge. She often credits her father with instilling in her a strong sense of responsibility towards education, youth empowerment, and community leadership. From her mother, she inherited values of independence, self-sufficiency, and a deep respect for nature, particularly in relation to rivers, seeds, and traditional agricultural practices. These early teachings were rooted in everyday life and Indigenous systems of knowledge, where learning is inseparable from the land itself.

Alongside her family upbringing, Anitalia Pijachi also identifies formal schooling as an important influence in shaping her environmental awareness. She recalls a teacher who warned her class: “Children, the Amazon is in danger, and that is why we must defend it. We are rich, but a monster is coming – enemies who want to strip us of our wealth”. This message had a lasting impact on her understanding of environmental threats and the urgency of collective action.

She was educated through a combination of Indigenous Amazonian learning traditions and formal training in ethno-education. This dual formation has informed her professional path as an environmental defender, educator, and advocate.

Today, Anitalia Pijachi is internationally recognised for her work in defending Indigenous rights, promoting women’s leadership, protecting ancestral territories, and safeguarding traditional ecological knowledge. She also promotes Amazonian ancestral gastronomy alongside her mother, contributing to the recognition and revitalisation of traditional food systems at national and international levels.



QUOTES

“God put man and woman together in the world ... to walk together. If the two are not working in harmony [...] it’s like walking with only one leg.”

“Without territory there is no food; one cannot speak of family, community, or happiness.”

“Being a woman and contributing to the defense of the Amazon is not an honor or a privilege; it is a mandate.”



ORGANISATION | ACTIVITIES

Anitalia Pijachi is the founder and active representative of Monilla R+ngo, an Indigenous women's organisation whose name can be interpreted as woman of abundance and reproduction in local Amazonian linguistic traditions. The organisation is dedicated to protecting, promoting, and safeguarding the traditional arts, crafts, and ancestral knowledge of Indigenous women across the Amazon region. At the heart of Monilla R+ngo is the concept of the chagra, the traditional Indigenous agroforestry system. The chagra is a highly diverse, self-sustaining cultivated space in which food crops, medicinal plants, and spiritually significant species grow in harmony. It represents not only a method of cultivation but also a social and cosmological model of balance, reciprocity, and abundance. Within this worldview, the chagra becomes a powerful metaphor for community life and ecological harmony.



In addition to her work with Monilla R+ngo, Anitalia Pijachi is actively involved in the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network (REPAM – Red Eclesial Panamazónica), a transnational Church-based network that supports the protection of Amazonian territories and promotes dialogue between Indigenous communities, civil society, and ecclesial institutions.

Her engagement with REPAM is a key part of her wider advocacy for Indigenous rights and environmental justice in the Amazon. She contributes to strengthening the visibility and participation of Indigenous and Amazonian women in decision-making processes. Her work in this space focuses on gender justice, territorial defence, and the safeguarding of traditional knowledge systems, ensuring that women's perspectives are included in discussions on the future of the Amazon. She also participates in Colombia's coordination structures within REPAM, facilitating exchanges between local Indigenous communities and national or international partners. This role involves helping to channel community concerns, particularly regarding land rights, environmental degradation, and extractive pressures, into broader advocacy and policy dialogues. Overall, her work with REPAM positions her as a vital link between grassroots Indigenous realities and international advocacy spaces, grounded in a holistic understanding of "integral ecology" that connects environmental protection with human dignity and cultural survival.

CHARACTERISTICS | EXPERTISE

Anitalia Pijachi is widely regarded as a visionary Indigenous leader whose work bridges ancestral knowledge systems and contemporary global advocacy frameworks. She is a strong proponent of women's empowerment, particularly within Indigenous contexts, and promotes leadership models grounded in collective responsibility, reciprocity, and community participation. She is recognised as a skilled bridge-builder between Indigenous traditions and international institutions, capable of translating local knowledge systems into global policy and advocacy spaces. Her public interventions demonstrate both courage and clarity, particularly in addressing issues of environmental justice, territorial defence, and the rights of Indigenous peoples. Her expertise spans several interconnected fields. These include Indigenous territorial governance and Amazon rainforest conservation, with a particular focus on community-led stewardship of ecosystems. She is also deeply engaged in the preservation of native seeds and biodiversity, as well as ethno-education and intercultural pedagogy. Her work reflects a strong grounding in traditional ecological knowledge and its application to contemporary environmental challenges. In addition, she contributes significantly to the strengthening of women's leadership within Indigenous communities, promoting sustainable food systems and ancestral gastronomy as tools for cultural resilience and food sovereignty. Her broader work is committed to cultural preservation, including the transmission of oral traditions, and to the defence of Indigenous rights within broader environmental and political frameworks.

