



PROSPECTUS

ACTS Masters Degree
Programme

ACADEMIC YEARS 2018 to 2019

TRANSFORMATION
CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION
APPLIED CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Introduction

The Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies offers a Masters Degree in Applied Conflict Transformation Studies to practitioners living and working in Asia. It is a hands-on programme combining practice, theory and action-research. It complements and challenges existing largely theoretical graduate courses on governance, rights, conflict and peace.

The two-year programme includes academic study of advanced conflict intervention skills, theory building, analysis and strategy development. The students build on academic study by implementing an action research project related to their own peacebuilding and conflict transformation work and to the organisations they work with. While the core curriculum for each course will be the same, much of the content will differ according to the context and work of those in a particular course group.

Most practitioners in these fields have taken part in basic training programmes in conflict transformation. However, many expressed the need for further training which enables them to examine and explore in depth some of the challenging issues that they are dealing with. Examples of these include:

- strategic intervention in complex conflicts,
- post-conflict democratic institution-building,
- disarmament, demobilisation and reconstruction,
- multi-level processes for reconciliation and justice,
- monitoring and addressing human rights abuses,
- culture sensitive approaches to trauma healing,
- deep-seated stereotyping and prejudice,
- preventing the escalation of violence,
- dealing purposefully with the abuse of political and economic power,
- facilitating peace processes.

The ACTS programme offers training in advanced, hands-on conflict-handling skills, combined with Action Research (AR) into the issues with which participants and their organisations are engaged. The programme is innovative, seeking to develop and articulate the experience of people working for peace, human rights, democracy and justice, to build new theory from practice, and to test it in the fire of reality.

ACTS Faculty are committed to rigorous debate and discussion, challenging students to reach their full potential and the notion that by building more strategic peace builders, peace in Asia will be sustainable and lasting. The programme is underpinned by a commitment to core values, which are integral to a sustainable future for humankind:

- diversity
- inclusiveness
- justice
- cultural sensitivity
- mutual respect
- non-violence
- environmental sensitivity



Our Partners

The ACTS programme is a collaboration of the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies and Paññasastra University of Cambodia (PUC).

Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies

The Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (CPCS) is home to a range of programmes that promote the advancement of peace processes, research and learning. CPCS creates opportunities for practitioners, students, academics and analysts to access information and resources that are contextually grounded and supports local efforts to transform conflict situations through network support mechanisms and consultancy services.



CPCS seeks to:

- bring experience from the ground to inform best peace practice,
- disseminate and share the reflections and learning of peace practitioners,
- apply and test theory and approaches for best peace practice,
- support countries and conflict situations through network support and consultancies,
- support leadership and initiatives in people and situations.

CPCS has experience in Afghanistan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. We work alongside our partners across the Asia Pacific region to help peace practitioners make informed and strategic interventions into violent conflict and to create lasting transformation of conflicts. We offer many courses and consultancy in this field, including the innovative ACTS programme.

For further information: <http://www.centrepeaceconflictstudies.org/>

Paññasastra University of Cambodia

Paññāsāstra University of Cambodia (PUC) was founded by a group of Cambodian expatriates from the United States of America, whose objectives are to contribute to the development and enhancement of Cambodia's human resources, and to play an active role in the "nation building" process for future generations.



PUC envisions a world at peace, where conflicts are resolved by non-violent means, beginning with individuals, and extending to the community of world leaders in the context of international relations. We envision a world where those in government and positions of power exercise their duties responsibly and seek with compassion to benefit all they serve, especially destitute women and children. PUC believes that education is the key to fulfilling this vision; as when people are well educated they are empowered to participate and contribute more fully in the life of society.



To this end, PUC strives to deliver quality education that is attainable by, and responsive to the needs of, the people of Cambodia and the global community. PUC places special emphasis on research and studies in peace, development and social responsibility. PUC was established to fulfil the following mission:

- Improving the quality of life and building the capacity of the people of Cambodia, and of the region;
- Providing high-quality academic study and research;
- Promoting international standards for higher education in business, management, economics, law and government, humanities, science, communication, medicine, and culture;
- Facilitating training of professionals who wish to continue their technical and intellectual growth through advanced education and specialized fields of research and development;
- Building a strong teaching profession capable of delivering quality education and forming new scholars, academics, and scientists to enhance the quality of life in our society;
- Fostering development, strengthening peace, and implementing peaceful means of conflict resolution on local, regional and global levels;
- Transferring technology from advanced and developed countries; and
- Becoming a leading institution for research and study in Cambodia and Asia, recognized for the high quality of faculty, students, and contributions to the peace and development of the region.

