

# Kathryn Wasserman Davis Collaborative in Conflict Transformation

## 2022 Annual Report

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## INTRODUCTION

Conflict is part of the human experience. The high conflict that manifests as ‘us vs. them’ binaries or violent struggles can destroy relationships and communities. Yet other forms of conflict are essential. Conflict helps keep relationships and social structures honest, alive, and responsive to human needs and aspirations.

In March 2022, Middlebury announced the largest programmatic grant in its history – a \$25 million, seven-year initiative focused on *conflict transformation*. The Kathryn Wasserman Davis Collaborative in Conflict Transformation (the “CT Collaborative”) explores how destructive conflicts can change and become relatively constructive. Communities large and small need to develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions that allow them to listen, deliberate, and organize to solve problems in a constructive way. Approached this way, conflict can generate positive personal, political, and social change.

Middlebury has made a commitment to *“build a flexible model that establishes conflict transformation as a liberal art by integrating appropriate skills at all levels of the higher education curriculum, from the secondary school pipeline to the graduate degree.”* This model will be informed by our own practices and by our partners – scholars, educators, community partners, and practitioners – working at various levels – interpersonal, national, and global.

This annual report shares our stated objectives and identifies our foundational efforts in our first year. At Middlebury, there is a growing and shared conception of conflict transformation as an interdisciplinary approach to inevitable conflicts that arise in all spheres of social life, from interpersonal relationships to global affairs.

We have seen excitement, innovation, collaboration, and real achievements. We faced unexpected changes in our leadership, and our faculty and staff have substantive responsibilities beyond the Collaborative. Still, we have managed to develop strong and productive working relationships among key CT stakeholders. We seek to model a collaborative approach to problem-solving that invites students, faculty, staff, and external partners and community members. This foundational work in years one and two will prepare us to be meaningful members in a global network of practice.

The Collaborative is organized into six (6) areas of work that encompass the educational experiences of our students. These roughly align with different parts of Middlebury as an institution. We are expanding conflict transformation in the following areas:

- the Bread Loaf School of English, supporting teachers in K-12 Schools
- undergraduate life at Middlebury College
- experiential learning and community engagement at the College
- graduate training and research at the Institute in Monterey
- global literacy in our Schools Abroad and beyond
- supporting faculty research at the College and Institute

The following pages outline the design and implementation of programs in these six areas.

## **LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION IN HIGH SCHOOL WORKING WITH TEACHERS ATTENDING THE BREAD LOAF SCHOOL OF ENGLISH**

There are four (4) major components to our work in conflict transformation at the Bread Loaf School of English: a new conflict curriculum, a summer workshop series, support to the NextGen teacher network, and BLSE fellowships for teachers from NextGen communities.

### **Conflict curriculum for K-12 teachers**

BLSE inaugurated a three-course conflict transformation curriculum, “Teaching, Writing, and Acting for Change,” at its Vermont campus. The 2022 Change courses enrolled 25 K-12 teachers (seven of whom were fully funded by the CT Collaborative to attend BLSE as Change Fellows). These courses focus on cross-cultural communication and problem-solving within and across communities. In these three courses, high school teachers

- develop strategies to manage classroom dynamics – using theatrical practices, language theory, and storytelling as key anchors for working across differences.
- investigate “conflict transformation” collaboratively, seeking ways to adapt it to humanities-based teaching and integrate it into their pedagogies and community action.

Through this work, high school students work across cultural differences, within their classrooms or with other schools/states/nations (through Bread Loaf Teacher Network partnerships) or within a youth network (the BLTN Next Generation Youth Leadership Network).

### **Summer workshop series: teaching across difference and developing civic capacity**

We developed a weekly workshop series on concepts, and strategies for addressing conflict and change. These participatory workshops are “training the trainers”—the high school teachers—to return to their home institutions prepared to teach conflict mediation tools in their classrooms. In this pilot year, the programming focused on the 28 teachers and faculty involved in the Teaching, Writing, and Acting for Change courses. In response to COVID, we limited gathering sizes. The curriculum and workshops seeded transformative projects that participants are carrying out in their home schools and communities over the 2022-2023 academic year, working under the auspices of the Bread Loaf Teacher Network (BLTN).

At the end of the summer, participants from the three classes hosted an open forum for the full Bread Loaf community, presenting their approach to the subject of conflict transformation to roughly 100 students, faculty, and administrators. The audience was asked to practice conflict transformation themselves: to engage in a series of small group exercises, designed to identify -- and build relations across -- differences in their perspectives on the Bread Loaf residential and academic life. It was a very successful and much appreciated community-building event.

