



GLOBAL UNITES
YOUTH MOVEMENTS FOR CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

GLOBAL UNITES SCHOOL OF PEACEBUILDING

SUMMER PROGRAM ON
THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF PEACEBUILDING

YOUNG. BOLD. GLOBAL.

Being part of a **Global Unites Summer Program** is unlike any other educational experience. What sets it apart is not only the **breadth of its international network**, spanning over 21 countries across the globe and particularly rooted in South Asia and Africa, but also the **depth of its local connections**. Each program site is built on years of trust and collaboration with communities, ensuring that students are not just visitors but welcomed participants in ongoing movements for peace, justice, and reconciliation. This unique combination of global reach and grassroots immersion makes the learning both academically rigorous and personally transformative.

WHEN

25THMAY - 25TH JUNE 2026 OR
20THJULY - 20TH AUGUST 2026

INSTITUTION

GLOBAL UNITES

COUNTRY

SRI LANKA

LANGUAGE

ENGLISH

CREDITS

4 CREDITS
(ACCREDITEDBYGORDON COLLEGE)

FEE

2000 USD
(Includes ACCOMMODATION AND MEALS, ALL COURSE
MATERIALS AND SITE VISITS)



ABOUT

What began as a simple vision in Sri Lanka—to bring young people together across divides—has grown into a global movement. Our founder believed that those who have experienced conflict firsthand have the deepest lessons to share, and every student who joins us carries the potential to turn that learning into lasting change.

The Global Unites Summer Program on the Theory and Practice of Peacebuilding is a month-long residential experience in Sri Lanka that brings together emerging leaders from around the world. Through a combination of classroom learning, practical workshops, and cultural immersion, participants explore key concepts of conflict transformation, reconciliation, and nonviolent social change. The program bridges theory and practice by engaging with local communities, faith traditions, and grassroots peacebuilders, while also providing space for reflection, dialogue, and collaboration. With shared accommodation, meals, and weekend cultural experiences, the program fosters not only learning but of also deep cross - cultural friendships and a global network of peacebuilders committed to lasting impact.



WHY SRI LANKA?

Sri Lanka is uniquely placed for a program on peacebuilding. Having endured nearly three decades of civil war, the country continues to navigate the complex journey of reconciliation, justice, and rebuilding trust across communities. It offers participants a living classroom where theory meets reality, where lessons of conflict, resilience, grassroots activism, and interfaith collaboration can be observed firsthand. The richness of Sri Lanka's cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity also provides an invaluable context for understanding both the challenges and possibilities of building sustainable peace in divided societies.

Global Unites finds its roots in Sri Lanka, where the founder and current President first established Sri Lanka Unites in 2006, just a few years before the end of the war. Since then, it has grown into the nation's largest youth movement for peacebuilding. What began in Sri Lanka went on to inspire a global movement, with Global Unites launching in 2015 and expanding to 21 countries. It is often rare for voices from the Majority World, those who have directly experienced conflict and violence, to shape international discourse and practice on peacebuilding. This program offers a unique and important platform for students to learn directly from leaders and practitioners from the Majority World, providing perspectives often missing in mainstream narratives.

An added advantage for students participating in the summer program is the opportunity to learn and engage within a country that is not only rich in history and culture but also internationally recognized as a leading global travel destination. Sri Lanka has been the recipient of numerous international tourism recognitions, reflecting its sustained appeal as a global travel destination. In 2024, Wanderlust readers voted Sri Lanka the **Most Desirable Island in the World**, while CEOWORLD Magazine ranked it **fifth among the world's best countries to visit in a lifetime**. Condé Nast Traveler also identified Sri Lanka as one of the best places to visit in 2024 and subsequently as the **third best holiday destination in the world for January**. National Geographic Traveler listing Sri Lanka among its **Best of the World destinations in 2012**.



