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Quaker Action



Moving beyond aid



American Friends
Service Committee

afsc.org

“We are called to play the Good Samaritan on life’s roadside, but that will be only an initial act. One day we must come to see that the whole Jericho Road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life’s highway. True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring.”

—REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Beyond charity, toward justice

Friends,

In 1917, as the United States entered World War I, Quakers founded the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) out of a conviction that opposed all wars and sought paths to serve peace. Rufus Jones said about the founders, “They were inwardly pledged to a way of life which, if extended through the world, would eliminate the seeds of war and would bring new and higher forces into operation within the fabric of society.”

Hundreds of Quakers and others went to France through AFSC to drive ambulances and bind the wounds of war. They stayed after the armistice to rebuild war-

ravaged communities. Having seen such devastation, they returned with a renewed commitment to address the seeds of war—poverty, economic exploitation, racism, ethnic and religious discrimination, and militarism—which often arise in response to real or manipulated fears of being victims in war.

Over 98 years, AFSC learned what works to build peace and what does not work. We have experienced the truth of Dr. King’s observation that charity is not a sufficient response to crisis. Today, AFSC’s approach to building peace is to transform the road to Jericho. We partner with

communities most impacted by war and oppression. People who understand that violence begets violence. We accompany them, honoring their insights about how best to heal broken people and create systems to build sustainable peace.

In Zimbabwe, as a result of a massive “clean-up” operation by the government, over 700,000 people’s homes or businesses were destroyed, and they were left understandably mistrustful of neighbors. AFSC worked with displaced Zimbabweans in Hatcliffe Extension, helping them develop skills to supply goods and services needed in the community. We supported social



Mar Vista Gardens housing project in Los Angeles, where AFSC intern Carlos “Elmo” Gomez helped establish a community garden. Photo: AFSC

cohesion by teaching conflict-resolution skills, and we helped build bridges to government agencies that could support the ongoing economic recovery and reintegration of the community.

Last year, AFSC raised enough funds for a “factory shell” workspace in Hatcliffe Extension. Planned by the residents and supported by the government that once displaced them, it offers clean, well-lit space to practice trades such as welding, hairdressing, carpentry, and peanut butter production. The factory shell exemplifies our approach—providing resources so Zimbabweans can support themselves.

Transformative change is AFSC’s focus in the United States, too. In Los Angeles, young people in urban food deserts learn how to garden and feed themselves, and also learn to analyze—and change—the system. Carlos “Elmo” Gomez, an AFSC intern, was inspired to plant a garden in his yard in the Mar Vista Gardens housing project. After the housing authority pulled it up, citing federal regulations, he worked to establish a community garden with nine raised beds in the middle of Mar Vista Gardens.

“If we can change our world here, that can have an impact beyond this place,” Elmo says. “We are trying to change the policy about growing food here. Planting seeds and the gardens are instruments to organize the community. Once a garden is planted, we the people have experienced shifting something, doing something in the hood.”

Changing Mar Vista Gardens also means undoing the impact of a constant police presence. Police regularly stop and

arrest residents, especially young men of color. “After getting harassed this way all the time, it becomes hard to be motivated to come out of your home,” Elmo says. “The prison is around you, but it’s built in you, too. It takes a lot to work against that. We didn’t choose this situation, someone placed us in it. Even so, we can work to change it.”

“Just like you can internalize the prison, you can internalize the garden, too. I am a person of practice. Consciousness and action come out of the garden. I have a vision of a wholly changed social structure with the garden at the center.”

The wholly changed social structure that AFSC envisions is one in which people like the Hatcliffe Extension residents in Zimbabwe and Elmo and the other gardeners in Mar Vista Gardens are cultivating peaceful and resilient communities. Our role is to offer support, resources, and assistance for the short term, so people can change their lives and the lives of their neighbors for the long term. Our role is to support those we work with in laying the foundation from which peace with justice can arise.

I value your commitment to that vision and your ongoing support to make it real in Zimbabwe, in Los Angeles, and around the world.



In peace,

 Shan Cretin
 General Secretary

Quaker Action

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WHO WE ARE

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a Quaker organization that promotes lasting peace with justice as a practical expression of faith in action. Drawing on continuing spiritual insights and working with people of many backgrounds, we nurture the seeds of change and respect for human life that transform social relations and systems.

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FPO: FSC SEAL
 IF APPLICABLE



Fabiola Jean. Photo: AFSC/Haiti

It's not easy to feel secure in the Haitian settlement where Fabiola Jean wakes up each day. Hastily built houses dot the desert—most with five to 10 people packed into a single room. The land is devoid of trees, water, and other natural resources. Amid such scarcity, it can be dangerous to possess anything that others need.

If she can't feel safe, if her community can find no peace, Fabiola realizes that her dream of rebuilding after the earthquake could be out of reach. So she starts each day with a prayer, greets her neighbors, and gets to work uniting people who have little more to their names than the clothes they wear and the community they are building among strangers.

Fabiola lost almost everyone in the 2010 earthquake that shook Haiti—her father, husband, youngest daughter, brother, sister, and cousin. Only she and her daughter survived. Five years later, they are among tens of thousands of people who are still displaced.

The urgency of the immediate aftermath brought \$13 billion in aid into Haiti. That support kept survivors alive, fed, and sheltered. Today, Fabiola says that the most urgent need for herself and for neighbors is a house to call home—a foundation from which to begin rebuilding their lives.

Supported by AFSC, Fabiola and other community leaders are taking steps to help people like themselves get back into homes. It's going to be a long road.

Every Saturday morning, leaders in the camp convene small groups, known as local peace networks, to address problems facing community members. Participants range in age from 12 to 50. They've developed sanitation systems; made goods such as sandals, bracelets, and necklaces to sell; and reduced violence.

"Before the local peace network activities, inhabitants couldn't even walk in some areas," Fabiola says. "But because we have selected the most violent and vulnerable youth and young adults to be part of the local peace network, now the situation is really different. People are feeling safe and not afraid."