### **Supporting NextGen’s six core sites and expanding the network**

With the addition of one new site centered at the Santa Fe Indian School, we have awarded funds to seven (7) NextGen sites: Louisville, KY; Atlanta, GA; Aiken, SC; the Navajo Nation; rural Vermont; Lawrence, MA; and Santa Fe, NM. Each site has been awarded \$10,000 grants, with

some additional support for the Vermont location's extensive "What's the Story?" project. The Vermont group helped bring members from the Santa Fe and South Carolina sites to a mini-conference featuring the social action documentaries created by the "What's the Story?" youth.

We are establishing an annual BLTN NextGen Writing & Learning retreat focused on the analysis and resolution of conflict, hosted and organized by a different BLTN NextGen hub each year.

On Oct. 7-8, the Navajo wing (La Casa Roja) of BLTN NextGen hosted a "Peacemaking Conference," at Dine College in Tsaile, AZ. The participants included 9 youth and 9 mentors from four Next Gen sites (Navajo, Aiken, Louisville, Lawrence). Masako Toki (MIIS) also attended at our invitation. Centered on peacemaking and conflict transformation, the conference revealed how Navajo storytellers, scholars, justice experts, and writers can help in developing creative solutions to conflict-based systems and situations endemic to Navajo culture.

On Nov. 4-5, the Andover Bread Loaf / BLTN NextGen Lawrence team hosted a conference on "Rising Together," in Lawrence MA. 10 Next Gen youth and 8 mentors from six Next Gen sites (Lawrence, Louisville, Aiken, Atlanta, Santa Fe Indian School, Navajo/La Casa Roja) attended. There was a special session for the BLTN NextGen group as well as a writing workshop for 50+ Lawrence youth and mentors. The goal was to foster cross-cultural understanding through a focus on the history of Lawrence itself. BLTN Next Gen youth and site mentors learned techniques for facilitating multi-generational writing workshops aimed at building community. Mentors attended a session on "Activism for Education Justice: Adult Co-conspiratorship and Youth Participatory Action Research as Tools for Social Justice."

Additionally, the Collaborative offered fourteen *Change Action Grants* to support the projects undertaken by Change Fellows, as well as some other students in Teaching, Writing, or Acting for Change courses, and other BLTN members engaged in conflict transformation.

We have also enabled the development of change- and conflict-oriented work by mentors and youth in the BLTN Next Generation Youth Leadership Network, as well as by the Bread Loaf Acting Ensemble and its offspring, Beyond the Page. As a BLTN Change Action Grant recipient, Beyond the Page reached 190 students across nine events in Fall 2022, using a physical theater framework for approaching peer-to-peer mediation, storytelling, building community, and valuing identity in the classroom.

### **Conflict Transformation Fellowships for NextGen community teachers**

In Summer 2022 we awarded seven Change Fellowships that covered 100% tuition for teachers pursuing conflict transformation study at BLSE and related project work within BLTN. By covering all expenses for these Fellows, we have reduced barriers to participation for students from less well-funded schools. We reduced the expected number of Change Fellows to increase the stipend for each and fully cover their graduate tuition and living expenses at BLSE, providing critical access for teachers from communities with limited professional development opportunities. Going forward, we will continue to uphold access as a priority and explore how resources can be allocated accordingly. We have advertised fellowships for the coming summer, and are planning to offer 12 in the next cohort.

## CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION IN UNDERGRADUATE LIFE

Our focus this first year has been to build our internal capacity at the College, in order to tackle three (3) main efforts: the development of training opportunities for students, expanded professional development, and engaging with CT in our higher education networks.

### **Interdisciplinary, comprehensive conflict transformation training program**

One major aspect of training is the expansion of residential life training. In August, 79 students in Middlebury Resident Life and 95 Middlebury Orientation Leaders received Restorative Practices training. Students are supporting the expansion of this work, as interns working on restorative practices and as facilitators for Beyond the Page workshops. In May, twelve Poverty and Privilege interns were trained in Restorative Practices.

The integration of curricular and co-curricular efforts has begun with a pilot “conflict transformation skills” course at the College. The content is being developed in consultation with CT leaders at the Institute, Bread Loaf, and Schools Abroad. We seek to define conflict transformation training in a way that reflects a share core of knowledge and skills while being flexible enough that educators can adapt the content to their students (K-12 to graduate) and their interests (from mindfulness to mediation to environmental conflict).

The development of the course spanned the fall semester. We received input from 25-30 faculty and staff and convened an eight-member student advisory board. The course focuses on three questions: (1) what is conflict, (2) who am I in conflict, and (3) what skills and dispositions can help address conflict? It is intended in part to prepare students for experiential education opportunities where conflicts can arise: in study abroad, internships, treks, and research projects. This pilot course contains material on the dynamics and causes of conflict, developing self-awareness, mindfulness, creativity, restorative practices, mediation, dialogue, and peacebuilding.

