

From mustard seed to master's degree: innovation in global peace studies for sustainable development in Africa

Abstract

The resolution to institutionalize peace studies across Catholic higher education institutions in Africa has been one of the major decisions of the Association of Catholic Universities and Higher Institutes of Africa and Madagascar (ACUHIAM) since 2017. Whereas some institutions have implemented this resolution, some others have not been able to do so. Nevertheless, the resolution passed by ACUHIAM Vice-Chancellors sowed a seed of an academic innovation through a project "Peace Studies for Sustainable Development in Africa" which was initiated by a transcontinental consortium of peace scholars from Germany, Tanzania, China and the United States of America in 2019. This consortium aimed at supporting African peace and development scholarship. Grounded in Peace Studies and Development Studies, this paper analyses and showcases the implementation of the innovation commonly known as "Global Peace" in terms publications and events, namely webinars, conferences, book launches and internships where one book has been published, another has been reviewed for publication and a call for papers has been issued for the third book. Over 60 weekly webinars have been organized. Global Peace is establishing a Master of Arts in African Peace and Sustainability Studies (MAAPSS), which is an innovation worth pursuing through a global partnership for sustainable peace and development, thus contributing to the implementation of Agenda 2030. Global Peace encompasses all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, with a focus on SDG 4 on Quality Education; SDG 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and 17 on Partnerships for the Goals.

Keywords: global peace, sustainable development, african studies, ACUHIAM, innovation

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George Mutalemwa

Research, Innovations and community engagement, St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Tanzania

Correspondence: George Mutalemwa, Research, Innovations and community engagement, St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Tanzania, Tel +255756058511, Email georgemutalemwa@gmail.com

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Introduction

This paper analyses the mission and vision of the academic programme entitled "Global Peace Studies for Sustainable Development in Africa" in the framework of the bilateral co-operation between the State of Lower Saxony, Germany represented by the University of Vechta and Tanzania represented by St. Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT) and financially supported by the State Government of Lower Saxony. The programme builds on the project, generously funded by the State Government of Lower Saxony, which has been managed by Prof. Dr. Prof. h.c. Egon Spiegel from the University of Vechta, Germany in collaboration with Prof. Dr. Cheng Liu from Nanjing University, China; Prof. Dr. Lester R. Kurtz from George Mason University, USA and Dr. George Mutalemwa from St. Augustine University of Tanzania with the Assistance of Prof. Lacinia Yeo, from Universite de Cocody-Abidjan, Ivory Coast before George Mutalemwa assumed the management of "Global Peace" in 2022 organizing two scholarly publications, weekly webinars and conferences.

The mission of Global Peace is to establish a special global network of peace builders with a marked focus on Africa represented by Tanzania. The global network will complement African scholarship from within the Continent to research and showcase Africa's contribution to peace and development scholarship or literature. This paper argues that Africa has a great contribution to world knowledge or science which is disproportionately acknowledged or recognized. Hence, there is a real and urgent need to go back to the roots (sankofa) and usher in the African renaissance from a global perspective.

This mission is informed by the vision which is "making African scholarship rise and shine again for an educated, peaceful and

sustainable world society" while leveraging on Pan African insights on nonviolence as elucidated by Sutherland and Meyer¹ as Africa struggled to comprehend the rise of new imperialism (Kioni-sadiki and Meyer.² It is also a contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.³ It encompasses all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, with a focus on SDG 4 on Quality Education; SDG 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and 17 on Partnerships for the Goals. It is through quality education that peace, justice and responsible institutions can be realized. Indeed, the existing and envisaged global network of scholars presupposes and epitomizes a global partnership that can ensure that all the goals are met. As far as Africa is concerned, the SDGs are especially important because of the development needs as well as the challenges of bad governance and violent conflicts.

"Africa remains the continent of poverty, struck by plagues, wars, disintegration of states and lawlessness"⁴) cited in Pul.⁵ Against this background, a myriad of explanations of why countries in Africa are prone to perpetual conflicts have been offered. Notable are the theories of ancient hatreds,⁶ out-group resentments;⁷ fear-induced self-protection initiatives;^{8,9} or the manipulation of ethnic identities for political ends,¹⁰⁻¹² among others blame Africa's persistent conflicts on the acts and omission of colonial rule, which created or aggravated the ethno-political and religious fault lines that (re)defined the boundaries of interethnic competitions for access to and control over political and economic power.