Fabiola was impressed by AFSC's willingness to support community efforts to reduce violence.

"The confidence that AFSC puts in our vision to work according to our capacity to improve our lives was surprising," she says. "Every time we sit with AFSC, they're always valuing our voice as well as our activities."

Leaders now speak directly with elected officials, police officers, and religious leaders as part of resolving conflict and preventing violence.

Fabiola spreads positive messages to encourage the community members to move forward, but it's challenging to stay resolute when even community leaders struggle to feed their families. And her own pain persists. She asks, "Do you know what it means to lose your loved ones?"

Making peace a daily practice helps. Peace is "like a tree you plant in your garden," says Fabiola. "Then you have to take good care of it constantly. If it doesn't find daily care, it will destroy." ■

The practice of peace



Jeremy "Lucky Lou" Tassin (left) and Glenn Sullivan performing "Stomp the Violence" during Healing through the Arts. Photo: Akema Namore

Expressing injustice

EXCERPT FROM "WHO CARES" BY GLENN SULLIVAN

He's from a place where love was thought to be more of a cliché than a genuine feeling that was expressed by human beings amongst each other, and so he did as he saw in the environment that he spent the most time in, his neighborhood, and it wasn't necessarily a bad place so much as the things that took place in it by the people that lived there, lies, generational pain, drug usage and infestation, lack of direction moral and financial support, this was home, and so it did not matter that he spent at least eight hours in school mon through Friday, if none of the people in the school understood that they had a personal stake in not only his future success, but his current success or failure, and maybe he didn't care about his future or his present success in life, but did anyone in or outside of school care to ask with a genuine purpose, not because they were paid to or because it was a part of the curriculum, or did they only care about his future to the extent of their job requirements, who knows, who cares, who doesn't

Read the rest at afsc.org/glenn-poems



Damage and flooding in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. Photo: FEMA/Jocelyn Augustino

avenue for being heard.

Jermy Tassin, the recording artist and AFSC program committee member who planned and hosted this year's show, told the standing-room-only crowd why the performers were there: "We use our talent as an alternative to violence."

A resourceful entrepreneur, Jermy works with what he has: a city of talented people and cultures; disengaged kids with undiscovered gifts; and experience in the business of art. These all come together in his work with AFSC and in the movement he is leading to spread peace through art.

Police brutality and violent conflict are all too familiar to the young performers. Breial Kennedy, an intern with AFSC who has taught nonviolent conflict resolution, says that the frequent violence they experi-

ence leaves teens desensitized. "Things are routine," she says, remembering reactions to an incident a few weeks back in which a shooting victim died. "A lot of the kids see it as common—we expect it."

Violence becomes the go-to for solving problems. "Some people think they have to fight out their problems physically," says Glenn Sullivan, who encountered AFSC through Jermy a few years ago before becoming an AFSC intern. "We are trying to deal with our problems and find solutions using different avenues, like the arts."

By creating art, young people also share how it feels to experience injustices such as the school-to-prison pipeline—the system of budgetary and disciplinary practices that pushes young people out of school and into the criminal justice system.

Responding to conflict and injustice nonviolently is one step. Securing justice is another.

MORE FROM JERMY TASSIN

Watch Jermy's music video for "Stomp the Violence" at afsc.org/stomp. It starts with news footage from deadly shootings in New Orleans. A woman raises her hands in exasperation, asking: "How much more murder we gotta have to take notice?" An AFSC workshop on healing inspired Jermy to write the song, using a chant he'd heard at a peace rally.

New Orleans has limited resources for young people, but arts and music are as much a part of daily life as the violence and extreme weather covered in the news. Glenn, Jermy, and Breial, whose childhoods were fragmented by disinvestment before and after Hurricane Katrina, are living examples of the power of using self-expression for peace and survival.

Nothing changes suddenly

Heavy rain was already falling when Glenn's family drove out of eastern New

Orleans in August 2005. The levees were intact and the buildings were still standing. His family had no way of knowing that Hurricane Katrina's devastating floods would wash away the mainstays of New Orleans community life. That they would move from shelter to shelter in Texas, from town to town for the better part of a year, and stay in Texas for half a decade. That Glenn would never again see most of his childhood friends.

Glenn was 10 years old then. Now 20, he deals daily with this narrative about his life—defined by the largest residential disaster in U.S. history. "I get tired of hearing about the hurricane, like a lot of people," he says. He is frustrated that, 10 years and \$120.5 billion in aid later, people are still displaced, homeless, and traumatized—and it seems that many Americans expect New Orleans to be fixed.

"The work we're doing down here is not an overnight thing, by any stretch of the imagination," Glenn says. "People's homes still haven't been rebuilt. People are still suffering mentally from what's happened."

Thirty nine percent of New Orleans children live in poverty today—a rate that matches the pre-Katrina poverty level. Most children have at least one working parent, but reasonable wages and job security are hard to come by, even while the city experiences an economic revival and rising rents in certain areas. Children are affected by poor access to effective edu-

MORE FROM GLENN SULLIVAN

Last summer in the Washington Post, Glenn wrote about the empowering effect that seeing oneself in an educator can have on a young person. See the story at afsc.org/white-teachers.

cation, health care, and nutrition, and by the social impacts of torn-apart neighborhoods. One in 14 black men from New Orleans is behind bars. Ninety two percent of the city's 2014 homicide victims were black.

Statistics are telling, but not defining. Glenn is focused on the future. Ending housing displacement and developing a government accountable to the people are the first steps. "We need real neighborhoods to come back," he says.

"A lot of the old housing projects have been torn down and rebuilt with less apartments—people have to relocate around the city," says Glenn. To bring back communities, the poorest New Orleanians need allies to keep politicians accountable. "It's going to take more than us to do the work."