We plan for a version of the course to be offered each term at the College for the next six years. We next hope to develop a parallel post-experience reflection course, following on the P&P model (discussed below). Consultation and reflection on this first pilot course will engage with colleagues at the Institute and Bread Loaf. This will help define a “Middlebury model” of cultivating skills and dispositions for conflict transformation at all levels of student experience.

The initial offering of the class in January 2023 enrolled 65 students across three sections. Guest speakers offer public talks that are recorded for future course iterations and other CT learners.

- Bruce Dayton, Director of Conflict Transformation at SIT, co-author of *Constructive Conflicts*
- David Campt, Founder of The Dialogue Company & creator of *White Ally Toolkit*
- sujatha baliga, Restorative Justice practitioner, attorney, & 2019 MacArthur Fellow
- Francisco Diez, Senior Mediation Advisor for the United Nations
- Gaston Ain, Dispute Resolution Coordinator for the Inter-American Development Bank
- April Chatham-Carpenter, Better Angels
- Eliza O’Neil, Essential Partners

## **Faculty and Staff Professional Development**

Essential capacity-building work was completed in the fall of 2022. Eight faculty, all alumni of the prior *Engaged Listening Project's* dialogic practices program, received training in order to lead four cohorts through an expanded and revised “ELP 2.0.” In Spring 2023, we have 14 participants. This is slightly below our aim for the spring as we encountered scheduling conflicts and solicited applications later than expected given our administrative transitions.

Approximately 30 colleagues (faculty and staff) explored different modalities of engaging with difference and conflict in short sessions in Restorative Practices, Dialogic Practices, Critical and Intercultural Communication at a June retreat. Ten additional faculty and staff attended similar sessions during the September 2022 Clifford Symposium dedicated to Conflict Transformation (see discussion below).

We launched multiple continuing education opportunities. At our Center for Teaching Learning and Research (CTLR), twenty-two colleagues registered for a September workshop with Essential Partners (a consulting firm supporting dialogic practices). A second CTLR workshop from Beyond the Page (BtP) worked with 16 faculty and staff participants on how arts practices can disrupt stale classroom dynamics, engage tensions, foster belonging, and value identity. Nine faculty invited Beyond the Page (BtP) Faculty artists to their classes this fall, reaching 200 students in 15 class sessions. Through theater and arts practices, these classes addressed complex issues: institutional racism, antiracist principles, activism and movement work, identity and race in Marvel Comics, theater for social change, mindfulness in education practices, and using theater as an ethnographic output.

## **Working with Higher Education Networks**

We have begun disseminating information about the program across our networks. President Patton gave a talk on May 17, 2022 for a webinar hosted by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences titled [Bridging Divides in America](#). We hosted a June meeting at our Bread Loaf campus which approximately 50 colleagues from across Middlebury campuses attended. Although this retreat was predominately for our Middlebury community, roughly ten external community members attended two talks--one by Pushpa Iyer titled “Conflict Transformation: An Overview” and one by Laurie Patton titled “Conflict Transformation and Liberal Learning.” This Clifford Symposium is also open to the public on our Vermont campus. Other colleges have sought to learn more about our professional development model (see discussion of outreach in the Cross-Pillar Initiatives section below).

## **EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION**

The offerings for students at Middlebury and beyond have been greatly enhanced by the opportunity to engage in conflict transformation-related experiences. There are four (4) streams of work launched in our first year: support for year-round community engagement, funding summer internships, the Projects for Peace alumni award, and expanded break offerings open to non-Middlebury students.

### **Year-Round Support for Community Engagement Opportunities**

The CT resources allow us to expand engagement opportunities to students that build their knowledge and skills in addressing conflict. We funded a cohort of local Privilege & Poverty (P&P) Internships. The [Privilege & Poverty Academic Cluster](#) integrates coursework with experiential learning to critically examine the causes and consequences of economic inequality. Students work directly with agencies and community members in law, immigration, health, food and nutrition, and housing. In each of these areas, students navigate conflict and utilize conflict transformation skills. One notable learning outcome was deeper student understanding of the intersections of structural injustices that lead to the wealth gap.

We funded a Projects for Peace project from a Middlebury College applicant that took place in Can Giuoc, a rural district in Vietnam's Mekong Delta. 20 twenty students from two schools in the district were provided with crucial resources and free tutoring to mitigate the devastating impacts that the pandemic had on their education. Initially a three-month project, free tutoring will continue through May 2023 through support from local benefactors.

In 2023, these projects will continue, along with five Middlebury College Alternative Break Programs in February and support for participants in the Social Impact Corps summer program. We are working with the CT Collaborative on incorporating the CT curriculum into preparation for and reflection on these experiences.

