



Culture of Peace Description and Background

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A culture of peace has been a dream and hope for human beings for thousands of years, even though different words may have been used. In the last half of the 20th Century a more precise focus and language has emerged which serves as a guideline for those seeking and leading in this quest.

"...my experience and research have convinced me that the world is on the verge of the greatest change in human history: the transition from the culture of war that we have had for tens of thousands of years to a new culture, a culture of peace." David Adams, Director, UNESCO

"A culture of peace is a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behavior and ways of life..."* This is about shifting mindset and behavior in all aspects of our societies as we move from force to reason, from conflict and violence to dialogue and Peacebuilding and embrace humanity's interconnectedness and inner oneness. It has become well-established that the pathways to a peace culture are through local efforts in NGOs, education, government, business, and environment that work together to better understand each other and create new possibilities. Education, and specifically peace education, is an essential ingredient.

Cities are the real societal structural level where the Culture of Peace rubber meets the road. The individual person is always the bottom line in Peace and Peacebuilding daily choices, but it is the city that has the reach, authority, responsibility and influence to set the positive tone and direction for so many people. This can be done by beginning to use the Culture of Peace as a compass for guidance and a lens to see and understand differently. This is relatively new territory in the early stages and where we are co-creating together.

The growing Culture of Peace is actually alive and well in many cities, but is often invisible and not identified or nourished directly. The results and benefits of embracing and living in a Culture of Peace are enormous and pervasive in health, happiness, prosperity, sustainability and a legacy for future generations!

The United Nations in a series of resolutions and programs for the 21st Century, called for a transition from the culture of war to a culture of peace. In 1999 the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (A/RES/53/243). During the International Year for the Culture of Peace in the Year 2000, one percent of the world's population (75 million people) took part in the signature campaign on the Manifesto 2000.

This was followed by the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010). To quote David Adams at UNESCO, "Over 3000 pages of information and 500 photos submitted by over 1000 organizations from more than 100 countries testify that the global movement for a culture of peace is advancing, although this is not yet recognized by the mass media."

Again, as defined by the United Nations, the Culture of Peace is a set of values, attitudes, modes of behavior and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations (UN Resolution A/RES/52/13).

"The pursuit of peace is an exhilarating adventure."**

Initial Weaving of the Culture of Peace

There are many people who over time represent threads that come together and weave the tapestry of the emerging Culture of Peace. The following are noted leaders who stand out in the Culture of Peace development. Three of these leaders are currently providing guidance in the evolution of the Culture of Peace in our NGO community, and ask us to take the torch to help lead the way to a world that lives within, and is sustained by, a Culture of Peace. They are Avon Mattison (Pathways To Peace & Culture of Peace Initiative), David Adams (UNESCO, CPNN, & Manifesto 2000) and Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury (Global Movement for the Culture of Peace). There are many interconnections and collaborations that have taken place between them at different times and occasions.

UNESCO Culture of Peace - Federico Mayor Zaragoza

Federico Mayor served as Director-General of UNESCO from 1987 to 1999. Under Federico Mayor's guidance, UNESCO created the Culture of Peace Programme, whose objectives revolve around these main themes: education for peace; human rights and democracy; the fight against isolation and poverty; the defense of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue; and conflict prevention and the consolidation of peace. In his re-election speech as Director-General of UNESCO in 1993, he stated: "I intend to devote myself personally, in the coming years, to the culture of peace." He directed the drafting of the Culture of Peace Declaration and Programme of Action, which was drafted by David Adams (UNESCO, CPNN, & Manifesto 2000) in collaboration with Sema Tanguiane. During the following 7 years Federico Mayor held innumerable meetings with ambassadors, heads of state and other dignitaries in which he pushed the agenda of a culture of peace. On 10 November 1998, the UN General Assembly declared the years 2001–2010, International Decade for the Promotion of a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World and, on 13 September 1999, it adopted the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, which embodies Mayor's greatest aspirations from both a conceptual and practical standpoint.

With a view to fulfilling the mission of the United Nations of avoiding "the scourge of war", the Constitution of UNESCO begins as follows: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed".

The UNESCO concept of a "culture of peace" in relation to putting this mandate into practice, originated at The International Congress on Peace in the Minds of Men in Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast, on the first of July 1989, with the "Declaration on peace in the minds of men."