The other part of Glenn's solution is nonviolence. Through AFSC's peace education project, he serves as a role model for younger school kids. "It's going to be much harsher for them coming up," he says, explaining that today's teenagers face a more negative atmosphere than previous generations. "Since the hurricane, things have got worse."

Transforming the future

AFSC interns teach peaceful conflict resolution to young, mostly black, people in the city's under-resourced neighborhoods. Glenn, Jermy, and Breial are very effec-

tive at this work because they have been in similar shoes. They also show kids that living can be about expression and art.

Responding to conflict and injustice nonviolently is one step. Securing justice is another.

"We are moving into the organizing side now," says Breial. The February arts showcase and a January discussion on police brutality got a lot of people's attention, and more youth are interested in getting involved.

"We are asking what we can do in our community to empower young people," Breial explains. "People want to talk about issues that are important to us—taking charge of education reform, the school-to-prison pipeline, budget cuts." In the coming year, she is leading AFSC's efforts to train New Orleans youth in effective lobbying, to make elected officials pay attention to their concerns.

Glenn looks at today's transformations as a door to a peaceful and just New Orleans in the future. "Sources outside of our control act upon their lives without them knowing it yet," he says. "[Nonviolence] will interrupt those other forces ... and help them to do whatever they are put on this planet to do, whatever they are very passionate about. If they can access that, and tap into themselves, and identify that, that can be an even better future beyond what I see. They might be running things one day." ■



Glenn Sullivan (far right) and Breial Kennedy (center) were among representatives from New Orleans who took part in an AFSC human rights summit in summer 2014. In Washington, D.C., they spoke with Congresswoman Mary Landrieu about supporting opportunities for youth. Photo: AFSC/Bryan Vana



Neighbors gather on a sports field that was previously a garbage-filled ravine. Concerned residents transformed the space into its current use as a soccer field and community meeting space with the support of AFSC. Photo: AFSC/Guatemala

Breaking silence

The violence didn't end with the war. You could say that of many places, but perhaps it is especially true of Guatemala, where a 1996 peace accord ended 36 years of civil war, but left society grappling with a legacy of violence.

The country's homicide, lynching, and mugging rates are higher than in 1996. An average of around 100 people are killed each week. Rural communities have used collective resistance to protest the environmentally degrading plans of mining companies. City dwellers have continued to live in fear of gang violence and extortion.

In Guatemala City, home to 5 million of the country's 14 million people, silence and suspicion are required for survival in neighborhoods where speaking out can be dangerous.

"Violence has become our daily bread, separating neighbors, confronting them and turning into enemies, instead of making them collaborators for a better future in community," says Oswaldo Joel Mendía Bonilla.

He is among the more than 200 young peace leaders who studied conflict transformation, the public policy cycle, and democracy through AFSC's civic engagement program. In a country where the median age is 21, leaders like 20-year-old Oswaldo see power in their own potential to shape a future with lasting peace.

Making that power visible to others is one step toward transforming the community's fear.

Traditionally, young men like Oswaldo have been stereotyped as lazy or violent, and young women have been expected to stay home. In addition, youth have been dismissed by their elders as unable to think for themselves or make decisions. These stigmas have kept authority figures—and sometimes other youth—from taking young people seriously as agents of peaceful change.

But thanks to efforts by Oswaldo and others like him, those expectations are beginning to change. For two years, youth have been forming peace networks through which they have transformed public parks, schools, and streets into safe spaces where neighbors can gather and children can play. Miriam Camas, Gua-

YOUNG PEACE LEADERS SPEAK OUT



Oswaldo Joel Mendía Bonilla, age 20, is one of 200 youth who studied conflict transformation, public policy and democracy through AFSC's civic engagement program. He's a local peace network leader in Asentamientos Zona 3.

"I believe [that] in my community it is important that young people begin to take the lead and actively participate in building peace."



Saulo Fernando Mazariegos Hernandez, 30, planned a mural festival in Santa Isabel. By creating a detailed plan and asking for permission, he got local authorities to support it, to the surprise of many community members.

"Working with peace-building topics has transformed me personally. I have learned to analyze things. It's generated a change in attitude that I want to transfer to other youth, to plant this seed in them, beginning in my community and expanding through actions in all areas."

temala program coordinator with AFSC, says these activities change the way other community members see the youth: "They are legitimized in the eyes of the community—people note that they are doing good work."

These same youth leaders are using their credibility and skills to advocate for peace and social justice at a policy level. Through the public-space recovery projects, they learned how to approach public authorities. "Now the youth leaders understand how democracy works," says Miriam. "There is a structure above us that we have to respect and ask for help. [Those people are] obligated to respond to the community because they are public authorities."

She says it is a huge change for youth to approach public authorities, and for public authorities to say yes. "Sometimes we need to accompany youth because they don't believe it will work," she says. "After the first time, it gets easier. The next time, the field staff won't have to go."

Learning side by side

In 2015, AFSC initiated a new avenue for youth and adults to build understanding. After community partners requested human rights training, AFSC worked with the education unit of the government's Human Rights Office to set up a course with a local university that met twice monthly for five months. Youth leaders, community

partners, and public authorities attended the course. Police were invited but were unable to attend this session.

Learning alongside one another, "the distance between public authorities and stigmatized youth fades," Miriam says. The human rights course is proving to be empowering for youth and perspective-changing for public officials.