### **Conflict Transformation Internships**

We funded 20 domestic summer internships related to conflict transformation. Students interned in fields that include mediation, climate justice, access to education, refugee resettlement, healthcare, gender equity, economic development, prison reform, and counterterrorism. We will fund similar internships in summer 2023, and also create internships for students from multiple institutions with the Shepherd Consortium of Higher Education, focused on the causes and consequences of economic inequality.

### **Projects for Peace Alumni Award**

This fall, we launched the [Projects for Peace Alumni Award](#). We distributed application materials to 100+ eligible institutions and via social media. The announcement yielded an enthusiastic early response, leading to outreach to staff from partner institutions and alumni. Each of the 115 institutions that have sponsored a Projects for Peace since 2007 are eligible to nominate one alumni for consideration. Application materials should emphasize conflict transformation themes. Nominations are due February 13, 2023; we hope to name a winner (or winners) in April 2023.

Projects for Peace staff have been working together with CT Collaborative staff to design the award, prepare guidance and respond to queries from alumni and campus contacts. It has been rewarding to reconnect with the Projects for Peace alumni and hear how their efforts in peace building have evolved.

### **Annual Break Program for Students from Multiple Institutions**

We supported three major programs this first year. First, the Center for Careers and Internships and the Middlebury in DC office collaborated to provide a fully-funded *Student Trek* for 14 students to Washington in June 2022. Students interested in conflict transformation were exposed to professional experiences to inform their career exploration and post-graduate planning. This immersive “living and learning” experience visited diverse organizations and met with alumni at their workplace and over dinners. CCI received 44 applications from Middlebury undergraduates. The 2023 Trek to New York City will explore *Law, Advocacy, and Conflict Transformation*.

Second, *History in Translation 2022* was a fully-funded experiential and intercultural immersive learning trip for seven Middlebury students and eight students from International Christian University in Japan to explore the impacts and lessons of Executive Order 9066. This built on collaborations since 2020 to translate primary source documents and interviews detailing the experiences of Japanese Americans living under Executive Order 9066. ICU and Middlebury students gathered to 1) further explore and study this history and its lived impacts; 2) consider how and why our assumptions and perspectives on history might conflict; and 3) to understand how the transformational potential of these historical explorations can be applied to current challenges and opportunities in the pursuit of social justice. In December 2022, CCE and the Japanese Studies Department co-hosted a reflection event to share the learning with the wider Middlebury community. We will continue with smaller group experiences in 2023, and expand to a new History in Translation project on the reclamation and revitalization of indigenous languages and cultures. We are working with the Director of the Middlebury School of Abenaki and three representatives from the University of Waikato (New Zealand).

Finally, *Jiran* (جيران) is a summer program that pairs intermediate and advanced Arabic students with underserved Arabic-speaking families in New Britain, Connecticut. The program allowed student participants to build relationships and learn about challenges facing Arabic-speaking families new to the US. Students navigated conflict in intercultural contexts and utilized conflict transformation skills. Students from Brown University, Bowdoin College, Trinity College in Dublin, and Middlebury joined in a cross-institutional cohort that worked with families from Yemen, Jordan, Iraq, Sudan, and Syria.

## GRADUATE TRAINING AND RESEARCH IN CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

At the Institute and beyond, the Collaborative supports graduate education, expands community engagement, and offers educational opportunities for high schools students and teachers.

### **Conflict Transformation Fellows Program**

Lederach (2003) notes that conflict transformation involves five key practices: seeing issues as a window, integrating multiple time frames, posing conflict energies as dilemmas, making complexity part of the process, and engaging multiple perspectives. Drawing on this conception, the faculty and graduate students at the Institute collectively developed a vision for our interdisciplinary CT approaches to address complex social problems. In that vision:

- conflict presents opportunities to create changes that increase justice
- projects develop creative solutions to conflict-based systems and situations (resolution) while building something new (moving to transformation)
- field or disciplines offer different approaches, especially within specific contexts
- projects can focus on macro, meso, micro, or “me-cro” (individual) scales
- history creates present patterns and structures; moving into the future thus can mean creating new relationships

This vision informs the work of three types of CT Graduate Fellows: Cohort Fellows, Graduate Assistant Fellows, and Pedagogy Fellows. In total we supported 58 Fellows this year.

Out of 130 applications, we selected *44 Cohort Fellows* in Fall 2022, which included both continuing and incoming students who received \$10,000 scholarships (per academic year, based on full time enrollment). The fellowships involve monthly meetings facilitated by Dr. Netta Avineri, peer-to-peer mentorship, learning with guest speakers, and deep engagement in an interdisciplinary project. A fall CT-sponsored speaker series (open to the MIIS community) to learn from Beyond the Page Director Craig Maravich, Brian Lind (Restorative Practices), Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe representatives The Ohlone Sisters, and Diverting Hate. In spring 2023, students continue working with guest speakers and prepare to present their projects at the Annual Seminar. A select group will serve as mentors for the next year’s cohort.

