



# THE PEACEBUILDERS

**“Keeping the ICF Circle informed; Connecting with Community of Interreligious Peacebuilders”**

Bi-monthly E-Newsletter of the Interfaith Cooperation Forum of Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs



## Contrast of Conflict? Road to Conflict Transformation

Nearly 30 participants from different religions around Vietnam joined the Workshop series “Conflict or Contrast? Road to Conflict Transformation” on November 12th, 19th, and 26th at Mua Hoa No Coffee in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC). The attendees, who are currently living in various areas of the city, met to exchange ideas, discuss conflict issues, and network.

The workshop series, hosted by a non-profit organization, “Peace Education - Road to Peace Blossom,” took place in person at a coffee room with a capacity of up to 30 people. The participants were given learning opportunities through 3 rigorous training sessions with the objectives of reconceptualizing conflicts and providing them with alternatives to transform conflicts. Dr. Muriel Oreillo-Montenegro and Baidido Saganding from the Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF) were invited on the first day to give some inspiring insights about peacebuilding. Ms. Tham Tran and Ms. Quynh Nhi welcomed the participants and facilitated the workshops, “Conflict Understanding,” on Day 1 and “Tools for Analyzing Conflicts on Day 2, respectively.” Ms. Khanh An coordinated the opening and closing ceremony and facilitated the last day of the series “How to Deal with Conflict.”

The Workshop series revolved around empowering the youth in HCMC to develop strong skills in transforming conflicts and embracing the differences in a diverse society. Through various activities involving panel discussions, presentations, working in pairs, and group work, the attendees were enabled to approach another aspect of “conflict” and transcend their ongoing personal conflicts into peace.

## Inside this Issue:

Contrast of Conflict? Road to Conflict Transformation	1
Three-Day Workshop to Promote Peace in Pakistan	3
YMCA Vietnam hosted a transformative "CONFLICT 101" Workshop	4
Student Leaders join ICF-Peacebuilding Workshop in Siaton	5
ICF Philippines Alumni plans for the coming years	7

## REFLECTIONS:

"Being a facilitator is like being a teacher, right? "Yeah..."	7
Participant's Perspective Road to Conflict Transformation	8
Participant's Perspective Road to Conflict Transformation	9
Participant's Perspective Road to Conflict Transformation	11
Reflection on Peace	12
Reflection on Religious Harmony and Peace in Pakistan	13
A Reflection on the "Conflict 101 Workshop"	14
Reflection Essay "Conflict 101 Workshop"	15
Thank you, ICF, for believing in me! A reflection.	17

## POETRY:

A Child's Prayer	18
------------------	----

Editorial: "During this festive season and beyond, let us pursue Peace in a Divided World"	19
--	----



### Day 1:

On Sunday morning, two instructors conducted a 3-hour session of group discussions, sharing, plenary, and reflective writing activities. The topic focused on “Conflict Understanding” to equip participants with the capability of collectively defining the concept of conflict and articulating their individual conflicts. The opening host was Ms. Khanh An, who was responsible for introducing the workshop and carrying out warm-up tasks. Participants engaged in a group discussion to share their expectations for the workshop series. Afterward, they took a conflict handling test to determine their conflict style. Ms. Tham Tran, the facilitator, hosted the conflict sharing and a plenary discussion. Then, she shared great insights into the collective definition of conflict in a detailed, apparent, and concise way. Day 1 left a distinctly strong impression on the participants, so more than 90% of them continued exploring the rest of the Workshop Series.



*Participants engage in group discussion during the workshop.*

### Day 2:

On the second day of the workshop series, attendees were given opportunities to work on the Onion Ring and Conflict Map through individual activities, group discussions, and presentations. All attendees shared the same issue: they had been facing issues with their loved ones, such as parents, sisters, or brothers. They knew how important it was to solve conflicts between them and other parties. Ms. Quynh Nhi, responsible for facilitating this session, “Tools for Analyzing Conflicts,” brought two typical case studies related to parent-children and romantic relationships to the table for participants to practice and give their resolutions. The participants could relate closely to the case studies, which led to dynamic discussions during the session. Participants delved deeper into conflict analysis tools to gain a broader understanding of the conflict and identify entry points for intervention in their conflict maps.

### Day 3:

The last day was the culmination of knowledge and action, “How to Deal with Conflict.” The game “Passing the Balls” was introduced by Ms. Khanh An to emphasize the importance of direct communication in our daily lives. “Sometimes we misunderstand each other as the way we convey our thoughts is unclear,” said one participant. Participants leveraged knowledge from the previous two sessions, applying them along with two provided examples to develop practical solutions. It was noteworthy for the attendees that conflict transformation occurs when we genuinely address each others’ needs based on Johan Galtung’s Basic Human Needs model. This session aimed to motivate participants to engage in conflict resolution guided by principles of empathy, non-violence, and innovation, striving towards a future of sustainable peace.



Participants have been equipped with essential skills, fundamental theories, and how to effectively apply them to their daily lives to transform their conflicts and direct them to a healthier lifestyle over the workshop series. Through that, attendees brought home valuable lessons to approach issues with comprehensive perspectives.