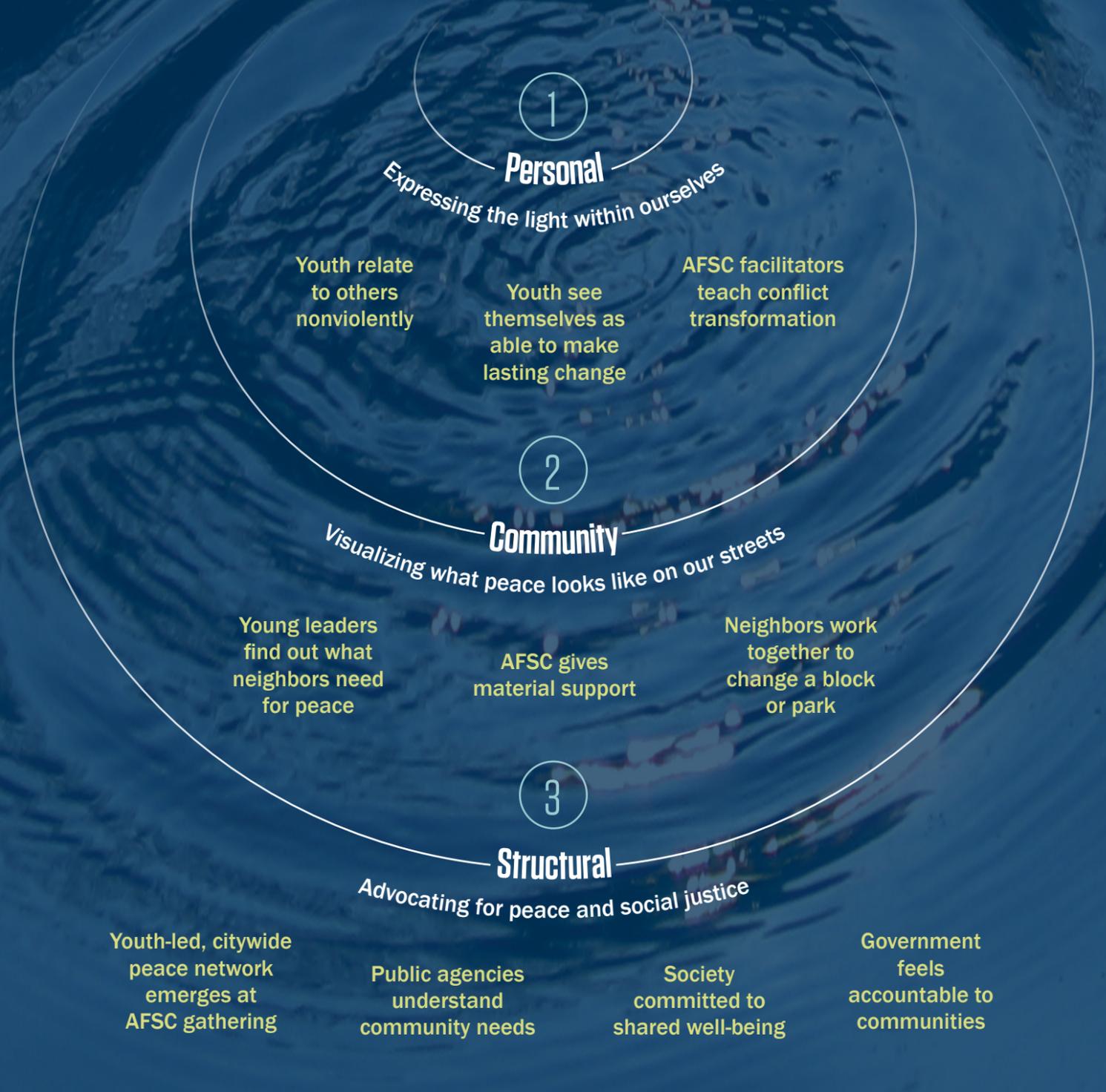
"When the authorities get to know youth, they say, 'This is not a delinquent. They're actually doing something in their community and are worried about the future like we are,'" Miriam says. "Sometimes these adults come to us and tell us they didn't know the efforts the youth are doing in their communities because they don't let them speak. When the youth speak in the diploma class, they understand that these youth are training themselves."

"We all want the same thing: Police want communities with peace. The youth want peace. AFSC wants peace. We have to remind youth, community leaders, police, and public authorities that every day, every citizen can be an effective peace-builder."

More trainings are planned to bring youth together with police and other authorities, as AFSC continues to focus on leadership opportunities for Oswaldo and other Guatemalan youth, who are redefining their country's future. ■

THREE STEPS TOWARD NEIGHBORHOOD PEACE IN GUATEMALA CITY

After working on the personal and community levels for a few years, participants in AFSC's Guatemala program are now expanding their peace and social justice advocacy to include a structural focus.



Young leaders from neighborhoods destroyed in the 2014 attacks on Gaza meet to discuss rebuilding. Photo: AFSC/Gaza

Gaza students put relief funds to work

Manal Hillis, 22, lives in Sheshaiyeh, one of many neighborhoods destroyed during Israel's 51-day attack on Gaza last July and August. The attack rained bombs on the already fragile region, where civilians have been under blockade for eight years.

Manal recounts how her family came to flee their home on a July morning:

We received warnings from the Israelis to vacate the area, but we refused. We are used to targeted attacks and killings, not random shelling. Hence, we did not give any attention to the warnings. However,

on an early morning at 6 a.m. my father, mother, three brothers, and myself fled in haste under the severe sounds of bombshells. We searched for protection elsewhere because the Israeli bombs were hitting the whole neighborhood randomly.

We arrived to the shelter, a regular school run by United Nations Relief and World Agencies that was opened for civilian protection. We stayed there until the end of the war.

Toward the end, every time a cease-fire was announced for a couple of hours, we rushed back home to either get more belongings or to check out the damage done. We

stayed in the school until the official cease-fire was declared.

Israel's "Operation Protective Edge" was catastrophic for Palestinians in Gaza. Nearly 30 percent of Gaza's population was displaced, with about 273,000 people sheltering in U.N. schools. Ten thousand homes were razed; an additional 89,000 were damaged. Over 2,100 people in Gaza lost their lives, including 513 children.

