

Webinar Invitation

We are pleased to invite you to the webinar during which we will discuss our projects and finetune them. It is a great moment to hear about expectations of experts, Rotary clubs (local and international) and other

Please note the time and date of the webinars

Time: Oct 6, 2020 - 05:00 PM London (BST)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/5336326427>

Meeting ID: 533 632 6427

Time: Oct 20, 2020 - 01:00 PM London (BST)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/5336326427>

Meeting ID: 533 632 6427

Project 1

Understanding the Impact of Voicemore – Uganda Project

While many countries and international organisations working with youth leaders have ratified the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and adopted a rights-based approach, meaningful and well supported opportunities for genuine participation remain rare, with those that do exist often limited to low level decision making, and rarely extending into spaces where programmes, policies or law are formulated.

Often when children and youth leaders are allowed to voice an opinion, they are usually asked to do so with little or no preparation, limited control over how they are represented, and are offered no support in assessing the impact their input has had. Youth participation consequently becomes a partial experience: tokenistic engagement rather than genuine consultation or partnership.

It is, however, vital that young people are supported and empowered to become their own advocates and their voices within their communities are not just heard but really listened to. Otherwise our understandings of their unique experiences, perspectives and concerns are lost, to the detriment of efforts to support them. Voicemore strengthens assessment, research and leaderships skills of young people to better understand how to achieve their aims including mitigating the drivers to conflict.

Voicemore is War Child's youth advocates development programme, which empowers young people affected by armed conflict to share their experiences, become youth leaders and act on issues impacting them. Groups discuss and debate how conflict affects children and youth in their area and what they feel could be done to help improve their lives. They are then supported to design and run their own advocacy projects themselves in their local community, with War Child helping them elevate these concerns onto national and international platforms.

Aims and Objectives

- Ensure that War Child supports children to identify the challenges they face in the communities, regions and countries in which they live, and to advocate at those levels to ensure that these challenges are addressed.
- Raise the confidence and empowerment of young people in expressing their honest views and opinions to a wide range of audiences, and to bring these into debates with decision-makers on issues that impact their lives.

- Promote the participation and inclusion of children and youth in decision-making, particularly in conflict contexts.

Generating Evidence to support Voicemore

Between July 2018 and June 2020, War Child UK, in partnership with War Child Holland, supported two VoiceMore groups in Bidibidi refugee settlement, Yumbe, Northern Uganda. Both groups of young people identified the neglect and abuse of separated and orphaned children in the community as the issue they wished to focus on. Over the course of two years the young people designed and undertook their own research - the first ever community-based count of child orphans in the district - and carried out a wide-ranging set of activities to raise awareness and change negative practices impacting children. They successfully engaged relevant authorities to improve orphans' situation including camp authorities, health workers and local government to achieve sustainable change. Alongside their advocacy, the project brought together the South Sudanese refugee and Ugandan host community youth in a new spirit of solidarity and also helped promote young people as positive changemakers to elders in the community.

We believe VoiceMore has huge potential that could benefit many other communities. It is for this reason we are requesting support to undertake a robust, community-based assessment and independent evaluation of the Uganda pilot. The funding would be used to build an evidence base which would enable us to promote its use in further countries and on a wider scale. It is important this is undertaken as soon as possible; Covid19 already hampered follow-up plans, and if left too long, the window to assess activity will close and we will lose this important opportunity. This evaluation would seek to establish the ability of Voicemore to mitigate conflict by equipping and providing a platform to youth leaders within their communities and beyond.

Project 2

Training of Young People in Peace Actions

Peace is part of the mission of Rotary International and important to Rotarians worldwide. While debates on the most effective ways to build sustainable peace continue, there is no viable pathway to sustaining peace that does consider the abolition of war and militarism. A more peaceful, just, and sustainable world rests, in part, on our ability to end war once and for all. This is because many of the world's most pressing issues can be traced back to the war system. Some 180 million people died in wars in the 20th century. On top of its human costs, war is a major contributor to the environmental crisis. As an example, the U.S military is the world's biggest polluter. War (and violence) costs the global economy an estimated \$14 trillion a year, money that could be better spent on healthcare, education, mitigating climate change, COVID-19 recovery, and so much more.

This project is created and led by World beyond War, in collaboration with the Rotary Action Group for Peace (RAGFP) and other members from the Rotary family. The project will follow a two-pronged approach to peace education and nonviolent direct-action organising.

The project will be rolled out in two stages:

First, it will equip 120 individuals (from 10+ countries, including 100 young people, half of whom may be from Rotaract) with foundational knowledge and skills for preventing conflict and promoting peace - i.e. managing conflict without violence, creating a culture of peace, ways to develop empathy and compassion for self and others, strategies for demilitarizing security. This stage will feed into the preparation for nonviolent direct action organising.

The second stage will support youth (and adults) to design, implement, and evaluate 10 peace projects (more numbers possible) – where youth lead and adults guide. The issues addressed in these projects will be tailored around the local needs and cover topics related to peace and war such as conflict, violence, security, justice, and climate change. This two-pronged approach to change-making adopted in this project can act as a model for others seeking to do similar work. The project also lays a foundation for ongoing collaborations between WBW and Rotary.

The RPPI initiative is an important opportunity to bring Rotary Peace Fellows, Rotarians, Rotaractors and international experts together to create projects that help to make the world a more peaceful and sustainable place. Like other RPPI initiatives, the project described above is conceptualised as a collaborative venture. Here are some of the ways you can get involved:

- Provide scholarships that ensure that young people from your area can be involved.
- Sign up to be trained to act as an adult mentor for the youth-led peace projects.
- Join us for the upcoming webinars focussed on the theme, '[Peace through Education](#)'.
- Share this link with others to spread the word of the PPI to a wider audience.
- Reach out to Phill (phill@worldbeyondwar.org) to find out more about any of the above.

