

# The Peace Post



Dear Friends,

With the UN Summit of the Future and Climate Week coming to New York in September, PII has been actively engaging with our global partners to create avenues for intentional cross-sector collaboration in service of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and our four core pillars of peace. Acknowledging the crucial importance of innovation in our quest for a more peaceful and sustainable world, we have been focusing substantial efforts on our third pillar (Climate and Energy) in the lead-up to September. As we prepare for these pivotal gatherings and their many side-events, we recognize that access to clean, reliable energy is not merely a technological challenge; it is a fundamental human right that supports global stability and prosperity.

This month's edition of the Peace Post brings us to consider the role of peace innovation in achieving SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy. Drawing on recent advancements in solar technology, large-scale renewable energy projects, and infrastructure adaptations for extreme weather events, we explore the potential for innovation to transform our energy landscape in ways that promote further cross-sector collaboration—a critical component of broader political stability and peace. As we confront the impacts of climate change and prepare for the future, it's evident that implementing energy-efficient solutions not only protects lives but also contributes to climate change mitigation and conflict resilience.

In light of the insights uncovered in the articles below, we are also excited to announce our new partnership with [QGEMS](#), an innovative global energy management company revolutionizing the sustainable energy market with their new AI-driven Energy Management Orchestration System (EMOS): designed to create a modern energy 'hypergrid.' Building on the success of our [Health-and-Peace Fellows](#) cohort launched at the University for Peace Global Center of Peace Innovation in 2023, we are expanding our Fellowship program to include Clean Energy and Data Infrastructure cohorts. With the support of QGEMS and other partners, these Fellows will focus on developing groundbreaking solutions to transform the energy sector and global information environment, laying the groundwork for peace and sustainability initiatives worldwide.

Partnerships are just the beginning of new possibilities for people and planet, and we look forward to accelerating the delivery and implementation of sustainable energy solutions worldwide in our pursuit of peace innovation! We encourage you to join us in our work and become a member of our PII Cooperative, opening the door to exclusive global events access, cutting edge insights, and more. Together, we can create a future where peace and sustainability are not just goals but realities for all. Each connection, innovative solution, and technological advancement brings us closer to a world that prioritizes sustainability and equity, fostering peace and resilience in communities around the globe.

In the spirit of peace and unity,  
Barbara Winston, President and Founder  
Gordon Winston, Co-Founder

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## Scientists reveal breakthrough that could reduce need for solar farms

Researchers at the University of Oxford have developed a groundbreaking solar technology that could revolutionize clean energy production and contribute to sustainable development. The team has created an ultra-thin, flexible solar cell using perovskite material that can be applied to various surfaces, including buildings, vehicles, and everyday objects. This innovative approach has achieved 27% energy efficiency, matching traditional silicon-based panels, with the potential to reach 45% efficiency in the future. The versatility and efficiency of this technology could reduce the need for large solar farms, making clean energy more accessible and integrated into daily life. The commercialization of this innovation, led by Oxford PV, exemplifies the power of scientific breakthroughs to foster sustainable economic growth and global cooperation for addressing climate change.

[Read more >](#)



## Electrical 'superhighway' between Scotland and England approved

Regulators have approved a £4.3 billion subsea cable project to transfer renewable electricity between Scotland and England. The project, set to be operational by 2029, is expected to power approximately two million homes and is part of a broader initiative to modernize the UK's energy transmission network. By enabling the efficient transfer of renewable energy across regions, especially during periods of low wind, it will contribute to enhanced energy security, reduced reliance on fossil fuels, and progress towards UN Sustainable Development Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy). The collaboration between Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks and National Grid demonstrates how innovative infrastructure can foster regional cooperation and collaboration, enhancing resource sharing and sustainable development.

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## Biden administration announces more than \$2 billion in grants to boost US power grid

The Biden administration has announced over \$2 billion in grants to strengthen and expand the U.S. power grid, a crucial step for advancing clean energy and combating climate change. This initiative, part of the Department of Energy's Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships Program, aims to boost grid capacity and enable more renewable energy connections. The grants will support innovative projects across 18 states, including new high-voltage transmission lines, grid-enhancing technologies, and offshore wind infrastructure. By fostering collaboration between federal, state, and private entities, this investment promotes peace through sustainable development and demonstrates innovation in addressing energy challenges. The projects are expected to facilitate the addition of 13 gigawatts of clean energy resources to the grid, contributing to the administration's goal of halving carbon emissions by 2030.