For further information: www.puc.edu.kh

About the Programme

The Applied Conflict Transformation Studies (ACTS) Masters programme is rooted in an outcome-based curriculum that stresses holistic and transformative learning. Students will develop their professional competency, critical analysis and moral imagination. The holistic curriculum includes care for the person's psyche, interpersonal and spiritual life, as well as academic and professional achievement.

ACTS uses a systems theory approach to understanding conflict and the role of the self in analysing and working within conflict situations. Understanding that conflict cannot be studied objectively as an external observer, but rather that by observing and studying conflict situations we influence the events, ACTS applies a "Power, Path, Voice and Vision" lens to understand the integrated theory and practice in a way that is adaptable to the unique contexts students are working in. Throughout the programme, students will learn how to use this tool to gain a holistic understanding of the self and their work within the systems they are working in. The programme culminates in an Action Research project wherein students will apply their academic learning to gain a deeper understanding of their work related to peace and conflict transformation.

Because the overall methodology of the ACTS programme is experience-based, students draw on their own experiences living and working in situations of conflict and violence as a basis for their learning. The ACTS programme helps students to develop the necessary skills to reflect on their experiences, analyse them and



develop creative responses and interventions to enable transformation of the systems, structures and behaviours that give rise to injustice.

Students have many and varied opportunities to further develop personal and group skills in working in situations of conflict and violence. Developing skills such as listening, communication, feedback, analytical, academic reading and critical analysis start from the very beginning of the programme and continue throughout.

About Action Research

Action Research (AR) methodology is used throughout the two year programme. In the first year participants will get an in-depth knowledge on theories of conflict transformation and how to apply theory in their own work, which builds to the AR project in the second year.

The use of AR methodology will enable participants to build theory about what works in this field through a systematic process of learning *through action for action*. In AR the researchers are consciously and deliberately engaged with the events or processes that are being studied. They are inevitably implicated in the research and acknowledge the role they play in influencing events. The impact of their own choices and behaviour is a key part of what they are researching.

Programme Aims

The ACTS programme aims:

- To provide an accessible, flexible opportunity for advanced, practical learning in conflict transformation for people who want to make constructive changes possible in their situation.
- To generate and share more widely new knowledge, theory and insights relevant to work for peace and justice in the region.
- To challenge and strengthen existing work for peace and justice in the region by deepening the capacity of practitioners, and their organisations and networks, for complex analysis and strategic activity at all levels.

Learning Objectives

The programme will enable participants to:

- Handle conflict at all levels, including the interpersonal, with increased sensitivity and resourcefulness and take the opportunities these present for positive change.
- Assess the impact of specific actions on conflict and the extent to which this action is contributing to desired change.
- Work strategically in order to improve their effectiveness and the sustainability of initiatives.
- Draw critically on aspects of existing knowledge and theory in the field of conflict transformation to illuminate their situation and be able to contribute to its development.
- Make active use of a deep knowledge of one specific issue or approach, which they will have engaged with in detail.
- Share their knowledge and skills appropriately with colleagues, partners and, more widely, with others interested in this field.
- Communicate effectively with a range of audiences at different levels.



- Generate and test creative hypotheses and theories for action relating to issues confronting them in their work for peace and justice.
- Contribute to the growth of the overall field of conflict transformation by writing, publishing and the use of other non-formal means of communication.

Core Competencies

Students will develop a deeper understanding of conflict transformation theories and how to apply theory to practice. Students will develop self-reflective capacities to be able to work with their whole selves in peace work. Students will develop action research skills that will inform their practice as well as contribute to a wider body of academic knowledge on peace processes and conflict transformation in Asia.

ACTS students are part of the advancement in the understanding of conflict between individuals, groups, institutions, and nations through systematic study, research and writing on the nature, origins and dynamics of such conflicts and approaches to peace. Students will critically assess contemporary peace practice by understanding the complexity, the requirements and challenges involved in building sustainable peaceful societies.