In 2022 we supported 9 Graduate Assistant (GA) Fellows working on projects affiliated with Centers and initiatives at MIIS and Middlebury. The funded projects are as follows (with number of fellows in parentheses):

- at the Center for Terrorism, Extremism, and Counterterrorism, projects on Militant Accelerationism (2) and Racially & Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremist Groups & Anti-Government Groups (1)
- at the Center for the Blue Economy, a project on Shark/Human Interactions (2)
- at the MetaLab, Coalition of Homeless Service Providers Community-Based Research (3)
- at the Social Sciences Research Modules, Conflict Transformation & Social Sciences Research Methods (1)

Pedagogy Fellows support the work of the CT Collaborative. Thus far there have been 5 Pedagogy Fellows. 2 support the work of Pillar 4, 2 supported Pillar 1 (Bread Loaf School of English Summer Institute in Global Humanities), and 1 works with Pillars 3 and 5 (Projects for Peace, Undergraduate Experiential Learning, Beyond the Page, Schools Abroad).

In addition to these fellows, we have supported graduate students in other CT-connected work. We added support for a graduate Projects for Peace award, Mohamed Ahmed, to advance his project titled “Peace Story” as an additional graduate opportunity for 2022. We provided support to the Middlebury Language Schools to support seven graduate students pursuing projects in conflict transformation. We have also worked with DLINQ staff to create a website to highlight the Fellows’ projects and contributions to the Annual Seminar.

### **Year-Round Community Engagement Opportunities**

In Fall 2022 we supported MIIS Experiential Learning Funding to enhance ten (10) students’ conflict transformation-related experiential learning projects around the world. We also created Experiential Learning Faculty Mini-Grants, providing faculty with support for courses and experiences focused on conflict transformation. In Fall 2022 we supported four (4) experiential learning projects:

- Sabino Morera and Marie Butcher, Partnership for Peace course in Costa Rica, 13 students
- George Moore and Carolyn Taylor Meyer, Nuclear Reactor Practicum in Czech Republic, 8 students
- Thor Sawin, Peacebuilding in the Balkans course, 18 students
- Philipp Bleek and Zachary Ackemann, Emergency Response to Terrorism workshop, 18 students

### **Critical Issues Forum for Nonproliferation and Disarmament Education**

The CT Collaborative supported several CIF events and activities this year, creating opportunities for meaningful engagement across the Middlebury ecosystem and beyond. The three major CIF events were the [CIF Spring Student Conference](#), the [7<sup>th</sup> Speaker Series](#), and [the CIF BLTN Teacher Retreat](#). In addition, CIF Project Manager Masako Toki had the opportunity to participate in the Conflict Transformation Workshop in Vermont in June and the Conflict Transformation Conference in the Navajo Nations in October.

The CIF Spring Student Conference (Theme: Theme: “Using Disarmament and Nonproliferation Education to Empower Youth to Address Global and Social Challenges”) included more than 100 high school students and teachers from multiple countries (US, Japan, Russia). The 7<sup>th</sup> Speaker Series (Topic: “The Power of VR and Storytelling: Building Empathy for a Nuclear Weapons Free World”) included approximately 70 speakers and participants. The CIF BLTN Teacher Retreat Participants included 11 participants (long-term CIF teachers, new teachers who are interested in joining the CIF, and teachers from the BLTN from all over the United States) as well as 8 guest speakers/research assistants.

## GLOBAL LITERACY AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

At the Middlebury-C.V. Starr Schools Abroad, we are developing conflict transformation opportunities for our students across the globe. More than half of our students come from other U.S. colleges and universities. The activities we are developing vary according to student interests and available local resources and opportunities, but include internships, independent courses and research experiences, short-term student and faculty exchanges, expert talks and panels, and courses incorporating conflict transformation as an integral analytic device.

As a complex organization made up of 16 distinct Schools in separate countries and staffed by local employees, the process has been predictably slow. We have made significant progress in several Schools, and invested substantial energy into planning activities for future semesters.

### **Middlebury School in Argentina**

Conflict transformation provided the analytic framework for two students conducting semester-long internships with local organizations that culminated in a substantial final research paper in Spanish. One internship was with the *Consejo Argentino para las Relaciones Internacionales* (Argentine Council for International Relations), an academic non-profit organization dedicated to the study of international problems in order to promote peace. The student explored how new war technology may prevent armed conflict. The second internship was with *La Ponderosa*, a publication highlighting class exclusion and poverty issues in Buenos Aires. The student translated promotional material and worked closely with a supervisor to consider the physical and dynamic differences between low-income neighborhoods in the US and Argentina.