In the midst of the attacks, AFSC used the hours of temporary cease-fire to carry out an early aid intervention, delivering 1,500 kits containing urgently needed personal items to displaced Palestinians sheltering in U.N. schools. This was especially critical in a time when short cease-fires



The Sheshaiyeh neighborhood is still in ruins, several months after the attacks. Photo, above left: Mohammed Shorafa; above right: AFSC/Ilona Kassissieh

made movement difficult, and larger relief organizations were still working to put systems in place for delivering humanitarian aid.

Neighbors helping neighbors

Though bombs stopped falling months ago, recovery efforts have only just begun. Tight restrictions on the import of goods, including construction materials, have slowed efforts at reconstruction. Some estimate that it will take a generation to rebuild.

AFSC's work for peace in the region extends well beyond Gaza, encompassing efforts by Palestinian, Israeli, and U.S. activists working to end the Israeli occupation, uphold human rights, and promote economic activism. In Gaza, we continue to direct resources to the places they are most needed—and we are especially committed to supporting efforts by Palestinian youth like Manal who are helping their communities heal and rebuild.

As one of the local leaders carrying out early recovery projects with AFSC, Manal is part of a group of 25 young men and women from families whose houses were severely or completely destroyed in the two most hit neighborhoods of Beit Hanoun and Sheshaiyeh. Most are university students between 18 and 25 years old. Many now live with relatives or are renting apartments in other neighborhoods.

"We suffer from the lack of services, such as regular provision of electricity and water or Internet," says Manal. This makes

their work to rebuild move slowly; yet, they are making steady progress.

Manal says AFSC is one of the first organizations in Gaza to involve affected people in the process of assessing community needs. AFSC organized training sessions for the group. "I loved the training on needs assessment, especially the part where we learned how to conduct interviews with various types of people in order to identify their needs," says Manal. These trainings have helped Manal and others gather sufficient input to make decisions about where their efforts can make a difference. The trainings also help ensure that such skills stay in the community when AFSC's relief aid ends.

In addition to needs assessment, participants learned about statistics and disaster risk reduction. Through questionnaires and focus groups, Manal and others surveyed 360 residents and interviewed eight community leaders. They organized a public meeting to share their findings and recommendations. Now, they're moving forward with projects they identified, including rehabilitating a medical clinic with physiotherapy equipment in Sheshai-

yeh and repairing houses for people with special needs in Beit Hanoun.

Manal's involvement with the project gives her a positive outlet for responding to her community's dire circumstances. "I used to be relatively calm and happy, but now I live under constant emotional pressure and stress," she says. While rumors of more war circulate around her, she does not endorse violence or extremism—instead she is asking questions about what people need to survive peacefully. ■

Since 1948, AFSC has worked in the U.S., Israel, and the occupied Palestinian territory with Palestinians, Israelis, and other committed activists to support nonviolence, challenge oppression, and (since 1970) to end Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territory. This work is guided by AFSC's "Principles for a Just and Lasting Peace in Palestine and Israel," which supports the implementation of international human rights and humanitarian law and calls for an end to Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territory, implementation of refugees' right of return, equality, and justice for Palestinians and Israelis.

WORKING AT THE ROOT OF THE CRISIS

More than 80 percent of Gaza's population is dependent on international assistance for survival. Despite the terrible human suffering caused by the blockade, the situation in Gaza is not a humanitarian crisis that can be resolved through the provision of international aid and assistance. It is a political crisis that can only be resolved through political action to end the occupation. To learn more about how you can participate in boycott and divestment efforts, go to afsc.org/key-issues/issue/economic-activism.

Taking away occasions of war

For almost 100 years, AFSC has brought relief in the aftermath of conflicts around the world. Nearly all of our international programs originated in war zones or amid political conflicts, often aggravated by disasters.

Though AFSC gained respect and renown for aid interventions, humanitarian assistance and development have never been the driving mission of the Service Committee—rather, the mission has always been to make peace viable.

Rebuilding requires harmony. Reconciling warring communities takes trust. And trust takes time to build. The pace of building peace with justice—of taking away the occasions of war—requires faith in the practice of nonviolence. Lessons from the past century have taught AFSC to concentrate on preventing violence. Often, that means staying in a post-conflict area long after the news cameras and emergency aid dollars have moved on.

Colin Bell, executive secretary in the 1950s and 60s, summed up AFSC's approach: "The cup of cold water to the thirsty child is not a debatable proposition. It has to be given," he said. But to fulfill their spiritual purpose, Quakers must continue beyond aid, finding direction by asking "Why the thirsty child? Why the breakdown into war?"

Love is the first motion

The Quaker peace testimony opposes war and violence, compelling Friends to pursue lasting, sustainable peace. Eliminating the causes of violent conflict—such as poverty, exploitation, and intolerance—is part of practicing nonviolence.

Led by this testimony, 14 Quakers created AFSC weeks after the United States entered World War I. The organization gave conscientious objectors ways to serve without joining the military or taking lives. Members drove ambulances and ministered to the wounded in Europe. They collected clothing and canned food to distribute to displaced people in war-ravaged France.

Donations and volunteers kept coming after the war. Though AFSC was imagined as a wartime effort, support for its approach encouraged the early members to keep serving those suffering in post-conflict areas around the world.

Thus began a longtime AFSC practice of collecting and distributing material aid. That aid peaked in the two decades following World War II, when AFSC shipped over 124 million pounds of supplies to devastated areas of Europe and Japan. Medical supplies were shipped to hospitals during the Korean and Vietnam wars. Tractors to Israel in the 1950s. Vaccines for Algerian refugees in Morocco and Tunisia. In 1948, the Emergency Material Aid Program ran five export warehouses, in Philadelphia, Chicago, New York City, Pasadena, and Seattle.

AFSC was a conduit for a swelling amount of generosity in



German feeding program during World War II. Photo: AFSC Archives



AFSC in Quang Ngai, Vietnam. Photo: AFSC Archives

that period. The federal government subsidized shipping costs, and U.S. supporters gave readily in the form of used clothing and donations. As Colin Bell said:

The efficient first aider who appears on the scene of an accident is a godsend, and is seen by others as one. For this reason, it is a tragic fact that the AFSC, a charity existing on the gifts of vast numbers of Americans, most of them not Friends, has been at its richest in funds during the aftermath of a number of wars.