Upon completion of the ACTS Programme

- Students are able to articulate the relationship between theory and practice.
- Students have completed an Action Research project, beginning with developing a research proposal and culminating in a thesis dissertation explaining their research findings and implications.
- Students identify as agents of change both in their professional work and the broader field of peace and conflict transformation.



ACTS Faculty & 2017/2018 Class; Siem Reap,



Programme Details

Length: Two years, part time. The programme includes six modules. Each module includes an approximately two weeks residential seminar in Siem Reap, Cambodia. Students are expected to be actively engaged in self-study in between the modules and remain in close contact with the faculty.

Accreditation: The Paññāsāstra University of Cambodia has accredited the MA degree in Applied Conflict Transformation Studies by the Accreditation Committee of Cambodia, the authorising agency under the Ministry of Education, Royal Government of Cambodia. The protocol for accreditation is of an international standard.

Structure: The two-year programme includes six modules. Each module combines a 2 week residential seminar with guided work / home-based distance learning to augment the seminars. Modules are held in February, July, and November each year.

Methodology: The methodology is based on well-established participatory adult learning principles and is, at the same time, highly eclectic. Faculty consider the life experiences of the students and the context in which they work to inform and adjust the ACTS learning approaches. Examples of techniques used include: group work and discussion, skills practice, formal presentations, action research projects, role-plays, exposure visits and other interactive and participatory learning methods.

Faculty: ACTS faculty is made up individuals who have extensive experience in participative, action-reflection methods of learning in many parts of the world and are also practitioners themselves. The faculty will combine practical and academic expertise. All core faculty members have a minimum of an MA in the field of peace and conflict studies as well as experience teaching tertiary education. Guest lecturers are brought in to share extensive experience working throughout the region on peace and conflict transformation.

Support: In Module 3, each student will be assigned an academic advisor who will keep in regular contact with his or her assigned students between the residential seminars and is available to students for one-on-one advising sessions during the Action Research project. Where this cannot be done face-to-face, email, Skype, post and phone will maintain close contact.

Time: Residential seminars are approximately 8 hours per day of instruction. Outside of the residential seminar, students spend on average 5 – 10 hours per week on readings and assignments.

Location: The ACTS programme is operated by CPCS in Siem Reap, Cambodia. The residential seminars are conducted at the ACTS learning centre in Siem Reap. Accommodation is available close to the centre including home stay, self-catering and hotels.

CPCS believes Cambodia is the ideal location for such study given Cambodia's own transition from genocide to civil war to stability. Cambodia showcases UN intervention, an internationally led peace process, local and international justice and reconciliation process, community based peace building and development. Further, Cambodia is accessible in terms of cost and the possibility for all students to receive a visa on arrival.



Overview of the Curriculum

Each module contains a residential seminar of approximately 14 days and work/home based study.

Module One – Conflict Transformation: Theories and Analysis

Module One builds the foundations for the ACTS programme and is focused on understanding conflict and conflict transformation theories. It introduces a number of frameworks and concepts to assist students to develop a common language for working throughout the programme.

This module includes conflict analysis tools and skills, an introduction to a range of theories of conflict transformation, and the underlying values and components in the conflict transformation approach. Students identify the critical issues that need to be taken into account when working in conflict or societal transformation to work towards a durable peace. These critical issues will be addressed throughout the programme as appropriate.

An essential task in Module One is to build the learning group: to develop a common culture of learning and a learning contract for the programme. It is important for students to understand the programme, to have an overview of objectives, topics, and assignment tasks, and also understanding of the learning process and support that they will have throughout the programme. This creates the base for learning during the programme.

Module Two – Conflict Transformation: Strategies and Peace Processes

This module focuses on Peace Processes and Mediation Support as a central component of contemporary peace work in Asia. It defines the structures, roles and complex dynamics of peace processes and the function of mediation, while drawing on illustrations from case studies around the region. Students are introduced to “Power” as a holistic orientation for understanding power dynamics in conflict situations, both internally and externally.

Students will work with several case studies from the Southeast Asian and Pacific region to analyse practical challenges and strategies to peace process and mediation work. As religious considerations are a focal point of many ongoing conflicts in Asia, it also considers the role religion plays in peacebuilding.