*Nhu Quynh & Hanh Nguyen,  
Vietnam*



*Participants present their group work findings.*

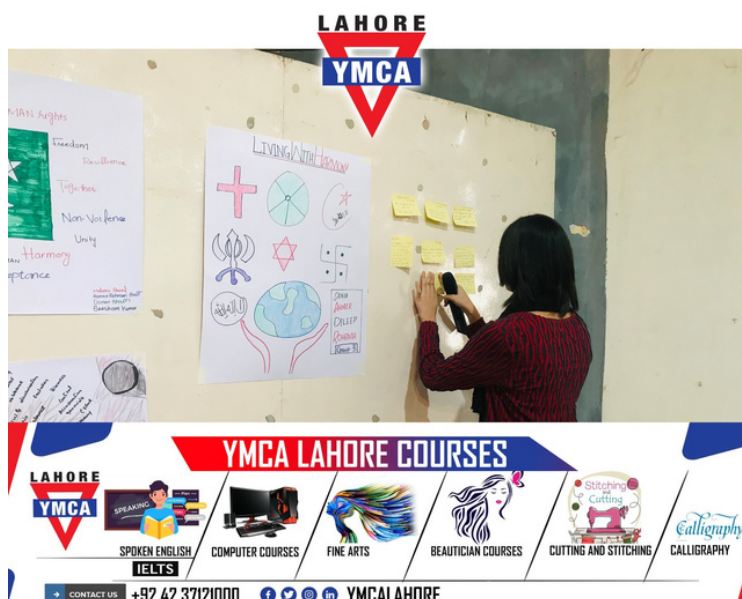
### Three-Day Workshop to Promote Peace in Pakistan

A three-day workshop to spread religious harmony and promote peace in Pakistan was held at the YMCA Hall in Lahore, Pakistan, from November 16-18, 2023. YMCA Lahore organized the event in collaboration with the Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF), a project of the Asia Pacific Alliance of YMCAs. It was a unique opportunity for the youth of different religions and social backgrounds to come together, deliberate on the situation and issues, and work on solutions to create a just, harmonious, and peaceful society.

The event brought together the youth from across the country, especially from different cities and rural areas. There were 16 participants (9 males and 7 females), who represented different faiths, including 8 Christians, 5 Muslims, and 3 Hindus. The youth came together to view the new challenges, formulate a strategy to meet them and carve a future course of action. The event formed a common ground among all religions and how to end the divisions and emerging hate-spreading trends in society.

On Day 1, the topic was on identifying common conflict issues within local communities in Pakistan. Mr. John William, founder and chairman of Save Foundation, led discussions on the root causes of conflicts and potential solutions.

On day 2, Rev. Reuben Qamar, Vice President of the National Council of Churches in Pakistan and priest at Presbyterian Church FC College & University, delved into the importance of peace education and teachings across religions.



*A participant posts their group work.*





On the final day, the participants explored the theme, “Understanding and Maintaining Peace and Religious Harmony in Society and Human Rights for All. Prof. Abdia, Founder of the Student Christian Movement (SCMP) of Pakistan, and Mr. Emanuel Sarfraz, General Secretary of YMCA Lahore, Pakistan, shared their insights on the theme.

They watched video documentaries and shared their insights on how these documentaries enhance their understanding of peace education and awareness campaigns. Ramis John, a youth member of YMCA Lahore, facilitated the sharing segment of the activity.



Group picture during the three-day workshop.

The workshop concluded with the distribution of certificates to participants, a ceremony graced by Chief Guest Rev. Qaisar Nadeem of Vicar Lahore Cathedral Diocese, Church of Pakistan. Overall, the workshop was successful, and YMCA Lahore is thankful for the support of the Asia Pacific Alliance of YMCAs through the Interfaith Cooperation Forum project.

*Ramis John,  
ICF Alumnus,  
Pakistan*

## YMCA Vietnam hosted a transformative "CONFLICT 101" Workshop

YMCA Vietnam hosted a five-day thematic workshop on Conflict 101 from November 16–20, 2023, in Ba Dat Homestay in Dong Nai, Vietnam. A total of 18 participants (16 female, 2 male), 6 were Buddhist, 2 were Christians, and 10 were not affiliated with any organized religion, participated in the workshop. It was supported by the Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF), a project of the Asia Pacific Alliance of YMCAs. The workshop aimed to provide an environment for participants to learn and experience navigating and resolving conflicts in diverse scenarios.

The workshop activities included morning yoga, walking meditation, and conflict analysis lessons led by speakers from Vietnam and ICF. On the first day, there was an orientation on the workshop and works of ICF, YMCA, and the Asia Pacific Alliance of YMCAs led by Baidido Saganding, ICF staff, and Ms. Thuy Nguyen, YMCA Vietnam staff.



Participants during the session on NVC.

Day 2 of the workshop focused on Understanding and Defining Conflict, facilitated by Ms. Le Thi An Ha. This exploration continued on Day 3, which focused on Conflict Analysis led by Dr. Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro, ICF Coordinator.







The participants were provided with practical frameworks and tools to analyze and understand different types of conflicts. Additionally, the Forum Theater session facilitated by Ms. Annika Denkmann allowed participants to engage in other creative problem-solving methods with real-world scenarios actively.



Group picture at Ba Dat Homestay.

The Day 4 discussion centered around Nonviolent Communication (NVC), facilitated by Ms. Nguyen Thi Van Trang. The participants explored the transformative power of non-aggressive communication, adding valuable insights to their conflict resolution journey.

As the workshop concluded, the participants left not only with theoretical knowledge but also practical skills to navigate and transform conflicts positively. During these five days, they forged a sense of community among the diverse group, creating lasting connections beyond the workshop's duration.

The "CONFLICT 101" workshop marked a significant step toward building a community willing to address conflicts constructively. As the participants return to their respective environments, the impact of this workshop is expected to spread, contributing to a more harmonious and peaceful society.

*Than Ngoc Nhi Binh, participant, studied International Relations at VNU Ho Chi Minh University of Social Sciences and Humanities*

### Student Leaders join ICF-Peacebuilding Workshop in Siaton

The Interfaith Cooperation Forum alumnus conducted a workshop on Peacebuilding on the theme: "Harmony in Diversity: A Peace Education Initiative." Thirteen Supreme Secondary Learner Government (SSLG) and potential senior high school learners of Siaton Science High School attended the workshop. It took place on the 25th and 26th of November, 2023, at 2Views Resort, Mantuyop Beach, Siaton, Negros Oriental, Philippines.

The peacebuilding workshop enlightened young learners on essential knowledge for a sustainable future. The peacebuilding workshop met the group's needs by providing targeted sessions and activities that address peace education. The goal was to equip participants with the knowledge and skills to contribute actively to community peacebuilding efforts.



types, understand critical issues, and use conflict analysis tools. Furthermore, it aimed to address the underlying causes of conflict, help people resolve their differences peacefully, and lay the foundations to prevent future violence. It also intended to help the attendees express their understanding of peace through poetry and painting, creating tangible expressions of their visions for a peaceful contemporary world.

