ISŌKO

CENTER FOR HUMANITY

Cultivating the Practice of Peace | Kwimakaza Umuco W'amahoro

What the World Needs

The world is in crisis. Communities are experiencing violence and atrocities. The media fuels hate. Politics drives division. And fear cultivates exclusive ideologies, identity-based conflict, the destabilizing effects of climate change and food insecurity, hybrid warfare, cyberattacks, and information manipulation.

We are developing a new kind of institution to address these challenges with applied peacebuilding — field-tested approaches that identify early warning signs, intervene to prevent conflict, and guide communities through post-conflict recovery and renewal.

Why Rwanda

Rwanda’s journey from the devastation of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi to its emergence as a global leader in post-conflict reconstruction makes it the natural home for this next step in peacebuilding. Over three decades, the country has developed and tested innovative approaches to justice, reconciliation, social cohesion and socio-economic transformation. From the Gacaca courts to nationwide dialogue programs, Rwanda’s experiences offer vital lessons for societies grappling with conflict — lessons that can now be systematically shared through this new center.

Kigali Genocide Memorial + Isōko Center For Humanity

Kigali Genocide Memorial
Remembrance and Learning

ISŌKO
CENTER FOR HUMANITY

- Confronting the effects of extreme violence and genocide in Rwanda 30 years ago.
- Exploring the external factors that hasten the path to intercommunal violence today, including climate change, food insecurity, and mass migration.
- Understanding and diagnosing the behaviors and policies that degrade societies and leave them vulnerable to intercommunal violence, including social polarization, scapegoating, and dehumanization.
- Exploring the roles of local, national, and international actors in ending and preventing violence.
- Understanding the essential elements in rebuilding and safeguarding societies, including healing, social cohesion, and functioning institutions.
- Teaching peacebuilding, caring for peacebuilders, and expanding the international community of people committed to building resilient societies.

ISŌKO CENTER FOR HUMANITY

Crafting the Experience for a Proven Model

The Isōko Center for Humanity will have **four programmatic functions**, each constructed from Aegis' experience in Rwanda and around the world and piloted in programs at the Kigali Genocide Memorial and in Rwanda's national education program.

ISŌKO
CENTER FOR HUMANITY

PEACE EDUCATION & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
Advancing applied peacebuilding through peace education, research, and practical guidance

ATROCITY PREVENTION & ADVOCACY
Bringing people from conflict zones together to resolve differences and build foundations for peace

HEALING PEACEBUILDERS
Providing peacebuilders on the front lines with support and renewal

MUSEUM FOR THE FUTURE
Engaging visitors from around the world in learning and contributing to the essential work of building lasting peace

Audience Activities Outcomes Requirements Analogues

FUNCTION 1 / 4

PEACE EDUCATION & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Audience

Teachers, learners and leaders discover how to apply peace education and policy in practice.

- Teachers, students, and youth locally and internationally
- Community members, including opinion leaders and parents
- Policymakers from ministries and governments
- Researchers and faculty from global universities
- Social and business entrepreneurs
- Media and content providers

INITIAL CAPACITY

2,000

Teachers and education policymakers annually

15,000

Youth/students/community locally and globally

250

Global practitioners and policymakers

250

Social and business entrepreneurs

PEACE EDUCATION & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Activities

- Roundtable discussions and training seminars
- Residential training on proven peacekeeping models & programs
- Vocational training and peace education of community members
- Programs to address hate speech and incitement
- Investing in social entrepreneurs from fragile communities
- Civility and values training at workplaces

Outcomes

- Evidence-based applied research
- Practical application of Rwanda’s peacebuilding learnings
- Teachers and curricula use Isōko model globally
- Economic livelihoods in fragile states strengthened
- Climate change resiliency developed

PEACE EDUCATION & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Requirements

- Conference spaces and classrooms
- Online learning space and facilities
- Flexible workspaces for research
- Short-term residential facilities
- Library, archive and resource center
- Land for climate resilient practices training

ANALOGUES

PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (OSLO)

The Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) conducts research on the conditions for peaceful relations between states, groups and people.

Researchers at PRIO seek to understand the processes that bring societies together or split them apart.

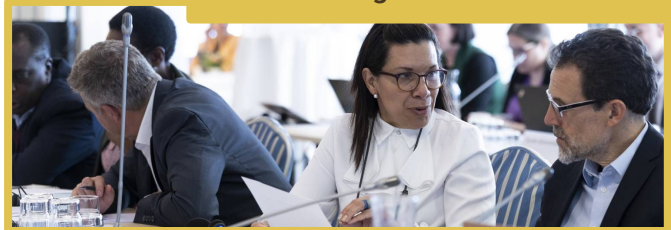
PRIO explores how conflicts erupt and how they can be resolved; they investigate how different kinds of violence affect people; and they examine how societies tackle crises – and the threat of crisis. PRIO documents general trends, seeks to understand processes, and inform concrete responses.



