# Paths to a Culture of Tolerance and Peace

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# Paths to a Culture of Tolerance and Peace

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# Contents

**Preface** **xi**

**List of Figures** **xv**

**List of Tables** **xvii**

**List of Abbreviations** **xix**

**1 Human Fraternity Document and the Role of the United Arab Emirates** **1**
*H.E. Ahmed Al Jarwan* *1*
1.1 Introduction . . . . . 1
1.2 UAE History with Tolerance and Peace . . . . . 1
1.3 Insights on the Human Fraternity Document . . . . . 4
1.4 Higher Committee of Human Fraternity . . . . . 9
1.5 The Document of Human Fraternity . . . . . 10

**2 Peace, Conflict, and War: The Role of Language and Languages** **19**
*Prof. Timothy Reagan* *19*

**3 An Institutional Model for Tolerance and Peace Using a Formulaic Integration of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion** **35**
*Prof. David L. Everett* *35*
3.1 Introduction . . . . . 35
3.2 Leadership . . . . . 37
3.3 Ownership . . . . . 42
3.4 Partnerships . . . . . 45
3.5 Conclusion . . . . . 47

**4 An Identity-Based Conceptual Framework for the Assessment of Tolerance in Education Curricula** **49**
*Karina V. Korostelina* *49*
4.1 An Identity-Based Conceptual Framework for the Assessment of Tolerance . . . . . 50
4.2 Indicators . . . . . 53
4.3 Negative Attitudes Toward the Other . . . . . 55
4.4 Forms of Identity . . . . . 56
4.5 Interrelations Between Groups . . . . . 58
4.6 Intergroup Competition . . . . . 60
4.7 Ingroup Victimization . . . . . 61
4.8 Outgroup Threat . . . . . 62
4.9 Collective Axiology . . . . . 65
4.10 Dehumanization . . . . . 67
4.11 Ideologization/Manipulation of Identity . . . . . 68
4.12 The Conceptual Framework . . . . . 72

**5 The Historical-Legal Development of Religious Tolerance and Harmony in Albania** **83**
*Eda Çela* *83*
5.1 Communist Albania and Forced Atheism . . . . . 88
5.2 The Reborn of Religious Tradition, Tolerance and Harmony in Albania . . . . . 90
5.3 Religious Harmony in Albania, Between Myths and Truth . 95

**6 Tolerance and Peace Through the Portuguese Parliament Action** **99**
*H.E. Fernando Negrão* *99*

**7 Interreligious Dialogue and Its Contribution to International Security** **105**
*Prof. Ferdinand Gjana* *105*
7.1 Traditional Meaning vs. the New Environment of International Security . . . . . 106
7.2 International Security and the Scary Trends of Terrorism . . 107
7.3 Interreligious Dialogue as an Effective Way of Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism . . . . . 108
7.4 Examples of International Initiatives . . . . . 110
7.5 Active Role of UN in Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue 110

7.6 The Active Role of Vatican in Interreligious Dialogue . . . . 111
7.7 UAE Initiatives in Promoting Religious Tolerance and Dialogue . . . . . 112
7.8 Interfaith Dialogue in Albania: A Multi-Dimensional Example of Coexistence . . . . . 112
7.9 Historical and Social Dimensions of Religious Tolerance and Coexistence . . . . . 113
7.10 The Role of Religious Institutions and Their Leadership . . . 114
7.11 State, Politics, and Religions: A Balanced Equilibrium . . . 115
7.12 The Interreligious Coexistence in Albania as Part of Its Public Diplomacy . . . . . 116
7.13 Conclusion . . . . . 117

**8 Universities as Cosmopolitan Places for a Culture of Peace and Tolerance. The Case of the Ponto De Partida — Experiências Educativas** **121**
*Cláudia Vaz, Ana Carolina Reis, João Ferreira Marini* *121*
8.1 Introduction . . . . . 122
8.2 (One) "Starting Point" — An Educational Experience . . . . 124
8.2.1 The Process . . . . . 127
8.2.2 The SP-EEI Model[11] . . . . . 130
8.2.3 About "What I Enjoyed Most" (Students Quotes) . . 133
8.2.4 About "Ideas that I Take with Me" (Students Quotes) 134
8.3 Assumptions of the Model and Pillars of Education — An Analogy . . . . . 134
8.4 The Responsibility of Universities to Nurture a Culture . . . 138
8.4.1 How Can Models Like the SP-EEIC Be an Integral Part of a More Socially Responsible Educational Culture? (Level 4 of Figure 8.3) . . . . . 139
8.4.2 How Can Universities Contribute to a Culture of Peace and Tolerance? (Level 5 and 6 of Figure 8.3) . . . . . 140

**9 The Peace Education Reconstructive-Empowering Approach: From Recognition to Cultures of Peace** **145**
*Dr. Sofia Herrero Rico* *145*
9.1 Introduction . . . . . 145
9.2 Peace Education from the Reconstructive-Empowering Approach . . . . . 146

