



# James R. Mancham Peace and Diplomacy Research Institute

The James R. Mancham Peace and Diplomacy Research Institute was formally established in August 2017, under the auspices of the University of Seychelles. It is an ambitious and timely project that adds to the reputation of Seychelles as a peaceful nation making a widely recognized contribution to global society. The Institute also supports the university's drive to develop niche areas of research and course opportunities with particular relevance to small island states.

## *Vision*

To be an international hub for peace and diplomacy research, education, training and mediation.

## *Mission*

Our mission is not to replicate the work of other international peace institute but to make a practical contribution to the promotion and maintenance of peace and stability within the region and beyond:

- by promoting ongoing research, training and capacity building in peace and diplomacy studies;
- by helping to prevent, mitigate and resolve conflicts through an exchange of ideas and experience;
- by facilitating high-level dialogue between global peacebuilding players; and
- by promoting the engagement of youth in the work of the Institute.

## *Why Peace Studies?*

The subject of peace studies is as intriguing as it is important:

- it is about war as well as peace;
- it addresses terrorism along with national confrontations;
- it is an academic study but also highly practical;
- it ranges from the boundaries of religion to the hard edge of geopolitics;
- it encourages abstract debate but cannot shy away from problem-solving;
- it draws on a variety of disciplines but belongs to none; and
- it addresses contrasting instances of conflict in different parts of the world.

## *Why Diplomacy?*

The study of diplomacy goes hand in hand with an agenda for peace:

- it is a discrete set of skills that can make peace happen;
- it provides an international language for negotiation and the resolution of disputes;
- it enables small island states to converse with major powers.

## *Why Seychelles?*

Politically, the Republic of Seychelles is a small island state that is a friend of other nations and a threat to none; its neutrality is a key consideration.

Socially, the country has an enviable record of ethnic harmony and is widely regarded as a peaceful society. Where better to locate an international hub for peace and diplomacy research and education?

Geographically, it is located in the Indian Ocean, just a few hours from the African continent and the Middle East, two regions where national and regional conflicts are too often in evidence.

Environmentally, Seychelles is a mecca for tourists who value the exceptional quality of its islands and turquoise seas. As a tranquil backcloth for negotiations on war and peace, it is hard to imagine a more conducive setting.

But there is another reason too why this is an ideal location. For many years, the first President of the Republic of Seychelles, Sir James Mancham, forged links with a wide range of international organisations and he, himself, was a renowned spokesperson for peace and reconciliation. Sir James passed away early in 2017 but it was already his wish that his lifelong mission should be continued in this way.

## **WHAT WE DO**

The work of the Institute is focused on three main areas:

### *Education and Training*

To develop a wide range of academic programmes ranging from short courses to postgraduate degree programmes.

### *Research*

To provide comprehensive research and training that will be delivered by highly experienced practitioners. It will promote interdisciplinary research on a wide range of topics related to peace and diplomacy, and governance and democracy, with a particular emphasis on small island states and the western Indian Ocean region. Such projects will be of immediate policy relevance and have a significant influence in promoting regional stability and governance.

### *Mediation*

The Institute will be the meeting place for local and regional practitioners and scholars alike to come together and find innovative solutions to prolonged peace and security problems. It will foster dialogue and build the capacity of individuals and groups in the Indian Ocean in peacebuilding as an alternative to extended conflicts and armed violence. When conflicts do arise, the Institute will facilitate and mediate through the hosting of high-level meetings and consultations.

A twice-yearly newsletter is produced to report on recent and proposed activities. The newsletter is mailed to friends of the Institute and is also available on the university website.



### *How we are organised*

- The Institute is an integral part of the University of Seychelles and operates strictly according to its policies and procedures.
- The Director of the Institute, Diana Benoit, is a university appointment.
- She is supported by a consultant, Emeritus Professor Dennis Hardy.
- In turn, the Institute enjoys the support of a number of distinguished scholars and practitioners from around the world. Details of these are posted on the website.
- Collaboration with other organisations working in this field is also an avowed aim of the Institute.

*For more information about the Institute, send an email to [peace@unisey.ac.sc](mailto:peace@unisey.ac.sc)  
or visit us online: <https://unisey.ac.sc/pdri>*

*Love, peace and harmony ... it begins with you!*