

Career Opportunities in Peace and Conflict Resolution

The field of peace studies is an interdisciplinary academic field that analyzes the causes of war and systemic oppression, and explores processes by which conflict and change can be managed so as to maximize justice while minimizing violence. It encompasses the study of economic, political, and social systems at the local, national, and global levels, and examines ideology, culture, and technology as they relate to conflict and change. In different settings, this field of study is known variously as "peace and conflict studies," "peace and security studies," "peace and world order studies," "justice and reconciliation studies," "conflict resolution" and so on. What distinguishes this field from others, however, is a concern with the modalities of peace and the methods of peacemaking (Michael T. Klare, Peace and World Security Studies).

Career-related activities within this field include policy research, legislative lobbying, public education, petitioning and protest action, mediation, community service, and intercultural diplomacy.

Career Paths and Entry Salaries

Entry level positions in the peace and conflict field are diversified and often highly competitive. Salary levels range from high teens to mid thirties at entry level depending on the size of the organizational budget, number of staff, and qualifications. The functional titles will include analyst, program associate/assistant, education coordinator, research assistant, public relations liaison, regional monitor, etc. Salaries will vary depending on the larger field chosen by the employee. Conflict resolution is often a component of other policy, analyst or non-profit careers. Human resources officers often specialize in mediation and staff bargaining, for instance. These positions, especially at the corporate level, pay substantially more than would be true at a small, grassroots organization.

A graduate level degree is almost essential because of the functional expertise it demonstrates. The methods utilized in evaluating and analyzing conflict and in resolving such situations or potential situations are often learned through a combination of experience and higher education.

This field has no direct or specified career path. Acquiring essential skills in the peace and conflict resolution field can be initiated through involvement and concern with the social issues affecting most communities

Qualifications Necessary/Application Procedures to Enter Field

A strong commitment to social issues and interest in either interpersonal relations, community development or international relations is essential.

Educational background should emphasize research and analytical methods. The shared sense of a common purpose being pursued for a socially conscious cause will sometimes create a less than structured environment where flexibility is a required characteristic. Foreign languages can assist a job search in this field because many positions are of an international nature. Teaching and training skills acquired through education or work also are applicable.

The enthusiastic involvement with public interest organizations as an intern and/or volunteer will help to develop a network important in receiving an offer for a professional

job. Overseas field experience, especially in a developing country, and experience in a multicultural section of a local community or city is highly recommended. Domestic positions in public affairs work may require conflict resolution skills, although the position may be in policy or management and not identified specifically as a “conflict resolution” position.

Sample Employers

- Alliance for International Conflict Resolution, www.aicpr.org/
- American-Mideast Education & Training Services, www.amideast.org/
- American Civil Liberties Union, www.aclu.org/
- Amnesty International, www.amnestyusa.org/
- Carter Center, www.cartercenter.org/
- CARE, Inc., www.care.org/
- Carnegie Council on Ethics & International Affairs, www.cceia.org/
- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, www.ceip.org/
- Center for War/Peace Studies, www.cwps.org/
- Conflict Management Group,
<http://www.mercycorps.org/countries/unitedstates/10703>
- Conflict Resolution Center International, www.conflictres.org/
- Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, www.fmcs.gov/internet/
- The Fund for Peace, www.fundforpeace.org/
- INCORE, www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/
- The Institute for International Mediation and Conflict Resolution,
<http://www.cemproc.org/IIMCRprofilepage.html>
- Institute for Multi-Track, Diplomacy www.imtd.org/
- Institute for Policy Studies, www.ips-dc.org/
- Institute for World Affairs, www.iwa.org/
- International Alert, www.international-alert.org/
- International Crisis Group, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/>
- InterReligious Council of CNY – Community Wide Dialogue to End Racism,
www.irccny.org
- Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice,
<http://www.sandiego.edu/peacestudies/ipj/>
- Mercy Corps, <http://www.mercycorps.org>
- National Peace Foundation, www.nationalpeace.org/
- Non-Violence International, www.nonviolenceinternational.net
- Program on the Analysis and Resolution of Conflicts (PARC),
www.maxwell.syr.edu/parc/parcmain.htm
- Peace Brigades International, www.peacebrigades.org/
- Peace Makers Trust, www.peacemakers.ca/
- Search for Common Ground, www.sfcg.org/
- TransAfrica, www.transafricaforum.org/
- US Institute of Peace, www.usip.org/
- The United Nations, www.un.org/
- The William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, www.hewlett.org/
- Woodrow Wilson International Center, <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/>
- World Commission on Peace & Human Rights Counsel,
<http://greenfield.fortunecity.com/swallowtail/408/>
- World Policy Institute, www.worldpolicy.org

Demand and Future Challenges of Profession

The unprecedented changes in the world community have not prevented conflict from continuing unabated. Thus, the demand for new, more effective means to resolve conflicts between nations and peoples increases the opportunities in the field. Many of the mediation skills can be acquired in a domestic setting and then transferred to the international arena. Many volunteer opportunities exist which can lead to full-time employment opportunities.

As an interdisciplinary field conflict resolution positions can be found in a variety of organizations not traditionally thought of as "Peace Groups." For example, development organizations like CARE and CRS are increasingly recognizing the important linkage between development and conflict resolution. The creation of the World Bank's Post-Conflict Unit and the Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service demonstrate that governmental and multilateral organizations are also recognizing the importance of this growing field. However, paid professional positions in this field are difficult to obtain unless the candidate has related experience and relevant education.

Resources For More Information

Associations/Websites

Association for Conflict Resolution, <http://www.acrnet.org/>

American Political Science Association Conflict Processes Section, http://www.apsanet.org/content_4938.cfm

American Sociological Association Peace and War Section, <http://www2.asanet.org/sectionpwsc/>

Peace and Justice Studies Association, www.peacejusticestudies.org/

International Peace Research Association, <http://www.iprafoundation.org/>

Peace Studies Association, Earlham College, www.earlham.edu/~psa/

Program on the Analysis and Resolution of Conflicts (PARC), www.maxwell.syr.edu/parc/parcmain.htm

Publications

- Alternatives to the Peace Corps: A Directory of Third World and US Volunteer Opportunities, 10th edition, Jennifer S. Willsea, Meagan Reule, Food First Books; (October 2003)
- Becoming a Mediator : An Insider's Guide to Exploring Careers in Mediation, Peter Lovenheim, Jossey-Bass, (March 2002)
- Careers in International Affairs, Editors: Maria Pinto Carland and Lisa A. Gihring, Georgetown University Press (2003)
- Career Opportunities in Politics, Government and Activism, Joan Axelrod-Contrada, Facts on File (2003)
- Goodworks: A Guide to Careers in Social Change, Jessica Cowan, editor, Barricade Books, NY (1991)
- International Peace Directory, Thaddeus C. Trzyna, California Institute of Public Affairs, (1984)

- Scholar's Guide to Washington, D.C., for Peace and International Security Studies (Scholars' Guide to Washington, D.C., No 15), Robert W. Janes, Katherine R. Tromble, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, United States Institute of Peace, Woodrow Wilson Center Press (September 1995)
- Theory & Practice (25-hour mediation training manual), The Program on the Analysis and Resolution of Conflicts (PARC), Syracuse University. Available by calling 315-443-2367 (\$20 cost and postage fee)
- Working for Peace (1990). Available from The Fund for Peace, 345 East 46th Street, Suite 712, New York, NY 10017

Internet Resources:

- IGC PeaceNet - <http://www.igc.org/index.html>