We are most strongly supported when we are doing what we least want to do—namely, picking up the pieces, stanching the wounds caused by some violent breakdown in human relations. Doing that, it is easy to be everybody's darling.

Preventive medicine

AFSC's founders protested taking up arms because they believed that humanity could exist without violence. "They were inwardly pledged to a way of life—which, if extended through the world, would eliminate the seeds of war," said Rufus Jones, one of the founders and AFSC's first chairperson. In caring for others and respecting each person's dignity, the found-

ers were transforming enemies into allies and conflict into peaceful coexistence.

Transformative peace-building has always been the core of the Service Committee's approach, even when humanitarian assistance is the first response.

During the Vietnam War, AFSC ran a medical project in Quang Ngai, training residents to make artificial arms and legs for civilian amputees. Lady Borton volunteered on the project, running errands in the town to support volunteers with medical skills. Years later, in 1988, Lady reflected that her presence interacting with townspeople made a lasting difference. "Our effort to learn Vietnamese, our willingness to let the Vietnamese on both sides know who we were and, most important of all, our commitment to listen and to care," she said, were more critical than the medical projects they were there to provide.

"Commitment to listen and care is no small gift," she said. "After the Vietnam War, the AFSC commitment meant fostering a relationship during years of Vietnamese reticence. And it meant continuing projects even when funding programs in Vietnam grew unfashionable."

Being present in circumstances such as these makes a lasting difference. In

the mid-2000s, AFSC made external and internal changes to better support that investment with its limited resources. The material aid program ceased sending used clothing overseas, as shipping grew costly and material goods had negative effects to local economies. Directors for international programs moved from Philadelphia to international regions, bringing leaders closer to people affected by decisions and allowing them to act in deeper partnership with community and national leaders.

AFSC also expanded the work of international affairs representatives who focus on building bridges. In the midst of violence and in post-conflict situations where violence could easily erupt again, they have created important opportunities for underrepresented voices to be heard. They also created space for dialogue among divided leaders.

AFSC pioneered many of the peace-building methods practiced widely among international peace organizations today, such as bridging divides, meeting pressing needs while addressing underlying conflicts, and engaging respectfully with local partners. These principles continue to inspire our work with communities worldwide. ■

Peace-building can replace weapons and war

We've all heard the argument that violence is strategically necessary. Decision-makers may believe that nothing short of force will resolve conflicts, protect their interests, or keep in place systems that protect their interests. Leaders may feel the need to avoid loss of political capital or loss of face, to project strength, protect access to resources, and prevent the emergence of rival blocks of power. People are sometimes driven to extreme action in an effort to demonstrate personal resolve.

But as a means to secure peace, war is not working. In 2012, the world directed 11 percent of its gross product—a total of \$9.46 trillion—toward containing violence, with half spent on militaries. Fighting violence with violence begets more violence.

Every day, all over the world, people

from all walks of life resolve conflicts without killing anyone. Most do not espouse pacifism per se; yet communities,

As a means to secure peace, war is not working. Fighting violence with violence begets more violence.

states—even rebel groups—achieve their desired ends without violent force time and again. Experience shows that peaceful approaches to conflict do work.

It's a simple truth, but for those tasked with responding to conflict, it can be hard to see. That's why AFSC is actively

promoting the idea that conditions for peace can and must be built without resorting to violence. And we're starting at home, with U.S. lawmakers.

One problem encountered in policymaking circles is that those who realize war is not working do not have models for effective nonviolent approaches. Because the U.S. leads the world in investing in war, examples of successful nonviolent interventions are more difficult to find.

AFSC's experiments in building peace provide some of the best evidence. Our methods include engaging with local organizations, strengthening their capacity and effectiveness, and accompanying them in their grassroots work. At the same time, we help forge connections between these local partners and policymakers, internationally and within the United States. As AFSC pushes

As AFSC calls on leaders to put the power of governments, civil society, and cooperative international institutions toward diplomacy rather than force, we recognize how critical it is to demonstrate the effectiveness of such decisions.

for U.S. foreign policymakers to adopt similar methods, examples from our work are coming into play.

“A lot of policymakers are engaged with the peace-building community,” says violence prevention expert Bridget Moix. She is currently compiling evidence from AFSC’s work to share with influential international organizations and academic institutes working on peace. “It is a way [for policymakers] to see important work and to open more evidence-based relationships,” she says.

Evaluating the impact of peace-building programs is not easy, Bridget says—it’s something the whole field is trying to figure out. “[Peace-building practitioners] are not yet good at showing how approaches impact the larger dynamics of a country,” she says, pointing out why AFSC’s examples are so important: “AFSC’s work shows how community work is linked to broader policy and structural policies.”

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Case study: Truth and reconciliation in Burundi

Burundi is still healing from a civil war that ended in 2005. Individuals and communities are working to recover, but it is also a national effort. To avoid falling back into conflict, the society must uncover and deal with the truth of past events. Victims’ frustrations must be heard, and perpetrators’ stories must be heard, too, if the root causes of violence are to be understood.

For years, AFSC supported government decision-makers as they considered how to forge a path to lasting peace. A turning point came at a conference on truth and reconciliation commissions (TRC) that AFSC organized in 2011.

Representatives from nine African and Latin American countries shared their experiences with building peace and stability through a TRC mechanism, which helps to address past human rights violations. Generally, the truth is uncovered

through widespread consultations with victims and witnesses. Reparations are offered, and individuals and institutions responsible for past human rights violations are named. Preventative measures are developed from a deep analysis of the root causes of conflict. And forms of peaceful conflict resolution are encouraged at the grassroots.