COURSE LEAD

PRASHAN DE VISSER
FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF GLOBALUNITES

Prashan De Visser is the visionary founder of Sri Lanka Unites, the largest youth movement for peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka. Under his leadership from its inception in 2008 the movement grew to over 30,000 members, employing 50 full-time staff, and maintaining 9 offices nationwide. It has been recognized as one of the Top 20 youth movements in the Commonwealth and among the Top 8 models to follow globally. Building on this success, Prashan founded Global Unites in 2015, an international youth movement with a mission to transform conflicts through grassroots engagement. Launched initially with Congo Unites, the movement now spans 21 established and emerging movements across countries including Sri Lanka, Kenya, Congo, Uganda, Afghanistan, Liberia, Myanmar, Germany and more. Prashan's efforts culminated in two significant global summits, the latest in Doha, that united 100 peacebuilders from 20 countries. Prashan is an international speaker and trainer on the topics of conflict transformation, grassroots movements and non-violent engagement. He also serves as a visiting lecturer at Crozer Colgate University Seminary, a key institution in the legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin. He recently published ***The Phoenix Generation***, a book that shares insights, stories, and recommendations drawn from over a decade of working with youth across the globe. He is also the author of ***Peacemakers in a Polarized World***, designed to help individuals put peacemaking into practice within their communities.



WHO WILL BENEFIT?

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Gain exposure to applied peacebuilding beyond the classroom.

POSTGRADUATE PROFESSIONALS

Deepen their theoretical knowledge while engaging in practical field experiences.

ACTIVISTS

Strengthen their skills and strategies within a real-world context of conflict transformation.

All participants will benefit from this unique blend of theory and practice in peacebuilding, offered within the context of a country that has lived through conflict and is now working to build structures for reconciliation and justice.



COURSE AIM

The Global Unites Summer Program aims to equip undergraduate students, postgraduate professionals, and activists with both the theoretical foundations and practical tools of peacebuilding. Set within the post-war context of Sri Lanka, participants will explore themes of conflict transformation, reconciliation, and justice while engaging with grassroots leaders and communities. Beyond the classroom, students will be **connected to a global network of peacebuilders across 21 countries**, gaining opportunities to learn from their diverse experiences and approaches. The program also opens pathways for internships within the Global Unites movement, allowing participants to continue their engagement and apply their learning in real-world contexts.



WHAT WE OFFER

CORE COURSES WITH MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

- **History, Culture, Religion, and Ethnicity in Sri Lanka**
 - Examines the social, cultural, and religious dynamics that have shaped Sri Lanka's identity and conflicts.
- **Conflict and Reconciliation Theory**
 - Introduces key theoretical frameworks for understanding conflict and approaches to reconciliation.
- **Justice, Truth, and Memory**
 - Explores mechanisms of transitional justice and the role of collective memory in post-conflict societies.
- **Philosophical and Theological Perspectives on Peace**
 - Engages with ethical, philosophical, and theological traditions that inform peacebuilding practices.
- **Mobilizing Grassroots Movements**
 - Provides practical insights into building and sustaining community-based peace initiatives, drawing from real-world examples within the Global Unites movement
- **Engaging in Nonviolent Resistance Effectively**
 - Equips students with strategies and case studies for practicing nonviolent resistance in diverse contexts.



WHAT WE OFFER

CROSS-CUTTING ELECTIVES

- **Gender and Conflict**
 - Analyzes the gendered dimensions of conflict and peacebuilding.
- **Trauma and Healing**
 - Examines psychological and communal approaches to healing in post-conflict contexts.
- **Youth Leadership**
 - Develops skills for youth engagement and leadership in peace and reconciliation processes.
- **Peace Tech**
 - Explores the use of technology and digital tools to advance peacebuilding and conflict resolution initiatives.