*Excursion activity:* All five students in the program traveled to the City of Mendoza where they participated in conflict transformation activities focused on the conflict between the government and local citizens over the sustainable use of water resources. Students had dinner with activists from the *Asamblea Popular por el Agua*, a nationwide grassroots organization mobilized to protect the sustainability of water resources from mega-mining. A trip to a small neighboring village, San Carlos, involved a day-long regional meeting of activists from *Instituto Nacional de Semillas*. This grassroots assembly offers the free exchange of seeds as well as advocating for protections from privatization and creating legal rights on natural species.

*Semester activity:* 7 students worked with the *Autoridad de Cuenca Matanza Riachuelo* (ACUMAR) on the Riachuelo River. The Riachuelo is an over-polluted river at the southern border of Buenos Aires that has caused deep environmental, economic, social, and humanitarian problems. Students learned about the issues, and then in November navigated the stream to learn and hear from experts on the consequences of the polluted water.

### **Middlebury School in Uruguay**

Over the semester, six students worked with *Redalco*, an NGO focusing on social injustice and unequal distribution of food through the recovery of discarded food at the Central Market and distribution to disadvantaged sectors. Our students first participated in the process of recovering discarded edible food at the Central Market. Subsequently students assisted in distributing food

through different centers that organize emergency food services for disadvantaged neighborhoods, while learning about their perspectives and priorities. Finally, students attended a lecture on the concept, problems, and solutions to inequitable food distribution.

### **Middlebury School in Cameroon**

We have developed a partnership with Professor Éric Wilson Fofack, whose area of expertise is international relations, crises and armed conflict in Africa, child soldiers, and peacekeeping. In fall 2022, one of our students completed a semester-long guided research project under the supervision of Dr. Fofack exploring the situation of Anglophone state university students who have been forcibly displaced due to the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon. As a member of the research team, the student traveled to three different universities in Yaoundé to conduct interviews, eventually analyzing data from more than 300 participants. The final project for the class was a research paper based on the data, including using conflict transformation as a lens to reflect on the entire experience. This partnership supports the research agenda of a local scholar and supports student research and experiences.

In reflecting on the power of this opportunity the student wrote: “In reading the responses, and at times interviewing those directly affected from the crisis, its severity and human impact come to surface. I had a moment of “yeah, this conflict is real” - of course I knew that, but its meaning changes once you are within its context. In this way I can only begin to grasp what the experience of actually living through such conflict is like, rather than just hearing accounts of it.”

### **Middlebury School in Japan**

In fall 2022, the Middlebury School in Japan provided a CT internship for a graduate student from the International Education Management program at MIIS to bring together two distinct but related projects already underway:

- *The translation project:* This is a collaboration between the School in Japan, the Center for Community Engagement, the college Japanese department, and the Translation and Interpretation department at MIIS. The School in Japan has been working with Tenryumura Village helping preserve the record of its memories of WWII, as well as to translate their historical documents so that their experiences are known and remembered.
- *History in Translation:* This work in Tenryumura Village inspired the design of a workshop in summer of 2022, History in Translation (described above in Pillar 3 section).

The graduate intern was directly involved in the development of the History in Translation workshop with faculty. The student summarized the development and experience of the current projects in Tenryumura Village and the translation workshop, both of which center on remembering history as a form of reconciliation and empowerment. The student also worked on a website that archives the project deliverables so far. This will serve as a platform to allow cohorts of students, past, present, and future to participate in the project and build on each other's accomplishments. Another goal was to connect with our regular sending institutions to assess their needs and identify possibilities for future collaboration.

## FACULTY RESEARCH

At the college and the institute, the CT Collaborative funded five faculty research projects on conflict analysis and transformation. We encouraged faculty to engage students in their research and welcomed collaboration with other institutions and experts. A committee of both MIIS and Middlebury faculty selected the grant recipients for 2022.

### Middlebury College

This was an extremely competitive process, with 22 proposals submitted from the college in the first round. While supporting new knowledge around conflict and conflict transformation, five undergraduate students will work as RAs on these projects.

- Chong-Suk Han, “Addressing Racism in the Gayborhood” (Sociology)
- Rebecca A. Mitchell, “Deconstructing the ‘Russian Idea’: émigré Visions from Lenin to Putin” (History)
- Jennifer D. Ortegren, “We Live With Love For Each ‘Other’ How Muslim and Hindu Women Transform Conflict in Middle-Class India” (Religion)
- Andrea E. Robbett and Peter Hans Matthews, “Meta-Perceptions, Trust, and the Transformation of Partisan Conflict” (Economics)
- James Chase Sanchez, "In Loco Parentis" (Writing and Rhetoric)

Our second round of research grant applications opened in Fall 2022, with selections made in December for the upcoming calendar year. Seven proposals from the College were awarded funding:

