

Building trust, avoiding revenge



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In a time when the world is balancing on a knife-edge, and the possibility of nuclear conflict appears to be more likely, it may seem that efforts to work towards peace are futile.

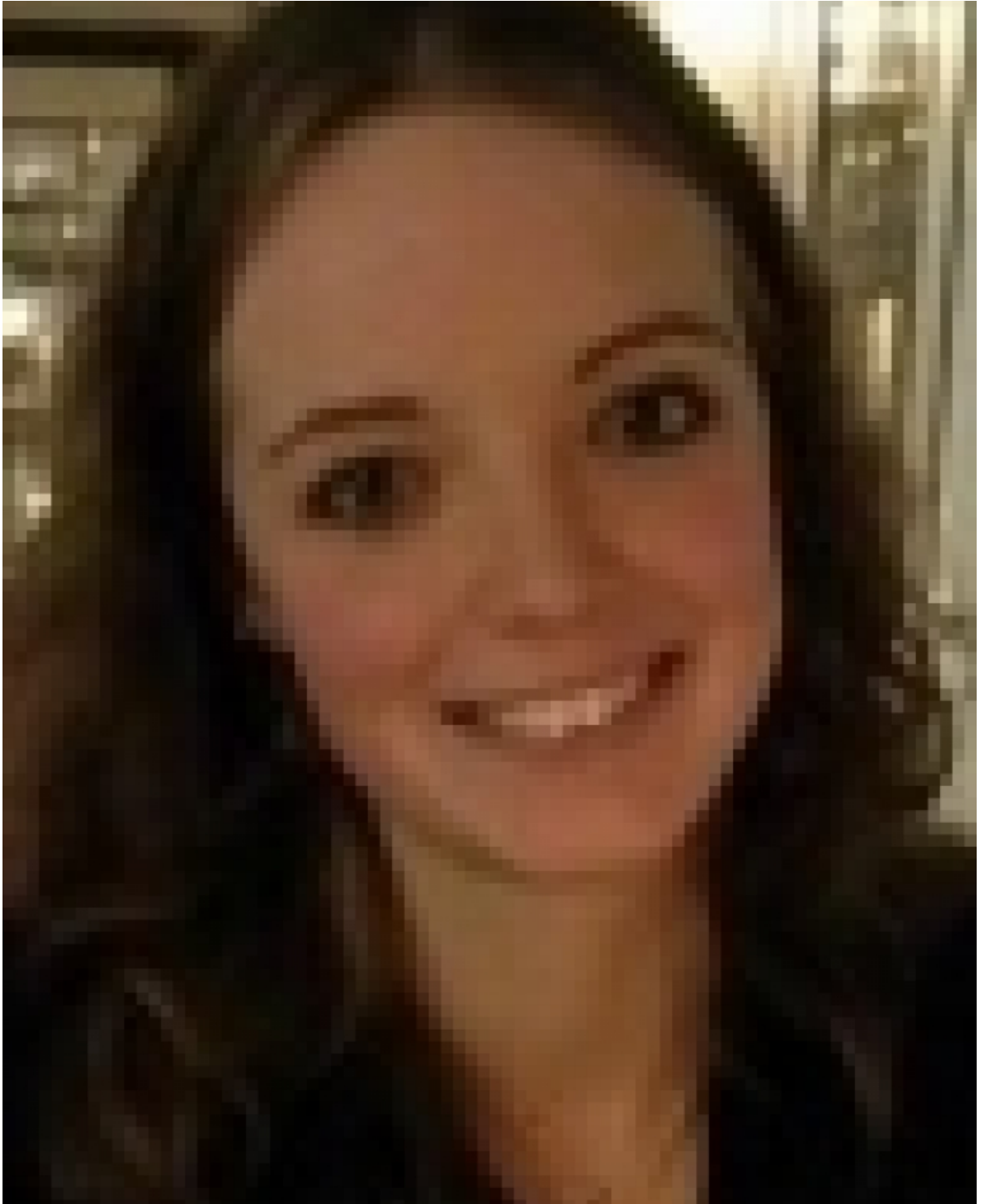
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Description:

She is responsible for Peace Direct's digital marketing and communications.

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But this is just one side of the story. There is a different, more positive one, crafted by some of the most remarkable people in the world. Local people working against the odds to build peace in their communities.

I met one of these people back in April. He is called Michael and he works in northern Nigeria to build trust between different religious communities, and stop young people turning to Boko Haram - just to survive. Michael himself experienced deadly violence when a militia came to attack him. His house and his car were destroyed but Michael was safe, thanks to his Muslim neighbours.

For Michael this sparked a journey which now sees him leading a local **peacebuilding** organisation to break down the very divides that led to that violence, and to prevent it from happening again. He says: "I did not want to take revenge. I knew I must do something positive. I needed to forgive, move on and change the trend towards violence. So other members of the community and I, who had all had similar experiences, set up an organisation to work with young people on leadership, peace and identity – to stop this happening again."

We can learn so much from people like this. It takes courage to turn your back on violence but each and every one of us does have the power to make a difference in our local communities, however small it may seem. As Michael reminds us, "I don't see myself as a victim of violence. I see myself as a catalyst for change."

So on this **International Day of Peace**, we should take courage from people like Michael. You may never know their names, and you may never know they exist, but they are stopping more people from turning to militant groups, they are rescuing child soldiers from a life of violence and they are building a better, more peaceful and more tolerant world, one person at a time.

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