On the first day, the session commenced with an opening ritual, reading of house rules, and orientation. The participants were oriented on the house rules, and Eugene Jamandron, an ICF alumnus and organizer, expressed his gratitude to the participants for dedicating their time to participate in the workshop.



Dr. Muriel O. Montenegro, the ICF Coordinator, led the session with a warm ‘Getting to Know Each Other Deeper Activity’ where everyone shared aspects of their identities to create a deeper connection with their fellow attendees.

The session progressed when the host introduced the purpose of peacebuilding and its significance in social equity, emphasizing the vital role that the participants play in creating a positive impact. Later, Dr. Muriel took the floor to delve into Conflict and its types and shed light on their nature and effect. Dr. Muriel then discussed conflict analysis tools, empowering participants with valuable insights to navigate and understand complex situations for peaceful coexistence and positive social change. The dynamic duo of Mr. Eugene and Dr. Muriel blended the session with practical applications and activities that the participants took part in to deepen their understanding of the mentioned conflict analysis tools.

On day two, Royanni Miel M. Hontucan, a college instructor, and Florena Arzelle Sun, a senior high school teacher, joined the session to share their expertise with the young participants.

The session started with introducing the concept of ‘Art for Peace.’ Ms. Florena shared insights on using painting and drawing for peace advocacy. The workshop on painting followed.

This activity was followed by an introduction to the significance of poetry in advocating for peace. Ms. Miel facilitated the “writeshop.” She encouraged the participants to write poems and express their appreciation and understanding of peace. The workshop outputs in painting and writing were then displayed for the gallery walk.

The organization needs such projects to address issues related to peace education. Eventually, the project aimed to contribute to conflict resolution, understanding, and building a culture of peace within the community. At the end of the session, participants wrote their reflections and expressed their takeaways and personal experiences during the activities. Certificates of Recognition were given to the participants and Event Coordinators. Through the collaborative efforts, the workshop on Peacebuilding was smooth and well-coordinated.

*Avegail V. Kilakiga & Eugene E. Jamandron,  
Philippines*



ICF-Peacebuilding workshop participants in Siaton, Negros Oriental, Philippines (from left: Shifra Jyian Labajo, Dazel Valerie Esteral, Allyza Gainsan, Althea Ragay, Avegail Kilakiga, Jun Joshua Galabay, Herzell Arbolado, Franz Miguel Tolentino, Arthpaul Quio, Doblenn Cabugnason, Sofian Alexis Villamor, & Mitch Mahabague, along with ICF Coordinator, Dr. Muriel Oreillo-Montenegro, Ms. Royanni Miel Hontucan (resource speaker), Florena Arzelle Sun (resource speaker), & Eugene E. Jamandron (ICF alumnus).



## ICF Philippines Alumni plans for the coming years

The recently concluded Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF) Philippine Alumni Meeting brought together ICF Alumni from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. The meeting was held on December 4-6, 2023, at the UCCP Retreat House in Tagbilaran, Bohol. The objective of the gathering was to share their achievements and outline plans.

During the meeting, the alumni from different ICF programs shared their undertakings, projects, and progress. They discussed their successful implementation of peacebuilding initiatives in their communities, such as organizing small grants and doable projects. Plans were also thoroughly discussed and deliberated by the alumni to determine the course of the program in the coming years.

The first day of the gathering marked the arrival of alumni and ICF staff from different islands, with the opening program commencing at 5:30 pm. Alumni from Luzon, particularly from Albay Interfaith Group, the Visayas representing Bohol and Dumaguete, and Mindanao coming from North Cotabato and the Special Geographic Area of Bangsamoro Region, took their turns presenting their accomplishments after they had attended programs offered by the ICF. Dory Dotusme from Samar and Rose Hayahay from Davao joined online also to share their experiences and engagements.



*Group picture during the ICF Alumni meeting in Bohol.*

Discussion and brainstorming of plans beyond 2024 for the ICF programs transpired in the morning of day two. The dialogue concluded at noon, giving ample time for the attendees to take a small tour around Tagbilaran, Bohol City.

Day three concluded the Philippine ICF Alumni Meeting with the attendees returning to their hometowns.

Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF) is a project of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs that aims to capacitate young people from different faith backgrounds in Asia.

*Ma. Jacintha L. De Leon,  
ICF Alumna,  
Philippines*



## "Being a facilitator is like being a teacher, right? "Yeah..."

That was part of my conversation with Anne in one of our meetings, brainstorming activities for the workshop series: Contrast of Conflict? Road to Conflict Transformation. For your information, I am a teacher. My question above, as I still remember vividly, was not to look for the answer from her but to seek reassurance from her that this role was not too challenging and was entirely in my control. However, my mind was screaming then, thinking that I was not ready and eligible to host a workshop, not to mention the tricky topic I voluntarily took charge of Conflict Analysis Tools—Onion Ring and Conflict Map. Aside from the pressure of this role and my wish to share what I know about conflict and conflict transformation, especially in the context of families, motivated me to face this challenge. I spent a lot of time researching this topic and trying to present the information in a way that is easy for Vietnamese people to understand since these tools are unfamiliar to them.





The important day finally came. I admit that I was a bit worried at first, but the energy from the participants amazed me. They were very active and fluently shared their stories, opinions, and points of view. Such a contribution helped me look at problems discussed from various angles and gain more insights from the participants' experiences. Along the way, I felt a deep connection with the participants after listening to and discussing different stories about conflict. I know they all took a significant interest in the topic of conflict and were eager to find constructive and sustainable solutions for their personal conflicts.

