

THE UCLG PEACE PRIZE 2022



LOCAL GOVERNMENT
INITIATIVES FOR PEACE

Colophon

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THE UCLG PEACE PRIZE 2022





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The UCLG Peace Prize collects successful and inspiring peace initiatives undertaken by local governments worldwide and stimulates others to follow suit. Moreover, it aims at generating international public attention for the role local governments play in ensuring sustainable and peaceful development. This publication features several examples of initiatives by local governments around the world.

NETHERLANDS

The Hague

The international city of peace and justice, The Hague, is committed to further developing itself as a global hub.

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Daejeon

Host City of the UCLG World Congress 2022 featuring the award ceremony of the third edition of the UCLG Peace Prize.



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The CAIPA centres look to prevent youth recruitment by criminal groups through a social policy of prevention.

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Pazos is a comprehensive violence prevention strategy aimed at instilling a lasting peace in the formerly highly violent city of Palmira.

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The COMPAZ centres utilize an innovative strategy aimed at tackling the underlying causes of violent crime by improving the legitimate and legal opportunities available to young people.

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The Commune government implemented a long-term solution to improve the prospects for and integration of young people.

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Mersin Finalist 2022

The Social Cohesion Centre eases the adaptation and integration process for Mersin's large migrant and refugee population.

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Tuguegarao

The Local Government Unit of Tuguegarao implemented a holistic strategy aimed at mainstreaming the previously marginalized Muslim Community in the city.

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AWARDS MAP



“Peace is not an absence of war, it is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence, justice.”

As Spinoza, the philosopher, famously wrote, peace goes far beyond simply an absence of violence. For peace to be lasting and true, there must also be peace in the hearts and minds of people. Peace is as much social, cultural and economic as it is a decrease in the incidence of violence.

It is in the realm of the community where most people live together and interact. And, as such, it is where most conflicts have their origin. Peace is an everyday thing in a community. For peace to be lasting, it must be practised day in and day out, continually, constituted by the interactions between those who make up the community.

Just as 2022 was the year where we crowned another recipient of the UCLG Peace Prize, it was also a year that has further deepened inequalities and laid bare structures of marginalization. With COVID-19, war, unrest and natural disasters, the time we live in now will be crucial to ensuring that the seeds of conflict and violence are not spread further.

Yet, just as striking as stories of unrest, endemic violence and marginalization, to me, are the stories of those who are working to prevent it. Those who, as

I put it in my opening address at the launch of this edition of the Peace Prize, are bridge builders in the truest sense of the word – the local government administrators and inhabitants of cities and villages who are dedicating themselves to building lasting peace in their communities.

There are many paths to peace, of course, all of which hold merit. As we can learn from the dozens of qualified candidates, the five finalists all worthy of winning, and the one winner of the 2022 edition of the UCLG Peace Prize, in smothering the flame of conflict or ensuring that it cannot be lit in the first place, local governments are key actors in building a lasting peace.

We stand here on the shoulders of those who came before. The inspirational stories of the initiatives in Kauswagan, the Philippines, and Arsal, Lebanon – who won the previous editions of the Peace Prize – stand as striking examples of how peace has been built at the local level, between individuals and within communities, led by committed officials and community members.

And now, Palmira, Colombia enters their ranks. I was able to witness the presentation of the previous iterations of the Prize in 2016 and 2019. This year, as president of UCLG, I was even more personally involved by having the honor of presenting the prize, thereby recognizing the crucial work done in Palmira. I hope that these three cities can serve trailblazers and models of courageous and moral public administration, for local governments everywhere and beyond.

Building a lasting peace in the streets, neighbourhoods, villages, cities and territories will be easier if those pursuing it are able to follow in the footsteps of those who came before.

Jan van Zanen

MAYOR OF THE HAGUE
CO-PRESIDENT OF UCLG AND
FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE NETHERLANDS ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES (VNG)





UCLG and the UCLG Peace Agenda

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is a global network of local and regional governments and their associations, committed to representing and defending their interests on the world stage. UCLG’s network of members represents over 70% of the world’s total population and is present in all world regions: Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Eurasia, the Middle East and West Asia, Latin America, and North America. Organised into seven regional sections, it also has two specialised sections: a metropolitan section and a Forum of Regions. UCLG’s key priorities are the promotion of decentralisation, good governance, sustainable development policies, and innovation through city-to-city and association-to-association learning.

The UCLG Peace Agenda

Within the UCLG world organization’s activities, peace is a cornerstone of the agenda. The cruciality of local and regional governments as actors in promoting peace and reconciliation has been underscored many times by previous experiences. In times where peace is critical, multilateralism has shown again to be vital to the construction of a more peaceful and just world. Recognizing this, UCLG has positioned itself as a municipalist movement striving toward peace and guided by the principles of equality, solidarity, and local democracy. Municipal international cooperation and decentralized cooperation, partnership, twinning, local government diplomacy, sister city links, and mutual assistance through capacity-strengthening programs and international municipal solidarity initiatives are all key tools to achieving this goal.

The current context is calling on UCLG to revert back to its origins as a movement driven by peace and city diplomacy, and following the mandate received from its Presidency. As such, UCLG is expanding its efforts under its peace agenda through the Municipal Peace Talks and by becoming the secretariat of the World Forum on Cities and Territories of Peace. UCLG’s approach to local peacebuilding and reconstruction is further growing through the UCLG Peace Prize.

Moreover, UCLG is committed to spreading the message of the importance of city diplomacy as a transformative form of diplomacy. Over the years,

certain aspects of city diplomacy have been couched in other terms, such as municipal diplomacy, citizens diplomacy, and city-to-city diplomacy. Yet at its core, as defined by the Committee on City Diplomacy, Peace-building and Human Rights of UCLG, established in 2005, city diplomacy is “the tool of local governments and their associations in promoting social cohesion, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction with the aim to create a stable environment in which the citizens can live together in peace, democracy and prosperity”.

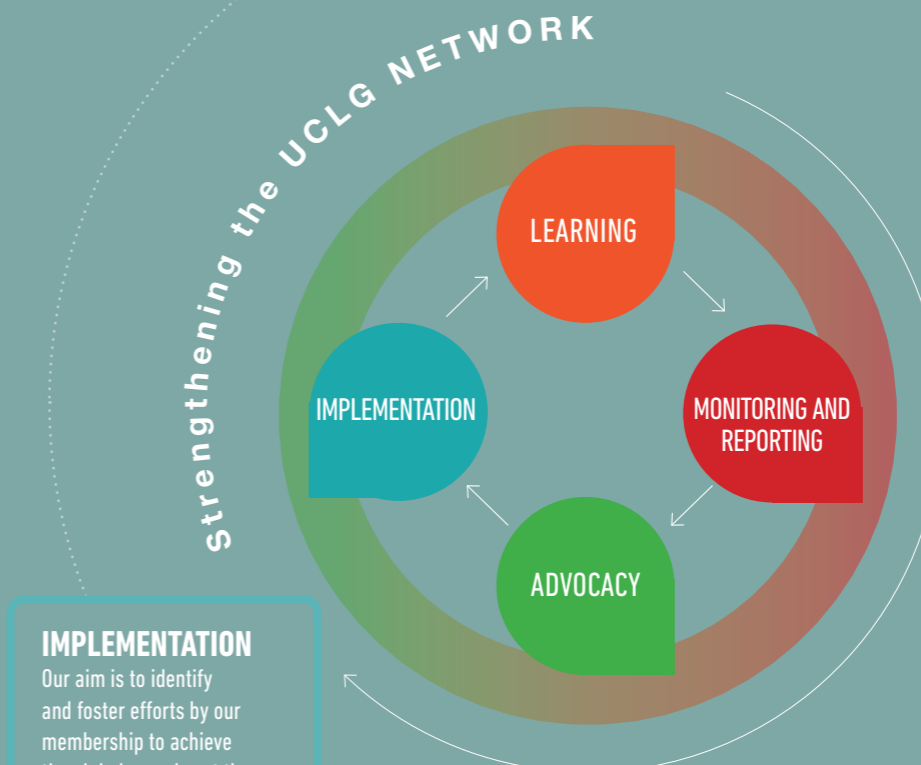
Local governments often feel a responsibility to contribute to dialogue and peace – to create a secure environment for their citizens. Generally speaking, local governments are the layer of government that feels the consequences of conflicts most directly, that is, in the streets of the city. As such, they often have a history in dealing with conflicts at home. At the same time, many local governments have gained experience in projects and programmes involving international co-operation. They have formed long-term relationships with partner municipalities all over the world, and they work together in international platforms and associations. International actors, such as UN organizations, transitional administrations, peace-keeping forces, and NGOs are increasingly recognizing this and are inviting local governments and their national associations to join their peace-building efforts. Likewise, UCLG understands the importance of city diplomacy in peace-building.

UCLG amplifies the voices of local governments in various ways:

Enhancing political participation, creating new tools for synchronized action, renewing partnerships with different actors and ensuring shared ownership across the membership enhances our transparency, democratic participation, and accountability.

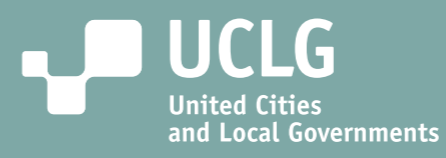
LEARNING Through training, creating a learning culture throughout the organization and promoting decentralized cooperation as a key tool of international cooperation and development programmes.

MONITORING AND REPORTING Our aim is to ensure that local and regional experience influence the implementation and assessment of the global agendas, by contributing to local and regional governments’ storytelling, and informing the reporting done by national governments.



IMPLEMENTATION Our aim is to identify and foster efforts by our membership to achieve the global agendas at the territorial level.

POLICY AND ADVOCACY We strive to amplify the voices of territories internationally. This includes making proposals concerning the role and perspective of local and regional governments on the definition of the next phase of the global development agendas, and increasing national and international support and recognition for the role of local and regional governments in the implementation process.





Reflections on the History of the UCLG Peace Prize

I have been involved in municipal attention to issues of conflict and peace since 1977 and have actively promoted the establishment of the UCLG Peace Prize. After the editors of this publication invited me to describe the history of UCLG's Peace Prize for local governments, I was pleased to give a positive answer to their request. However, this is not a balanced study of the origin and the complex development of the Peace Prize and its context. It is rather a personal note in which I am sharing some reflections on the history of the UCLG Peace Prize. If you don't mind I will follow my personal story from the past 45 years.