Building on the theories of ethno-political competition, Horowitz¹³ argues that "societies that are deeply riven along a preponderant ethnic cleavage ...tend to throw up party systems that exacerbate ethnic conflict"¹³ Other theorists see relative political and economic deprivations¹³⁻¹⁶ or the natural concentration of ethnic groups in specific geopolitical spaces Toft,¹⁷ as the sources of conflicts in Africa.

Debunking the foregoing, however, Fearon & Laitin,¹⁸ Collier & Hoeffler,¹⁹ and Galtung²⁰ argue that the combination of state formation processes and the weakness of states in Africa is responsible for the internal revolts that occasion the violent conflicts.

Global peace and publications

The first publication resulted in a book entitled “Peace Studies for Sustainable Development in Africa: Conflicts and Peace Oriented Conflict Resolutions”, which was published by Springer International in 2022.²¹ The book has about 800 pages, with authors contributing chapters from around the world and the majority being from Africa. The second one “Studying Peace as Nonviolence: Pillars of Peace Studies Programmes in Africa” has been reviewed for publication by the same publisher. The project aimed to promote academic research and peacebuilding efforts in Africa through academic publications and webinars. The book manuscript has a clear focus on nonviolence. It

attracted 63 abstracts from 77 contributors out of which 21 chapters from 32 contributors were accepted for publication. Two other chapters had major revisions. The abstracts which were rejected were mostly those which did not abide by the theme as stipulated in the call for abstracts. However, they could still be published following a more open call in the future if the contributors still desired to resubmit them.

Springer Nature accepted to publish the second book. The plan is to publish a third book and maintain the multidisciplinary approach to Peace Studies and Sustainable Development in Africa and include a diversity of topics such as “Peace Studies and NGOs” and “Peace Education”. The multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary nature of Global Peace depict themes from sociology, political science, economics, religious studies and international relations. Here are the titles and authors of the second book: (Table 1).

Table 1 Book titles and authors

Titles and authors
1. Pan African peace research and nonviolence: dynamism and growth across diverse disciplines and ideologies ¹
2. Studying peacebuilding and nonviolence: The ethos and experience of the International Centre of Nonviolence, South Africa – Prof. Geoff Harris/ Prof. Crispin Hemson/ Dr. Sylvia Kaye/ Prof. Simone Plüg
3. Nonviolence as a decolonial principle: Limits and possibilities of mainstreaming peace studies in Africa – Dr. George Mutalemwa/ Ms. Sarah Trochemowitz
4. Sustainable peace, peace ecology and ecological peace policy for sub-Saharan Africa – Dr. Hans Günter Brauch
5. Sustainable peace education as a response to violent conflict in Nigeria – Dr. Stanley Ehiane/ Dr. Mariam Seedat-Khan
6. Alternative societal models of peace education in Cameroon – Prof. Olga Vorkunova/ Ms. Daniele Nga
7. Analysing peace education in post-Apartheid South Africa – Bernedette Muthien
8. The failures of higher education in addressing peace preservation in Mozambique – Dr. Anna Fontana
9. Language and culture in peacebuilding: Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission of Nigeria (HRVIC) 1999-2021 – Dr. Ugo Aniga
10. The place of peace in linguistic diversity within religious congregations in Zambia – Dr. Ireen Moonga/ Dr. Audrey Muyuni/ Dr. Jive Lubungu
11. Learning pragmatic nonviolence together: African peace studies in Australia – Prof. Helen Ware
12. Challenges in teaching nonviolence in schools – Mr. Timothy Gachanga
13. Learning pragmatic nonviolence together: African peace studies in Australia – Prof. Helen Ware
14. Insights into the challenges of evaluating young learners' intercultural competences for better living-togetherness – Dr. Pascal Nadal/ Dr. Aruna Ankih-Gangadeen
15. The role of women's pre-marriage rites of passage and cultural practices in promoting peace in Kabwe District, Central Province, Zambia – Ms. Lucy Kamboni/ Dr. Simakando Silongwa
16. Ogoni women's peace, nonviolence and feminist resistance – Prof. Domale Dube Keys
17. Beyond rhetoric to practice: A review of women's place within the African peace and security architecture – Dr. Stanley Ehiane/ Dr. Lukong Stella Shulika/ Mr. Leonard Lenna Sesa
18. A Rapid Assessment of the Interplay between Gender, Financial Literacy and Peacemaking – Dr. Asenath Maobe
19. Achieving Nationhood in the Trauma of Ethnic War/s and Genocide in Rwanda and Burundi: A Women Writers' Angle – Dr. Obed Machogu
20. Nonviolent conflict and the transitions to 'multi-party democracy' in Burkina Faso – Mr. Abdul Karim Issifu/ Mr. Thomas Duke Labik Amanquandor
21. “Walk to work”: A new wave of non-violent activism against the militarization of Ugandan politics – Dr. Hannah Muzee
22. Peace studies: Panacea for national unity and socioeconomic development of Nigeria – Mr. Hamidu Ishaku/ Mr. Yusuf Gambo
23. Social-economic role of mass media in peacebuilding: The case of Uganda – Mr. Henry Semambo
24. Peace education, the relevance of Comparative studies in the field of Religion: A case study of Islam and Christianity – DiggiBala Bello
25. “Dance & Peacebuilding:” Developing nonviolence practices in an interdisciplinary course – Prof. Mariah Steele
26. The arts of education and governance: Peace in the person and in the state – Dr. Frederick Ifeanyi Obananya
27. The Creative Path to Peace and non-violence in Africa – Dr. Ayo Ayoola-Amale
28. Sowing seeds of peace through the arts – Joseph Ebulu-Otim