When going around and checking on the participants doing group work during the discussion part, I saw myself back in the days during the School of Peace (SOP) 2023 in Bali, Indonesia, where I also worked in teams and drew a conflict map about intergenerational conflicts in Vietnamese families, that moment reminded me about my presence and responsibility in the workshop, not simply to facilitate but to spread what I have learned in the SOP, together with my experience in using those tools to solve conflicts, to those who are not at peace with the conflicts in their lives. Therefore, I hope that all the input that the other two facilitators and I delivered during these Sunday mornings will help any of the participants whose conflicts negatively impact them and their relationships with others.

Upon the success of this workshop series, I would like to express my sincere gratitude towards ICF-APAY and YMCA Vietnam for letting me be a part of the SOP 2023, to Anne for giving me this precious chance to be a facilitator, to the organizing team, which has always been an enormous support for me in this journey, to Ms. Tham Tran - facilitator of the first session - for giving me helpful advice and suggestions for my work, and last but not least, to all the participants who joined me on November 19th.

Hope to see you all again in future peacebuilding activities!

*Nguyen Le Quynh Nhi (Queenie),  
Vietnam*

### Participant's Perspective Road to Conflict Transformation

Hello everyone! Recently, I had the privilege of participating in an exceptionally high-quality workshop program titled "Contrast or Conflict? Road to Conflict Transformation" conducted by the organization "Peace Education—Road to Peace Blossom." Exploring the theme of "contradiction," which is both novel and extremely practical, the program has significantly contributed to my personal growth <3.

I appreciate the content of this workshop due to its coherence and logical progression throughout the three sessions. Like reading a novel, my questions and uncertainties gradually unfolded as time passed.

Initially, I delved into the concept of "contradiction" at a deeper level, realizing that the "conflict" we commonly perceive extends beyond mere arguments and loud voices; it also encompasses the needs and pain of the involved parties. Upon reflection, I discovered that I had been superficially resolving conflicts for a long time, merely aiming to settle arguments quickly without genuinely understanding the parties' underlying needs to transform the conflict.

In the second session, the facilitator introduced conflict analysis tools, including the Onion Ring and the Conflict Map. These tools are beneficial, aiding our understanding of the nature and interconnections involved. However, applying them to real-life demands an objective, profound, and comprehensive perspective—qualities that someone like me, who tends to be emotional, may find challenging to execute well.







Typically, these tools are crafted by external parties, emphasizing the importance of cultivating quality relationships to seek guidance.

The final session left me with a sense of both regret and gratitude. I regretted that it was the last meeting, yet I was grateful for the young individuals who are actively contributing to society, such as the organizers of this program. During this session, I learned that we are not as alone as we might think on the journey to resolving conflicts. Rather than solely focusing on fulfilling superficial desires, let's strive to understand and share each other's genuine needs to transform conflicts positively.



*Conflict Analysis: Onion Ring practice during the workshop.*

Personally, I attended the first workshop in a state of uncertainty and anxiety about my studies and family. Honestly, my initial attendance was driven by a desire to escape the chaos in my life. However, after participating in the first session, I was deeply impressed by the content and organization of the program. It provided me with insights into addressing my problems. Previously, when confronted with the discord between my father and mother, I chose to disengage, viewing it as an adult matter that would only become more perplexing if I intervened. The pain associated with witnessing their conflict bothered me. Yet, this program made me realize I am a crucial link in my parents' conflict. I must be an intermediary for them, even if they do not listen to or criticize me. Contrary to my earlier perspective, I see myself on the path to finding a solution for my family.

I want to extend my gratitude for the appreciation everyone showed toward each participant. Thank you sincerely for the values you have instilled in the community. Look forward to meeting again in the near future!

*Vũ Cao Hoàng Yến,  
Medical Department - Pham Ngoc Thach Medical  
University*

### Participant's Perspective Road to Conflict Transformation

Chance to know the Workshop series: I am a person who often falls into conflict situations with people around me and myself. I always want to have an opportunity to understand conflicts more thoroughly and then have more appropriate ways of behaving because, after each conflict, there is no solution, and no value can be found, as well as a common voice; I understand that I lose more than I gain. While surfing the message board, I saw a post shared by a sister I knew on a volunteer trip. That post introduced the Workshop series **"CONTRAST OR CONFLICT? ROAD TO CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION"** organized by Road to Peace Blossom did it. I didn't think much and signed up right away.

I attended all three sessions because of the valuable things and the cuteness of the guests, as well as the program organizers, have brought to me and everyone.

First impressions of the organizers: It was gentleness, kindness, thoughtfulness, and devotion. I felt this right when I filled out the participation form. Thoroughness is shown through each communication article, each line reminding about important information when participating in the program. Emails were sent to our inbox with thoughtful messages from choosing drinks to giving us more accessible directions. All of this makes a thought appear: "I'm really looking forward to this series of workshops." And then, when I arrived at the place to attend, my previous feelings were recovered but were more accurate and precise.





The organizers are so dedicated and thoughtful. Everyone's gentleness makes the barriers I have always built up disappear. The positive energy that everyone creates spreads throughout the room, helping me to be more open and share more things without fear of being judged or criticized. These are the things that give me a source of motivation, excitement, and the desire for the weekend to come quickly so I can meet everyone.

Impressions about the facilitators and valuable things I have learned: The thoughtfulness and dedication were also shown through the guidance of Ms. Khanh An and three reporters. The three sisters always lead everyone in a way that suggests problems without imposing personal thoughts on the participants, giving us multi-dimensional perspectives on conflicts. The concepts, models, and tools you introduced in all three sessions also excited me. Everyone always creates an environment that can be said to be peaceful. Everyone is allowed to voice their thoughts and opinions.

The facilitators and the Organizing Committee very carefully prepared the content of all three sessions. In session 1, I listened to the reporter's sharing about the concept of conflict, new perspectives on conflict through everyone's sharing, and basic human needs, ... In the second session, we learned analytical tools to understand the deep roots of conflicts better, identify factors and objects involved in conflicts, and the relationship between conflicts so that they can find the best solutions, which are the two tools Onion Rings (Point of View; Goals - concerns, Fears; Basic Needs) and Conflict Map. Coming to the final session - Session 3, we learned more about ways to resolve conflicts. By applying what we learned in all three sessions, we "Practice: Facing conflicts" through three steps: (1) Identifying conflicts, (2) Analyzing conflicts Onion Ring, Conflict Map, and (3) Directions for resolving conflicts.