PRIO Headquarters



Book launch: Humanitarian Extractivism – The Digital Transformation of Aid



International peace mediators gather to strengthen women's inclusion in peace processes

ANALOGUES

EAST-WEST CENTER (HAWAII)

The East-West Center promotes better relations and understanding among the people and nations of the United States, Asia, and the Pacific through cooperative study, research, and dialogue.

The Center’s 21-acre Honolulu campus, adjacent to the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, is located midway between Asia and the US mainland and features research, residential, and international conference facilities. The Center’s Washington, DC, office focuses on preparing the United States for an era of growing Asia Pacific prominence.

Established by the U.S. Congress in 1960, the "Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange Between East and West," or East-West Center serves as a resource for information and analysis on critical issues of common concern, bringing people together to exchange views, build expertise, and develop policy options.



East-West Center Jefferson Hall on the campus of University of Hawai’i



Hawai'i State Climate Conference taking place at the Imin International Conference

FUNCTION 2 / 4

ATROCITY PREVENTION & ADVOCACY

Audience

People from conflict zones convene to address differences and build foundations for peace.

- Leaders and opposing factions from active conflict regions
- Community leaders and faith-based organizations
- Policy institutes and think tanks
- International organization representatives
- Academic researchers and faculty from global universities
- Diplomats and mediators to support dialogue

PEACEMAKER INTERVENTIONS

2

Monthly workshops
(600 people a year)

POLICY WORKSHOPS

1

Monthly workshops
(300 people a year)

RESEARCH FELLOWS & VISITORS

15

Researchers a month
(180 a year)

Activities

- Learn Rwanda’s post-genocide reconciliation process
- Facilitated dialogue sessions with opposing groups
- Develop practical conflict resolution strategies
- Create action plans for implementation in home regions
- Undertake early warning to help prioritize where Isōko works
- Develop policies for dissemination and implementation

Outcomes

- Reduced tensions between opposing factions
- Development of concrete peacebuilding frameworks
- Practical tools for conflict de-escalation
- Reduction of hate speech and incitement in high risk areas
- Global policies for prevention
- New partnerships, networks, initiatives, and academic programs

Requirements

- Private meeting spaces for sensitive discussions
- Secure, comfortable residential facilities
- Separate accommodations for opposing groups
- Meeting rooms with breakout spaces
- Room for policy discussions and situation assessments

ANALOGUES

SCHLAINING PEACE CASTLE (AUSTRIA)

The Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR) supports people so that they can engage in conflicts nonviolently, constructively and sustainably. In doing so, they acknowledge the close interdependence between research on, education about, and the practice of conflict transformation.

The ASPR conducts research projects on peace and security policy, are involved in mediation between conflict parties and engage in political consulting; they offer target group-oriented training programmes and advanced education for civilian experts and youth. The constant advancement of innovative theory and practice is built upon a foundation of dialogue and cooperation with international institutions, networks, theoreticians and practitioners of conflict transformation.



Schlaining Peace Castle



Volunteer Training

ANALOGUES

CORRYMEELA COMMUNITY (NORTHERN IRELAND)

Corrymeela Community focuses on four key areas: 1) Repairing Relationships - every year they support around 7,500 people, who are mainly from marginalised communities, to explore difference and discover ways to live well together; 2) Nurturing Cohesive Leadership - by supporting hundreds of leaders each year to work in cohesive ways which benefit wider society; 3) Building Movements - growing a community of people committed to living well with others. This includes nearly 190 members who are dispersed across the island of Ireland and beyond. Members commit themselves each year to relationships that overcome divisions of ‘us and them’ in order to discover a better ‘we’; and 4) Being Sustainable - working towards becoming more sustainable through emphasis on people, the planet, and not-for-profit work.



Corrymeela Community Program Workshop



The Corrymeela Peace & Reconciliation Centre

ANALOGUES

CARTER CENTER (ATLANTA)

The Carter Center is guided by the principles of founders Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter. Founded, in partnership with Emory University, on a fundamental commitment to human rights and the alleviation of human suffering, the Center seeks to prevent and resolve conflicts, enhance freedom and democracy, and improve health.