Data on webinars and conferences

Regarding webinars, 66 webinars have been organized every Wednesday from 16:00-17:30 EAT between 27 October 2021 and March 2023 led by speakers from around the world. At least 70 invitations to speakers have been sent. Almost everyone who was invited to give a presentation warmly accepted the invitation. Only two people declined the invitation citing too many commitments on their side as the reason. On average, 30 academics and students have participated in a webinar each week. The plan is to continue organising webinars on a weekly basis as long as speakers offer to do so. It is also decided to offer certificates of participation to people who will have attended at least 10 webinars.

This is a way of motivating participants and a token of appreciation for participation. More advanced certificates will be issued to people who will have attended 20 or even 30 webinars. All certificates will bear four logos from the four founding partner institutions, namely the University of Vechta, St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Nanjing University (including the UNESCO logo) and George Mason University. Whereas the current webinars have attracted mostly experienced scholars: professors, doctors and authors; the plan is to include more masters and doctoral students for the sustainability of the programme. The presentations given during webinars will be converted into book chapters which will be published as a handbook. The Call for Chapters has been issued with the deadline as 30th November 2022. Springer Nature has also expressed interest in publishing the third book.

Peace and sustainability conference in Tanzania

Over and above the ongoing, consistent and regular Global Peace webinars, the plan is to organize an international peace conference in Tanzania in 2024. This is part of the original idea in a tripartite meeting which was held at the University of Vechta in Germany and attended by Prof. Dr. Prof. h.c. Egon Spiegel, Prof. Dr. Cheng Liu and Dr. George Mutalemwa in 2019.²¹⁻²³ This conference is organized to mark in descending order: 100th Commemoration of the late Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere, the First President of Tanzania and the architect of African socialism “*ujamaa*”; towards the 80th Anniversary of the UN/ UNESCO, 75th Anniversary of the State of Lower Saxony, 35th Anniversary of the Association of Catholic Universities and Higher Institutes of Africa and Madagascar and 25th Anniversary of St. Augustine University of Tanzania. It may be important to highlight here that St. Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT) hosts the Permanent Secretariat of the Association of Catholic Universities and Higher Institutes of Africa and Madagascar (ACUHIAM). The success of the 2024 conference will redound to more conferences in the future, strengthen the webinars and build an international peacebuilding network.

To successfully organize the international peace and sustainability conference in Tanzania, there is need for a meeting of various peace studies directors from across the world. These are instrumental in devising themes and promoting internationalization, transdisciplinarity, multidisciplinary, multicultural and networking. The network will be supported by a website. The proposed website would be a medium of communication and a depository of webinar presentations, conference proceedings, publications and events. Indeed an idea that came from one person and probably a small idea for that matter may produce a positive and lasting ripple effect just like a mustard seed.

Founding collaborative partner institutions

The three publications and the webinars with the invitation theme “Global Peace Webinar for Sustainable Development in Africa”

have attracted the attention of various international organisations. For example, the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU) based in Paris; the Catholic Peacebuilding Network (CPN) based in the US and the University of Congress based in Argentina, have offered to promote the publications and the webinars on their websites. IFCU has translated the last webinar invitation into French, which is one of the official languages of the Association of Catholic Universities and Higher Institutes of Africa and Madagascar with a Permanent Secretariat at St. Augustine University of Tanzania.