After three days of examining TRC experiences in South Africa, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Kenya, participants at the conference identified three elements integral to a successful commission: political will of the government, a national consensus, and a guarantee of security for victims and witnesses.

Leaders in Burundi eventually developed a draft law for a TRC in their own country, but they recognized that they were missing a key ingredient: national consensus on its content. This missing component meant risking the integrity of the TRC process—and risking the country’s fragile peace—if the law was implemented as drafted. So in 2013, AFSC coordinated another dialogue and exchange, this time bringing members of the Burundian parliament to South Africa. There, they were able to learn how similar issues arose and were addressed when South Africa developed its TRC process.

With this understanding, members of parliament were able to revise and pass a TRC law in 2014. The president of Burundi came out in support of the law, and now, the nominating process for commissioners is underway.

Solutions found within a group’s history, knowledge, and culture are more effective at making peace last. Supporting this process with resources such as space for dialogue and exchange is one way to make peace possible.

Case study: Linking civil society and government internationally

Chinese communities have been partnering with AFSC since 1920, when AFSC’s humanitarian assistance program—which delivered aid to people regardless of political affiliation, religion, or nationality—established a model village near Shanghai. While other policies seek to isolate or criti-

cize China, AFSC facilitates dialogue and builds connections among groups affected by Chinese interests. Recently, those groups have included Chinese companies developing assets in Southeast Asia and in Africa.

In January 2008, AFSC invited influential experts on Africa from Beijing’s leading official foreign policy think tank to a study tour in Zambia and South Africa. The delegation met with African labor unions, opposition party members, local nongovernmental organizations, and policy experts. They toured Chinese factories and copper mines and spoke with local Chinese businesspeople and Chinese ambassadors.

Upon returning to China, participants urged policymakers to build relationships with African civil society groups, address local environmental and labor concerns, and expand training for Chinese businesspeople and embassy staff in Africa. Independent of AFSC support, the Chinese delegation also invited African experts to a return visit to Beijing, where African participants could raise their concerns directly with Chinese officials and academics.

Communities need to be able to engage directly with the public and policymakers whose decisions affect their lives. As a U.S. organization, AFSC is reluctant to speak on behalf of affected communities around the world, instead creating opportunities for people to speak for themselves—and in the process laying foundations for a more just and peaceful world. ■



Top: An exchange trip to the Democratic Republic of the Congo organized by AFSC’s staff in China. Photo: AFSC/Jason Tower

Middle: Participants in Haiti. Read about AFSC’s approach to community peace building in Haiti on page 4 and in Guatemala on pages 8–10. Photo: AFSC/Haiti

Bottom: A Burundian government minister is interviewed by news media following her remarks at the 2011 conference. Photo: Leah Hazard



News from around AFSC

New sanctuary movement stops deportations

When Arturo Hernández García faced deportation last fall, he found sanctuary in the basement of a Denver church. The church community had been partnering with AFSC for over three years, learning about issues affecting undocumented immigrants and accompanying them at vigils. In 2013, AFSC approached the church about providing sanctuary for an immigrant leader, who ended up not needing it. By the time Arturo needed them, they were ready.

Arturo is a longtime resident of Colorado and father of two. On a construction worksite several years ago, a man started an argument with Arturo, and then called the police to have him arrested. Though a jury found him not guilty, the case brought Arturo to the attention of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). After losing appeals against deportation, he turned to Jennifer Piper for help entering sanctuary. As interfaith organizer with AFSC's Colorado Immigrant Rights Program, she coordinates the Metro Denver Sanctuary Coalition.

"Sanctuary calls people of faith to accompany immigrants living with the destructive impacts of our immigration system to examine that system in light of their values, and to amplify the prophetic voice of immigrants to educate the rest of their faith communities and the larger citizen community about the realities of this situation," Jennifer says.

Arturo is the first person to take sanctuary in a Denver church since the 1980s sanctuary movement. With over 2 million people deported since President Obama took office in 2009, a new sanctuary movement was born to draw attention to the community impact of immigration policies.

Sanctuary allows people to remain in the U.S. while ICE re-examines their cases. It's against ICE policy to enter places of worship (and schools and hospitals) in order to detain immigrants. In 2014, over 30 faith communities were prepared to provide sanctuary, and a dozen people claimed sanctuary. None have been deported, and most have returned home to their families after ICE granted stays of removal.

Check metrodenversanctuary.org for the latest on Arturo's case.

Are you invested in military occupation in Palestine?

A new AFSC website helps socially conscious investors scan investments to identify companies directly complicit in ongoing human rights violations. It highlights companies that support Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory and companies that do business with the Israeli military.

"Companies that consistently and knowingly participate in violations of international law and war crimes cannot be regarded as responsible investments," says Dalit Baum, director of economic activism for AFSC.

At afsc.org/investigate, investors can upload a list of the companies in their portfolios. That list is then scanned, and companies involved in human rights violations are identified. The tool offers details of each company's involvement, shows how other responsible investors have reacted, and lists public campaigns aimed at changing the company's behavior.

Investors' voices can be influential in prompting companies to change their practices. AFSC recommends divestment from a handful of the worst violators—like Hewlett-Packard and Caterpillar. Several faith investors, including the Friends Fiduciary Corporation, the Presbyterian Church (USA), and the United Methodist Church, have already decided to divest from some or all of the companies listed on the site.

Go to afsc.org/investigate to check your investments.

How St. Louis students want to be seen

What do students of color have to say about how the criminal justice system sees them? Students at Northwest Academy of Law High School in St. Louis made a video to describe their feelings regarding Mike Brown, the Darren Wilson grand jury verdict, and Ferguson protests happening in their community.

Joshua Saleem, AFSC's peace education director in St. Louis, says that the grand jury decisions in the killings of Mike Brown and Eric Garner sent a negative message to youth that blackness is suspect, dangerous, and threatening. "Many in the black community have already received these messages either through direct experience or knowledge of the history of the oppressive relationship between law enforcement and people of color in this country," he says. The grand juries' failure to indict reaffirmed the message that defenders of "justice" don't place value on young black and brown lives.