Arising Awareness

It was in the '70s of the last century that the idealism of building a better world seized my heart. As a youngster I felt attracted to the movement against apartheid in South Africa, the work for human rights in the world, the resistance against nuclear energy, and the aid for developing countries. Amongst all the issues, however, the initiative of the Inter-church Peace Council (IKV – nowadays merged with Pax Christi into PAX for Peace) in the Netherlands in 1977 to resist nuclear weapons and to align with the democratic opposition in Eastern Europe had the strongest appeal to me. The view that foreign policy should not be formulated by a small elite but by all citizens and that my own local politicians should feel responsible for international issues like peace and development inspired me. At the age of 21, as chair of a collective of peace organizations in my hometown Delft, I visited our mayor to discuss the question of whether Delft should decide to become a nuclear-free local authority as a token of resistance against the conflict between the East and the West.

Nuclear Free Zone Local Authorities

Since the rise of the national states in the 18th century the role of towns in foreign policy, in questions of war and peace, vanished. However, even before the First World War, individual cities called on central governments to protect human

civilization against the atrocities of war. Probably the first example which convincingly underlined that local governments can and should play a role in peacebuilding and conflict resolution in a world dominated by national states was the massive twinning movement, the 'jumelages', after the Second World War. Initiated by citizens in France and Germany municipalities in both countries, soon followed by municipalities all over Europe, linked with each other to seek reconciliation and overcome the deep wounds of the war.

The second wave of international attention in the '60s and '70s of the last century was focused on poverty reduction in developing countries; active local solidarity groups knocked on the door of the municipalities and initiated actions to support the development of people in other countries. This was immediately followed by a third wave of concern amongst civilians in many countries about the East-West conflict and the nuclear arms race by the end of the '70s and '80s. Local governments together with citizens' initiatives tried to break down the images of the enemy and to reach out to opposition groups by establishing linkages with local governments behind the so-called Iron Curtain. Grassroots activism in the Southern Pacific, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, Canada, the United States, and Western Europe resulted in decisions by thousands of municipal councils to declare themselves a nuclear-free zone. One of the first was the city of Manchester in the UK in 1980; the city took the initiative to start the Nuclear Free Zone Local Authorities movement as well. In The Netherlands, the first municipality that decided to call itself 'nuclear free' was Hellevoetsluis in 1981, soon followed by 200 other Dutch cities,

including my hometown Delft. In 1982 "Mayors for Peace" was established by the mayor of Hiroshima which strengthened the attention for nuclear disarmament even further.

First National Conference on Municipal Peace Policies in The Netherlands

Although one might argue that nuclear-free decisions were just a kind of 'tokenism', it was a period in which the discussions about the role of local governments as actors of peace deepened. The understanding grew that local governments as the tier of government closest to the citizens could play an important role in creating a culture of peace. Instruments like awareness-raising, peace education, multi-stakeholder dialogue, bridging gaps between groups through sports and culture, reintegration of combatants in society, international cooperation, twinning, and political statements can be used to shape this role. Being still very active in this peace work in my free time, both in my hometown Delft as well as nationally, the Mayor and deputy mayors of the city of Delft asked me to join them during the second international congress of the Nuclear Free Zone Local Authorities Movement in Perugia, Italy, 1986. Together with deputy mayor Arie Pieter Hoogendam and my colleague activist Rens Looij, I participated in this conference where we met with colleagues from other Dutch cities like Rotterdam, The Hague, Deventer, Zaanstad, Wageningen, and Enschede. In close cooperation with Dion van den Berg of the IKV, we took the initiative to organize the first national congress on municipal peace policies in The Netherlands. With the support of the mayor of Delft at that time, Huib van Walsum, I organized this conference in 1987. To our utter surprise representatives of more than 100 Dutch municipalities attended the conference which resulted in the acceptance by the national Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) to house this initiative if sufficient Dutch local governments would be willing to support such an initiative financially. After a campaign supported by the Dutch 'Perugia cities', the Network for Municipal Peace Policy (PGV) was established with more than 140 municipal paying members in the beginning of 1989, chaired by Mayor Huib van Walsum. Employed by the VNG, I became the first secretary of this PGV with the aim to strengthen and deepen the role of local governments as actors of peace and to investigate what the role of national associations of local governments in this field could look like.



Peter Knip at the congress in Perugia, 1986

Fall of the Berlin Wall

In the autumn of 1989, the Berlin Wall collapsed, unexpectedly for many people, which brought an end to the period of Cold War between East and West. An impressive number of local governments in former Eastern European countries twinned with local governments in Western Europe. On behalf of the Network for Municipal Peace Policy, I could initiate with – initially lukewarm – support from the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) the first East-West town twinning congress hosted by the city of Rotterdam in 1990. The congress was an expression of widespread interest of municipalities and active citizen groups in Western European countries to contribute to a peaceful Europe and to support the building up of democracy in the former communist countries. In many countries, including The Netherlands, active town twinning platforms of cities having linkages in the same countries were organized to exchange experiences and discuss the best approaches. From my position as secretary of the Municipal Peace Platform, I could actively contribute to this development and succeeded to get access to financial support from the Dutch government and later on from the European Commission to offer professional assistance to the reform in Eastern Europe.

The Association of Netherlands Municipalities came quickly to the conclusion that they had to play a role in issues like development cooperation and the promotion of peace and democracy and decided already in 1991 that such issues should be part of the regular attention of the VNG. They asked me to take on this role as coordinator of international work of the VNG. From this position, enabled by global developments and with the support of an increasing number of young colleagues and colleagues in Dutch municipalities, we were able to intensify our work



with a growing amount of financial support for international projects. To cut a long story short, this was the beginning of what is nowadays VNG International, the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities which is involved in projects and programmes of strengthening democratic local government in more than 40 countries in the world.

No End of History

The hope that peace and cooperation would be the future of the world after the end of the Cold War, clearly expressed in Francis Fukuyama's famous article 'The End of History?', vanished soon with the awful war that broke out in former Yugoslavia in the early nineties, the failure of the peace process between Israel and Palestine, and other ongoing regional wars in other parts of the world. Again many local governments in Europe embarked on activities to support local governments in various former Yugoslavian countries. Other municipalities increased their cooperation in support of a peaceful solution between Israel and Palestine, often in the framework of larger networks like the Municipal Alliance for Peace in the Middle East (MAP) in which my VNG actively participated, and the European Network of Local Authorities for Peace in the Middle East (ELPME) in which the Italian Co-ordination of Local Authorities for Peace and Human Rights as well as the United Towns Organisation in France played a major role.

Against this background of ongoing concern about violence and war in the world, it was logical that municipal attention for peace and conflict resolution became a priority on the agenda of the new world organization of local governments, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), after the merger between the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), the World Federation of United Towns and Cities (FMCU-UTO) and Metropolis in 2004. UCLG decided to establish a special political Committee on City Diplomacy, Peace Building and Human Rights in 2005 which should: 'Advise the world organization on issues of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction in order to contribute to the creation of a stable environment in which the citizens can live together in peace, democracy and prosperity'. Wim Deetman, mayor of The Hague and chair of VNG, became the first president and inspiring leader of this Committee.

First World Conference on City Diplomacy of UCLG

The new world organization brought various strong networks promoting local governments as actors for peace together. The Italian Co-ordination of Local Authorities for Peace and Human Rights, the Province and City of Barcelona, United Towns Organisation France, the Canadian Association of Municipalities (FCM) and my VNG joined hands to raise the attention for this city diplomacy role of local governments. It led to preparatory conferences in Perugia and Barcelona in 2006 and 2007. With the strong support of VNG and in cooperation with IKV/Pax Christi and the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict we succeeded in organizing the first World Conference on City Diplomacy of UCLG in The Hague, June 2008. This successful and impressive congress with several representatives of local governments from war-torn countries like Bosnia-Herzegovina, Colombia, Liberia, Rwanda, Israel, and Palestine resulted in 'The Hague Agenda on City Diplomacy', a document with concrete suggestions for further action. Amongst the different suggestions for further action in The Hague Agenda, the idea of a World Peace Prize for local governments was mentioned.



World Conference on City Diplomacy, the Hague, 2008

A long way to go

From my perspective, the intensity of municipal attention for the specific role of local governments in building peace decreased in the past decade, despite the process which led to the City Diplomacy Congress in The Hague. At the same time, we can observe a more general trend of inward-looking local government in Western countries in those years. Although it is difficult to judge as a contemporary, I am inclined to say that the economic crisis, budget cuts in local government, growing security problems, and the rise of more populist politics mark a slow but steady shift in municipal orientation from solidarity to economic self-interest and mutual gain.

As a consequence, some of the founding fathers of the World Conference on City Diplomacy are no longer able to field the strength that they showed in the past, building on the commitment of their members, like the Italian Coordination of Local Authorities for Peace. Although I felt very much attracted by the idea of launching a Peace Prize for local governments that invest in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, I had to admit that also my organization VNG International did not have the funds to realize such an ambitious plan. Within UCLG, where we merged the Committee on City Diplomacy, Peace Building and Human Rights with the Committee on Development Cooperation chaired by the Canadian Association of Municipalities, our VNG politicians, in particular, former Mayor Ton Rombouts of 's-Hertogenbosch, and myself continued to keep the idea of a Peace Prize alive. With the support of FCM and the Barcelona Region, we worked on the political acceptance of a formal Peace Prize by the World Council of UCLG over the years. The good cooperation with the UCLG World Secretariat and in particular Emilia Sáiz has been instrumental in achieving this institutional anchoring.

Both PAX and the Barcelona Region continued to be crucial partners in the preparation of the first Peace Prize edition; both in the elaboration of the first terms of reference and in making available funds for the implementation. I also need to mention Jeremy Smith, former Secretary General of CEMR, who developed the first action plan for the Prize.