The International Office of the University of Congress has offered to create a flyer to promote these transcontinental webinars and livestream the webinars on YouTube. Furthermore, the Secretary General of the International Peace Research Association (IPRA), Prof. Matt Meyer, has, besides contributing a book chapter and presenting at two Global Peace webinars, offered to co-organize the envisaged 2024 international peace conference in Tanzania. In addition, the World Wisdom Forum has also offered to support the conference through fundraising. The Commonwealth Interfaith Network has been instrumental in promoting the vision of Global Peace. The list of global partnerships is likely to keep growing.

Global peace and St. Augustine University of Tanzania

Global Peace has been instrumental in promoting the image of St. Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT) and in building an international network of peace builders and development professionals. The sustainability of this cooperation needs to go hand in hand with capacity building in Tanzania in particular and Africa in general. This can be achieved through giving qualifications to peace researchers, Master's and PhD candidates so that universities and higher education institutions can establish peace studies and development studies departments and offer courses in these disciplines to all students. At St. Augustine University of Tanzania this is certainly a great need.

Establishing a Department of Peace and Development Studies is a necessity for a number of reasons. First, the establishment of Peace Studies is a requirement of all Catholic universities in Africa since 2017. SAUT is a Catholic university. Second, Development Studies is a compulsory course for all undergraduate students in Tanzania. SAUT has about 15,000 undergraduate students but they are taught by a maximum of three lecturers at any given time. Now that SAUT is turning 25 since it was established in 1998 and with Development Studies remaining a course, the time has come to establish an Institute of Development Studies. This would cater for both development and peace studies at least for the time being before the two fields can be separated if need be and depending on the availability of academic staff.

Association of catholic universities and higher institutes of Africa and Madagascar

The Association of Catholic Universities and Higher Institutes of Africa and Madagascar (ACUHIAM) has been one the direct beneficiaries of this project. ACUHIAM has a Permanent Secretariat at St. Augustine of Tanzania whose Executive Secretary (Dr. George Mutalemwa) is the Coordinator of the project “Peace Studies for Sustainable Development in Africa”. It is essential to underscore that the idea to mainstream peace studies in Africa was the brainchild of this Association. This project has begun implementing this idea thus putting ACUHIAM and SAUT on a world map of peace education, research and activism, thanks to the four transcontinental pioneers of Global Peace earlier mentioned. It should be emphasized that having an idea is one thing, important though it is, implementing it is another thing though an idea that does not exist cannot be implemented. Thus an idea, and a good idea for that matter, must be implemented.

Master's degree in African peace and sustainability studies: an innovation

The experience gained in three years from networking, publications, webinars, conferences and book launches has taught us four very important lessons. First, the need to study Peace and Sustainability Studies is real and urgent. Second, the level of voluntary support to teach Peace and Sustainability Studies is high and global. Third, a global partnership is essential for sustainable peace and development in the globalizing world.²² Fourth, great ideas should be implemented to make a positive contribution to humanity and the environment for the present and future generations. The global nature of the speakers and the participants has necessitated the prefix 'global' to the name of the project "Peace Studies for Sustainable Development in Africa". It is now commonly referred to as "Global Peace Studies for Sustainable Development in Africa" or, in short, "Global Peace".

Furthermore, the project launched in Vechta in 2019 is equated with a mustard seed that would give rise to a programme, where Global Peace has added events to publications. It is a seed that also bears fruit.²⁴ These include conferences, book launches and the envisaged internships and a master's degree. The mustard seed sowed as a webinar would result in a master's degree programme (Master of Arts in African Peace and Sustainability Studies, MAAPSS), a unique programme from Africa and on Africa. The tripartite meeting at Vechta would give birth to a transcontinental network of global peacebuilders and development professionals. The transcontinental network would bring about a global solidarity and place Africa on a well-deserved world map.

For this reason, the envisaged master's degree (MAAPSS) which will focus on peace and development seeks to link "peace" and "development" as two inseparable concepts.²³ Specifically, Africa's underdevelopment is related to violence.⁵ Certainly, the war in Ukraine is a case in point among other warring countries. The MAAPSS will focus on students and professionals who seek to make peace an integral part of their lives and careers and who seek its implementation in the labour market or serve in various civic organisations to promote sustainable development for people and the environment.

MAAPSS and the other Global Peace events will redound to an establishment of a steady institute of sustainable peace and development in Africa that will be established in Tanzania in the near future. Tanzania is one of the beacons of peace in Africa and the world renowned for its contribution to the liberation struggle particularly in southern Africa. MAAPSS will be an opportunity to appreciate Africa's contribution to scholarship, address the arguments and counterarguments of Africa's contribution to peace education, peace research and even philosophy and unpack the other "little" White lies as Meyer²⁵ dubs them.

