

# Youth, Peace and Violence – What is my Role?

## Roadmap for Peace Activism

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## Introduction

Hello and welcome to the peace activism workshop. In this workshop, I will provide a roadmap for peace which can also be served as a model everywhere – role of youth can play in peace building and violence prevention. Youth-led movements today are on the forefront influencing policies in areas of peace, abolition of war, climate change, violence reduction and much more.

## Test Your Knowledge of Peace Quiz

- How many countries have a government Department for Peace?  
**1                      3                      5                      12**
- How much was the global military spending in 2018?  
**\$600 billion            \$1,820 billion            \$900 billion            \$2,220 billion**
- What was the UN's annual budget for peace keeping?  
**\$6.8 billion            \$15.2 billion            \$25.7 billion            \$35.6 billion**
- What do you think is the knife crime and murder capital of the world?  
**New York            Glasgow            Chicago            London**
- With a population over 300 million, US has how many guns?  
**200 million            393 million            600 million            800 million**
- What is the carbon footprint (CO2 emissions) of one B-2 bomber mission,  
**105 tonnes            187 tonnes            251 tonnes            320 tonnes**
- One B-2 bomber mission equals one average American's car emissions for \_\_\_\_ years  
**10 years            38 years            53 years            72 years**
- Name the 9 states that have nuclear weapons  

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- How many countries recently voted to ban nuclear weapons at the UN?  
**53                      87                      122                      110**
- Name a 20th Century conflict that has been resolved
- How many military bases does USA have in the world?  
**560                      430                      800                      680**

12. How many countries is currently UK supplying weapons to?

51

20

65

42

13. Name the UK's Shadow Minister for Peace and Disarmament

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### **Solutions and Actions for Peace Building**

- Join a peace group in your area and work for replacing war by cultivating Culture of Peace. Like, Uniting for Peace, World Beyond War, Conscience and Peace and Neutrality Alliance
- Attend a peace rally.  
Rally and tour of Shannon Airport
- Invite a peace speaker to your event, workplace or community
- Write a blog about promoting peace
- Write articles for newsletters / newspapers and post it on social media.
- Study non-violence, conflict management, conflict resolution and peace studies
- Get in touch with your MP (Member of Parliament), Congressman or Legislator and ask what steps they are taking for reducing militarism and war, mitigating climate change and bringing harmony in a divided society. Put forward questions for MPs to ask the Parliament.
- Campaign for opening Department for Peace which can work for building peace, education and capacity building to solve aggression and wars between countries.
- Work in the community for opening peace centres for reduction of knife crimes, shootings, violence and help communities to overcome their differences and tensions.
- Make a personal commitment to non-violence and attend non-violence and conflict resolution training
- Read books about peace
- Create art, music and painting in the theme of peace
- Spread kindness, fairness, compassion, justice, equality, freedom etc. values which underpin a good society.
- Join a group for cultivating inner peace having calmness within oneself. Then expand outward for harmony among people. From outer peace at its largest level, peace is to live without violent conflict or war opening the doors for world peace.

### **Peaceful Schools**

Peace is needed now more than ever in schools, by pupils and teachers alike. We need to introduce peace education in primary, secondary and special schools with practical methods to improve pupil and teacher wellbeing, combat bullying and promote peace both inside and outside the school gates.

Adopt a simple 4 step system for promoting positive peace in individuals, relationships, the school community and the world. That will involve holistic approach to reduce stress, promote positive mental health, solve conflict, nurture potential of each individual and encourage children to develop peacemaking skills and values. By doing so, children and staff can transform their school environment for the better.

Schools can enable students to go out into the community as peace workers and peace ambassadors, an example of which is student activism for climate change challenging the society to make laws for a better environment. Another example is the Quaker Peace Education Programme in school project for 'Fly Kites Not Drones'

### **Conclusion**

There are 1.8 billion youth in the world who need empowerment to actively involve in organisations, civic initiatives and activities in peace building, social justice, addressing and overcoming violent extremism and hate in communities. Movements like Black Lives Matter, Me Too, Extinction Rebellions and others have what it takes to change the world as the world is ready to be moved.

We have got great examples of past and present leaders, M. K. Gandhi (non-violence and Indian Independence Movement), Martin Luther King (Civil Rights Movement), Nelson Mandela (African National Congress Movement) and now Malala Yousafzai (Pakistani Activist for Female Education), Greta Thunberg (Swedish Teen Climate Activist) who have shown the world that young people have a powerful voice and overpowering will to change the future of the world.

Thanks for listening.

**Vijay Mehta** is an author and peace activist. He is Chair of [Uniting for Peace](#) and founding Trustee of [Fortune Forum](#) Charity. His notable books include **'The Economics of Killing'** (Pluto Press, 2012) and **'Peace Beyond Borders'** (New Internationalist, 2016). His current book is **'How Not To Go To War'** (New Internationalist, 2019)

The Sunday Times described him as a "longstanding activist for peace, development, human rights and the environment, who along with his daughter Renu Mehta has set a precedent for striving to change the world" (**The Sunday Times**, February 01, 2009).

In 2014, Vijay Mehta's bio **"The Audacity of Dreams"** appeared in the book form "Karma Kurry" published by Jaico Publishing House, India with a foreword to the book by **Nelson Mandela**.

*"Thank you for all you do Vijay – both the organisation Uniting for Peace and yourself are inspiration and give us all hope that both yourself and the organisation can bring a world without a war. Indeed it is possible, even in our own time."* – **Mairead Corrigan Maguire, Nobel Peace Laureate 1976**

*"Vijay Mehta proposes in his book **How Not To Go To War** that in countries and communities, in governments, private institutions and media, Peace Departments and Peace Centres be established to report on and promote peace."* – **Jose Ramos-Horta, Nobel Peace Laureate 1996 and Former President of Timor-Leste**

*"I'm happy to give my support to Ministry for Peace whose responsibility would include being a consistent voice for non-violent means of settling disputes"* – **His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Nobel Peace Laureate 1989**

In 2017, Vijay Mehta's article, **'Reforming the UN for the 21st Century'** was included in the anthology **'Approaches to Peace'** edited by Prof. David P. Barash published by Oxford University Press, New York. The anthology feature classic and contemporary selection of work on peace which included **Leo Tolstoy, Martin Luther King Jr., Pope Francis, Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu and Noam Chomsky** among others.