A decisive factor, however, for the Peace Prize was the moment when in 2015 the City of Bogotá committed at the political level to the realization of the first edition of the Peace Prize. This ensured that within the UCLG World Congress in 2016, the Peace Prize had an important podium and sufficient visibility. The National Fund for Peace, Freedom and Veterans Care (vfonds) in The Netherlands decided to make available the actual amount of the Prize, which has been awarded to the municipality of Kauswagan (Philippines).

After the first edition of the Peace Prize, it became clear that there was still both a lot of interest in and a need for this Prize. An increasing number of people understand that local governments can play a crucial role in the prevention of conflicts and peacebuilding. The Prize helps us to put the role of local governments in peacebuilding more clearly on the agenda. Due to the success and recognition of the first edition of the UCLG Peace Prize, a second edition was launched with support from new partners such as the Gipuzkoa Provincial Council and the City of Tromsø. This second edition of the UCLG Peace Prize was awarded at the UCLG World Congress in 2019 to the Municipality of Aarsal in Lebanon.

Last year, at the 2022 UCLG World Congress in Daejeon the Municipality of Palmira, Colombia was crowned winner of the third edition of the Peace Prize. 2022 saw the South African Local Government Association join the group of Peace Prize partners. Furthermore, we saw the highest number of applications to date, a testament to the growing reach and impact of the Prize. With this most recent edition, important steps have been set towards securing the financial means as well as further committing the UCLG world organisation and its members to maintain the important place of city diplomacy in creating a culture of peace high on the agenda.

With the fourth edition to look forward to, the Peace Prize is more and more becoming the key global platform for showcasing local peace initiatives. Connections are formed, practices and experiences are shared, initiatives are expanding, and the founding spirit of the UCLG Peace Prize lives on strong. I could not be more proud. ■

Peter Knip

Former Director of VNG INTERNATIONAL



Winner of the Peace Prize 2022

The prize has not only been a recognition of how innovative and effective Pazos is, but also a demonstration that social preventative mechanisms are the most successful ways of achieving peace.

Palmira Colombia

Palmira, a city in the west of Colombia was on the list of the 50 most violent cities in the world for several years, with young people being both the majority of perpetrators and victims. In response, the Mayor's Office implemented the socially-innovative Pazos strategy - a comprehensive violence prevention strategy aimed at ensuring lasting peace in the city. In part due to this, last year Palmira reached the lowest homicide rate in the last 17 years. Thanks to these stellar results, and its innovative approach, Palmira and Pazos were crowned winners of the 2022 UCLG Peace Prize.

Background

Palmira is the second most important city in the Valle del Cauca department, the twentieth most populous city in Colombia, and is known as the national capital of agriculture due to its agro-industrial production, growth, and research. Further demonstrating its economic potential, Palmira has two free trade zones, two industrial parks, an international airport, and 33 multinational corporations in its territory.

Despite this, violence rates were incredibly high in the city, both within Colombia and globally. Furthermore, worryingly, 54% of all homicides were perpetrated by young people aged 14 to 29 with more than half of the victims also falling in that age group. The main cause of the structural violence in Palmira has been the violent environments in which many young people live, as well as a lack of opportunities to advance.

However, instead of resorting to the traditional confrontational or punitive measures, the municipal administration, led by Mayor Óscar Escobar, set out to develop an inclusive and comprehensive violence reduction strategy. Thus, Pazos (Peace and Opportunities for Palmira) was created as an inter-institutional endeavor to reduce violence through the accompaniment of at-risk children living in the city's most violent locations.

WINNER



The Project

The Pazos strategy has a total of five components (interruption, intervention, prevention, environments for life, and access to justice). Under 'interruption', 9 coexistence managers have been directly placed in neighborhoods to work on risk management and violence prevention. Next, as part of 'intervention', over 260 young people have followed psychosocial and vocational training programs and aimed at easing transition into the job market. As part of this component, participants receive a monthly allowance. Meanwhile, the 'prevention' component has led to improved social use of public spaces and sport as ways of steering people away from violence by using their energy in more constructive ways. 'Environments for life' has also focused on public spaces, looking to ensure their usage as forums for art and culture. Finally, 'access to justice' is focused on positioning restorative justice as a valuable alternative to the overcrowding of Colombian jails, the challenges to improving life inside of them, and the high rates of youth recidivism. Pazos' restorative justice approach centers around providing young people with the chance to redeem their bad behavior in the eyes of society and allowing them to re-signify their role in their communities.

A key factor in Pazos' implementation and success to date has been its support by more than 20 local and national strategic allies as well as international cooperation organizations.

One of Pazos' most remarkable accomplishments has been the incredible drop in homicide rates, dropping by 40% to 31.5 incidents per 100,000 people. This causal link was confirmed by a recent study funded by the Open Society Foundation and conducted by the Universidad Javeriana de Cali in cooperation with civil society actors and the Mayor's Office. According to the study's findings, there were 25 fewer homicides between August 2021 and August 2022 than the previous year, with 4 of these directly attributable to Pazos. There was also a considerable decrease in the use of psychotropic substances and the number of family conflicts, as well as an increase in the labor-force involvement of young people. As such, it was concluded that through mechanisms such as the transformation of life projects, education, culture, sports, and access to job prospects, Pazos has been able to rescue hundreds of individuals from the dynamics that cause violence.

The Future

Winning the 2022 UCLG Peace Prize has increased Pazos' popularity to the point that many more organizations and individuals have been encouraged to join and support the Pazos strategy. Now, Pazos is expanding with new initiatives. Here, the community kitchens deserve a special mention. These played a significant role in feeding hundreds of hungry people affected by a national strike that took place in Colombia in 2021. More recently, a music school was launched in cooperation with the national government under the Cocrea initiative. This has been very valuable in promoting a more productive use of free time and helping develop new talents.

Next, winning was extremely motivating and inspirational for those actually working on Pazos in Palmira's most vulnerable areas. As such, the prize has not only been a recognition of how innovative and effective Pazos is, but also a demonstration that social preventative mechanisms are the most successful ways of achieving peace.

Furthermore, the award confirms the importance of international cooperation in achieving results with greater coverage and impact, with Palmira being turned into a global reference and success story. As a result of this, the Mayor's Office will soon collaborate with Colombian National Government, to apply Pazos' methodology to other intermediate cities throughout the country.

Winner

of the Peace Prize 2022

The Pazos strategy has a total of five components

1

Interruption:

Delivering actions that contain or dissuade violent actions and providing access to institutional offers to provide opportunities for youth at risk.

2

Intervention:

Central to Palmira's approach is believing in the power of second opportunities. Therefore, it is needed to provide a way out from criminal life to the youths and those who left prisons, for example by providing psychosocial support, soft skills, and job training to ensure legal income generation.

3

Prevention:

The designated territories are the focus of the local authority's social policy. In search of better use of free time, trainings are being provided on the topics of conflict resolution, and harm reduction in drug consumption. In total, 19 programmes will be implemented in these areas.

4

Safe environments:

Certain locations and community infrastructures are badly affected by violence. That's why Palmira is working on situational prevention together with their Infrastructure Secretariat, Secure Secretariat, and Government Secretariat, to transform the places and indirectly change people's perceptions.

5

Access to Justice:

To avoid citizens taking justice in their own hand, justice needs to be brought closer to them. Specifically, it is believed that restorative justice is key in this venture to ensure reconciliation and better coexistence.





Finally, thanks to the resources from winning the UCLG Peace Prize, the Mayor's Office of Palmira is now working with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for the Andean Region and the Southern Cone (UNODC) to put the first local public policy for violence prevention in Colombia into place. In this way, the Pazos strategy will be able to endure over time and will continue to demonstrate that social approaches are the best tools to prevent violence and transform lives. ■



**For more
information
scan here**

Winner

of the Peace Prize 2022





Interview

with Two Pazos
Participants

Two people connected to the Pazos project, Stiven and Helen, agreed to be interviewed by the UCLG Peace Prize Secretariat to share their stories and talk about how Pazos impacted their lives.

Hellen Mosquera

Helen's life changed when she became moved by all the children she saw walking aimlessly in the streets with nothing to do and no opportunities to invest their energy in. She wanted to help them somehow. Consequently, together with her mother she founded an educational support group for these young children. Helen decided to partner her support group with the Forjar Oportunidades program.

Now, many kids from her neighborhood are part of her educational support program. Helen and many other participants in her support group now work as manicurists for girls, barbers, or hair stylists. As a result of their participation, Helen has been able to witness how many of her peers have been able to change their perspective on life by channelling their energies into more productive ventures. Because of that, Helen emphasizes on the importance of Forjar Oportunidades, particular the psychological support and the professional classes, in changing lives by helping youngsters build a different future for themselves. ■

21-year old **Helen Mosquera** is also from Palmira. Before joining Pazos, Helen did not have any close friends. At age 11, she started doing housework and worked as an independent manicurist to support her mother.

"I want to invite everybody to join Pazos strategy because if it changed my life, it can also help you to find new opportunities to develop".

Stiven Gonzalez

Stiven joined the Forjar Oportunidades program where he has had the opportunity to become more socially active by doing social work like picking up trash from parks and preparing communal meals. He even organized a Halloween party for children from socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods. Doing this made him realize that children from these areas are unable to spend a lot of time with their families and other kids: they did not have the opportunity to just be children. Because of that, seeing the children with a big smile on their faces, playing with other kids, enjoying the festivities, and realizing his hard work had paid off was even more satisfying.

Having graduated from the program, Stiven is now studying business administration at the Universidad del Valle and he works as a chef at an Éxito supermarket. He loves the economic stability he is able to enjoy in his new livelihood. He strongly believes that a new Stiven was born thanks to Pazos and the Forjar Oportunidades program. This new Steven is calmer and more sociable, has a social consciousness and cares deeply about his city. With the opportunities that Pazos provides, he says there is always a path to find happiness and a better life, if you choose to follow it. ■

Esteban (Stiven) González is a 21-year old young man from Palmira. Growing up, Stiven only looked after himself and his family – he did not care about what was going on around him or the social issues of Palmira.

"Anything can be achieved if you fight for it. I fought for everything I have now and I feel very grateful for having been able to participate in Pazos and the Forjar Oportunidades program".





