

# Sharon Kniss

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## EDUCATION

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### **MASTER OF ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL PEACE STUDIES [TERMINAL PRACTITIONER'S DEGREE] 2014**

Track focus: Policy Analysis and Political Change  
University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana

### **BACHELOR OF ARTS IN JUSTICE, PEACE, AND CONFLICT STUDIES 2006**

Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Virginia  
*Cords of Distinction, Summa Cum Laude*

## WORK EXPERIENCE

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### **TRAINING RESOURCES GROUP, INC DEC 2022 - PRESENT**

*Organizational Development & Training Consultant (full-time staff position)*

- Provide organizational development services such as conducting needs assessments, designing interventions, and supporting implementation
- Provide training services for leadership, management, and technical training programs
- Design and facilitate retreat, team building programs, knowledge-sharing fora, and strategic planning initiatives
- Clients include World Bank Group, USAID, US Forest Service, and other international development and environmental organizations and initiatives

### **UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE MAY 2021 – NOV 2022**

*Senior Program Officer, Conflict Management Training for Peacekeepers – Trainer*

- Execute primary responsibility for managing training design and trainer development for the Institute's Conflict Management Training for Peacekeepers (CMTTP) program
- Supervise, oversee, and contribute to the ongoing development of CMTTP staff and regional civilian master trainers, including designing and implementing training-of-trainer processes and professional development programs for civilian and peacekeeper trainer cadres
- Revise and contribute to the development of peacekeeper training curricula
- Lead trainer for the CMTTP training curriculum: Malawi, Uganda, Rwanda, Zambia, and Indonesia.

### **INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT / COOPERATIVE BY DESIGN, LLC / COLLABORENT, LLC 2009 - PRESENT**

*Peacebuilding Specialist*

- Facilitate and design complex multi-party conflict interventions
- Consultant for organizations in the areas of conflict transformation, strategic planning, organizational health, restorative justice
- Consultant, coach, and trainer for restorative justice implementation
- Provided technical services for project review and report for an INGO conducting land conflict mediation
- Provided monitoring and project evaluation support for a racial justice and trustbuilding organization
- Facilitator for "Finding Freedom" anti-racism training for white women
- Provided editing support for Geneva Centre for Security Policy dialogue reports
- Developed reports on transitional justice initiatives
- Coordinated an international convening of practitioners and academics to identify synergy in post-conflict ex-combatant reintegration and post-incarceration reentry challenges
- Partnered with community mediation experts in Indiana on statewide collaboration and advocacy
- Drafted two chapters in a book for training faith leaders in conflict transformation within their communities
- Grant and strategic writing support for a neighborhood community organization

### **KANSAS INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION 2016-2019**

*Director of Education and Training*

- Conflict transformation mediator, facilitator, coach, and trainer
- Lead facilitator for organizational and group conflicts
- Lead facilitator for Restorative Justice processes and training, including implementation for the Restorative Schools Initiative
- Oversaw and led all training design and implementation – including designing new training and content
- Coordinated the Restorative Schools Initiative and oversaw team of consulting trainers
- Team content lead on Criminal and Restorative Justice Certificate, an academic certificate at Bethel College

- Taught as professor in Peace, Justice, and Conflict Studies at Bethel College (8 different courses, 23 sessions, plus 2 online courses)
- Administered Conflict Resolution Certificate, an academic and training certificate at Bethel College
- Creator of the Kansas Restorative Schools Network
- Initiator and Steering Committee Chair, Restorative Kansas (first-ever statewide Restorative Justice Conference)

**COMMUNITY FOR PEACE AND NONVIOLENCE, SOUTH BEND, INDIANA** **2014-2016**

*Program Director*

- Led a collaborative network of organizations in building a strategic platform for peace and justice in the community.

**PARTNERS FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE, WASHINGTON, D.C.** **2014-2015**

*Security Fellow*

- Provided content guidance, editing assistance, and evaluation collection in the development and publication of the Security-Governance, Accountability, and Performance framework and guide for civil society, governments, and security organizations considering security sector reform.

**CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES & UNIV. OF NOTRE DAME, ACCRA, GHANA** **2014**

*Consultant, Business on the Frontlines*

- Led a collaborative consultancy with Business and Law graduate students to identify opportunities for shared value creation in corporate-NGO partnerships

**CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES, DAVAO CITY, PHILIPPINES** **2013**

*Intern, Peace and Reconciliation Program*

- Investigated impact of the resolved land conflicts through CRS' conflict mediation program, by conducting on-site interviews and research, achieving MEL strategy outcomes.
- Supported peacebuilding training in an ongoing conflict setting
- Researched multi-party NGO peacebuilding collaborations which developed the working consensus-based vision document: Mindanao People's Peace Agenda.

**OUR COMMUNITY PLACE, HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA** **2010-2012**

*Community Center Director*

*Community Wellbeing Coordinator*

- Facilitated organization-wide restructuring process, using multi-stakeholder dialogue focus groups and collaborative decision-making processes
- Developed, strengthened cross-sector community partnerships
- Designed and oversaw program implementation, violence prevention and intervention strategies, and organization-wide use of circle processes and mediation
- Supervised staff, interns, and volunteers in an environment of high diversity

**MAHATMA GANDHI CENTER FOR GLOBAL NONVIOLENCE** **2009-2010**

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY, HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA**

*Program Coordinator*

- Lead Coordinator, 2010 Global Nonviolence Conference (Gandhi Awardee: Former President Jimmy Carter)
- Supervised 12 interns, executed programming, budget, and communications

**BRIDGE BUILDERS, LONDON, U.K.** **2006-2009**

*Trainer and Mediator*

- Lead mediator, trainer and consultant (42 trainings and 12 cases)
- Four consultancies with leaders to start mediation programs in the UK and Germany
- Co-hosted two national mediation conferences

**CONSULTANCIES**

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- **Group and Organizational Conflict**
  - Organization-wide or inter-organizational conflict interventions (x12), 2007-2012, 2017-2021
  - Organizational leadership team mediations (x4), 2007-2008, 2017-2019
- **Organizational Change Processes**
  - Lead consultant in organizational review process (x2) – 2011, 2021
  - Facilitator for strategic planning processes (x4) – 2011, 2014, 2017, 2020

- Lead consultant and full support for school-based restorative justice implementation, 2015
- **Interpersonal Conflict**
  - 11 cases, 2015-2019: restorative justice, workplace, neighborhood, domestic and core mediation
- **Contentious Dialogue**
  - Single dialogue facilitation (without overall intervention) (x4), 2006-2007, 2019
- **Coaching**
  - Organizational Leaders in Conflict or Designing Conflict Interventions (x10) 2007-2009, 2017-2020
  - Restorative Justice Implementation in Schools, x3 (2015, 2018-2019)
  - Consulting with groups interested in starting conflict mediation and training programs in Germany and Northern Ireland, 2008-2009.

## **TRAINING EXPERIENCE (Training courses designed and facilitated)**

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### **COLLEGIATE, GOSHEN COLLEGE (IN) & BETHEL COLLEGE (KS), 2015-2019**

- Restorative Approaches to Justice (x1)
- Introduction to Conflict Management (x2)
- Practical Skills for Managing Interpersonal Conflict (x11); graduate and undergraduate levels
- Practical Skills for Managing Group and Organizational Conflict (x1); graduate and undergraduate levels
- Restorative Practices in Schools (x2); graduate and undergraduate levels
- Transforming Difference & Disagreement within Faith Communities (x3); graduate and undergraduate levels
- Domestic Mediation Training (x2)
- Transforming Conflict and Violence (x2)

### **MULTI-DAY TRAINING COURSES (2-5 DAYS)**

- Conflict Transformation 2007-2009 (x14), Annecy, France; Chelmsford, Kent, Hereford, London and various UK
- Training of Trainers 2008-2009 (x2), London UK
- Leadership & Family Systems 2008 (x1), London UK
- Restorative Justice 2017-2019 (x7), Kansas City, Lawrence, Leavenworth, Newton, and Topeka KS
- Racial Justice 2015 (x1), South Bend Indiana