[Read more >](#)



## Extreme weather is coming for your house. Passive energy retrofits can save lives

Researchers at the U.S. National Renewable Energy Laboratory have released a study that discusses and reviews various innovative passive energy retrofits that can significantly enhance the resilience of residential buildings to extreme weather. Their study shows that combining measures like extra insulation, improved air sealing, and phase-change materials can extend safety periods from 2 to 42 hours during winter storms and from 12 to 37 hours during heat waves. These retrofits not only protect lives but also improve energy efficiency, contributing to climate change mitigation. The research highlights how innovative solutions can foster peace and security by enhancing community resilience, particularly for vulnerable populations, while aligning with global efforts for sustainable development and climate action.

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# Program Spotlight

## DNA of Peace Fellowship Program

The DNA of Peace Fellowship Program is a PhD fellowship program designed and led in partnership with our founding partner, the University for Peace, to connect and equip cohorts of practitioner-scholars with the network, education, and technology necessary to launch their own innovation projects for peace and sustainable development. Last month, we celebrated the 1st anniversary of the program, and we invite you to join us in support of our inaugural cohort of Anu and Naveen Jain endowed Health-and-Peace Fellows. Congratulations to Fellows Michelle Helman and Clara Ramin for their incredible work!



Michelle Helman is a Doctoral Candidate and Fellow in Peace and Health Innovation at UPEACE's Global Center for Peace Innovation. She brings over twenty years of experience partnering on global, community-led initiatives to generate innovative solutions towards creating peace, justice, and health equity. Michelle holds a Masters in Peace and Conflict Studies, is a Rotary Peace Fellow, and serves as a Senior Fellow at the Center for Public Service at Portland State University. She is a certified mediator, Wilderness First Responder, and medical interpreter who learned to speak Spanish during her Peace Corps service in Perú.

### Innovation Project: Peace-Tech & Health Equity

Michelle's doctoral research study is a peace-tech and health equity innovation project that provides change agents the opportunity to strengthen their leadership, communication, and facilitation approaches so that they can design solutions to create the conditions that enable healing, peace, and justice. With her research partner, Green String Network (GSN), a Kenya-based non-for-profit, Michelle is engaging a design research and intervention approach that supports GSN's internal organizational development process as they launch a mobile application that enables healing-centred peacebuilding and entrepreneurship with youth and women in East Africa. The anticipated findings of the study will contribute to existing research and provide actionable recommendations and resources applicable in and beyond the peace and health sectors.



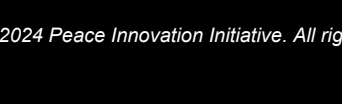
Clara Ramin is a Ph.D. student, instructor, and coordinator of two MA programmes at University for Peace: Development Studies & Diplomacy, and Responsible Management and Sustainable Economic Development. She holds an MA in Environment, Development, and Peace with a specialization in Sustainable Natural Resource Management. Clara is from Germany and has over 12 years of experience living and working in Costa Rica on projects related to water, agriculture, and gender in rural communities. Her doctoral research is on water justice, river rights, community health, and environmental peacebuilding.

### Innovation Project: River Rights as an Innovative Tool for Health & Environmental Peacebuilding

As part of a Costa Rican river's movement, Clara has learnt about the challenges around river protection, water access, and water quality in the southern area of the country. Neoliberal economic activities not only affect community and environmental health, but also particularly threaten environmental defenders who mobilize for the protection of their territories. The purpose of Clara Ramin's PhD research is to analyze how the establishment of particular river rights could be an innovative tool for promoting environmental and community health and support environmental peacebuilding efforts in communities of the Térraba basin in Costa Rica. In a time where the idea that nature has rights is gaining momentum, there is still much uncertainty about the outcomes and impact of this novel legal paradigm. This research will be conducted in close collaboration with water activists and community members and its outcomes aim to benefit local communities who are river protectors and who have created strong social movements, decisive to resist private and governmental neoliberal extractive development projects. This PhD study is supervised by Dr. Ken Conca at American University and Dr. Olivia Sylester at the University for Peace.

Your support and engagement drive us to continue our mission of fostering innovation for a more harmonious world. Whether you're reading, sharing, or contributing, you're playing a vital role in this journey toward global peace. If you have stories, insights, or feedback, please don't hesitate to reach out. Together, we're making a difference.

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