WHAT WE OFFER

FIELD VISITS

As part of the program, students will participate in field visits to regions that were deeply affected by Sri Lanka's nearly three-decade civil war. These visits provide direct engagement with the people, institutions, and communities who continue to navigate the complex challenges of post-war recovery. In the Northern Province (Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Vavuniya), students will meet with civil society leaders, local peace commissions, and community activists addressing issues such as displacement, the search for the disappeared, land rights, and reintegration of former combatants. In the Eastern Province (Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Mannar), students will engage with interethnic and interreligious communities who are building models of coexistence and reconciliation amid diversity.



WHAT WE OFFER

INTERNSHIP AND LEARNING TRIP OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to the summer program in Sri Lanka, students will have the option to extend their learning through internships or short learning trips with Global Unites chapters.

Kolkata, India

- Work with initiatives on pluralism and social inclusion.



Kathmandu, Nepal

- Engage with youth-led programs on interfaith collaboration and peace education.



Islamabad, Pakistan

- Contribute to projects promoting civic engagement and democratic resilience.



WHAT WE OFFER

INTERNSHIP AND LEARNING TRIP OPPORTUNITIES

Kampala, Uganda

- Participate in community programs advancing conflict resolution and social cohesion.



Monrovia, Liberia

- Support initiatives focused on peacebuilding education.



Nairobi, Kenya

- Engage with grassroots projects promoting reconciliation and civic participation.



Bogotá, Colombia

- Contribute to programs addressing social justice and peace research



Students may also choose to remain in Sri Lanka to continue their internship with leading local peacebuilding organizations and movements. These opportunities allow students to apply their classroom and field learning to real-world contexts, strengthen their professional networks, and gain cross-cultural exposure to peacebuilding practices in diverse settings.

WHAT WE OFFER

FIELD IMMERSION AND COMMUNITY EXPOSURE

Students will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the vibrant culture of Sri Lanka—tasting diverse local cuisine, visiting bustling farmers’ markets, exploring the island’s rich biodiversity and wildlife, and engaging in experiential learning along its beaches and natural landscapes. For those who extend their program through internships in Nepal, Pakistan, or India, or choose to incorporate a regional learning element within the summer program, there will be further opportunities to experience the dynamic cultures of these countries. Together, these experiences provide a unique blend of academic study, cultural immersion, and hands-on learning across South Asia.



WHAT WE OFFER

OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPLORATION AND CULTURAL IMMERSION IN SRI LANKA

- **Hiking and Trekking**
 - Trails through the Knuckles Mountain Range, Ella's Little Adam's Peak, Horton Plains (World's End), and the sacred climb to Adam's Peak (Sri Pada).
- **Food and Culinary Experiences**
 - Cooking classes with local families, sampling street food in Colombo and Jaffna, exploring spice gardens in Matale, and tea-tasting in Nuwara Eliya.
- **Cultural Travel and Heritage**
 - Visits to ancient cities like Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, temple and kovil festivals, interfaith experiences in Kandy and Batticaloa, and learning about
- **Local Artisans and Crafts**
 - Hands-on workshops in pottery, batik making, traditional weaving, and mask carving; engaging with village cooperatives that sustain craft traditions.
- **Water Sports and Adventure**
 - Surfing in Arugam Bay, snorkeling in Trincomalee, kayaking in Batticaloa Lagoon, whale watching in Mirissa, and white-water rafting in Kitulgala.

1) Costs for internships and learning trips will be separate from the summer program fees.

2) There may be separate costs for some of these activities



SUMMER PROGRAM 2025 LOOKING BACK



Dr. Shamara Wettimuny

(Historian and Junior Research Fellow – The Queen’s College, University of Oxford) – Sri Lankan History: Rise of Ethnic Tensions



Dr. Sanjana Hatthotuwa

(Global Leader in Civic Media, Peacebuilding & Digital for Security, TED fellow) – Leveraging Technology Peacebuilding



Suchith Abeywickrama

(Director, Office of National Unity and Reconciliation) – Inter-faith engagement

SUMMER PROGRAM 2025 LOOKING BACK



Tharaka Hettiarachchi

(United Nations Office of the Resident Coordinator) –
Transitional Justice Mechanisms



Shruthi De Visser

(Peacebuilding and Traditional Justice Research
Consultant)– Measuring the impact of peace and
reconciliation interventions



Prashan De Visser

(Founder -Global Unites, author and speaker) – Non-
violent engagement, Grassroots Movements,
Reconciliation and Conflict Transformation.