Finalist

of the UCLG
Peace Prize 2022

Recife

Brazil

“All COMPAZ community centers are located on the outskirts of Recife, in four high-violence socioeconomically-disadvantaged areas which have been historically overlooked by public authorities”

Recife, capital city of the state Pernambuco, is the fourth largest urban area in Brazil with a population of 1.6 million. In the city, 45% of violent crime is concentrated in only 16 of the 94 neighborhoods. Furthermore, inequality is rife as certain neighborhoods enjoy privileges and advantages that are unavailable to their neighbors. The COMPAZ (Community Peace Center) centers were built in socioeconomically-disadvantaged neighborhoods to offer the citizens there more similar opportunities, thereby helping the city tackle the underlying causes of violent crime.

Background

In 2020, Recife had a homicide rate of 33.7 per 100,000 inhabitants, which is more than three times the World Health Organization's threshold for endemic violence. At its peak in 2017, the homicide rate was at a staggering value of 48.5 per 100,000. (Black) young people (16-24), who make up one-fifth of the Recife's population, are often at the forefront of this violence – both as victims and as perpetrators. Brazilian youths experience double the unemployment rate compared to the rest of the general population which can push many toward organized crime.

To tackle the tremendous challenges that Recife faces, sheer political will and an effective police force are not enough – local authorities must bridge the gap created by vast inequalities. As such, though traditionally, security policies in Brazil have centered around more repressive and aggressive approaches to tackling drug trafficking and other violent criminal endeavors, COMPAZ utilizes a very different approach. It places its focus on tackling the underlying causes of violent crime by giving young people (legal and legitimate) opportunities in a safe and inclusive environment.



The Project

The project created several community centers designed to promote citizenship, human rights, peace, and access to justice. All community centers are located on the outskirts of Recife, in four high-violence socioeconomically-disadvantaged areas which have been historically overlooked by public authorities. The COMPAZ centers are created with community involvement at all stages. This means that each center is unique with its own specialty, answering the needs of the most overlooked communities in Recife.

In the centers, a vast array of educational, cultural, and athletic activities are offered – all to provide the young people a positive and protective environment where they can develop naturally away from the violence, learning important life skills in an inclusive and open-minded manner. Importantly, the COMPAZ centers also offer various services to the community as a whole. These include legal assistance, conflict mediation teams, medical and psychological assistance, violence against women prevention, reading initiation, and an entrepreneurs helpdesk.

Based on the success of the first four, four new centers are being created in Recife. With COMPAZ having been an idea of the municipality of Recife, the city has been an example for other Brazilian cities. The successes of COMPAZ have been recognized by the federal government with nine centers now set up in other states and cities with plans for more. This recognition has even extended internationally with COMPAZ being honored with the 2022 UN Civil Service Award. ■



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Finalist

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Mishiha

Burundi

“Youth mentoring is key to instilling a spirit of responsibility, initiative, enterprise, and creativity amongst the young people of the Commune of Mishiha”

In Mishiha, a commune in Burundi, many young people migrate to Tanzania to look for work, since there are limited job opportunities at home or elsewhere in Burundi. Unfortunately, many do not find work there and have to return to Mishiha. These returnees often suffer from substance abuse, and sometimes exhibit behavioral problems which can lead to violence. In 2021, a number of initiatives were launched in Mishiha to help tackle these issues and form a lasting peace in the commune.

Background

The Commune of Mishiha has a population of about 116.000 inhabitants and covers an area of around 380 square kilometers. It is situated in the northeast of Burundi, right next to the border with Tanzania. Young people have been identified as key to improving the fate of Mishiha – both socially and economically. Yet, there are not enough prospects for them in Mishiha, and many drop out of school to go look for work. Because of this, the Mishiha General States of Education and the Commune Council started looking for long-term solutions to help build a strong foundation for sustainable peace in the community.



The Project

The starting point for the initiatives are that troubled young people should be included in community projects as a proven way to increase integration and create a deeper link with peers. As such, youth mentoring was identified as key to instilling a spirit of responsibility, initiative, enterprise, and creativity. Thereby, the young people are transformed into responsible and trustworthy members of society with stronger links to their community.

One of these initiatives, the Growing Peace Clubs, was launched in primary and secondary schools and instituted a group of youth councilors to work with the young people. In these clubs, young people are taught important values, as well as conflict resolution and mediation skills. Furthermore, the Commune launched an awareness-building campaign aimed at teaching the youths about the value of education and keeping them in school. It also looked to motivate those who left school to return. Next to that, several community projects were organized, such as reforestation efforts, the laying of anti-erosion hedges, and brick production for the construction of community structures such as schools.

Though the officials emphasize the long road still ahead and highlight the lack of funding and partners, the initiatives achieved already highly positive results. Chiefly, the mentality and behavioral changes have been striking with many young people feeling far more responsible and involved in their community. Many have gone on to start small businesses or creative ventures. This is also reflected in the data with both a notable downward trend in drop-out rates, as well as lower rates of migration to Tanzania being important achievements. For those who cannot stay in school, many have started producer cooperatives, of which nineteen have been created thus far. For now, the Commune is looking to secure the sustainability of the initiatives so that young people can continue to find their place in in Mishiha. ■



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Finalist

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Peace Prize 2022

Mersin

Türkiye / Finalist

“The Social Cohesion Centre aims to encourage the adaptation and integration process by providing a large number of services, such as Turkish language courses, intercultural communication training, schooling, psycho-social support, and conflict management.”

Mersin, a key seaport in the Eastern Mediterranean with a population of 1.6 million in its metropolitan municipality, has been a destination for many Syrian refugees. The Provincial Directorate of Migration Management estimated that in 2022, approximately 12.8% of the entire local population of the city of Mersin were refugees. Reacting effectively and efficiently to this influx is a challenge. Thus, to build lasting peace in the community, the Mersin Metropolitan Municipality together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) created the Social Cohesion Centre.

Background

Especially during and after the Syrian Civil War in 2011 Mersin came under extreme stress from large and numerous influxes of migrants and refugees. According to recent data, there are currently 242,675 Syrian refugees residing in Mersin under temporary international protection. Additionally, there are also many Lebanese, Iraqis, Iranians, Afghans, and Egyptians living in the city. In total, over 300,000 migrants and refugees now reside in Mersin.

These influxes, often from very different ethnic and religious backgrounds, understandably led to social integration and spatial adaptation problems as the city experienced unplanned yet rapid urbanization without the resources or capacity to properly manage it. Furthermore, among new arrivals, there is often a lack of awareness of basic rights and access to other social support structures. The Mersin Metropolitan Municipality realized that these issues could be best addressed through a multidisciplinary approach. As such, the Social Cohesion Centre was created in 2019 to prevent potential conflicts and bridge the gap between the host community and migrants by facilitating social cohesion, supporting integration, and intercultural learning.



The Project

The Social Cohesion Centre aims to encourage the adaptation and integration process by providing a large number of services, such as Turkish language courses, intercultural communication training, schooling, psycho-social support, and conflict management. Furthermore, expert guidance and counseling are offered to the migrants and refugees in the fields of education, health, social services, vocation, and community support and social activities. Additionally, the Centre regularly holds awareness-raising sessions and events. In all this, though its activities have already been well-attended, the Centre operates under the dictum of quality over quantity, assuming a spread throughout the community of what is learned at the Centre.

Between July 2021 and April 2022, the Centre managed to involve almost 5,000 individuals from the migrant community in the Akdeniz district – the central district of Mersin where the Centre is located. Of these, over two-thirds have been female-identifying. As such, one of the Centre's most notable achievements has been its ability to reach the most vulnerable groups in the refugee and migrant community. Looking forward, Akdeniz hosts more than 90,000 migrants and the goal is to directly reach 22,500 of these individuals within the next three years. In that spirit, the Centre has been a trailblazer, with a Student Counseling Centre (in cooperation with GIZ) and a Women Health Counseling Centre (in cooperation with IOM) having been launched to further contribute to the Social Cohesion Centre's mission. ■



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Finalist

of the UCLG Peace Prize 2022

Monterrey

Mexico / Finalist

“When teenagers aged 12 to 17 come in conflict with the law, rather than being prosecuted or as part of their punishment, they can be forwarded to CAIPA. This can occur through both the criminal justice and the educational systems.”

Monterrey, the capital of the state of Nuevo Leon and the center of the second-largest metropolitan area in the country, is one of the most important cities in Mexico. However, due to the city's strategic location close to the United States border, organized crime and violence are highly present in the city. Regrettably, in many cases, young teenagers (12-17) have been either actively or unconsciously involved. Young teenagers in the socio-economically disadvantaged areas of Monterrey have borne the brunt of the militarization on the frontline of the drug trafficking combat. Recognizing the severity of the effects this can have on young people, in 2014, the municipal government of Monterrey adopted the state's approach of Comprehensive Care Centres for Adolescents (CAIPA) to build peace in the city.

Background

A large part of Monterrey's population is young, falling in the 15-34 age range. Many teenagers from the most marginalized areas of the city are school dropouts. Furthermore, living in these areas, a lot of them are pushed towards or are victims of the organized crime and violence gripping their neighborhoods. As a result, between January and August of 2021, 700 minors were murdered. Almost another 4,000 went missing between January and October of the same year. Notably, 64% of the missing youths were female.

Traditionally, since organized crime represents such a public security challenge, the (national) government reaction has been one of militarization and crackdown. However, this has not done much to prevent youth recruitment by criminal groups. In response to this, the city of Monterrey chose to focus on a social policy of prevention of both voluntary and involuntary recruitment.

The Project

CAIPA provides multidisciplinary attention to male and female teenagers to reduce risk and vulnerability factors. When teenagers aged 12 to 17 come in conflict with the law, rather than being prosecuted or as part of their punishment, they can be forwarded to CAIPA. This can occur through both the criminal justice and the educational systems. Teenagers may also enter the CAIPA program through family request. In both these avenues, the parents and guardians of the youth are also expected to participate, thereby offering the teenagers a stronger support network..

Comprehensive prevention services are at the heart of CAIPA's strategy to prevent youth recruitment and facilitate the reintegration of youth into education and the job market. As such, CAIPA provides services such as psycho-social support, socioemotional skill workshops, academic accompaniment, and professional coaching. The particular strategy and length of the program are tailored to each teenager based on their particular background, behavior, and risk factors.