Rationale of the innovation and its description

The quality of education and accessibility to higher education are some of the disturbing challenges in Africa and in some other places. While there are some of the graduates who complete their studies without the necessary qualifications for life and the labour market; there are many potential candidates who fail to pursue higher education for lack of accessibility caused by income poverty whilst the cost for higher education keeps on rising. This creates a precariat for social exclusion. Therefore, there is a need to support these students through a consortium of global experts willing to give a service in training and education for Africa and on Africa.

The innovation "Global Peace Studies for Sustainable Development in Africa" is envisaged as a free service training facility that brings

together experts, educators, researchers and activists to discuss topics of peacebuilding and sustainable development at a transcontinental level with a special focus on Africa. Since its inception in October 2021, Global Peace has concentrated on publications of books as well as weekly webinars. Where the first book with 780 has been accepted for publication by Springer International, the second publication is under review and the call for chapters has been issued for the third book.

As expected, all books are on peace, nonviolence and sustainable development. The books are co-edited by Prof. Egon Spiegel (Germany), Dr. George Mutalemwa (Tanzania), Prof. Cheng Liu (UNESCO-China) and Prof. Lester R. Kurtz (USA).²⁶ In addition, 66 transcontinental webinars have been offered each week for 90 minutes and more will be scheduled where the Global Peace Manager, Dr. George Mutalemwa, keeps on inviting speakers from all over the world to speak on a relevant topic and thus benefit interested students at no cost, except the purchase of Internet bundles for the majority of people who do not have free wi-fi. All presentations by Zoom are livestreamed and recorded on YouTube.

At the moment, revenue has not been a priority as the innovation has been working on a voluntary basis, taking into account the financial challenges facing most African students and leveraging on generous offers from academics and researchers from all over the world who are interested in giving offers and contributing to intellectual discussions for positive social change. Since, the training is predominantly online, the innovation is unique in the ability to provide quality education at almost no cost. Students will be expected to contribute towards occasional inperson meetings with funding which may come from a consortium of the above mentioned collaborators as well as the International Peace Research Association (USA), International Federation of Catholic Universities (France), World Intellectual Forum (France) and the Catholic Peace building Network (USA) among others.

Summary of achievements: an assessment

Global Peace has been exceedingly successful. The publication of a nearly 800-page book and a 400-page book is a living memory of this innovation. The consistent organization of webinars every week, with the number of participants increasing with time has been phenomenal. The webinars have earned us some of the world-class scholars who would also contribute to the third book based on the webinars. The innovation started by a couple of people is now a truly global innovation, where thinkers and specialists from all over the world work to meet the mission of Global Peace.

In addition, the programme has strengthened the cooperation between the University of Vechta and St. Augustine University of Tanzania. It has also enriched the cooperation between these two institutions and other partners particularly Nanjing University and George Mason University. Indeed, while SAUT has several collaborative partners in several countries, the collaboration between SAUT and the University of Vechta has remained the strongest. This programme has served to demonstrate and cement this partnership. Through the coordinator of the partnership between SAUT and the University of Vechta from 2008 to 2014, George Mutalemwa, the same project coordinator of this project, a great deal of trust for sustainability has been rekindled, marking the 14th anniversary of the partnership between the University of Vechta and SAUT.

The programme has also had a positive ripple and multiplier effect as it enters its fifth year of its establishment (2019-2023). Besides, working with and for Global Peace as such, some participants and

speakers have built networks among themselves, working on common research projects. The sustainability of the cooperation towards peace research, education and activism is vitally important. The need to learn more and improve ideas, values, attitudes and practices in relation to peacebuilding in Africa is greater than ever before. Global Peace is definitely a contribution towards the African renaissance.

Summary of global peace contacts

Global Peace has established and maintained collaboration with a number of international institutions with a great likelihood to expand the number of institutions in the future. These are the ten founding institutions: Africa Peace Research and Education Association (Africa-Kenya); Association of Catholic Universities and Higher Institutes of Africa and Madagascar (Africa-Tanzania); Catholic Peacebuilding Network (International-USA); George Mason University (USA); International Federation of Catholic Universities (International-France); International Peace Research Association (International-USA); Nanjing University (China); University of Vechta (Germany); Universidad de Congreso (Argentina), World Wisdom Forum. (International-France) and the Commonwealth Interfaith Network (CIN) (UK).