Module Three – Conflict Transformation: Agents of Change

This module critically assesses and explores a society’s transition out of violent conflict. It addresses the question of what it means to be a “post-conflict” society and its implications for peace work. The “Path” orientation is introduced as a way for students to explore the historical contexts of conflict and how to use historical understanding of conflicts to inform plans for future action.

The students build upon their understanding of Action Research to begin to identify relevant issues to be addressed in their own Action Research project. Students will begin the inception phase of their project and develop an Action Research proposal to be implemented during the second year of their studies.



Module Four – Conflict Transformation: Action Research Methodology

Action research is the systematic, self-reflective, scientific inquiry by practitioners to improve practice. Action research is grounded in the belief that research with human beings should be participative and democratic. Researchers working within this frame are charged with being sensitive to issues of power, open to the plurality of meanings and interpretations, and able to take into account the emotional, social, spiritual and political dimensions of those with whom they interact. 'Purpose' is also central to these methods: A primary purpose of action research is to produce practical knowledge that is useful to people in the everyday conduct of their lives.

The core focus of module four is working with students to finalise their Action Research proposals and plans for implementation. Lectures are focused on linking theory to practice, honing academic writing skills and using peer learning and feedback to help students take the next steps in their proposals. This module is a combination of lecture seminars, student presentations and time to work individually with academic advisors on their proposals.

Module Five – Conflict Transformation: Research and Writing

The action research project is the transformative learning and reflections of the relationship of knowledge and power in maintaining and changing social systems with a critical subjectivity and to unveil their ideologies and help to see how best they could participate in maintaining the status in work and society. This critical subjectivity can help connect the jargon in organizations with their assumptions about how their activities change society. The action research enables students to give deeper feedback on their work for further improvement.

During this module, students focus on building theory from practice and eliciting learning from action research. By this time students should have a complete picture of the programme and flow of the topics, and should be able to see how their own learning objectives and their work fits in this picture.

This module is writing intensive with the focus on individual work and mentoring students in preparing their final dissertations. Students will have time allocated to writing and to meeting with academic/research advisor for preparing their formal presentations and monographs.

Module Six – Conflict Transformation: Reflection

Module Six includes the formal defence of project papers at Paññāsāstra University of Cambodia. Successful defence of the Action Research project papers is the final step toward earning the ACTS MA. In the final few students will be guided on writing a short paper on their project for publication.

Additionally, this module focuses on how students understand themselves "as agents of change". What does this mean in each student's context? What skills are needed? How can we mobilise our power at community, national & global levels? This is a space for students to reflect more deeply on their own practice & to see how their work can contribute to conflict transformation.



Students will have two one-day retreats: The first is structured to reflect with students on their journey with ACTS, what they have learned about themselves and others, and how they will carry their learnings and new skills with them to continue their work as agents of change. The second retreat is used for students to give feedback on the ACTS programme itself, to critique the process and to reflect on the learning environment.

Students

The programme is designed for students who want to develop the skills and increase their competency to build greater peace and justice in their own situations and countries. Some are already working in the general fields of peace, human rights, and development. Others are looking for ways to become engaged in these, or related, fields. Some students come from civil society, including local and international NGOs. Others may be engaged in the public sector, e.g. religious service, education, public health, the security sector, or in the political field. ACTS students exhibit a strong commitment to peace and justice values, as well as a willingness to participate in cross-cultural and learning environments.

As a Master degree programme, ACTS is academically rigorous. Students must be able to cope with the demands of self-directed study, keeping up with all readings, maintaining self-awareness and openness to feedback, and being able to effectively conduct action research. It is necessary that all students be present for all six residential modules, and must have regular access to a computer, internet and email to complete course requirements outside of the residential sessions.

Strong candidates for the programme are those that are familiar with basic elements of conflict transformation, either through their work experience or related training. Strong candidates also have previous experience with participative learning methodology in their field.