Each facilitator gave their own impression, but the common thing I felt in everyone was acceptance, understanding and concern for everyone's thoughts and feelings.

Although the workshop series only had three sessions, these three were meaningful for me. It helped me have a more objective view of conflicts. I learned that conflict is inevitable in life. Most importantly, when conflict occurs, each of us needs to look at it objectively, peeling off each layer of the problem to be able to see the inside deeply and understand the deep roots of conflicts so that we can identify the "needs" of both sides so that we can find appropriate solutions whenever conflicts occur. At the end of the workshop series, Ms. Khanh An shared an image of two donkeys eating grass from both ends of a rope, which I found particularly compelling. This made me suddenly understand that conflicts will be reduced when we stand on the other person's side, look at the problem from their perspective, and sympathize with each other. "Solve the nature of the problem, not the problem creator," just like: "When the fingernails grow long, people will cut the nail instead of the finger. Like human relationships, when a conflict arises, we should understand and resolve that conflict, not give up that relationship."



*Participants are listening to the presentation.*







Regrets and messages: If there were any regrets, it would be the shocking realization of the short time left to spend with everyone. During this busy time, I almost exhausted my energy. During the past weekend, I felt more energized and at peace after attending the workshop. Because of the positive things that people shared, I felt that "way."

I want to send my sincere thanks to everyone. Thank you, everyone, for organizing such a wonderful, high-quality workshop series. Even though the workshop has ended, I will always follow and support Road to Peace Blossom because I know this organization will bring meaningful projects to the community. I hope that you and everyone will spread the message of peace everywhere. The messages everyone received were like flowers, making this world more and more beautiful.

See you again, everyone. I hope our organization will become stronger and stronger in the future!

*Trần Thị Ngọc Thủy*

*Psychology Department, HCM University of Education*

### **Participant's Perspective Road to Conflict Transformation**

Participating in all three "Contrast or Conflict Workshop? Road to Conflict Transformation" sessions, I had an overview and planted the first seeds on the journey to learn about conflict and peace.

I want to thank the Organizing Committee for meticulously carrying out every step regarding content and format. The cakes were deliciously prepared, and the location, the drinks, and the staff were also very remarkable. Everyone did a great job, so my three Sundays were meaningful and full of energy and peace. The vibrant and diverse way of conveying the content and the professionalism of the facilitators (Ms. Tham, Ms. Nhi, Ms. An) make the content, though academic, very practical and easy to absorb.

In session 1, we got to know each other, discussed the concepts of conflict, and took a test to see our tendency to resolve. What remains in us are new perceptions of differences, which is each individual's fundamental right and a condition that leads to conflict, conflict, and even violence.

When conflicts occur, we only see the tip of the iceberg through arguments and violence,... but underneath are attitudes and differences, things that are hard to see. Hence, when a conflict occurs, how do we recognize and resolve it?

The content of session 2 begins with a drawing activity that evokes a seemingly simple way that needs to be learned and cultivated - communication. We also know that each person will have different emotions when facing the same problem, so there is no right or wrong, and we should only judge with a proper understanding of the other person. The two suggested tools to do that are Onion Rings - We understand that in Positions and Objectives, Fears are ultimately unmet needs; and Conflict Map - which helps us have a broader view of the objects affecting the conflict and the potential solutions, and we can also increase our power or add additional resources to achieve a balance of power. We had lively discussions on this topic, and there was even a practice example at the end of the session.





The content of the last session opened with a game that I really liked - ball throwing. It seemed simple, but when I heard Ms. An analyze it, I thought it was a diverse conflict that could be transmitted between many people. Problem and communication is needed to resolve the issue. We adopt some components of Johan Galtung's Needs model that no one's needs are more legitimate. The important thing is to follow the rules: Empathy - Nonviolence - Creativity. Then we continued to discuss the situation posed in session two and together found solutions (can be avoidance, competition, compromise, cooperation, and adaptation).

The image of two donkeys is so impressive that if they change their perspective, look for alternative solutions, and finally enjoy a delicious meal together. That's how we solve problems. The peace formula states that increasing unity and harmony and reducing trauma and conflict is necessary. At the end of the session, everyone gathered together, expressed gratitude, summarized the course, answered three small questions, took photos, and left with an eagerness to seek more related knowledge.

*Võ Thanh Trúc*  
*Tourism and travel management major, HCM University of*  
*Economics and Finance (UEF)*

### Reflection on Peace

I was very happy to attend a 3-day workshop on religious harmony and forging peace in Pakistan at YMCA Lahore. It was an excellent opportunity for me to be a part of this peace training and to be a peace builder for the communities of Pakistan.

This is a topic that has been discussed previously because I have already attended sessions, seminars, and workshops on peace, interfaith, and religious harmony. Still, a few things were amazing for me, such as the guest speakers who joined us during these three days; their speaking style, words, and way of delivering their speeches were outstanding.

This workshop was very informative, especially seeing such engaging young leaders from different religions and communities. We exchanged our ideas about our culture and religion. And what world religions say about peace.

I gained much information about peace, peace education, interfaith, religious harmony, human rights, the role of minorities in the founding of Pakistan, and so many others. First, I must understand peace, interfaith, religious harmony, and rights. Then, I can tell others who are in my social circle.

I am very thankful to YMCA Lahore, who arranged such a marvelous 3-day workshop. I would be happy if YMCA Lahore would organize more workshops, sessions, and seminars in the future.

*Sumeet Kumar*  
*Lahore, Pakistan*







## Reflection on Religious Harmony and Peace in Pakistan

The three-day workshop on Religious Harmony and Forging Peace in Pakistan taught me a lot. I learned that our country faces numerous challenges in understanding and accepting different religions. This made me think about what I can do to help bring peace and harmony.