- “Peace is reverence for life.
 - Peace is the most precious possession of humanity.
 - Peace is more than the end of armed conflict.
 - Peace is a mode of behaviour.
 - Peace is a deep-rooted commitment to the principles of liberty, justice, equality and solidarity among all human beings.
 - Peace is also a harmonious partnership of humankind with the environment.
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- ...on the eve of the twenty-first century, peace is within our reach...
 - ...The Congress invites States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the scientific, educational and cultural communities of the world, and all individuals to: help construct a new vision of peace by developing a **Culture of Peace** based on the universal values of respect for life, liberty, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human rights and equality between women and men...” *The development of Culture of Peace and Non-Violence (1988-2010), Report by Federico Mayor*

Culture of Peace Initiative - Avon Mattison

Pathways To Peace (PTP) is one of the pioneer Peacebuilding UN NGOs which helped establish the United Nations International Day of Peace (Peace Day) (UN Resolutions A/RES/36/67) in 1981, which laid the foundation for the Culture of Peace Initiative (CPI). CPI originated in 1983 as a programme of Pathways To Peace by Avon Mattison (Co-Founder and President) and Dr. Robert Muller, then Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations. This Initiative was renamed “We The Peoples” Initiative in 1984 upon the advice of Dr. Muller in order to make it more relevant to the UN and UN NGOs during the Cold War. In the mid-1980’s the former UN Peace Studies Unit worked very closely with Pathways To Peace and the Initiative to develop programs during, and subsequent to, the UN International Year of Peace (UN Resolutions A/RES/40/3, 1986). During the first UN Peace Messenger Conference in 1987, PTP co-presented a program on a Culture of Peace. In 1989, this Initiative was granted “Peace Messenger Initiative” status by UN Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar.

With the advent of the UN International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (UN Resolutions A/RES/56/5, 2001-2010), the “We The Peoples Initiative” name returned to the Culture of Peace Initiative (CPI). Pathways To Peace serves as the International Secretariat for the Culture of Peace Initiative (CPI), with Participants in all the world's regions. The annual highlight of this local/global Initiative is the International Day of Peace (Peace Day) since 1983, which is now celebrated worldwide on September 21.

From its inception in 1983, the Initiative has served to unite the strengths of organizations, networks, and programs toward building a movement for a Culture of Peace in co-operation within civil society and with the UN. CPI is an intergenerational and intercultural community along diverse pathways. Through its web and social media presence, CPI continues to serve as an integrative hub for the growing movement for Culture of Peace programs and local/global activities on the International Day of Peace and throughout the year.

UNESCO Culture of Peace Programme and Manifesto 2000 - David Adams

David Adams designed UNESCO's Culture of Peace Programme in 1992, and was the Director of the International Year for the Culture of Peace in 1998. The UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) approach was later confirmed by the UN General Assembly in their Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (A/RES/53/243) in 1999.

The strategies behind the International Year centered upon involving civil society as much as possible. The specific initiatives included the collection of some 75 million signatures worldwide in support of a culture of peace, with the Manifesto 2000 Project. Another initiative was the Culture of Peace News Network (CPNN), a worldwide network of locally-based websites reporting news in support of a culture of peace. CPNN is where readers exchange information about events, experiences, books, music, and web news that promote a culture of peace. CPNN is owned and managed by the Culture of Peace Corporation, based in Connecticut (USA) and composed of youth teams. The founder and president of the Corporation is David Adams. David has been prolific in his Culture of Peace related writings, blogs, websites, trainings and video programs. He is also a leading member and organizer of the City of New Haven Peace Commission in Connecticut.

Global Movement for the Culture of Peace – Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury

Founded by Ambassador Chowdhury (former UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative) in 2011, the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace (GMCoP) is a civil society initiative and consortium of UN NGOs' advocating and networking to build and to promote the Culture of Peace at the global, national, regional, as well as at the societal, communal and individual level through the full and effective implementation of the United Nations Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (A/RES/53/243). Ambassador Chowdhury played an important role when he worked with the diplomats at the UN for adoption of the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace which was submitted by Federico Mayor. He also assisted the Security Council's adoption of its groundbreaking Resolution #1325 on women's contribution to peace and security.

The Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (A/RES/53/243) gives clear and comprehensive guidelines on a new mode of governance, which calls on the entire United Nations system -- all governments and all peoples -- to work together to build a freer, fairer and more peaceful global neighborhood through "a positive, dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation." The GMCoP is a leader in promoting the Culture of Peace among the United Nations member states and creating the UN's annual High Level Forum on the Culture of Peace in early September. Ambassador Chowdhury continues to travel to many countries around the world giving talks and educational programs on the importance of, and the implementation of the Culture of Peace through the Programme of Action. He is a key global spokesman for the Culture of Peace engaging individuals and organizations wherever he goes.

* Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (A/RES/53/243).

** Yamoussoukro Declaration on Peace in the Minds of Men (Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, 1 July 1989).