CAIPA's work takes place in a larger network of inter-agency, multi-level, and civil society coordination. The Centre is supported by key organizations in the fields of psychiatry, pediatrics, general medicine, nutrition, addiction care, and those offering academic socio-productive professional opportunities.

Though the Covid-19 pandemic hindered progress, CAIPA has been able to achieve highly positive results. In 2021 alone, 722 teenagers were directly assisted by the Centre, and CAIPA is estimated to have indirectly reached another approximately 12,000 individuals. Through their participation, the teenagers have more easily (re)integrated into social, educational, and professional life. Furthermore, many display improved mental health, a higher degree of self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and a greater capacity for interpersonal relationships. ■



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Social Urbanism: A Reliable and Sustainable Way to Pacify Our Cities

Paulo de Moraes

Executive Secretary for Citizen Security at the Municipality of Recife, Brazil

*Views are the author's and do not necessarily represent those of the UCLG



The Biblioteca de España Library Park in the Santo Domingo Savio Neighborhood, Medellín



The Governor Eduardo Campos COMPAZ Center, the first of its kind

Social urbanism is an urban intervention policy first implemented in the Colombian city of Medellín. Under social urbanism, urban and social transformation is sought through innovative and comprehensive policies which are wise to the social and territorial aspects of urbanism. The COMPAZ centers in Recife helped pioneer social urbanism in Brazil and represent one of the most important examples of social urbanism in the country. Because of this, COMPAZ helps test social urbanism's limits and possibilities for the pacification of cities.

The Underlying Theory

The starting point for social urbanism is that socioeconomic inequalities are reflected in the layout, look, and usage of the urban space – the urban equity gap. In other words, the inequalities and violence often experienced in Latin American cities can be recognized in how 'antisocial' these cities are. At the same time, social urbanism maintains that all inhabitants of a city have a right to their city. Because of this, the participation of the community and the regularization of the land situation must be guaranteed.

As such, social urbanism exists as both a paradigm in architecture and urban planning, as well as a public policy in general. It exists to ensure that the social dimension is not missed in urban policy and development. By transforming public architecture and facilities, it is hoped that the social practices in the environment will be similarly transformed. Given how cross-cutting it is as a strategy, social urbanism informs all aspects of city construction – not only housing, but also those things that should accompany housing such as facilities and social services. In turn, this impacts access to education, work, transport, health, and culture.

Medellín

Medellín is a good example of how Colombian cities have implemented integrated and holistic public policies aimed at urban and social renewal in areas with high crime and poverty rates. Under the motto "the best works for those most in need", the Medellín city government implemented the PUI or Integrated Urban Project. Each underprivileged area (the "comunas") in which the project was implemented was anchored by a landmark facility.

For example, 'library parks' were built which house a large number of cultural and educational activities. Other facilities and projects offered access to conflict resolution mechanisms and support to victims of violence, encouraged entrepreneurship at the community level, or retrofitted abandoned areas into public spaces where sports, recreation, culture, and community participation are made possible. Together, this architectural investment helps represent a modernized society built on coexistence and interaction in the public space to the community.

Accordingly, all these urban transformation projects were guided by similar principles of participatory decision-making, strong investment in citizen culture, and education as ways to achieve peace. Accordingly, the physical changes were accompanied by campaigns, cultural actions, and a shift in the municipality's policy and approach towards the population.

The main landmark of this transformation is the PUI (integrated urban plans) experience. This new approach aims to encompass not only urban improvement and public order in degraded areas (with housing, sanitation, walkability, green areas), but also connecting social and citizenship services in the area, combining a new urban design with access to human rights and citizenship.

A Connection Between two Cities

A few years after the launch of the Integrated Urban Project, a dedicated local government official in Recife, Brazil, made the connection between the frightening increase in violence indicators in his city and the new wave of social urbanism in Colombian cities like Medellín and Bogotá. Murilo Cavalcanti, at the time Urban Security Secretary of Recife, saw the major impact that social urbanism was having in contexts politically, socially, and economically similar to the one he was working and living in. Based on these perceived similarities and the success of social urbanism, he travelled to Colombia to learn.

In 2008, he returned to Recife bringing with him the concept of COMPAZ – community centers that are:

- **Allied to the strategy of reorganizing and reoccupying the physical and symbolic space by the Government;**
- **Associated with the strategy of preventing violence, reducing inequalities, generating jobs and income, and furthering social cohesion;**
- **And guided by a culture of peace.**

Recife & COMPAZ

In face of the very high violence rates in Recife, COMPAZ was launched in 2013 as the main component for violence prevention in Recife's Security Plan 'Pact for Life'. As a first step, several public policy hubs were set up in Recife's outskirts. These go beyond only being public buildings. The COMPAZ centers function as both focal points for quality public services and offer cultural, educational and sports activities for children and youngsters. All these services and activities are linked with peace cultural aspects, meaning sports are not only for competition, but a tool to teach respectful coexistence as well. The educational agenda is based on the UN Declaration and Program of Action on a Culture of Peace (A/RES/53/243). The (attractive) buildings also represent anchors of improvements to come, and with their higher aesthetic standard a political statement.

They signify a shift in priorities and attention paid to underprivileged areas of the city. It shows that change is coming and staying in the delivery of services and public policies, and that the physical security of people in vulnerable situations (especially young people) will be ensured. Through this, citizens are invited to build new relationships with the Government in different ways than before.

With COMPAZ, the construction of a new urban centrality began. This was articulated by a new system of city parks which place a focus on improved mobility, lighting, drainage, green spaces, and shading.

In the decade since the first center opened, the communities have embraced the facilities and the COMPAZ team in such an enthusiastic way that the initiative's scope has had to shift to adapt to an unexpectedly broad audience. People of all ages frequent the centers, making the program an inclusive and truly democratic space for citizen coexistence. Now, COMPAZ, as a truly example of social urbanism approach, has been able to become more than simply a community center and a decentralization of city hall services to the city outskirts. It is a concept, a place in which opportunities are generated and peace is built on daily basis. In the next four years 2023-2026, 40 new centers will be opened by the Federal Government.. ■



Honorable mentions

of the 2022 UCLG Peace Prize

Tuguegarao, Philippines

Tuguegarao, a city in the north of Luzon with a population around 170,000, experiences a strong religious divide. Though a large part of the city is Catholic, there around 1,500 Muslims living in the city. As is the case in many other parts of the country, the relationship between Catholic and Muslim communities is strained, with tensions often resulting in violence. Furthermore, there are often far fewer opportunities available to Muslims pushing many to criminality and the drug trade. To prevent an outbreak of violence and ensure genuine and sustainable peace in Tuguegarao, the Local Government Unit of Tuguegarao (LGU) launched a holistic peace initiative aimed at mainstreaming the Muslim Community. This initiative ran from 2018 until May 2022.

The Peace Initiative

The main aim of the initiative was to strengthen the inclusion of the Muslim community in the social, political, and economic fabric of Tuguegarao. As such, under the wider peace initiative, the LGU undertook a number of policies. First, the LGU provided livelihood assistance to almost 200 Muslim families, and annually offered education scholarship grants to around 50 Muslim students.

Second, to improve their standing in the government structure itself, representatives of the Muslim Community were included in the City Development Council – the highest policy-making organ in the LGU. Furthermore, a consultative council was created with the goal of encouraging the Muslim Community's involvement in the promotion of local governance, peace, progress, and intercultural understanding. The council also offers a focal point for issues or concerns to be relayed to the LGU. The LGU provided the council with an office space. Similarly, given that most Muslims in Tuguegarao are traders or vendors, a Muslim traders association was established.

Mainstreaming the Muslim Community



The impact of the initiative has been striking. Many Muslims now feel more included and a part of society. Demonstrating this, the number of registered voters has tripled to over 300 voters since 2013. Additionally, the number of organized Muslim communities in the city has also tripled from one to three. Most importantly, intercommunal relations have improved markedly characterized first and foremost by a newfound mutual trust. This was put to the test in 2019 when Tuguegarao experienced its first terrorist threat ever with the news that ISIS had infiltrated the city and was planning an attack. However, rather than cracking down, through dialogue between leaders from the Muslim community and local and national officials, the threat was eventually proven to be false. ■





Honorable mentions

of the 2022 UCLG Peace Prize

Osh, Kyrgyzstan

Ethnic violence, political instability, clashes, arson, and looting rocked the city of Osh, Kyrgyzstan in the summers of 1990 and 2010. The more recent of the two clashes left nearly 420 people dead, 2,000 injured, and displaced another 80,000 – most of which were ethnic Uzbeks. Furthermore, more than 2,000 residential buildings were burned with economic losses estimated at four Billion Som. To prevent the breakout of future violence, in 2010, the city of Osh launched the 'Our Strength is in Unity' initiative.

The Peace Initiative

The leadership of Osh launched the 'Our Strength is in Unity' initiative to improve inter-ethnic and inter-faith relations, thereby laying the foundation for continued future tolerance and peaceful coexistence. As such, the initiative is centered around awareness-raising, shared activities, and improving the formal structures in which inter-ethnic and inter-faith relations take place.

To achieve these goals, firstly, the city government created thirteen national cultural centers. Together with the Mayor's office and in partnership with civil society and international organizations, the centers organize numerous activities and cultural events. Many of these activities have also been aimed at students to foster an understanding of their peers' cultures and to embrace commonalities.

Secondly, the city government looked to strengthen the internal processes through which it resolves important local issues such as the regulation of inter-faith and inter-ethnic relations, or the preservation and development of historical and cultural traditions and values. As a result, the relationship between the Mayor's office, the city council, and citizens has been further formalized and strengthened. Furthermore, the city government has formalized a relationship with the leadership of the Kazyyat and Russian Orthodox Church – both to strengthen inter-faith relations at a higher level, as well as to improve the holding of important religious holidays. These holidays have, in turn, become a communicative platform for rapprochement and friendship between the various ethnic and religious groups.