9.3 Facing Intolerance and Violence Through Recognition . . . 149
9.4 Recognition: Key Concept for the Creation of Cultures of Peace . . . 150
9.5 Conclusion . . . 151

**10 The Meaning of Education in a Time of "Ressentiment" and Global Hatred 155**
*Prof. Stephen Dobson* *155*
10.1 Story Number 1: Norway and New Zealand, the Old and the New . . . 158
10.2 Story Number 2: The Most Important Demand Placed on all Education . . . 159
10.3 Story Number 3: Ressentiment, Moral and Values-Based Education . . . 162
10.4 Conclusion . . . 164

**11 The Interreligious Dialogue as a Premise to the Culture of Peace 167**
*Prof. Roberta Santoro* *167*
11.1 Migration Flows and Cohabitation in Multicultural Contexts 167
11.2 Multiculturalism and Interculture as Tools for the Composition . . . 170
11.3 Building Peace with Dialogue and Integration Policies . . . 174
11.4 Religions in the European Context . . . 177

**12 The Dialogue Between Democracies: The Resolution of Conflicts and the Protection of the Human Rights 183**
*Gaetano Dammacco* *183*
12.1 The Mediterranean as "multi-space": multi-cultural, multi-religious . . . 183
12.2 Plurality of Models of Democracy: Is There an Arab-Islamic Model? . . . 186
12.3 Religion and Laicity in the Euro-Mediterranean Area: The Value . . . 191
12.4 Dialogue Between Cultures and Religions Instrument . . . 193
12.5 Dialogue Beyond Tolerance: The Role of Religions . . . 195

**13 Tolerance and Nonviolent Practices 199**
*Prof. Hugh J. Curran* *199*
References . . . 206

**14 Careers in Tolerance** **207**
*Anjum Malik* *207*
14.1 Concepts of Tolerance: Conceptual Career Issues in Bettering the World . . . . . 208
14.1.1 Geographical Possibilities: Mapping Out the Future . 208
14.1.2 Skills and Contributions from an Education in Tolerance . . . . . 208
14.1.3 Noble Leaders: Best Practice for Tolerance . . . . . 209
14.1.4 Professional Skills at the Next Level . . . . . 209
14.2 Tolerance and the Arts . . . . . 209
14.2.1 Film and Television . . . . . 211
14.2.2 Music . . . . . 211
14.2.3 Literature . . . . . 212
14.3 Tolerance and the Market: Careers in International Business 212
14.3.1 Cultural Diversity . . . . . 213
14.3.2 Teamwork . . . . . 213
14.3.3 Emotional Intelligence . . . . . 214
14.3.4 Women's Empowerment . . . . . 214
14.3.5 Careers in Tolerance-Related Fields . . . . . 214

**Index** **221**

**About the Editor** **225**

**About the Authors** **229**

# Preface

The word peace does not have a unique meaning in the history of humanity, and it is convenient to assume that the challenge of unifying it for our time is extremely urgent. To understand this situation, we should keep in mind that, in the Roman sense (*pax*), it referred to the submission of any region or people to the Empire - which submitted them to obedience to the "*jus gentium*", meaning that peace was translated into obedience and submission.

Westernization defined the colonialism of several powers but highlighted the British *Pax* that took on a vast expression in the Commonwealth. In an attempt to reduce , the meanings of the word "peace", it ended up becoming defined as, "absence of war", which did not always mean loyalty in relations between different powers, but it meant just not appealing to violence that seeks, through the submission of different peoples and lands, the imposition of victory.

It was this vision that guided what was called *Pax Dei*, an expression sometimes intended to protect only non-combatants in times of war, but the most distinguished evaluators of the maintenance of peace between the States, being these habitual interveners in the action, although they cannot forget internal wars of a State, for differences of principles, values, or interests, are several and always valuable. It is above all the analysts of the faith, and creditors of international law, or very articulate university professors — for example at the Universities of Coimbra and Evora in Portugal, and Salamanca in Spain, who at the time of westernization by navigation and conquests, reminded a general thought of the rights of all Peoples encountered, a teaching that today is called "Iberian Peace Policy", inscribed in the "Intangible Heritage of Humanity", entrusted to UNESCO. Among the religions, Saint Augustine (354–430) stands out, who, in the "City of God", maintains that true peace does not depend only on the lack of hostilities, but rather on "tranquillity in order".

However, the most globalized thought was that of Kant, who advocated for the submission of the federation of free States to an obeyed law. This vision led to Jefferson's Universal Declaration of Rights (1776) entitled

Virginia Declaration of Rights, and, at the end of the 1939- 1945 war, to the UN General Declaration of Rights.