About World Beyond War

There is a huge volume of work on war, much of which focuses on its negative impact on people and the planet. Much less attention has been paid to what we can do to replace the war system. This is perhaps our greatest task in peace work – to not only figure out how to end particular wars but also how to work toward ending all war by replacing it with an Alternative Global Security System – one in which peace is pursued by peaceful means.

Towards this end, World BEYOND War (WBW) has developed an educational blueprint for ending all war. We have developed the book, "[A Global Security System: an Alternative to War](#)" (AGSS) and an online [study and action guide](#) to support this blueprint. Resting on a convincing body of evidence that violence is not a necessary component of conflict among states and between states and non-state actors, the AGSS relies on three broad strategies for humanity to end war: 1) demilitarizing security, 2) managing conflicts without violence, and 3) creating a culture of peace. These are the interrelated components of our system: the frameworks, processes, tools and institutions necessary for dismantling the war machine and replacing it with a peace system that will provide a more assured common security.

Strategies for demilitarizing security are directed at reducing dependency on militarism. At first glance these strategies seem to be only focused on “undoing” the present system. However, they also establish normative principles for pursuing and achieving security.

Strategies for managing conflict without violence are focused on reforming and/or establishing new institutions of global governance, and the tools and processes for assuring security. These are the most outwardly functional components of our system.

Strategies for creating a culture of peace are the most visionary, potentially transformative, and future oriented. These strategies are concerned with establishing social and cultural norms, values, and principles necessary for sustaining a thriving peace system and the means to spread it globally.

Project 3

Child of Empire – Healing the Wounds of Partition

Background: We are living in one of the great periods of global migration. In the last decade, migration rates have doubled. This has reshaped cultural identities, altered global economies and unleashed an unprecedented surge in populism.

The 1947 Partition of India is the largest case study of forced migration in history. Over 14 million people migrated, and around a million tragically perished. 73 years later, the Partition still casts a shadow on the modern subcontinent. Not only have India and Pakistan fought 4 bitter wars since (and Bangladesh created in 1971 on ethnic lines), but religious identity continues to be South Asia's biggest political divide. Hate crimes and state-endorsed xenophobia against religious minorities are sharply rising, driven in large part by obsolete and intolerant national-creation myths which emerged in the aftermath of 1947.

A decade long-debate over immigration in India recently led to the passing of India's Citizenship Amendment Act, which many accuse of discriminating against the Muslim community, engendering deadly nationwide protests. Across the border, minority populations of Hindus and Shias in Pakistan and Bangladesh are steadily dwindling, with thousands forcibly displaced as a result of religious persecution.

It is critical that young people learn about the historical origins of this conflict; the impact it had on the everyday citizen; and how religious intolerance and damaging stereotypes developed during the struggle for independence. By addressing South Asia's colonial trauma directly with young people, we can help pave the path to a pluralist future.

Proposed Project: This project is a series of workshops to take place in August 2022 (the 75th anniversary of the Partition). The workshops will target participants aged between 15-20, and will challenge the learned antagonism of divisive partition narratives that have been prevalent since partition and growing in recent years.

The innovative workshops will be designed around the *Child of Empire*. *Child of Empire* is a VR (Virtual Reality) animated documentary that puts you inside the shoes of a migrant during the 1947 Partition of India. Weaving through the stories of three-present day survivors, it navigates identity and sectarianism during times of immense social upheaval in British India. Following the VR experience, participants will explore themes including identity; community; and conflict. Following the workshops, participants will have the opportunity to devise and implement a project in their local area for their peers to share and grow their learning.

We propose these workshops be held across 15 prominent cities of the subcontinent: Delhi, Mumbai, Chandigarh, Madras, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Kolkata, Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar, Karachi, Dhaka, Mymensingh, Cox's Bazar, and Chittagong. We expect to localise elements of the programming in each city to enable participants to deepen their connection and understanding of the partition in their location. We would invite schools, universities and youth groups in the area to take part in the experience, which would be entirely free of charge to the participants themselves.

The development of the VR experience is funded by Arts Council England, National Geographic and the CatchLight Foundation. *Child of Empire* was selected for the 77th Venice International Film Festival Production Bridge.

Aims and Objectives:

1) Cultural Preservation : We want to preserve and promote knowledge of the shared cultural heritage of the subcontinent using VR.

2) Awareness and Empathy : We aim to recognize and remember the shared trauma that the generation of Partition went through, and help them tell their stories to younger generations in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, as well as diaspora and beyond.

3) Peacebuilding : We want to sow the seeds of peace between religious communities in South Asia by addressing trauma through art.

4) Education : Partition is usually studied from a macro-political, statist lens. Our Project seeks to educate future generations about the micro-level effects of Partition on everyday individuals and modern day politics.

About Us:

Project Dastaan is a peace-building initiative which reconnects Partition survivors to their old homes through virtual reality. Our team works across the UK, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, alongside an extensive network of local partners in South Asia, including the region's biggest citizens' archives.

The Project is backed by Malala Yousafzai, Suroosh Alvi (cofounder of VICE Media) and celebrated authors such as William Dalrymple and Aanchal Malhotra. We've received a CatchLight Fellowship and a National Geographic Exploration Grant, have spoken at British Parliament and were recently accepted onto Arts Council England's CreativeXR accelerator.

www.projectdastaan.org