RECOGNITIONS

One of her most notable moments of international visibility was her participation in the 2019 Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region held at the Vatican, a landmark event in which Indigenous voices were formally included in ecclesial deliberations on the future of the Amazon for the first time at this level. She was among a small group of Indigenous women participants, approximately 35 women, marking an important moment of visibility for Amazonian women within the Catholic Church's institutional space. Her presence at the Synod positioned her among key Indigenous voices contributing to global discussions on ecology, spirituality, and the future of the Amazon rainforest. Her contribution supported the articulation of “integral ecology” as both a spiritual and political framework, linking environmental protection with cultural survival and human dignity.



In addition to her advocacy work, she has also been recognised in the field of cultural heritage and gastronomy. In 2017, Anitalia Pijachi Kuyuedo, together with her mother Eufracia Kuyuedo, received Colombia's National Prize for Traditional Cuisines. The award honoured their work in preserving and promoting Amazonian ancestral gastronomy, including traditional foods such as insects, worms, and tucupí, a fermented sauce derived from bitter cassava.

Their culinary practice is rooted in Indigenous knowledge systems and sustainable food production, highlighting the ecological value of traditional Amazonian agri-food systems. Beyond its cultural significance, their work also contributes to contemporary discussions on biodiversity conservation, climate change resilience, and food sovereignty. Through oral transmission, community-based initiatives, and collaborative projects, they continue to elevate Amazonian culinary heritage and share it with wider national and international audiences.

“This region, is more than just a biome; it is a spirit, it is a woman, it is the breath of life, the breath of life that the Creator Father has given in the service of humanity. For this reason, it is very important that you in Europe, you in Africa, you in Asia and on all the continents bear in mind that you are the Amazon, that I am the Amazon and, above all, that the Amazon is a woman.”

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Artisans of Peace
**GLENCREE CENTRE
 FOR PEACE AND
 RECONCILIATION**

CEI Province

FOUNDATION

The Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation is an independent, non-governmental peacebuilding organisation based in the Glencree Valley, Ireland. It was formally established in 1974, during one of the most unstable and violent phases of the Northern Ireland conflict.

The Centre emerged in the aftermath of a sharp escalation of violence that had intensified earlier in the decade, particularly following Bloody Sunday in Derry in 1972, when British soldiers shot dead 14 civil rights protesters, and the 1972–73 wave of IRA bombings in Belfast and elsewhere, which deepened sectarian division and accelerated cycles of retaliation. These events contributed to a breakdown of trust between communities and between citizens and the state. By 1974, the situation had further deteriorated. That year saw major destabilising incidents, including the Ulster Workers' Council strike, which effectively collapsed the power-sharing government established under the Sunningdale Agreement, and widespread loyalist paramilitary activity enforcing shutdowns through intimidation and violence. This year also witnessed continued IRA bombing campaigns, including attacks in Britain, alongside loyalist reprisals against Catholic civilians. Collectively, these developments marked the failure of political compromise and a return to intensified communal polarisation.

It was in this context of political collapse and escalating violence that Glencree was founded by peace activists including Colonel Fred O'Callaghan and Una O'Higgins O'Malley. Both were motivated by a belief that the conflict in Northern Ireland could not be resolved through political structures alone, and that informal, human-to-human engagement was essential for breaking cycles of violence. Fred O'Callaghan brought organisational and public service experience shaped by a disciplined, structured approach to conflict management, contributing practical expertise in designing and facilitating secure, structured dialogue processes. Una O'Higgins O'Malley, a writer and peace advocate, was deeply shaped by the loss of her father, Seán O'Higgins, who was murdered during the Irish Civil War, a family tragedy that profoundly informed her lifelong commitment to reconciliation and non-violence. Together, they helped establish Glencree as a practical response to division, creating a space where opposing voices could meet safely and constructively.