- Lida Winfield, “Movement Matters: Global Body in Conflict” (Dance)
- Febe Armanios, “‘One Bite and All is Forgiven’: Paths to Gastro-Diplomacy and Conciliatory Foodways in Cyprus” (History, Food Studies)
- Carly Thomsen, “Feminist Studies vs. Feminist Activism” (Gender, Sexuality, & Feminist Studies)
- Jamie McCallum, “A Better Bargain: Transforming Conflict Negotiation Processes Between Workers and Management” (Sociology)
- Marybeth Eleanor Nevins, “Rural Vermont Community Responses to Claims of Anthropogenic Climate Change” (Anthropology)
- Ajay Verghese, “The Roots of Hindu-Muslim Conflict in India” (Political Science)
- Suzanne Gurland, “Perspective-Taking in Conflict Transformation” (Psychology)

### Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey

The following five graduate-level research grants were awarded for 2022, which involve seven researchers and sixteen graduate student research assistants:

- Anne C. Campbell, "'How do you give back to a community that doesn't want you?': International LGBTQIA + students transformative education and tumultuous returns" (International Education Management (IEM) )

- Pushpa Iyer, “Indigenous Perspectives on the Conflict-Environment Nexus” (Center for Conflict Studies)
- James A. Lamson, Hanna Notte, and Sarah Bidgood, “Employing Strategic Empathy to Address Adversaries' Acquisition, Threat, and Use of Strategic Weapons: A Fresh Look at "Demand-Side Factors” (James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies)
- Jade McGlynn, “Monterey Trialogue Initiative” (Initiative in Russian Studies)
- Alex Newhouse, “Investigating Online and Offline Intersections Between Militant Accelerationism and Great Power Relations” (Center on Terrorism, Extremism, and Counterterrorism)

Our second round of research grant applications opened in Fall 2022, with selections made in December for the upcoming calendar year. 4 proposals from MIIS were awarded funding:

- Jeff Langholz, “Flowing Toward Peace: Opportunities and Obstacles for Transforming Water Conflicts through Decentralized, On-site Water Production” (International Environmental Policy)
- David Wick, “Host Community Impacts of Study Centers Abroad: Transaction, Extraction, Transformation” (International Education Management)
- Lyuba Zarsky, “Indigenous People vs Decarbonization? Exploring and overcoming conflicts between mining of critical materials for clean technology and Native rights, lands and cultures in the US” (International Environmental Policy)
- James Lamson, “Adding North Korea Case Study to Strategic Empathy Project” (James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies)

## CROSS PILLAR INITIATIVES

### Assessment and Evaluation

Across these different streams of work, the CT Collaborative worked to define a baseline for evaluating our efforts and to build in new ways to assess the impact of our work. We have asked to embed questions across a range of student surveys, to capture data related to program effectiveness, as well as dispositional self-assessment upon entry and exit from Middlebury degree programs. We have collected an initial round of responses from some institution-wide surveys. We anticipate it will take multiple years to establish trends and evaluate our impact.

We have also embedded CT-related questions in program-specific feedback surveys and reflection exercises. Some examples of student reflections from experiential learning in Summer 2022 are below.

- “The [CT] Trek kicked off my summer ... One major takeaway was from our talk with the founder of Empathetics, an empathy coaching group. It was thought-provoking to hear about the importance of empathy in conflict and leadership, and pushed me to keep this in mind as I continue my career and leadership pursuits.” (Trek reflection, July 2022)
- My work is mainly focused on mediation and conflict transformation, observing and learning how mediators use their professional skills and communication techniques to help guide people out of conflicts. I seek to understand why people are in conflicts, what are their positions and interests in cases .... with so many conflicts within every field one can imagine, it is especially important to acquire the skills to deal with conflicts properly, in a way that can help every party learn and grow.” (Internship reflection, August 2022)
- “This summer, under Conflict Transformation and Projects for Peace, I was able to work with schools in [rural Vietnam] to address the educational inequality between rural and urban Vietnam.... My project works to provide junior high and high school with the crucial resources they need to mitigate the devastating impact that the pandemic has had on their education.” (Projects for Peace reflection, August 2022)
- “I felt extremely fortunate to be able to participate in this program and made me want to continue to learn about history and how we can serve others through it. A lot of the time it felt overwhelmingly positive and other times it felt emotionally heavy, but I am glad to have been able to have conversations with people about this topic and see history in a new light.” (History in Translation reflection, Summer 2022)
- “Empathy is a universal skill we all need to get better at. The general public still believes empathy is a trait of personality and some people have a higher capacity than others. This is simply untrue; empathy is a skill that you can weaken and strengthen...I’ve had an inkling for positive psych. It began in Professor McCauley’s Positive Psych class and then grew in Professor Cronise’s Emotions psych class. Every undertaking I am more and more enthralled in the power of empathy and emotional intelligence which is why this internship is a perfect fit.” (Internship reflection, July 2022)
- “I find that I often try to avoid conflict of any kind, so I decided to take this class as a challenge to myself and my personality. I'm hoping to learn some valuable skills and see a side of myself I maybe haven't before!” (Pre-survey, CT Skills Course, December 2022)

## **Communication and Network-Building**

The CT Collaborative has expanded its reach and developed new ways to share our messaging.

