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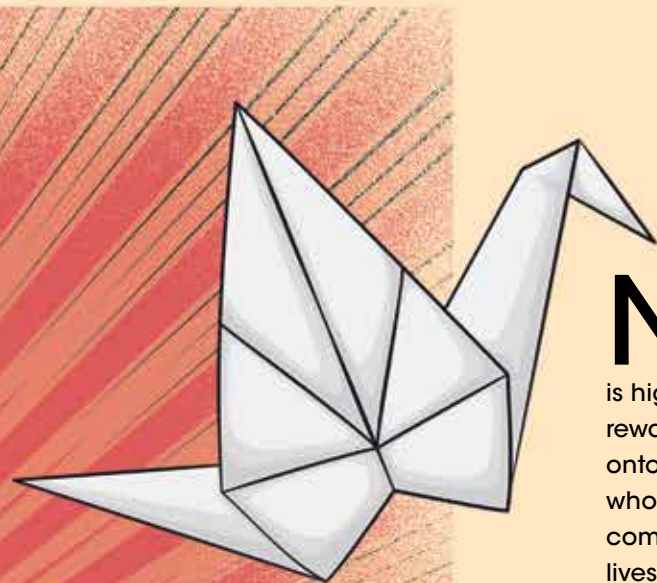


SEPTEMBER 2022

seeking Peace

IN SEPTEMBER

THIS YEAR, TO CELEBRATE THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE (WHICH FALLS ON THE 21ST OF SEPTEMBER), WE SHARE THE INSPIRING STORIES OF PEOPLE WHO ARE WORKING FOR PEACE AROUND THE WORLD.



Now more than ever, in a world torn by conflict of all sorts, peace-building is highly needed. Not often rewarded and never easy, it falls onto the shoulders of a select few who manage to go the distance, committing and dedicating their lives to fostering peace around the world. In conjunction with International Peace Day, *Calibre* celebrates the following global ambassadors of peace and their work in bringing communities and people together.

GLOBAL PEACE IN MALAYSIA: DR TEH TSU THYE

With their tagline “Embracing our common humanity”, the Global Peace Foundation in Malaysia aims to promote innovative and value-based approaches to peace-building using three pillars: social cohesion, moral and innovative leadership, and empowering families.

The foundation works with partner organisations from all around the world to bring peace down to the grassroots. Some of their initiatives include education literacy, hygiene, and even food farming.



“Dr Teh has initiated many programmes and trained his volunteers in ways to help relieve some of the issues the Orang Asli people face.”

**Dr Teh Tsu Thye, Chief Executive Officer of
Global Peace Foundation Malaysia**
Photo Credit: Global Peace Foundation Malaysia

The leader of the foundation is Dr Teh Tsu Thye, a medical professional turned social leader, who began doing his social work at the young age of 26. Notably, when he was 29 years old, he led a group of youth activists as part of the Middle East Peace Initiative to a conflict hotspot in Israel-Palestine, which reaffirmed his dedication towards peacebuilding.

Focusing primarily on the plight of the Orang Asli people in Malaysia since 2016, under his Global Peace Foundation, Dr Teh has initiated many programmes and trained his volunteers in ways to help relieve some of the issues the Orang Asli people face.

For example, in addressing the issue of clean water, Dr Teh implemented several programmes under WaSH (Water Sanitisation and Health) that provided the Orang Asli people with training on how to use and maintain a water filter as well as taught young children on the proper ways of handwashing.

The result of the programme is that it has eased the plight of the Orang Asli people in relation to water-related diseases significantly.

Many members of the community now do not suffer from ailments such as diarrhoea as often, and they can shower and drink water more frequently as compared to before.

During the pandemic in 2020, Dr Teh collaborated with international players such as Deutsche Bank in order to

provide food for 900 Orang Asli families' via their corporate social responsibility programme. This resulted in the contribution of RM50 staple packs for each family that ultimately fed over 2,500 people.

As a grassroots peace ambassador, Dr Teh continues to lead the efforts pertaining to education, volunteering, and ethical leadership as well as intercultural and interfaith collaborations.

NO AGE RESTRICTION TO ACTIVISM: MALALA YOUSAFZAI

A champion for girls' education, Malala Yousafzai is no stranger to the world stage. Once upon a time, the now Oxford graduate was a young schoolgirl forbidden from receiving an education in her hometown of Mingora in the Swat Valley.

Her father, Ziauddin Yousafzai, is an education activist himself and ran a chain of private schools in Pakistan when Malala was a child. When the Taliban began taking over the Swat Valley, banning girls' education, television, and women from going shopping amongst other restrictions, *BBC Urdu* began looking for a young girl in the area to share her experience of the insurgency via anonymous



Malala Yousafzai, activist for female education
Photo Credit: Education for Girls/ WikiCommons

I truly believe the only way we can create global peace is through not only educating our minds, but also our hearts and our souls.



regime. The assassination attempt on Malala that happened in October 2012 propelled her to even greater international recognition.

With efforts from doctors in Pakistan, Germany, and finally Birmingham, Malala managed to survive the attack. The assassination attempt caused global outrage, with leaders from all over the world condemning the attack on the 15-year-old.

In 2013, Malala Yousafzai was invited to give a speech at the UN on her 16th birthday, which was then dubbed "Malala Day", and she also won the Nobel

Peace Prize in 2014. She then established the Malala Fund that fights to ensure girls receive 12 years of free, safe, and quality education. It also champions country educators and activists like Malala's father through the Malala Fund's Education Champion Network.

From there, Malala went on to film a documentary with *The New York Times* and made several other international media appearances, speaking out against the suppression of girls' education in her homeland. She was nominated for an International Children's Peace Prize in 2011 and won Pakistan's first ever National Youth Peace Prize in 2012.