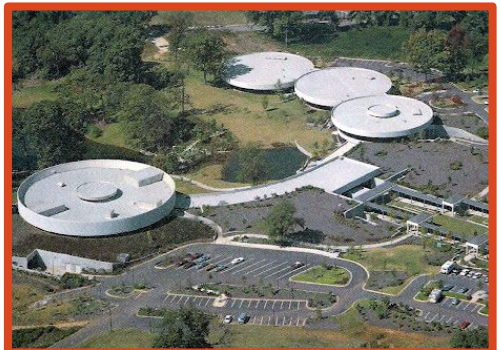
The Carter Center has undertaken peace works across the world, including such places as Sudan, Bangladesh, Israel, Palestine, Mali, China, Guatemala, and Venezuela.



Carter Center Peace Internships



Program at the Carter Center



Carter Center Campus



Carter Center Campus and Gardens

HEALING PEACEBUILDERS

Audience

Respite, psychological support & community for front-line peacebuilders.

- Active peace workers from conflict zones
- Memorial site staff and trauma counselors
- Field workers from humanitarian organizations
- Local community reconciliation leaders
- Professionals working in post-conflict reconstruction

500

Peacebuilders annually (approximately 10/week) with flexible duration stays based on individual needs

Activities

- Receive professional psychological support
- Participate in burnout prevention programs
- Engage in structured rest and recovery activities
- Share experiences with peers
- Access mental and physical wellness resources
- Receive training and upskilling in peacebuilding

Outcomes

- Renewed emotional and physical resilience
- Enhanced capacity to continue critical fieldwork
- Development of personal wellness strategies
- Creation of support networks with peers
- Improved long-term sustainability of peace work

Requirements

- Private counseling spaces
- Quiet gardens and meditation areas
- Wellness facilities
- Comfortable residential accommodations
- Common areas for informal community building

ANALOGUES

GARRISON INSTITUTE (NEW YORK)

The Garrison Institute offers a program that provides resilience trainings for direct service providers through the Contemplative Based Resilience (CBR) Project. These evidence-based trainings give caregivers—health care providers, social workers, humanitarian aid workers, first responders—the opportunity to strengthen their resilience



Garrison Institute Campus



Program at Garrison Institute



Garrison Institute Gardens

ANALOGUES

WORLD FELLOWSHIP CENTER (NEW HAMPSHIRE)

World Fellowship Center (WFC) is a secular, unaffiliated camp and conference center offering summer hospitality, educational social justice-related workshops and lectures, outdoor recreation and creative opportunities for all ages near the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire. It serves to promote global justice and connections between people, communities, and nature through education, recreation, and creative expression.

This “intergenerational camp and conference center with a social conscience” has a rich history of speaking truth to power, defending civil liberties and promoting peace while valuing issues of justice and freedom as our society shapes itself for future generations.



ANALOGUES

EMBEDDED JUSTICE RETREAT (WASHINGTON DC)

Organized by the Center for Urban and Racial Equity (CURE), the Embodied Justice Retreat is a bold and intentional space for Black changemakers.

Rooted in the collective visions of leaders working at the intersections of racial equity, justice, and transformation, this retreat reflects an imagined future where Black well-being and liberation are fully realized through connection, rest, and embodied practice. Changemakers often endure burnout, isolation, and gaslighting, and this retreat offers a vital sanctuary for rest, healing, and restoration.

Crafted with love and care, and designed with input from Black changemakers, this retreat is more than an event—it's a necessary intervention to sustain those leading racial equity and antiracism efforts.





FUNCTION 4 / 4

MUSEUM FOR THE FUTURE

Audience

A destination for visitors to Rwanda to learn about and contribute to building lasting peace globally.

- General tourists exploring Rwanda
- Conference delegates from around the world to share peace practices
- Educational groups and school visits
- Purpose-driven visitors seeking peace education
- Global citizens interested in conflict resolution

50K

Visitors annually starting target (Year 1)

250K

Annual visitors growth target

1,000

Conference delegate target (Year 1)

Activities

- Engage with interactive exhibits on global solutions to learn about peacebuilding best practices
- Participate in hands-on peacebuilding activities
- Connect with active peacebuilders
- Explore personal connections to conflict and resolution
- Join global peacebuilding networks

Outcomes

- Enhanced understanding of global conflicts
- Personal connection to peace work
- Practical tools for community engagement
- Network expansion for peace initiatives
- Increased awareness of Rwanda’s journey
- Individual commitment to peacebuilding

Requirements

- Interactive exhibition spaces
- Café, restaurant, gift shop and bookstore
- Conference and performance space (3,000-seat capacity)
- Conference and breakout session spaces
- Online digital experiences
- Parking for buses and vehicles

ANALOGUES

US HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM (WASHINGTON DC)

A living memorial to the Holocaust, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum inspires citizens and leaders worldwide to confront hatred, prevent genocide, and promote human dignity.