### **SINGLE DAY TRAINING WORKSHOPS**

- Workplace Conflict Skills 2015-2019 (x7), Newton, Topeka, and Wichita, KS; Gary and South Bend, IN
- Restorative Justice 2017, 2019 (x7), Newton, Lawrence, Newton, Pratt, Tescott, and Topeka KS
- Conflict Skills in Faith Institutions 2006-2010, 2014 (x10); UK; VA; IN
- Continuing Education Days for Mediators 2007-2009 (x15); Durham Leeds, London, Manchester, Reading UK

### **SINGLE WORKSHOP SESSIONS (PART-DAY)**

- Restorative Justice 2015, 2017-2019 (x21); Fort Wayne, South Bend IN; Kansas City, Newton, and Topeka KS;
- Communication and Conflict in the Workplace 2018-2019 (x7); Dodge City, Newton, Salina, and Wichita KS
- Conference Sessions, 2009, 2015, 2017-2019 (x15); FL; KS; IN; Asuncion, Paraguay

### **TRAINING DESIGNED TO ADDRESS ACTIVE CONFLICT**

- 2016, 2018-2020 (x7); Boston MA; Newton, McPherson, and Wichita KS; Indianapolis IN

### **RETREATS**

- Organizational / board / staff / regional leaders 2010-2011, 2016 (x4) Pennsylvania, Northern Indiana, Virginia

## **ADDITIONAL TRAINING RECEIVED**

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- Coaching Certificate, Association for Talent Development (2023)
- Finding Freedom: White Women Taking on Our Own White Supremacy, Facilitator Training, (2021)
- Finding Freedom: White Women Taking on Our Own White Supremacy, Online (2020)
- Community Trustbuilding Fellowship, Initiatives of Change, Richmond, Virginia (2020)
- Conflict Coaching, Heartland Mediators Association, Overland Park, Kansas (2019)
- Anti-Racism Training (training), Roots of Justice, Newton, Kansas (2017)
- Citizens Police Academy (13-week training), Wichita PD and County Sheriff Department, Wichita, Kansas (2016)
- Citizens Police Academy (9-week training), South Bend Police Department, South Bend, Indiana (2015)
- Advanced Circle Training with Kay Pranis (training), Shambhala Meditation Center, Chicago, Illinois (2015)
- Strategies for Trauma Awareness & Resiliency (workshop), New Market, Virginia (2011)
- Restorative Justice: The Promise, The Challenge (graduate credit), Eastern Mennonite University, VA (2011)
- Victim Offender Conferencing (training), Eastern Mennonite University, Virginia (2011)
- Building Blocks for Non-Profit Board Members (workshop), National Business College, Harrisonburg VA (2011)
- Developing Community Experiences (2-semester training), United Reformed Church, Cambridge, UK (2008-09)
- Indigenous Peacemaking Processes (graduate training), Eastern Mennonite University, Virginia (2005)

## **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND ADVISORY ROLES**

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- Committee on Right Relations and Transformative Justice Steering Committee, All Souls Unitarian Church, Washington DC (2021-Present)
- Circle of Restorative Initiatives for Maryland (2020-Present)
- National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (2018-Present)
- National Association of Community and Restorative Justice (2015-Present)
- Newton Community for Racial Justice, Newton, Kansas (2016-2019)
- NAACP-Wichita Branch, Wichita, Kansas (2016-2019)
- Heartland Mediators Association, Kansas (2016-2019)
- Advisory Board, Mamas Against Violence, South Bend, Indiana (2015-2016)
- Board of Trustees, First Unitarian Church, South Bend, Indiana (2015-2016)
- Board of Directors, St Joseph Valley Camerata, Elkhart, Indiana (2014-2016)
- Board of Directors, Gemeinschaft Home, Harrisonburg, Virginia (2010-2012)
- Restorative Justice Reference Committee, Fairfield Center, Harrisonburg, Virginia (2010-2012)