"If we don't name what has happened, youth of color will internalize the message that their life doesn't have as much value," Joshua says.

The video developed out of student conversations about the impact of the grand jury decisions. Some of their responses to how the system sees them include: "A thug," "wild," "dumb," "a demon" (per Darren Wilson's testimony), "violent," and "suspects."

Who are they really and how do they want to be seen? Their responses include: "A human being," "a citizen," "smart," "beautiful," "wise," and "good."

Go to afsc.org/i-see-me to watch and share the video. ■



Snapshot

A look at AFSC around the world

A student protest and march in Baltimore, supported by AFSC's Friend of a Friend and Youth Empowerment through Conflict Resolution programs. Photo: AFSC/Bryan Vana



Left to right, top to bottom:

1. Children in destroyed neighborhood; Gaza Strip
2. Narrative change for immigrant justice; Philadelphia
3. Newcomers digital storytelling project; Greensboro, North Carolina
4. Student protest and march; Baltimore
5. Palestine Youth Together for Change; West Bank
6. South Organizing Against Racism; Washington, D.C.
7. Voices of faith; Concord, New Hampshire
8. Palestine Youth Together for Change; Jordan
9. Racism and police brutality demonstration; Washington, D.C.
10. Immigrant youth on culture change; Philadelphia
11. Meetinghouse conversation on racism; Washington, D.C.
12. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; Manchester, New Hampshire

Photos: AFSC/Ilona Kassissieh, AFSC/Tony Heriza, AFSC/Ann Lennon, AFSC/Bryan Vana, AFSC/Ilona Kassissieh, Karen Elliot Greisdorf, AFSC/Arnie Alpert, AFSC/Ilona Kassissieh, Karen Elliot Greisdorf, AFSC/Tony Heriza, Karen Elliot Greisdorf, AFSC/Arnie Alpert



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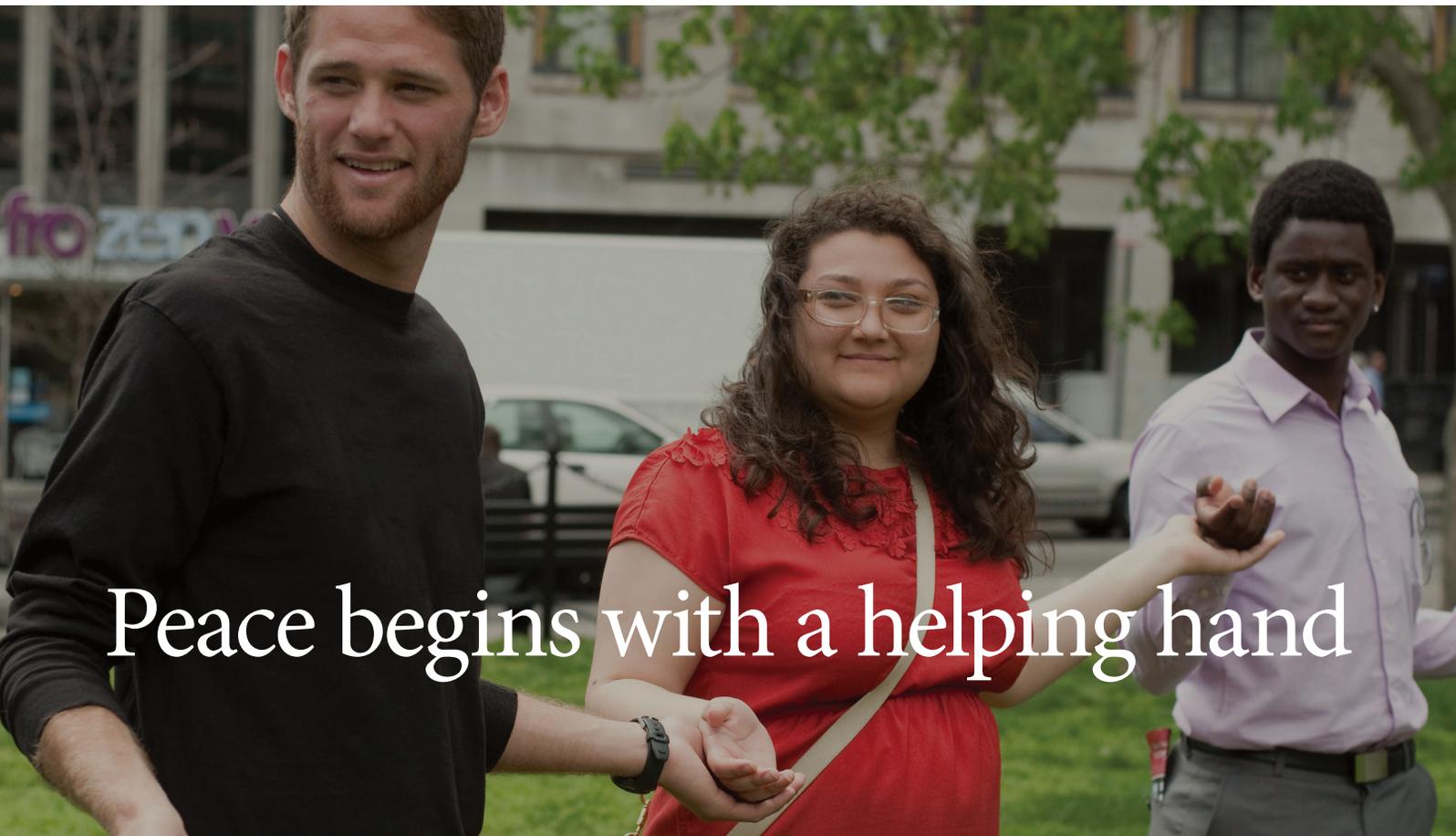
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