In September 2022, the CT Collaborative organized Middlebury's Clifford Symposium, which is an annual multi-day academic and public conference centered around a theme. Over three days, the CT Collaborative introduced foundational concepts of conflict transformation to the broader Middlebury community through panels, workshops, and performances. A founder of the CT field, John Paul Lederach, gave the keynote address. In partnership with the Woodin Colloquium series, environmental studies faculty hosted a panel discussion. Our new VP for equity and inclusion, Khuram Hussain, spoke on racial conflict and the potential of critical dialogue and collective action. Students displayed their CT-supported opportunities at a poster session and a faculty and staff panel presented our foundational work so far. Hilary Mullins, a leading voice in professor James Sanchez' documentary, spoke on transformation and empowerment after sexual abuse. Dance professors Cristal Brown and Lida Winfield performed *Same but Different*, a dance-theater performance as commentary on race, age, and gender. Saturday morning, we hosted practice sample sessions on Restorative Practices, Dialogic Practices, Intercultural Communications, and Aikido as Embodied Response to Conflict. Across these sessions, we had an estimated 315 attendees, primarily in-person.

We have made new connections with interested people and organizations to build our network. President Laurie Patton is engaged with a Democracy and Citizenship initiative at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Director Sarah Stroup has met with professors at Lewis and Clark College, Southern Methodist University, and University of Arkansas. She joined a July workshop from Essential Partners on dialogue in higher education and attended a September charette with the Wyndham Foundation on civil discourse. Stroup has met with directors of See Change Sessions (Vermont), the Sustained Dialogue Institute (Washington, DC), Diive Innovation Labs (South Africa), and staff at the Center for Non-Violent Communication (New York).

Through Summer and Fall 2022, the CT Collaborative has worked with the Middlebury Communications team to launch and continuously improve our dedicated website. It features news stories about our activities; research and pedagogy resources; suggested readings; and more. Our first electronic newsletter was distributed in September 2022, reaching nearly 2200 recipients (not including forwarded messages). We will release issues in January and May as well. We have launched an Instagram feed (@conflictransformationmidd), based on guidance from the Communications team about best practices in reaching student-age audiences, and currently have more than 100 followers. A CT-themed podcast is in early stages of development.

To reach alumni, the CT Collaborative has begun to use a Middlebury alumni engagement platform, Midd2Midd, to identify students and graduates who have CT-related career interests. We have created an interest group, where we can promote CT opportunities, make connections between current students and established alumni in the field, and offer ways to connect with us after graduation.

## LEADERSHIP AND ADVISORY BOARD

### CT Staff and Leaders

The CT Collaborative has three full-time staff to support administration, coordination, communication, design, and budgeting. Sarah Stroup (professor of political science) is director. Erin Anderson is program manager and April Lajeunesse is our coordinator.

We conceptualize each stream of work described above as a “pillar” of our work, and each pillar has a leader:

- Emily Bartels, director, Bread Loaf School of English
- Sebnem Gumuscu, associate professor of political science at the College
- Kailee Brickner-McDonald, interim director, Center for Community Engagement
- Netta Avineri, associate professor of TESOL/TFL at the Institute, Intercultural Competence Committee Chair
- Carlos Velez, dean of International Programs

The annual committee overseeing the grant awards for faculty research draws from faculty at the College and the Institute. We have been fortunate to work closely with many other faculty and staff, including Brian Lind (associate dean of community standards) and Craig Maravich (director, Beyond the Page).

### External Advisory Board

We have partnered with the Middlebury President’s Office to invite a range of experts to join our external advisory board. The composition is still being finalized, but a number of individuals have graciously agreed to bring their valuable insights to our efforts:

- Naazneen Barma, Director, Scrivener Institute of Public Policy, University of Denver
- Sigal Ben-Porath, University of Pennsylvania
- David Campt, Founder, the Dialogue Company
- Susan Clark, Creative Discourse Group, & co-author of *Slow Democracy*
- John Paul Lederach, University of Notre Dame
- Nancy Thomas, Director of the Institute for Democracy & Higher Education, Tufts University

We anticipate that the first convening of the external advisory board will be held by March 2023, chaired by Middlebury Vice President for Equity & Inclusion Khuram Hussain, with President Patton in attendance. The group would meet at least twice annually.