Later that year, the Taliban unanimously agreed to kill Malala as her advocacy posed a threat to their

regime. The assassination attempt on Malala that happened in October 2012 propelled her to even greater international recognition.

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COUNTERING VIOLENCE WITH NON-VIOLENCE: THOMAS KORUTH SAMUEL

A veteran in the scene of countering violent extremism in Malaysia, Thomas Koruth Samuel is currently Regional Consultant for Terrorism Prevention with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), but he has worn many hats before this.

Graduating with a degree in Biomedical Technology and a Masters in Strategic & Defense Studies from Universiti Malaya, Thomas served as the head of the research division in the



Thomas Koruth Samuel
Photo Credit: Observer Research Foundation

Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT) for 6 years before moving on to becoming the Director of the Digital Strategic Communications Division (DSCD) under the same organisation.

Also an author, Thomas writes predominantly on countering

violent extremism as a problem facing the youth. His book *Don't la Wei: A Peer-to-peer Resources Guide on Ensuring Your Kawan Never Becomes a Terrorist* is a fun and engaging guide for youths to be able to identify signs of extremism in their peers and how to counter them.



Finding Inner Peace in a Chaotic World

What does inner peace mean to you? Does it mean a place of sanctuary where you can come home from stressful situations and find that place of safety away from the cares of the world? Or is it a place where you can defend yourself from the ongoing onslaught of anger, hostility, and power games that are so often the measure of our lives in the 21st century?

The dictionary defines peace as a state of calm and quiet, freedom from disturbing thoughts, and an agreement to end hostilities.

One of the most important keys for this tranquillity and harmony or peace of mind as it is often called, is to honour our emotional nature and find methods to express feelings in appropriate ways that allow us to release them.

PRACTICAL STEPS TO RELEASING EMOTIONS

1 Learn to listen to yourself. Many of us have been harried for so long that we are out of touch with how we feel. A situation will present itself and we will flip out, later finding it unbelievable that we have lost control. This actually results from a build-up of emotions we were not aware of.

2 Accept responsibility for your feelings. No one makes you feel anything; rather, you choose how you think and feel based on what you interpret the situation to be. Blaming others gives away your power, and when you feel like a victim, you react with anger and resentment.

3 Talk to a trusted friend or counsellor. Finding a safe place where you are able to express feelings without anyone judging you provides an opportunity to release pent-up emotions.

4 Accept yourself. You are not supposed to be perfect, and learning to accept yourself with all your strengths and weaknesses creates feelings of peace within.

5 Don't judge yourself. Judging yourself means thinking you have to be perfect, and it creates feelings of not being good enough. When feeling inadequate, you judge yourself harshly, and no matter what you do, it will never be good enough.

6 Let go of the past. The past is over, and you did the best you could with what you knew at the time. If the past evokes memories of painful experiences for you, release the memories and find forgiveness for yourself and/or others. This doesn't mean you condone bad behaviours. It means you release the memories and feelings to find your own inner healing and peace.

7 Learn to relax. Many methods exist that contribute to staying in balance and harmony. Practising meditation as a daily ritual, reading, exercising, walking, or creating a sacred space where you can spend time feeling a sense of renewal and refreshment are all methods that take you away from focusing on what is

wrong to seeing yourself as having control of your life.

8 Practise gratitude. What you pay attention to increases as you give energy to your thoughts. Thoughts of peace, love, and abundance increase inner healing and peace and lead to living a life that feels more balanced and harmonious.

9 Keep a journal. People have used journaling for many years in order to release emotions and make sense of what is going on. This journal or notebook is for your eyes only and allows you to say anything you want without anybody seeing it except you. Once expressed, emotions tend to dissipate, and you will find they are released through this exploration. If this process doesn't totally release them the first time, repeat the exercise.

10 Spend time in nature. We are part of nature, and when we re-connect with the natural world, we touch our inner self or connect spiritually to something more. That something more is our connection to the Universal Energy, whether we call it God, Goddess, All That Is, or a Higher Power. Whatever we call it, when we feel connected to the Whole, we recognise our place in the world and feel a sense of peace and harmony and that all is right in our world.



Peacebuilding efforts should be commended and supported, and initiatives within legislation should be implemented to allow for more of these efforts to thrive and continue.



Thomas also writes more serious publications, such as his *Radicalisation in Southeast Asia: A Selected Case Study of DAESH in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines* as well as his chapter on Engaging Youths in Counter-Violent Extremism (CVE) Initiatives in the book *Learning from Violent Extremist Attacks*.

A firm advocate of peace through counter-narratives, Thomas conducts training for youths and adults on how to recognise hate speech and extremism and methods in which to counter them. His presentation is peppered with real world examples, case studies, and even media messaging examples that show extremism and presents solutions to them.

Most recently, Thomas was a facilitator of the UNDP's Preventing Hate Speech Workshop for undergraduates, which included participants from the University of Wollongong and the Islamic

International University of Malaysia, among others.

ACHIEVING PEACE THROUGH DIFFERENT MEANS

Be it grassroots or top downs, there is no one specific way to advocate for peace. Whether you're rubbing shoulders with world leaders like Malala Yousafzai, training the next generation like Thomas Koruth, Samuel, or getting deep into the communities like Dr Teh Tsu Thye, the fight for peace is diverse and important. Peacebuilding efforts should be commended and supported, and initiatives within legislation should be implemented to allow for more of these efforts to thrive and continue.

As Malaysians, we also can build peace within our own communities. Choosing to settle arguments with neighbours or agreeing to disagree within families are also peacebuilding initiatives, training our patience and tolerance. Every little bit counts. ☺