The Museum works closely with many key segments of society who will affect the future of the US. By studying the choices made by individuals and institutions during the Holocaust, professionals from the fields of law enforcement, the judiciary, and the military, as well as diplomacy, medicine, education, and religion, gain fresh insight into their own responsibilities today.

The Museum sponsors onsite and traveling exhibitions, educational outreach for teachers and students, and Holocaust commemorations, including the nation's annual observance of the Days of Remembrance in the US Capitol.



USHMM Exterior



USHMM Interior



USHMM Programming

ANALOGUES

APARTHEID MUSEUM (JOHANNESBURG)

The Apartheid Museum opened in 2001 and is acknowledged as the pre-eminent museum in the world dealing with 20th century South Africa, at the heart of which is the apartheid story. South Africa's struggle for liberation has been a journey of pain and strife. Freedom brought peace to South Africa in 1994 after centuries of colonialism and more than 40 years of life under apartheid.

The permanent exhibition is a trip through time that traces the country's footsteps from these dark days of bondage to a place of healing founded on the principles of a democracy.

The Apartheid Museum hosts many events throughout the year including temporary exhibition launches, book launches and public programmes. School visits to the Apartheid Museum make education about the country's history more creative and memorable.







ANALOGUES

MUSEUM OF MEMORY & HUMAN RIGHTS (SANTIAGO)

The Museum of Memory and Human Rights is a museum in Santiago, Chile, which commemorates the victims of human rights violations during the military dictatorship led by Augusto Pinochet between 1973 and 1990.

In 2013, the Foundation Museo de la Memoria and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights signed an agreement to established a network of institutions dedicated to this theme. The agreement was to include joint conferences and seminars, as well as interchange of officials, professional practices, research and publication.







Why Bugesera

Within Rwanda, Bugesera provides a uniquely powerful setting for this work. The region's history traces the full arc of genocide, from the mass deportation of Tutsis in the 1950s that foreshadowed later events, through its status as one of the areas most devastated by the 1994 genocide, to its role in pursuing justice through the genocide trials of the 1990s. Most importantly, Bugesera stands today as one of Rwanda's pioneering examples of successful reconciliation and forgiveness, making it an ideal location to share these hard-won insights with the world.

Key Operational Elements of Isōko

Let us walk you through the key elements that have shaped our vision for The Isōko Center, and show how each component supports the work we'll do together.

- Aegis Trust
- The Isōko Model
- Global Institutions
- Engaging Rwandans
- Research Community
- The Property
- Capital Budget
- Economic Sustainability
- Isōko Vision Team

Aegis Trust

The Isōko Center is a natural evolution of Aegis Trust's two-plus decades of work in Rwanda. Building on its foundational development and management of the Kigali Genocide Memorial and other memorial sites, as well as its successful integration of Peace and Values Education into Rwanda's national curriculum, Aegis Trust will expand its reach through this new institution. The organization's comprehensive work in preserving historical memory — from memorial exhibitions to the digitalization of Gacaca Court archives — and its proven track record in peacebuilding has created a strong foundation for this global initiative. While Aegis Trust maintains its legal registration in the UK, 90% of its operations take place in Rwanda, making the Isōko Center an essential hub for the organization's expanding global work and requiring facilities that can fully support its operational needs.

The Isōko Model

Drawing on over 20 years of work in Rwanda, we are developing the Isōko Model, an original intellectual framework to understand and strengthen societal health and resilience. The model examines twelve key elements: institutional health, social cohesion, economic equity, public rhetoric, historical narratives, social norms, collective action, safety and security, international relations, civic engagement, relationship to history, and social and emotional climate. This comprehensive framework will guide our engagement with peacebuilders, researchers, and policymakers at the Center while informing the design of visitor experiences. The model will provide practical tools and approaches for assessing societal well-being and developing targeted interventions that can be applied both in Rwanda and globally.

Global Institutions

The Isōko Center is currently engaging with major international institutions and organizations — including the United Nations, UNESCO, the African Union, the European Union, and international Holocaust memorial institutions — to explore partnerships that could amplify its impact while maintaining its unique identity and mission.