Global Peace Studies for Sustainable Development in Africa has been a well-received innovation and internationally acknowledged as pioneering. Besides, the publications above mentioned and through the initiative by Dr. George Mutalemwa and in collaboration with Spiegel, Cheng and Kurtz), a series of webinars with the title "Peace Studies for Sustainable Development in Africa" was launched on 27th October 2021. It was soon realized that it was not sufficient to limit the webinars to Africa. Hence, the name "Global Peace" was adopted. This brought about the universality of the themes to discuss the two interrelated and perennial global issues of sustainable peace and sustainable development.

At least 66 weekly webinars, each lasting 90 minutes, have been organized. Participation has been international and transcontinental with experts from around the world offering to give presentations. A total of 69 speakers have offered to give talks out of whom 43 are male and 26 are female. Speakers have come from all continents (except Antarctica) represented by 26 countries. The USA has the majority of presentations (16) followed by South Africa, Germany and Tanzania (6 each); Kenya (4) Nigeria and India (3); China, Mozambique, Australia, UK and Italy (2 each) while Sweden, Ghana, Japan, France, Togo, Canada, Uganda, Botswana, Jordan, Columbia, Morocco, Austria, Chile and Poland have one (1) presentation each.

Africa has been represented by the majority of countries (10) followed by Europe (7), Asia (4) North America (2), South America (2) and Australia/Oceania (1). This data may not lead to any meaningful conclusions in the analysis but they serve as baseline data to inform the Global Peace trajectory while indicating the transcontinental acceptability of the Global Peace innovation. Most of the speakers (34) are university professors followed by (26) PhD holders and the remaining (9) have other academic qualifications. This is therefore a network of experts, most of them highly qualified and world-class academics.

So far, Global Peace is offering certificates of Peace and Sustainability to participants who qualify. However, we intend to offer a master's degree in African Peace and Sustainability Studies (MAAPSS). This will not only be a specialized degree but it will be obtained at the minimum cost for students if at all. Hence, it will be accessible to all who will be interested in it. The mode of delivery of the programme is still under discussion. Suffice to point out that

the programme will be mostly online, with possibilities of meeting in person between students and their professors and the composition of students and professors will be transcontinental. Internships will form an integral part of the MAAPSS innovation.

In addition to the focus on higher education, Global Peace has a vision for the younger generation. Primary and Secondary school students should also be included in peace education. This vision has begun being realized. For example, the Global Peace Coordinator advised the State of Lower Saxony Government in Hannover, Germany to organize a youth conference to discuss the Sustainable Development Goals. As a result, a conference was organized on the 6th October 2022 which brought together students from two schools in Tanzania, namely Montessori Maria Secondary School in Mwanza and One World Kisangara Secondary School in Kilimanjaro who virtually joined students from Argentina, Greater Poland, Japan and Germany.

Conclusion

Global Peace is a result of the collaborative partners, authors and co-authors, webinar speakers, participants, the Ministry of Education in the State Government of Lower Saxony as well as numerous well-wishers. It has had a multiplier effect adding to the visibility of the founders, SAUT and ACUHIAM. In a particular way, the programme has strengthened the moderation and organizational skills of the Project Coordinator. As a result, Dr. George Mutalemwa has been invited to give a talk at the University of Vechta, co-organize a webinar on West Sahara, co-organize a Conference in Juba, South Sudan, co-organize a conference of the Catholic Peacebuilding Network, co-organize a conference in Tanzania, co-organize a conference in Mexico, speak at the conference of the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU) in Boston, USA, George Mason University (USA), Stanford University (USA) and the World Wisdom Forum (WIF) and serve as a rapporteur in a book launch summit where a new encyclopedia of violence, conflict and peace was launched. Prof. Lester R. Kurtz is the Editor-in-Chief of this Encyclopedia. Through this project, Dr. Mutalemwa has joined the International Peace Research Association (IPRA) and he has also been appointed Coordinator of the Commonwealth Interfaith Network.

In short, it is worth noting that Global Peace is more than just another network of peace builders. It is a beacon of international collaboration which seeks to bring together individuals and various peace institutions to unite and speak with one voice for nonviolence and well-being in a supranational way. Furthermore, Global Peace is not just about peace. It is also about sustainable development where the two concepts are intricately intertwined. Global Peace started as small as a mustard seed but it is already showing signs of a seed that bears fruit. For instance, setting up a global network of peace builders and development specialists is an innovation, which will be epitomized by the establishment of a unique master's degree in African Peace and Sustainability Studies.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no direct or indirect conflicts.

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