TESTIMONIALS

AMANDA GODWIN, USA

A key takeaway for me is that underlying root causes of conflict have to be addressed for real lasting peace and positive transformation of society post- conflict. Learning about the work that Global Unites does gave us a tangible application for the concepts we were learning in the classroom. Living in Sri Lanka for a month was an incredible chance to learn from another culture through immersion and encountering difference on a daily basis.



KATIE SPELDEWINDE, SRI LANKA

The Global Unites Summer Program gave me a broader understanding of what conflict and peace truly mean, and how peace can be built within society. More than just the sessions, I'm grateful for the chance I had to connect with new friends from different backgrounds. Learning from their ideas and experiences opened my eyes even more



RHITHIK SHAHI, NEPAL

The knowledge and lessons I gained will be my lifetime learning. I am committed to implement them in my own country, our organization Nepal Unites and everywhere I go, and to share these learnings with other peacebuilders so that together we can continue building bridges of peace



WHY CHOOSE US

ACADEMIC & INTELLECTUAL DISTINCTION

- **Distinguished Faculty & Practitioners** – Lectures and seminars led by both academics and activists, community leaders, and practitioners with lived experience in peacebuilding.
- **Multi-Disciplinary Approach** – Blending of political science, sociology, conflict studies, psychology, and cultural studies.
- **Research Opportunities** – Pathways for students to develop publishable papers or contribute to policy briefs with GU partners.
- **Workshops on Practical Tools** – Facilitation skills, mediation simulations, dialogue design, storytelling for peace, and restorative justice practices.
- **Capstone Project / Portfolio** – Students leave with a tangible piece of work (essay, policy paper, video, or action plan) that they can use for graduate school or job applications.



WHY CHOOSE US

GLOBAL NETWORK & CAREER EDGE

- **Direct Connection to GU's Global Network**– Access to leaders and movements in 21+ countries; students leave with lifelong global contacts.
- **Internship Pipeline**– Clear opportunities to continue engagement in Sri Lanka or other GU countries post-program.
- **Certification** – Global Unites Certification for completion and 4 credits offered to partner universities and colleges
- **Professional Development Sessions** – Mentorship, and pathways into international NGOs or graduate programs.



WHY CHOOSE US

SRI LANKA'S UNIQUE VALUE

- **Case Study of a Post - Conflict Nation** – Sri Lanka as a living laboratory for reconciliation, transitional justice, and pluralism.
- **Field Immersion Depth** – Not just site visits, but long-standing relationships with communities that provide rare access to grassroots perspectives.
- **Comparative Regional Lens** – Opportunities to connect Sri Lanka's lessons with South Asia's broader peacebuilding challenges (India, Pakistan, Nepal).
- **Cultural Philosophy Component** – Exposure to Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, and Muslim traditions of peace, ethics, and coexistence.



WHY CHOOSE US

EXPERIENTIAL & TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING

- **Dialogue Labs** – Safe spaces where participants from different nations practice interfaith and interethnic dialogue.
- **Simulation Exercises** – Crisis negotiations, community reconciliation processes, or post-war policy-making simulations.
- **Reflective Practice** – Journaling, guided meditation, or ‘peace circles’ to integrate learning with personal growth.
- **Cultural Exchange** – Paired with Sri Lankan peers for cross-cultural collaboration on group projects.
- **Leadership Development** – Training modules that link peacebuilding with entrepreneurship, innovation, and civic leadership.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON
THE PROGRAM AND INTERNSHIPS
EMAIL**

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WEBSITE

WWW.GLOBALUNITES.ORG