QUOTES

*"I...had got the thing
 about forgiveness firmly
 in my mind; you couldn't
 receive Jesus and tell
 Him you loved Him
 unless you forgave
 everybody, even those
 who had murdered your
 Daddy....Someone put
 into me that conviction
 about the necessity of
 forgiveness, Someone
 gave it to me as a gift
 and, as far as I am
 concerned, that Someone
 is God"*

(From pardon and protest,
 53). Una O'Higgins
 O'Malley

*"We believe in a world
 where conflict is
 transformed peacefully."*



Located in a former military barracks in the Wicklow Mountains, Glencree was intentionally positioned as a place of transition – from conflict to conversation – offering structured, confidential encounters aimed at rebuilding trust where formal politics had stalled. Its mission developed into a long-term commitment to preventing and transforming violent conflict through dialogue, trust-building, and relationship repair, creating safe spaces for difficult conversations and fostering reconciliation between individuals and communities affected by conflict. Over time, this work extended beyond Ireland, reflecting Glencree's belief that the principles of empathy, listening, and relationship-building are essential tools for peace in any divided society.

ORGANISATION | ACTIVITIES

The Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation is an independent peacebuilding organisation focused on transforming conflict through dialogue, relationship-building and experiential learning. Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation Its work spans local, national and international contexts, with a strong emphasis on sustained engagement rather than one-off interventions.

One of its core strands is the Community and Political Dialogue Programme, which brings together individuals from across political and community divides in Northern Ireland and the border regions. For example, Glencree has facilitated structured residential dialogues between former members of paramilitary-linked communities and victims/survivors of violence, alongside political representatives. These sessions often focus on difficult themes such as legacy issues, truth recovery, and reconciliation. A concrete feature of this work is the use of confidential, multi-day retreats in the Wicklow Mountains, where participants engage in facilitated dialogue sessions interspersed with informal shared activities like walking and communal meals, helping to reduce tension and build trust gradually.

Another major activity is peace education and youth engagement. Glencree runs workshops with secondary schools and universities that explore identity, prejudice, and conflict transformation. For instance, students may take part in simulation exercises where they role-play divided communities negotiating a shared public issue, helping them understand how narratives and stereotypes influence conflict. These programmes are often delivered in partnership with Irish educational institutions and youth organisations.



Glencree also works extensively on women's leadership in peacebuilding, supporting networks of women from divided communities in Ireland and internationally. One example includes facilitated exchanges between women from Northern Ireland and conflict-affected regions abroad, where participants share strategies for community reconciliation and trauma recovery.

Internationally, Glencree provides training and advisory support in post-conflict societies such as the Balkans and the Middle East. This includes capacity-building workshops for mediators and civil society leaders on facilitation techniques, dialogue design, and dealing with legacy violence.

Across all programmes, Glencree's approach is consistent: create safe spaces, enable honest conversation, and support long-term relationship-building as the foundation for sustainable peace.

RECOGNITIONS



In 2022, Glencree was awarded the Polish Prize of Sérgio Vieira de Mello, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in the NGO category by the Villa Decius Association. The prize recognises organisations that promote human rights, democracy, tolerance, and the peaceful coexistence of societies, religions, and cultures.

Glencree was honoured for nearly five decades of peacebuilding, particularly its role in facilitating dialogue across political and religious divides during and after the Northern Ireland conflict, as well as its international peacebuilding work.

Long-standing support through the EU PEACE and PEACE IV programmes reflects sustained institutional confidence in Glencree's reconciliation methodologies and its ability to deliver meaningful, practice-based peacebuilding outcomes in complex post-conflict settings.

Through these frameworks, Glencree has been supported to design and implement programmes addressing the legacy of the Northern Ireland conflict, including community dialogue initiatives, cross-community engagement, and work with victims, survivors, and divided groups.



The funding has enabled structured residential dialogues, facilitation training, and participatory processes that encourage storytelling, listening, and the rebuilding of trust across historical divides. It also supports innovative approaches to addressing contested histories and intergenerational trauma, ensuring that peacebuilding is rooted in lived experience rather than abstract policy.

PUBLICATIONS



The Missing Peace Project Toolkit, developed as part of the EU-funded Missing Peace project, provides 12 interactive activities designed to foster dialogue, critical thinking and conflict resolution skills.

Glencree Journal: “Dealing with the Legacy of Conflict in Northern Ireland through Engagement and Dialogue”. The Journal features contributions from 19 authors including academics and practitioners in the fields of peace studies and conflict resolution.



Fifty Years of Peacebuilding, Dialogue & Engagement

The Glencree Centre for Peace & Reconciliation (Glencree) is pleased to present our Annual Report & Financial Statements for the year to 31 December 2024.



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THANK YOU!



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