**Our Strength
is in Unity**



Results from the initiative have been positive so far, with a clear respect for multicultural diversity, tolerance, and more friendly inter-ethnic and inter-faith relations being visible. Interestingly, the number of inter-ethnic marriages has increased too since the launch of the initiative. Furthermore, the number of statements and complaints about harassment or the infringement of minority rights has also drastically decreased, as reported by the Mayor's office. ■





Cities are crucial for the European path of Ukraine

Dion van den Berg

Senior policy advisor, state building and peacebuilding expert at PAX

**Views are the author's and do not necessarily represent those of the UCLG



The first time I visited Sloviansk was in early 2015. The city, in the eastern oblast (province) of Donetsk, had been occupied by pro-Russian separatists in spring of 2014 for a few months. The city was full of tension. Young pro-Russian activists demonstrated in the protection of the big Lenin statue in front of the Town Hall. The text on their banner: "Lenin, our hero who brought democracy and peace". Approximately one hundred meters from the statue, speakers and musicians expressed loyalty to Ukraine from a platform. Soon after, the statue of Lenin was torn down. Sloviansk stopped looking to the East and chose to focus on the West, to the EU. Sloviansk was one of six towns where PAX started working on strengthening the social contract and social cohesion, in partnership with the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG).

The city was again under siege in the spring and summer of 2022, but the Russian troops were pushed back. Still, the threats remain. At Orthodox Easter, April 2023, a missile attack killed more than ten citizens. Almost all cities in Ukraine endured a lot over the last nine years. Interestingly, analysts underline that the success of the Ukrainian resilience against the Russian invasion in February 2022 has a lot to do with the success of the decentralization process in the country. Cities and towns through the devolvement of power (mandates) and local democracy were boosted by the development of civil society organizations and the cooperation of local governments with citizens' initiatives.

Even though serious fighting is ongoing in eastern Ukraine, and the shelling of cities and infrastructure throughout the country is continuing, reconstruction efforts have been underway almost from the day that the Russian troops left. The importance of local actors for successful reconstruction has been recognized in the so-called Lugano Principles (July 2022), which labeled 'democratic participation' as one of seven central principles guiding reconstruction in the country. Unfortunately, in practice, the approach of the central Ukrainian government is primarily

top-down, with very little attention to bottom-up processes and civil society input. Underlining this, research published in September 2022, shows that less than 1% of the international reconstruction funds were spent via civil society.

From numerous examples worldwide, we know that the success of reconstruction programs does not all depend on big and physical reconstruction projects. It has a lot to do as well with societal revitalization and supporting citizens and local communities in dealing with the impact of war. To that end, PAX started a comprehensive social reconstruction project in Chernihiv city and oblast, a region north of Kyiv close to the borders with Belarus and Russia. In partnership with an experienced local NGO, Dobrochyn, we organize citizens' input for reconstruction projects. In April 2023, we organized a working visit for a mixed local government and civil society delegation from Chernihiv to the Bosnian city of Tuzla. The hope is, to follow up with thematic working visits that allow for mutual and more in-depth learning.

Bottom-up and comprehensive reconstruction is logically very relevant in the case of Ukraine, where the principle of 'building back better' is so closely linked to the perspective of EU membership. However, that raises the question of whether the existing EU accession strategy will meet the reform and reconstruction demands. If we want reconstruction and reform processes to be comprehensive and with key roles for local governments and civil society, then the EU accession process will not bring the desired results, as it did not deliver in the Western Balkans, so far. The formal accession process must be combined with bottom-up programming on inclusive participatory democracy and transparent governance. In the setting of priorities, the subnational authorities need a central say. Community peacebuilding, dialogue, and post-war reconciliation are not part of the EU's *acquis communautaire*, but they will be crucial both for Ukraine to recover from the consequences of war and occupation and revitalize its inclusive reform agenda.

The challenges for local governments and local communities are manifold: the dominance of the war agenda, the urgent humanitarian needs, and the 'logic' that the unity of Ukraine implies that all must support the president and government. Principles of diversity and open dialogue with minorities are easily sidelined in light of the central struggle for survival and the restoration of territorial integrity. Here, donors can play a key role. They must look beyond government buildings in Kyiv and reach out to oblast and city authorities and civil society organizations. Cities, from Europe and elsewhere, can also play their parts through inclusive solidarity programs. Such solidarity will help Ukraine, and in the process will help improve the EU accession strategy too. ■





Democratizing local government helps to build and sustain peace

Prof. Jaap de Visser

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*Views are the author's and do not necessarily represent those of the UCLG

Local governments contribute to fostering peace by working in, and with the communities that reside within them.

There is another angle that this contribution seeks to highlight by discussing the case of South Africa. That angle is that, aside from the services, activities, and programmes local governments undertake, the democratic nature of local government and its status vis-à-vis other levels of government can contribute to building peace. There is great potential for peace-building in democratizing local government, and this is something that those seized with making decisions about the future of local government in their countries should consider.

In many countries, particularly in the global south, a combination of two phenomena is often prevalent. First, local government may not be fully democratized. For example, local leadership may be 'imposed' by the national government and not elected by local voters, or municipal elections may not be held regularly. Second, often, local government reforms take place against the backdrop of civil strife, which could be rooted in (a combination of) ethnic, racial, political, or cultural tension.

The case of South Africa

This combination was prevalent in South Africa before the advent of democracy in 1994. Local governments were racially segregated in line with the system of apartheid. They were also not democratically elected. Society had been ravaged by colonialism and apartheid, which abused and exploited the black majority in unimaginable ways, and caused deep cleavages that left the country teetering on the brink of civil war in the early 1990s.

In transforming local government, South Africa did two things. First, it democratized local governments. It introduced the local election of local leadership. This local democracy was introduced gradually because between 1994 and 2000 the electoral system included a compromise: the outgoing (white) minority was guaranteed 30% of council seats to ensure a peaceful transition. During that initial phase, local governments were also instructed to pursue consensus in decision-making, rather than a 'winner-

takes-it-all' approach. Second, South Africa elevated the status of local government by affording it constitutional protection: the boundaries, institutions, powers, and fiscal position of local governments are protected by the Constitution. Over time, municipalities (with cities at the forefront) started asserting this protection and claiming ownership of their constitutional rights and responsibilities.

More than two decades later, we can ask: what has the impact of these two features of South African local governance been on building and sustaining peace in a country of which the world once feared it would descend into chaos?

To begin with, for the first time ever, municipalities are democratically legitimate because the leadership of each municipality is now elected by its local voters. Free and fair local government elections have been held every five years since 2000. The abovementioned electoral compromise and drive towards consensus in the initial, post-conflict phase between 1994-2000 meant that former foes were forced to work together in municipalities on service delivery and development issues.

The second effect materialized in the longer term: the democratization and elevation of the status of local government assisted in the promotion of multi-party democracy. It resulted in the diversification of politics because, over time, different political parties and coalitions took charge of different levels of government. Initially, all provinces and the vast majority of local governments were controlled by one political party. But, politics gradually diversified and 'other' parties and 'other' coalitions were voted into power at different levels. Fast forward to 2023: more than one third of the municipalities is now controlled by other political parties or coalitions than the party that controls the national government.

The 'normalization' of the regular, peaceful transition of power at the municipal level on the back of free and fair elections has been a major achievement in sustaining peace in South Africa. Those supporting the ruling party came to realize that the sky does not fall down when another party wins power, and those supporting other parties and formations came to realize that access to power comes with responsibilities. Furthermore, there is another important peace-building effect of the diversification of politics across levels (or 'spheres' as they are called in South Africa). Local governments, irrespective of which party or coalition controls them, have to work together with national and provincial governments and vice versa, and the reality is that they do – regardless of their political and other differences. For example, the national government continues to transfer funds to local governments in a predictable, transparent manner, regardless of the political differences between the various parties controlling national and local governments. No municipality has ever been 'punished' financially by the central government for being run by another party or coalition than the ruling party nationally. In fact, municipalities of all political persuasions work together with national and provincial governments in planning, budgeting, and implementing service delivery and development projects.

Challenges and lessons

This does not mean it is all roses and sunshine. Local government in South Africa faces major challenges. And yes, there often is animosity between the spheres of government, particularly if different political parties are involved. They disagree, bicker, take to the media, and even litigate against one another. But the point is this: it is all done in accordance with the 'rules of the game'. There is no violence involved, legal disagreements are absorbed by an independent judiciary, and the tension is not materially different from any country with decentralized governments. The opposing role players in these disagreements may or may not overlap with the 'cleavages of old' (i.e., racial, ethnic, political, or cultural), but that no longer matters as much as it did during the dark days of apartheid or the precarious immediate post-conflict transition. The peaceful co-existence of local, provincial, and national governments, governed by different political parties or coalitions would have been hard to imagine in the 1980s or early 1990s when South Africa was engulfed in violence.

The lesson in all of this is that the democratization of local government, in the way it was pursued by the African National Congress and its negotiating partners during the transition to democracy, may help to promote peace, stability, and the fostering of political tolerance. I argue that it holds great promise for those countries which are now being faced with critical choices about the future and the role that decentralization plays in it. ■



The Hague as the International City of Peace and Justice

Municipality of The Hague, The Netherlands

*Views are the author's and do not necessarily represent those of the UCLG



The Hague, often hailed as the “International City of Peace and Justice,” has established itself as a global hub for intergovernmental organizations (IOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) dedicated to promoting peace, justice, and international cooperation. The city serves as a hub for global diplomacy in which some 40,000 people work on issues of peace and justice in some 500 international organizations on a daily basis. This rich ecosystem makes The Hague a center for diplomacy and conflict resolution that is just as relevant today. The city of The Hague’s commitment to promoting peace and justice extends beyond its physical borders and is exemplified through its involvement in local peace initiatives worldwide and initiatives such as the UCLG Peace Prize.

A vivid ecosystem promoting peace and justice

The Hague has a rich history as a center for global diplomacy and the pursuit of justice. The city's journey began in 1899 when it hosted the world's first international peace conference, marking the establishment of the Permanent Court of Arbitration. This historic event laid the foundation for The Hague's reputation as a center for peaceful resolution of disputes. In subsequent years, The Hague became the seat of several international courts and tribunals such as the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. Besides these, the city is also home to such organizations as Europol and NATO. In addition to international organizations, The Hague houses a diverse range of NGOs dedicated to peace and justice. These NGOs work alongside IOs and local communities worldwide to address conflicts, promote human rights, provide humanitarian aid, and lay the foundations for lasting peace. They advocate for dialogue, peaceful resolution, and the protection of civilians – foundational values that the city of The Hague strives to uphold.