The workshop showed me that having different religions in our country is good. Instead of causing problems, these differences should be celebrated. We need to see diversity as a strength, not a weakness.

Talking openly and respectfully is crucial. In Pakistan, where many religions coexist, we must create spaces for people to speak and understand each other better. This means not only listening but also trying to understand how others feel.

The workshop also stressed the importance of education. I realized that we need to teach tolerance and acceptance in schools. I can contribute by supporting programs that teach about different religions. By changing what is taught in schools, we can create a new generation that values diversity.

To make a real difference, we need to involve the local community. This includes organizing events that bring people from different religions together. Creating opportunities for shared experiences can build a more united and peaceful society.

The workshop made it clear that religious harmony is connected to human rights. We need to speak up for the rights of religious minorities and make sure everyone, no matter their religion, is treated fairly. This means standing against discrimination and working towards fair laws.

In conclusion, this workshop was a significant learning experience for me. I am now committed to taking steps to promote religious harmony and peace. This includes talking openly, supporting educational programs, and participating in community activities. I want to be part of making our society more understanding and inclusive.

*Kinret Waris  
Lahore, Pakistan*



Participants engage in group work during the workshop.





## A Reflection on the “Conflict 101 Workshop”

I humbly extend my gratitude to the dedicated organizing team for their unwavering commitment and invaluable contributions. Their tireless efforts have nurtured and empowered us, fostering an environment where we could grow as peacebuilders or, at the very least, as individuals with greater courage.

Throughout the workshop, we were introduced to the essence of peace and conflict, exploring various conflict types and acquiring the tools for resolution in theory and practice. Moreover, we delved into the practice of Compassionate Communication and its application in our present circumstances. I witnessed transformations not only within myself but also among my fellow participants. Some had previously isolated themselves, remaining within their safe havens and shunning interactions. Others were hesitant to partake in group discussions, while some were grappling with inner pain and found it challenging to trust others. The ambiance was intangible yet palpable. However, in the final days, an unexpected shift occurred. All participants came together, sharing their narratives. Tears were shed, embraces were exchanged, and we departed as a unified family after arriving as strangers.

The workshop was not about rectification; it did not seek to impose a singular correct way of life. Instead, it was about fostering connections. We were encouraged to step beyond our comfort zones and explore uncharted territories. Though we harbored pain and darkness within, disregarding or abandoning it was not the solution. Here, we were emboldened and enlightened to confront our fears and acknowledge our shadowy aspects, recognizing that while it may initially be painful, it is an integral part of the healing process.

As the workshop drew to a close, we experienced tears and remorse. Everything felt like a mere simulation, and now we must return to the stark reality where pain and strife await. We are apprehensive, for the abundance of peace and love here is a rarity in the outside world. We ponder who will lend us an ear upon our return, as that question remains unanswered. Having received so much, we feel vulnerable facing the real world. Yet, in this space, we have unearthed inner tranquility. We have learned that love and compassion are genuine and do indeed exist. These memories will endure, propelling us through the darkest of times. They will serve as our guiding light, inspiring us to spread love and compassion for ourselves and others.

*Le Thuy Phuong, NGUYEN*  
*BA in Law Degree, Hanoi Law University*



*Le Thuy Phuong Nguyen*



## Reflection Essay “Conflict 101 Workshop”

I am currently a university student with a vision and mission related to community and society, mainly concerning personal psychology and relationships. I am on a journey of personal development while also supporting others in listening and sharing. Despite my dedication to personal growth, I acknowledge that conflict resolution remains a challenge for me. Recognizing the importance of effective conflict resolution skills in my personal and professional life, I have taken the initiative to seek out programs that can help me develop and strengthen this crucial ability.

I am very fortunate to have found the Workshop "Conflict 101" of YMCA Vietnam. Attending the workshop was an enlightening and transformative experience that offered me a unique opportunity for both personal and professional development. The insights gained, the skills acquired, and the interactions with fellow participants have left a lasting impact on my perspective and approach to various aspects of life.

The Workshop "Conflict 101" of YMCA Vietnam was meticulously designed, and I found the content to be highly valuable. The sessions delved into the intricacies of conflict resolution, offering practical strategies and theoretical frameworks. The progression from fundamental concepts to more advanced techniques allowed me to build a solid foundation while also challenging me to expand my understanding. Specifically, in the first class, I was introduced to the most fundamental concepts and levels of conflict. The instructor skillfully encouraged everyone to provide examples that were closely related to each issue. This helped me to think and visualize the specific expressions and forms of conflicts. To be honest, this class has made it easier for me to approach the academic knowledge from Muriel, enabling me to apply specific situations to the tools or methods for identifying and resolving conflicts in real-life scenarios.

Simultaneously, the workshop also incorporates highly creative lessons. I had never been exposed to theater before, and Annika introduced it into the lessons as a way for us to enhance creativity and vision and prevent monotony. The drama class allowed me to experience being in the role of a character for the first time, allowing me to observe and think while standing in the position of an audience. This helped me broaden my perspective, develop problem-solving skills, and analyze the context of each situation. The final class was the most impressive session when it comes to discussing empathetic communication. This lesson was intellectually enriching and unexpectedly opened the hearts of everyone participating in the class. It felt like a psychological therapy session, helping me and the attendees become aware of the profound aspects within ourselves. It allowed us to identify the needs behind conflicts, making us more conscious of finding solutions to all conflicts. This class also deepened my understanding of psychological issues in the current society through the sharing of the participants.

Furthermore, the interaction of the Workshop "Conflict 101" allowed me to connect with peers who share genuine emotions meaningfully, and stories without hesitation. We connected to each other even though we were strangers, it was really easy for us to communicate and talk about the difficulties in our past lives. That was the most vital thing to connect quickly although we just met each other for five days. Besides that, engaging in discussions, group activities, and networking sessions expanded my network and provided diverse perspectives on the workshop's topic. These connections will be valuable for me in the future.

