

Rotary



rotary action
group for peace
peace through service
Switzerland / Liechtenstein Chapter

Rotarian Peace Projects Incubator

Project Proposal Summary

Rotarian Peace Projects Incubator's Thematic Area	Peace and Education
Rotary Focus Area	Peace and Conflict Prevention; Basic Education and Literacy
Contact: Contact person within your group (Name and email)	Amardeep Kainth (kainth.amardeep@gmail.com)
Project Title: Provide a full title (and acronym if any)	Child of Empire - Project Dastaan
Project Partners and Participating Organisations: List all your project partner organisations, including participating Rotary clubs and districts if any	Project Dastaan - https://projectdastaan.org/ Rotary Action Group for Peace Kainth Consulting
Geographical Scope	Bangladesh; India; Pakistan (delivery)
Summary: Please provide a concise summary with a maximum of 500 words outlining the project and explaining the community needs your project will address and how these needs were identified. Ensure that you include what your project aims to achieve (objective) and how (method/procedure). What will be the main outcomes? Explain in a few sentences how you will incorporate the objective of sustainability into your project.	Background: 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 for young people in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan, to take place in August 2022 (the 75th anniversary of the Partition). The workshops will challenge the learned antagonism of divisive partition narratives that have been prevalent since partition and growing in recent years.

The innovative, educational workshops for young people 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) 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.
- 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

	<p>younger generations in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, as well as diaspora and beyond.</p> <p>3) Peacebuilding: We want to sow the seeds of peace between religious communities in South Asia by addressing trauma through art.</p> <p>4) Cultural Preservation: We want to preserve and promote knowledge of the shared cultural heritage of the subcontinent using VR.</p> <hr/> <p>About Project Dastaan:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Beneficiaries: Who are the beneficiaries? Please include the estimated number of direct beneficiaries</p>	<p>The beneficiaries of the project will be young people aged 15-20 in 15 prominent cities in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan.</p> <p>Depending on the level of funding received, we estimate:</p> <p>Direct beneficiaries: 450 (~ 30 participants per city) Indirect (through the peer mentoring model): ~3000</p>