Discussions with the United Nations are examining how the center might combine the UN's policy expertise with Rwanda's proven implementation experience in peacebuilding and prevention, with plans for the UN to utilize the center's diplomatic space where people from conflict zones can come together to resolve differences and build foundations for peace. UNESCO's potential designation of the center as a Category 2 institution presents opportunities for formal collaboration in peace education, with a focus on transforming conflict and building cultures of peace. Conversations with the African Union could strengthen the center's connection to peace and security initiatives across the continent, while potential partnerships with the European Union might enhance social and economic development aspects of the work. Additional relationships with international Holocaust memorials could deepen the center's approaches to addressing identity-based violence.

Engaging Rwandans

Rwandans will be at the heart of the Isōko Center's work, sharing their unparalleled expertise in reconciliation and peacebuilding through their lived experiences, stories of forgiveness, and proven approaches to rebuilding community trust. Those who have been part of Rwanda's reconciliation journey will serve as teachers and guides, offering insights that can only come from walking this path themselves.

In turn, the center will strengthen Rwanda's communities through a comprehensive approach to wellbeing that recognizes how economic opportunity, social cohesion, and healing are deeply interconnected. This understanding will be reflected in practical initiatives: social enterprises including an on-site café and artisan workshops, agricultural programs in partnership with the Rwanda Institute for Conservation Agriculture (RICA), and cooperative economic activities that bring people together while building skills and livelihoods. These initiatives will create a model that demonstrates peace and humanity in practice — one that can be replicated first across Rwanda and ultimately adapted for communities worldwide.

Research Community

Academic researchers and faculty are engaging with the Center through a growing network of partnerships. Tufts University is conducting evaluation research to assess the impact of Aegis Peace and Values Education on promoting reconciliation and social cohesion in Rwanda, providing evidence to support the Center's methodology. The Medical College of Wisconsin has signed an MOU to adapt our Peace and Values Education program for addressing gun violence in Milwaukee, demonstrating how our approaches can be applied to different contexts. William & Mary University has accredited our Peace and Values Education courses. There is also ongoing work with Jimmy and Rosalynn School for Peace and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University.

Additional partnerships extend across multiple continents, including collaborations with the University of Rwanda, Exeter University, King's College London, SOAS, Leiden University, and NIOD. These institutions don't simply collect and analyze data — they're focused on developing real-world solutions that can impact society today. Our research partners study ongoing programs and test their efficacy in real time, ensuring that our work remains evidence-based and actionable.

Through partnerships like these, we've continued to expand our global network of scholars and practitioners working to advance our understanding of applied peacebuilding through research and practice. Their findings continue to help refine our methodologies while creating new frameworks for adaptation in different contexts around the world.

The Property

The Isōko Center site comprises 25 acres in Rwanda's Bugesera region, with negotiations underway to expand to 125 acres through land acquisitions totaling $1.5M. Located on Rumira Lake, which provides natural cooling breezes year- round, the site is positioned 15 minutes from Rwanda's new international airport—a $2 billion facility opening in 2026 with capacity for 8 million annual passengers. The center's proximity to several major developments enhances its strategic value: it neighbors the RICA campus, an international girls' school, and the site of a planned permanent Formula 1 circuit that will bring global attention and significant international visitors to the region. This combination of nearby attractions and institutions creates opportunities for partnerships while securing a presence in this rapidly developing area of increasing land values and economic growth.

Capital Budget

The budget for the Center will be developed after our architects develop plans for the Center based on the program outlined here. The budget will reflect estimated construction costs in Rwanda, the scope of facilities needed to fulfill the Center's mission, and design and development costs related to visitor experience, exhibits, and digital resources.

Economic Sustainability

The Center's projected annual operating budget will be developed once the capital has been secured. We anticipate securing the program budget from foundations and corporate donations, with several foundation partnerships already showing promising results. Examples of donors include The Wellspring Foundation which has contributed $300K to the goals of the project and the Nath family has made an initial gift of $100K, demonstrating early momentum in our fundraising efforts for ongoing support. Based on our track record at the Kigali Genocide Memorial, we expect to generate $500K+ annually from visitor-generated revenue including audio guides, on-site lodging, café operations, gift shop, etc.

Complementing these operational funds, we are establishing the Aegis Peace Fund with an initial $5M from founding donors, which will support Isōko programs. This fund will demonstrate how combining economic investment in fragile communities with peace education can strengthen resilience and support climate adaptation while providing modest returns to donors.

ISŌKO CENTER FOR HUMANITY

The Isōko Vision Team

Freddy Mutanguha
Aegis Trust / Kigali Genocide Memorial

Dr. **James** Smith
Aegis Trust

Stephen Smith
Aegis Trust

Jason Ulaszek
Inzovu / UX for Good

Jeff Leitner
Inzovu / UX for Good

Robin Heller
The Athena Advisors




AEGIS
PREVENTING CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY


INZOVU