This vivid ecosystem created through the presence of these organizations has firmly established The Hague as a center for international arbitration and the pursuit of global peace and justice. Especially now where challenges to peace are increasing, The Hague's role in the world is more important than ever.

Maintaining and furthering the ecosystem

The city of The Hague understands the crucial place it occupies and because of that, is committed to further developing its global position. For one, The Hague has a key role as a platform for dialogue and negotiation. As such, the city has hosted several peace talks and negotiations, providing a neutral and conducive environment for parties involved in conflict to find common ground. The Hague's experience in facilitating negotiations, coupled with its reputation as a city committed to peace and justice, makes it an ideal venue for peace talks and diplomatic initiatives.

Next, recognizing that cooperation leads to crucial innovation, the city of The Hague invests in programming activities, networking events and further development of its ecosystem. Under the umbrella of SDG 16: “Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions”, the municipality supports conferences that contribute to SDG16+, such as the World Justice Forum focusing on the access to justice, or the first Responsible AI Summit which focuses on the responsible use of AI in peace and justice. The city takes an active role as partner in these conferences.

Finally, another important aspect of The Hague's global positioning is its dedication to furthering the study of peace and justice. The Hague is already an important international knowledge hub. The city appreciates that it is not just current generations that have an important role to play in building and maintaining peace but future ones as well. Given this, the municipality is a staunch supporter of the large and growing body of domestic and international students as well as the numerous academic institutions in the city.

It's not just international

The Hague's efforts to promote SDG 16 not only contribute to the global agenda for peaceful and just societies, but also benefit its own residents. The city works actively on strengthening peace and justice within its own jurisdiction as well. For example, it is estimated that 15,000 neighborhood conflicts occur annually in The Hague. This illustrates the need for greater neighborhood cohesion and the ability to reach agreement together. To achieve this, one of the municipality's key projects aims to improve access to justice by introducing new conflict resolution models and by making legal processes more transparent and understandable for citizens. Through investing in themes such as neighborhood peace and debt relief, the project offers the opportunity to develop concrete, area-based initiatives that are cutting-edge and truly help citizens in vulnerable positions move forward.

By implementing innovative approaches such as these, the city strengthens the position of people to navigate conflicts and seek timely resolutions, reducing the overall impact of conflicts on society. The municipal investment into these projects demonstrates its commitment to building strong institutions at the local level. By addressing issues underlying complex problems and providing support to vulnerable populations, The Hague aims to foster social cohesion and ensure that no one is left behind.

The Hague & the UCLG Peace Prize

The city of The Hague's commitment to peacebuilding extends to its determination to recognize and honor exemplary and innovative local efforts that look to promote peace, social inclusion, and conflict resolution. The ties between the UCLG Peace Prize and The Hague have been close from the beginning. As Peter Knip shows in his contribution to this publication, The Hague was instrumental to the creation of the Peace Prize as a forum for its founding and preparatory conferences. Furthermore, former Mayor of The Hague, Wim Deetman, has been a jury member since the first edition of the Prize in 2016. With this latest edition of the prize the municipality of The Hague has even become an official partner of the UCLG Peace Prize. Through this, the city is able to actively participate in the selection process and supports the winning projects.

However, the importance of the UCLG Peace Prize lies in that it not only acknowledges the achievements of local governments but also serves as a platform to share best practices and inspire other cities to take action. This network enables cities to share experiences, resources, and knowledge, fostering a collective effort to address conflicts and promote sustainable peace on a global scale. The municipality of The Hague as the international city of peace and justice hopes that through its support of the Peace Prize, it can serve as a beacon leading more cities worldwide to follow the courageous examples of the initiatives highlighted in this publication. ■



The Role of Local Government in Building Safer Communities

South African Local Government Association (SALGA)

*Views are the author's and do not necessarily represent those of the UCLG



Local governments are well-positioned to address a myriad of societal problems because of their proximity to people and communities. Because of this, municipal governments often play a significant role in establishing and maintaining peace. Local governments can do this by improving service delivery and promoting sustainable development, including people and communities in decision-making in both a representative and inclusive manner, and fostering the political will to resolve conflict and maintain peace within their communities. This article explores how this has played out in practice in South Africa.

Crime and safety

In South Africa, the role that local governments play in creating safe environments for their residents and communities is increasingly coming to the fore as the country struggles with high rates of crime and violence. The South African Police Service 2021/2022 Crime Statistics show a sharp increase in reported contact crimes like murder, attempted murder, and other forms of assault as well as rape. A total of 25 181 murder cases, 22,095 attempted murder cases, and 52,694 sexual offences were recorded during the review year. Further underlining this, the Global Peace Index for 2021 also ranks South Africa as the 54th most dangerous country in the world out of 163 countries.

Clearly, Combating violence in society requires a multi-sectoral response and local governments are well placed to play a key role in crime and violence prevention.

Community safety as a cornerstone of development

In 2012, the South African Government adopted the National Development Plan (NDP), which is the roadmap guiding South Africa's development agenda until 2030.

Recognising that safety has a direct impact on sustainable development, and that high levels of violence have slowed down South Africa's economic growth and transformation, the NDP identifies community safety as one of the fundamental components of achieving sustainable development. The NDP also places significant emphasis on the role of local government in understanding the safety needs of individual communities and incorporating safety and security priorities into their integrated development plans.

With the majority of crimes and violent acts and crime taking place in local communities and municipal spaces, municipalities must be given the skills and resources they need to play a stronger, more active role in directing comprehensive, long-term localised safety responses.

SALGA on the role of municipalities in building safer communities

To outline a municipal understanding of the roles and responsibilities of local government in improving community safety, SALGA developed a position paper with the working title Enhancing the Role of Local Government in Building Safer Communities in South Africa. This includes how other spheres of government should assist local governments in carrying out these duties related to community safety.

SALGA, in partnership with the Department of Cooperative Governance (DCoG), the Civilian Secretariat for Police Service (CSPS) and the GIZ Inclusive Violence and Crime Prevention Programme (VCP) began this dialogue process by commissioning a broad ranging discussion document

Combat crime and violence through enhancing the capacities of municipalities

In 2022, SALGA and GIZ-VCP partnered to implement the tried and tested learning programme that was recently accredited by the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA) and is now a credit bearing skills programme on municipal community safety planning.

The accredited learning material is currently being tested through a pilot role out of the training plan which is envisioned to be embedded in regular SALGA skills development offerings in the future. The training provides municipal officials and municipal councillors with the skills and knowledge to develop and implement integrated community safety plans, drawing on evidence-informed violence prevention measures.

The training is designed to strengthen the capacities of municipalities to promote violence and crime prevention at local level with the objective to develop participatory community safety plans and intervention strategies aligned to / integrated in their Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), as well as to promote the institutionalisation of community safety in local government.

Participants get practical guidance on how to perform and coordinate participatory safety planning processes that align with key policy instruments such as the Integrated Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy (ICVPS), the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) and National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (NSP GBVF).

In conclusion, municipalities in South Africa are starting to play a significant role in the social facets of crime and violence prevention. This is done with the understanding that national government cannot effectively combat crime on its own and that all three spheres of government must collaborate with civil society to reduce crime and maintain peace within communities. ■



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Account of the proceedings & selection criteria

Each edition of the UCLG Peace Prize begins with an official launch of the call for applications. Local governments around the world can submit their peace initiatives, after which a thorough selection procedure takes place. This article provides more insight into the process that led to the selection of our finalists and winner in 2022.

Call for applications and eligibility

The UCLG Peace Prize 2022 edition was officially launched in December 2021 in The Hague, The Netherlands. The launch marks the start of the application period during which eligible local governments can submit their initiatives. Eligibility is determined firstly on the basis of whether the applicant fits the profile of a 'local government'. In this, the Peace Prize maintains UCLG's interpretation of the term "local government". Broadly speaking, this means that a local government is a subnational government, defined as such by its own country's constitution or legislation. Next, the Peace Prize is open for award to local governments who either work for peace and conflict resolution in their areas themselves or provide positive assistance to local governments in conflict and fragile areas. This includes pre-and post-conflict situations, but also contexts that have been peaceful for decades. Finally, any nominated initiative should have taken place (at least partly) within the 3 years prior to application.

Importantly, the Prize is awarded to the local government as an institution, not to the individuals that were in charge of the initiative. Furthermore, there may be cases where local governments worked together on a peace initiative. In cases such as these, the Prize can be awarded to them jointly. For example, this may include cooperation between a conflict-stricken local government and an external partner city.

Selection of finalists

Eligible local governments can submit their application using a standardised application form and may choose to add annexes in the form of photos and/or videos. Applications are first reviewed by the Technical Evaluation Committee. This committee arranges for background checks on strong applicants, collects more information where needed, and evaluates all applications on the following criteria:

100 points total

In total, the above criteria provide a score for nominated initiatives out of a maximum of 100 points.

1. The impact and effectiveness of the initiative in favour of peace (how did it promote peace in the community) – **25 points.**
2. The broad replicability or learning potential of the initiative for other local governments in similar situations – **15 points.**
3. The degree of demonstrated innovation or creativity shown in the design of the initiative – **15 points.**
4. The sustainability for the future of the initiative – **10 points.**
5. The degree to which the initiative is embedded in the local government organisation – **10 points.**
6. The degree of difficulty, complexity, or danger of the situation faced on the ground by those involved in the initiative – **15 points.**
7. The general clarity and details of the information provided about the initiative – **10 points.**

Subsequently, all applications and their particular scorings are shared with the Peace Prize Jury. Based on this, in a series of conference calls and through additional requests for information from strong contenders, the Jury selected a shortlist of five finalists and finally, decided upon the winner.



Introduction of the Jury



Wim Deetman

Mr. Wim Deetman was a member of the Dutch Lower House and later held the position of Minister of Education in three consecutive cabinets, after which he returned to the Lower House to become its president for a period of seven years. He then became Mayor of The Hague, city of peace and justice, from 1996 to 2008. In this position, Mr. Deetman was instrumental in positioning the city in the international peace and security domain leading to the International Criminal Court being situated in The Hague. He is also a former member of the Dutch Council of State and former Chair of the UCLG Committee on City Diplomacy, Peace Building and Human Rights. The Wim Deetman Scholarship Foundation has been established in his name, providing students from developing countries the chance to pursue a master's degree in the area of peace and justice in The Hague. Mr. Deetman has joined the jury of the UCLG Peace Prize for the third time.