The Workshop "Conflict 101" encouraged introspection and equipped me with tools and insights to navigate the complexities of conflicts. Through the diverse range of activities, I gained a deeper understanding of my thought processes, emotions, and responses in challenging situations.







In the realm of personal relationships, I learned to identify and address underlying issues, fostering healthier and more constructive interactions. Moreover, the emphasis on empathy has profoundly impacted my perspective, highlighting the importance of recognizing and understanding the diverse viewpoints and needs of others. This heightened sense of empathy has not only improved my interactions in conflicts but has also influenced my approach to everyday communication and relationship-building. In addition, I have more motivation to become a peacebuilder in my future endeavors; the workshop has equipped me with a holistic understanding of conflicts and the tools to address them constructively. I am inspired to apply these newfound insights in promoting understanding, collaboration, and harmony wherever I go.

Supportively, the setting and the venue at Ba Đát Eco Homestay, along with the overall organizational atmosphere, are crucial factors contributing to the success of both the workshop in general and my reception. The day's activities are interconnected, creating a sense of unity that facilitates the formation of balance and tranquility within oneself. I experienced a reduction in pressure and anxiety, finding both physical and mental relief. I believe this has significantly enhanced the effectiveness of absorbing knowledge in the workshop.

Following this workshop, I plan to take a proactive approach by acknowledging and documenting the status of relationships that pose challenges in my life. Subsequently, I intend to utilize guidance tools and evaluation frameworks to identify conflicts, allowing me to understand, recognize, and ultimately find optimal solutions to address these issues personally. The knowledge acquired during the workshop has equipped me with valuable insights and strategies for conflict resolution.



*Wrap-up on the final day of the workshop.*

I aim to apply these principles in my life and introduce and share this knowledge with others. I believe that by disseminating this understanding, I can contribute to creating a positive impact on the broader society around me.

In conclusion, the “Conflict 101” workshop has been a transformative journey, fostering my personal and professional development. Even though the Workshop took place for five days and provided the most basic knowledge, I am still really grateful and want to sincerely thank the program organizers, guests, and lecturers for their valuable time in imparting this knowledge to the community. As I continue to apply these insights in my daily life, I am confident that the impact of this workshop will be a guiding force in my ongoing pursuit of growth and excellence.

*Diệu Linh,  
Vietnam*



### Thank you, ICF, for believing in me! A reflection.

When I received a personal message from Ate Bai, I was not expecting her to invite me to an alumni meeting as she first asked me how I was. I am still sad that I could not attend the Licensure Exam for Fisheries. But when she asked me if I was available for an alumni meeting, I accepted and committed myself to attending the event without hesitation. For me, ICF is a family that is close to my heart. They gave me wonderful experiences, opportunities, and blessings that helped me grow into who I am now. Because of the ICF, I was able to participate and create an impact in my communities and society in terms of peace education and relevant issues that we face nowadays.

After some rest, when we arrived, we started the meeting and introduced ourselves. It was my first time meeting most of them. We were also welcomed by the head of the Bohol Conference of UCCP (United Church of Christ in the Philippines), Rev. Lope Robin. We also shared our experiences and our initiatives conducted in our communities. Since Pastor Dory Dotusme and Rose Hayahay could not attend the in-person meeting due to a family and personal emergency, they joined us through a messenger call. Pastor Dory shared her experience attending the APAY General Assembly in India and the Peace Conference in Chiangmai, Thailand. I am happy that all the alumni from different parts of the country are active in their peace engagement. They could implement various activities since they participated in the ICF activities. Overall, we had a fruitful discussion, exchanging ideas, sharing experiences, and planning for the ICF and the alumni in the Philippines.



*Ain Art Atos sharing the activities of the ICF Alumni in Luzon.*

After the meeting, we went for an exposure to a local farm that produces organic and local agricultural products. This is an excellent opportunity to learn how to grow farm products without synthetic fertilizer. I am also thankful that I was able to explore Bohol and discover the place. After the scheduled meeting, while waiting for our flight back home, I had the opportunity to visit Chocolate Hills and see Tarsier. I had only seen it in postcards and books before, but I could see it in person.

As this year ends, I am so grateful and blessed despite the failures that I experienced; even though it hurt, I tried to be who I am, a person with purpose and pursuing dreams. I am thankful that I have these people around me who believe in me, that I can do this if I believe in myself and God, and that there is nothing impossible in achieving my dreams at the perfect time. Thank you, ICF, for the experiences. You are a big part of changing me and helping our communities improve. Mabuhay ang Pilipinas at Mabuhay ang ICF! (Long Live Philippines and Long Live ICF).



*Muriel Orevilla-Montenegro, the ICF Coordinator, is sharing the plans for ICF beyond 2024..*

*Vepoy, Jr Ramil Ventura,  
ICF alumnus, Philippines*



## Poem

### A Child's Prayer

Waking up to the sounds of a warplane,  
There were guns, bombs, and soldiers everywhere,  
I was wondering what was happening,  
Soldiers were coming,  
Let us hide somewhere!



Crying, hiding,  
Longing for peace and healing,  
I wonder when this will come to an end,  
For a child's prayer is to see her friend.

"Oh, God, hear my single prayer!"  
"Pray," says my grandmother,  
For this is the only way to live.  
And to tell you the truth, we survive!"

-- Baidido Saganding,  
Philippines

This short poem was written on 22 June 2023 in Bali during the School of Peace session on Peace Journalism.  
Lines and text were slightly revised in solidarity with the Palestinian children.





## INTERFAITH COOPERATION FORUM

Asia and Pacific Alliance of  
YMCAs  
23 Waterloo Road 6/F  
Kowloon, Hong Kong  
Phone: +852-27808347  
Fax: +852-23854692  
E-mail:  
office@asiapacificymca.org

The Interfaith Cooperation Forum is a program of Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs. It values the significance of interreligious understanding and unity. Thus, it offers opportunities for study and appreciation of the different perspectives of religions on peace, and discern the role of religion in peacebuilding. Yet, considering that unpeace is brought about by many factors, including the onslaught of neoliberal economic globalization, more people experience poverty, internally displaced people are increasing as communities are destroyed, native wisdom and values are overrun by Western and consumerist outlooks, patriarchy and racism persists, and climate change is now felt as the destruction of the Planet Earth seems unabated.