However, being in this period the first time when globalism implies the meeting of all cultures and beliefs of humanity – not forgetting the fragility of obedience to all UN bodies – it seems clear to me that two principles are in force, not written and fundamental elements that ensure, if observed, peace and sustainable development: "the single world", that is, without wars, and the "common home of humanity", that is, all with equal dignity and peace, thus allowing for sustained equal development.

In the UN Charter, there is no guiding reference on the cultural encounter of the various religions. However, there was an intervention that grew in importance. The illustrious Secretary- General, Dag Hammarskjöld, who was to be a victim of an attack in the Belgian Congo, created a modest room at the UN headquarters, with rows of modest chairs near the walls and a stone altar receiving light from above, that was called the Meditation Room for all religions. This intention found no visible support, but the UN General Assembly welcomed Catholic Popes, Bishops of Rome, including Paul VI, John Paul II, Pope Emeritus, and presently Pope Francis.

Also the German Father, Hans Küng, with his remarkable work on Christianity, Islam and Judaism that led to the creation of his Foundation for Global Ethics, affirms that, in the "religious situation of the time, there is no peace between Nations or peace between religions, without dialogue between religions; and there is no dialogue between religions without researching the good between religions. The existence of the Global Council for Tolerance and Peace is a valuable contribution to making this often abandoned objective finally part of the cultural heritage of Humanity.

**ADRIANO MOREIRA**

President of the Institute for Higher Studies of the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon Professor Emeritus of the Technical University of Lisbon

# List of Figures


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Figure 1.1** | Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan. . . . . | 2 |
| **Figure 1.2** | Sheikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan. . . . . | 2 |
| **Figure 1.3** | His Holiness Pope Francis and The Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmad Al-Tayyeb in Abu Dhabi. . . . . | 3 |
| **Figure 1.4** | The Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmad Al-Tayyeb. . | 4 |
| **Figure 1.5** | His Holiness Pope Francis. . . . . | 5 |
| **Figure 1.6** | Human Fraternity document as a road map for global peace and coexistence. . . . . | 6 |
| **Figure 1.7** | Key principles of Human Fraternity document. . . . | 6 |
| **Figure 1.8** | The Human Fraternity document to become the object of research and reflection in all schools, universities, and institutes of formation. . . . . | 7 |
| **Figure 1.9** | H. E. Antonio Guterres. . . . . | 8 |
| **Figure 1.10** | The Higher Committee of Human Fraternity. . . . . | 9 |
| **Figure 1.11** | Summary of the achievements of the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity. . . . . | 10 |
| **Figure 3.1** | Hierarchal vs. Networked. . . . . | 41 |
| **Figure 3.2** | Hierarchal vs. Networked. . . . . | 48 |
| **Figure 8.1** | The SP-EEI model results from the combination of two apparently paradoxical models — the Human Centered Design, with a focus on the human person and the Business Model Canvas, with a focus on sustainable business. The underlying idea is to make a humanist project sustainable whose mission is to develop human potential. In this case, the solution was to create four laboratories from which all educational activities are designed and organized. . | 131 |
| **Figure 8.2** | Business model canvas. . . . . | 132 |
| **Figure 8.3** | The responsibility of the university, the responsibility of all of us. . . . . | 139 |

**Figure 8.4** We consider this metaphor of a "new box" interesting because it communicates the idea that more than creating, what we do is recreate — adapt what already exists to the context and purposes in question. In this process, it is essential to take into account existing resources (present) and the sustainability of the project (future). The line that combines these elements — the idea, the purpose (= assumptions), the resources, and the sustainability — is the same mindset (in this case, as mentioned in the previous section, it results from the intersection between Human Centered Design and Business Model Canvas). Collaborative intelligence, the way we communicate with not only others but all agents, at different levels. . . . . 142

**Figure 14.1** Career Opportunities Panelists shown with H. E. Dr. Ahmed Al Jarwan, President, Global Council for Tolerance and Peace. Left to Right: Tony Culley Foster, Orlando Kelm, Liesl Riddle, Hassan Diab, H. E. Ahmed Jarwan, Anjum Malik, Oddgeir Tveiten, Ida Beerhalter, and Lucy Wess. . . . . 217

# List of Tables

**Table 4.1** Identity-based conceptual framework for the assessment of tolerance in education curricula. . . . . 73

# List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| BCE | Before the Common Era (B.C.) |
| EU | European Union |
| Experiences IN | Inclusive, Informal and Inclusive |
| GCTP | Global council for Tolerance and Peace |
| GTI | The Global Terrorism Index |
| H variety | High (language) variety |
| L variety | Low (language) variety |
| LWCs | Languages of Wider Communication |
| NATO | The North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| OSCE | Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe |
| SIL | Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL International) |
| SP-EEI | Starting Point - Educational Experiences IN |
| UAE | United Arab Emirates |
| UN | United Nations |
| VUCA | Volatil, uncertain, complex and ambiguous |