Dr. Katarina Kruhonja

Dr. Katarina Kruhonja is a peace activist, and co-founder and director of the Centre for Peace, a Non-Violence and Human Rights NGO in Osijek, Croatia. She studied medicine and was a nationally recognized senior specialist in nuclear medicine at Osijek Hospital from 1992 to 1996. After she retired as a medical doctor, she decided to join the post-war peacebuilding efforts in war-torn areas of Eastern Slavonia, coordinating multi-ethnic peace teams which were supporting processes of peaceful integration in Eastern Slavonia. In 1998, Dr. Kruhonja received the Right Livelihood Award – the alternative Nobel Peace Prize – together with Ms. Vesna Teršelić, founder of the Croatian Anti-War Campaign. Between 2004 and 2010, she was involved in national and regional cooperation in dealing with the past processes, particularly in monitoring the national war crime trials. Dr. Kruhonja has joined the jury for a second time.



Dr. Tarik Kupusović

Dr. Kupusović was the Lord Mayor of Sarajevo during the second half of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the siege of Sarajevo (1994-1996). As President of the country's Association of Towns and Cities, he has established close relations with many cities and mayors in other countries to restore the workings of local autonomous government in his country's devastated cities. In addition to his political experience, Dr. Kupusović has a strong academic record. He is a Professor in Fluid Mechanics, Hydraulics and Water Management at the University of Sarajevo as well as serving as director of the Hydro-Engineering Institute Sarajevo. As the team leader and coordinator of many local and international water and environment projects, he has published around 200 scientific and professional papers. Dr. Kupusović was also on the jury of the previous editions of the UCLG Peace Prize.



Prof. Thulisile Nomkhosi Madonsela

Professor Thulisile Nomkhosi 'Thuli' Madonsela is a South African advocate and Professor of law, holding a chair in social justice at Stellenbosch University. In 1994, she helped draft the final constitution of South Africa promulgated by Nelson Mandela. In 2009, Professor Madonsela was appointed Public Protector for a seven-year term. She was the only full-time commissioner of the South African Law Reform Commission at the time. As Public Prosecutor, Professor Madonsela received international praise for her efficiency and professionalism. Furthermore, as an advocate for Gender equality and the advancement of women, Professor Madonsela is a member of the South African Women Lawyers Association and Businesswomen's Association of South Africa. Amongst numerous other awards, Professor Madonsela was named one of TIME's 100 most influential people in the world in 2014 and Forbes Africa Person of the Year 2016. Professor Madonsela was also a jury on the previous edition of the Peace Prize.



Introduction of the Jury



Prof. Janne Nijman

Professor Janne Nijman is an internationally recognised expert on cities in international law and governance, as well as the critical study of international law. She is a professor of History and Theory of International Law at the University of Amsterdam, and a senior fellow of the Amsterdam Center for International Law. Concurrently, she is a Professor of International Law at the Graduate Institute of International Law and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. Furthermore, she is a member of the Dutch Advisory Council on International Affairs and chair of its permanent Committee on Human Rights. From 2015 to 2022, she was Chair of the Executive Board and Academic Director of the T.M.C. Asser Institute in The Hague. Outside academia, Prof. Nijman serves on numerous boards and has been published widely in newspapers. Prof. Nijman has joined the jury of the UCLG Peace Prize for the first time.



Jerome Gama Surur

Mr. Jerome Gama Surur is the former State Deputy Governor of Eastern Equatoria, South Sudan. He played an important role in aiding internally displaced persons in the conflict in South Sudan and is an advocate of equal rights for all. Coming from an Economics and Public Administration background, Mr. Gama Surur enriched his knowledge of public policy and administration at the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague. As Chairperson of the South Sudan Technical Borders Committee since 2014, he has contributed to resolving border conflicts and promoted peaceful coexistence amongst the border communities. He published a book titled 'Reaping without Sowing', about the role of humanitarian organisations in the development of the young independent nation. Mr. Gama Surur has joined the jury of the UCLG Peace Prize for the second time.





Peace Prize's Partners

World Organisation of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is a global network of local and regional governments and their associations, committed to representing and defending their interests on the world stage. UCLG's network of members represents over 70% of the world's total population and is present in all world regions: Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Eurasia, West Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, and North America. Organised into seven regional sections, it also has two specialised sections: a metropolitan section and a Forum of Regions. UCLG's key priorities are the promotion of decentralisation, good governance, sustainable development policies and innovation through city-to-city and association-to-association learning.

Diputació Barcelona (The Barcelona Provincial Council)

The Barcelona Provincial Council is an intermediate local authority, which operates in the region of Barcelona, promoting the progress and welfare of its citizens. Its territory covers 24% of the total area of Catalonia and includes 311 municipalities, comprising over 5.5 million people. The institution offers technical, economic and technological support to municipalities, providing quality local services in a more homogeneous way throughout the territory. Following the idea of multilevel governance, it coordinates the municipal services and organises public services beyond the local level. Its aim is to share objectives, improve the level of well-being throughout the territory and improve the quality of services. The Provincial Council is firmly committed to the internationalisation of local governments. For this reason, the International Relations Directorate works in the field of development cooperation – at the European sphere as well as at international level – by means of the participation in international networks, transnational projects and development cooperation and giving support to the municipalities to elaborate actions and internationalisation plans.

VNG International and the VNG Fund for Emergency Aid, Reconstruction and the Promotion of Peace

VNG International is the international development cooperation agency of the Netherlands Association of Municipalities (VNG). The organization is committed to strengthening local governance worldwide. It supports decentralisation processes and facilitates decentralised cooperation, implementing projects on behalf of a variety of development partners. Building on existing experience, with high quality services such as benchmarks, taxation tools and handbooks, VNG International provides services to strengthen the capacities of local governments, their associations, training institutes and decentralisation task forces – both in developing countries and countries in transition. VNG International houses the UCLG Peace Prize secretariat.

As part of the VNG, the VNG Fund for Emergency Aid, Reconstruction and the Promotion of Peace bundles the strength of committed Dutch Municipalities by managing funding for emergency aid and reconstruction for areas struck by disaster. Further, the Fund is active in promoting peace through its foundational role in the creation of the UCLG Peace Prize.

PAX

PAX brings together people who have the courage to stand for peace. It works together with people in conflict areas, meets with politicians and coordinates efforts with committed citizens. For more than 35 years now, PAX is actively involving local governments in its peace work. Special programs are developed and implemented to support local governments in conflict and post-conflict countries. PAX sets peace in motion: it believes that peace belongs to everyone and everyone who believes in peace can contribute. Therefore, it calls on committed citizens to take part, for the sake of peace. PAX operates independently of political interests and is supported by a wide group of involved citizens, social organisations and churches.

National Fund for Peace, Freedom and Veterans Care (vfonds)

The National Fund for Peace, Freedom and Veterans Care (vfonds) is a foundation from the Netherlands working on the theme of peace. Vfonds seeks recognition and appreciation for those who wear a uniform and serve under the Dutch flag anywhere in the world. Through awareness raising, education and publicity vfonds tries to win the respect and appreciation for everybody that is involved in international peace operations. Each year, vfonds supports over 200 projects that increase knowledge about war and conflict and teach people skills to make an active contribution to peace themselves. In addition, to keep the memory of war alive and to not take peace and living in freedom for granted, the foundation supports museums about the resistance movement in the Netherlands and memorial centres.

Gemeente Den Haag (Municipality of The Hague)

The Hague, the international city of peace and justice is home to hundreds of international organizations and NGOs as well as tens of thousands of individuals committed to building a more peaceful and just world. As part of this ecosystem, the Municipality of The Hague is committed to further building the city as a global hub for diplomacy, conflict resolution, and peace, for example, through taking an active role in the hosting and organization of conferences, peace talks, and negotiations. Furthermore, the Municipality recognizes that it must promote the values that it represents internationally amongst its citizens as well. As such, it has undertaken many often innovative initiatives to strengthen access to justice, foster social cohesion, and improve the position of the city's most vulnerable inhabitants.

South African Local Government Association (SALGA)

SALGA is an association of all 257 South African local governments that aims to represent, promote, and protect the interests of local governments. Further, SALGA supports its members in fulfilling their obligations within the national system of government, for example, by providing policy recommendations, sharing knowledge, or building capacity. Being firmly rooted in local government and a long history of peace-building in South Africa, SALGA is highly aware of the important role that local governments can play in promoting sustainable peace. Because of this, SALGA has partnered with the UCLG Peace Prize to join hand-in-hand with the international local government community to help build lasting peace in cities, towns, and villages worldwide.



Submit your peace initiative – Become a Partner of the UCLG Peace Prize

A call for applications and partnerships – Showcase your initiative, collect examples, build the network, and inspire local governments together with us.



Call for Applications

Applications for the next edition of the UCLG Peace Prize will open in 2024. If your local government has undertaken an innovative, successful, or noteworthy peace initiative, we would love to work with you and perhaps even showcase your work in the next publication. Please use the link below to apply!



Please use the link below to apply!
peaceprize.uclg.org/apply/



Become a Partner

The UCLG Peace Prize is always looking for new partners. Becoming a partner of the UCLG Peace Prize means your organization is choosing...

- ... to be part of an organization that underlines the crucial role local governments play in promoting peace;
- ... to actively support local governments who are striving for peace and justice in conflict areas;
- ... to celebrate successful initiatives for conflict prevention and peace-building by local governments;
- ... to be supportive in generating international public attention for the role local governments play in ensuring sustainable and peaceful development;
- ... to be part of an international network that is committed to contributing to peace and dialogue around the world.

Options for partnerships range from financial support and a seat on the steering committee to active contributions in the day-to-day work of the Secretariat. Is your local government or organization interested in becoming a partner of the UCLG Peace Prize, or would you like to hear more about our work?



Please get in touch with us through
peace.prize@vng.nl

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

BECOME A PARTNER