Peace is celebrated as a gift from the Divine, yet, we, the earthlings have the responsibility to make peace a reality. Although its contribution may just be like a drop of water into the lake, ICF seeks to equip young people of different religious traditions, especially from the marginalized communities of Asia and Pacific, to make waves of peacebuilding actions.

## Editorial: "During this festive season and beyond, let us pursue Peace in a Divided World"

As we approach the height of this festive season, adorned with twinkling lights, it is also a time to reflect on what Christmas means to us, not to waver in our pursuit of peace in the current state of our world. In a world marked by division, uncertainty, and challenges, the essence of Christmas takes on renewed significance, urging us to rekindle the spirit of unity and goodwill.

At its core, Christmas is a celebration of hope, love, and the promise of peace. It is a time for people from various backgrounds to come together to share the joy of giving, express gratitude, and foster a sense of community. This festive season goes beyond exchanging gifts or enjoying festive feasts; it is a reminder of our shared humanity and compassion to bridge the gaps that divide us. In a world of ever-increasing conflicts, rising political tensions, climate crises, and the aftermath of a global pandemic, the pursuit of peace is a pressing matter.

The recently concluded COP28 conference on climate change in Dubai celebrated the agreement of over 200 countries to transition away from fossil fuels. However, this agreement has already sparked criticism among scientists and climate activists alike, arguing that it is too vague and will most likely not be enough to avert the worst impacts of long-term planetary heating. So, let us put our New Year's resolutions into a commitment to a more eco-friendly lifestyle in 2024. Let us hold ourselves and our leaders accountable to combat climate change and follow through with actions to give hope to our planet and future generations.

Please send news about your  
Forums, Alumni programs, ICF  
Partner events or activities related  
to peacebuilding to:

Muriel Orevillo Montenegro  
Editor  
muriel@asiapacificymca.org

Baidido Saganding  
Circulation and Promotion  
bai@asiapacificymca.org

Annika Denkmann  
Design & Layout  
annika@asiapacificymca.org





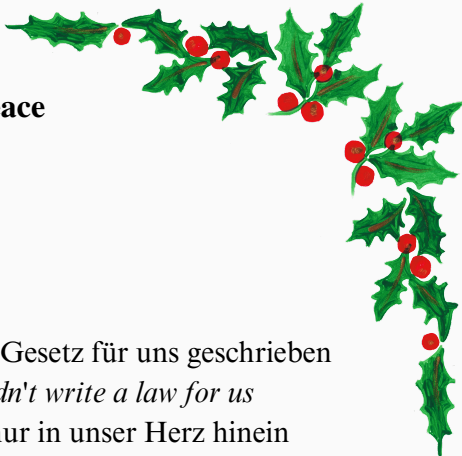
Unfortunately, the climate crisis is not the only issue that needs our attention this festive season. While some parts of the world prepare to spend time with their loved ones in peace among shining lights, others struggle with loss and are unable to procure the basics to live amidst the chaos of war.

As Rolf Zuckowski's song 'Der Kleine Frieden' (The Little Peace) highlights, peace faces many challenges in our times. The Little Peace is fragile, and unacquainted with the ways of war, and has never learned to use weapons. The song further emphasizes reconsidering the obstacles we face in pursuing peace and advocating for a more genuine fostering of harmony in our world. The concluding line underscores a resilient and unwavering spirit in "Der Kleine Frieden," stating that The Little Peace doesn't surrender despite all challenges. So, as we celebrate this festive season, let us persevere in our commitment to peace throughout the year.

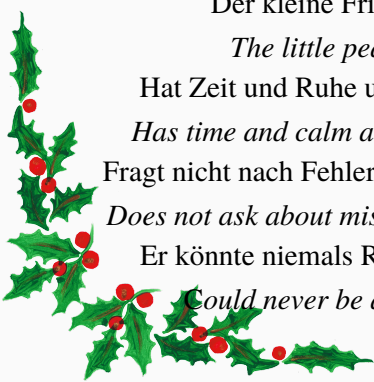
Annika Denkmann  
BftW Seconded Personnel  
Guest Editor



### Der kleine Frieden - The little Peace by Rolf Zuckowski



Der kleine Frieden  
The little peace  
Hat's schwer in dieser lauten Zeit  
*Has it difficult in these noisy times*  
Der kleine Frieden  
*The little peace*  
Sucht Stille und Geborgenheit  
*Seeks silence and security*  
Er hat das Kämpfen nie gelernt  
*Never learned to fight*  
Und wurde nicht gebor'n zum Siegen  
*And was not born to win*  
Ist weit vom Heldentum entfernt  
*Is far from heroism*  
Und lässt sich doch nicht unterkriegen  
*And yet won't let itself be defeated*  
Der kleine Frieden  
*The little peace*  
Hat Zeit und Ruhe und Geduld  
*Has time and calm and patience*  
Fragt nicht nach Fehlern oder Schuld  
*Does not ask about mistakes or guilt*  
Er könnte niemals Richter sein  
*Could never be a judge*



Hat kein Gesetz für uns geschrieben  
*Didn't write a law for us*  
Will nur in unser Herz hinein  
*Just wants to get into our hearts*  
Um dort bedingungslos zu lieben  
*To love there unconditionally*  
Der kleine Frieden  
*The little peace*  
Hat Kraft, um wie ein Freund zu sein  
*Has strength to be like a friend*  
Der kleine Frieden  
*The little peace*  
Kann gut verstehen und verzeihen  
*Can understand and forgive*  
Er weiß, dass wir nur Menschen sind  
*Knows that we are only human*  
Und hat sich doch für uns entschieden  
*And yet chose us*  
Will uns behüten wie ein Kind  
*Wants to protect us like a child*  
Er gibt nicht auf, der kleine Frieden  
*Doesn't give up, the little peace*