A selection panel formed from the two partner organisations assesses each applicant's suitability for the programme. Successful applicants **must** meet the following criteria:

- Employer or organisation relevant to peace and conflict transformation
- Undergraduate degree (Bachelors or equivalent)
- Living and working within boundaries of the Asia Pacific region
- Access to computer, email, internet
- Fluency in use of the English language (IELTS score 6.0 or TOEFL of 550)
- Over the age of 25 years

How to Apply

To apply for the ACTS programme, complete the ACTS application form, available online through the CPCS website: <http://www.centrepeaceconflictstudies.org/courses/how-to-apply/>

Applicants should complete the application packet, which includes:

- Application form
- Employer statement
- Financial statement



- Academic or professional writing sample
- Statement of Motivation
- Two references to complete referee forms from the application website
- Curriculum Vitae or resume
- A copy of your BA transcripts and certificate (translated into English if need be)
- A copy of IELTS or TOEFL score (minimum requirement IELTS=6.0, TOEFL=550)
- Scholarship form (if scholarship is needed in order to complete the course)

Applications for the 2018/2019 programme are due **October 31, 2017**. All application materials should be submitted electronically to acts@centrepeaceconflictstudies.org

APPLIED CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION STUDIES TEAM

Ms. Emma Leslie, Executive Director



As an Australian citizen, Emma Leslie has worked on peace, conflict transformation & development throughout the Asia Pacific region since 1993. In 1997 she moved to Cambodia & in the same year helped to found the regional network of Action Asia. Since then she has held the post of Secretariat to the Action Asia network as well as being the course director of the Applied Conflict Transformations Studies MA programme. Ms. Leslie has extensive advisory experience & works as a consultant, practitioner & trainer on conflict transformation & peacebuilding issues in Asia. She has conducted a number of conflict analysis trainings in Eastern Europe, Africa & throughout Asia, holds a Masters degree in International Development & was one of the thousand peace women nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005. Email: emmacambodia@gmail.com

Dr. Noah Taylor, Academic Director



Originally from Wisconsin, USA, Noah Taylor holds a PhD in Peace and Conflict Studies from The Universitat Jaume I de Castelló, Spain. He also holds a Masters degree in Peace, Conflict, Development and International Conflict Transformation Studies from the University of Innsbruck in Austria and a Masters degree in International Peace and Conflict Studies from the United Nations Mandated University for Peace in Costa Rica. Dr. Taylor has worked for CPCS in the ACTS programme for four years and built the newly founded ACTS PhD programme also at CPCS. He has lived and worked in many places throughout the world and speaks four languages.



Previously Dr. Taylor has worked for the University College of Oslo and Kulturstudier's peace and conflict studies program in Pondicherry, India and the US Congressional Youth Leadership Council's Global Youth Leadership Conference in Washington DC. Email: noah.taylor@centrepeaceconflictstudies.org

Mr. Dirgha Raj Sigdel, Faculty Member



Originally from Nepal, Dirgha Sigdel holds Masters degree in Conflict, Peace and Development Studies from Tribhuvan University. He has experience working with several organizations for more than 7 years in the area of peace and conflict. His experience ranges from community engagement to international level. Mr Sigdel has conducted several researches in various topics. His research interest area includes, civil society, peacebuilding, social movements, identity politics, violence, and conflict transformation. Prior to joining CPCS he worked with International Institute of Peace and Development Studies/ Asian Resource Foundation as Program Coordinator based in Bangkok, Thailand. Email:

dirgharaj@centrepeaceconflictstudies.org

Dr. Gabrielle Grant, Faculty Member



Gabrielle Grant is originally from North Carolina, USA and holds a PhD in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from Nova Southeastern University, USA and a Masters degree in Conflict Analysis and Dispute Resolution from University of North Carolina-Greensboro, USA. She also holds a graduate certificate in Qualitative Research from Nova Southeastern University.

Dr. Grant has worked at different universities and organizations focusing on research, advocacy, and violence prevention. She has served as a facilitator, practitioner, and researcher from the community to the international level, and has published on topics such as power, mediation, appreciative inquiry, structural violence, and genocide prevention. Prior to joining CPCS, Dr. Grant worked in Southeast Asia for many international non-profit organizations as a research consultant, working on issues such as access to justice for women and empowerment of marginalized populations. Email: gabrielle.grant@centrepeaceconflictstudies.org

Ms. Hally Heng, ACTS Programme Support



Heng Hally is CPCS' Administrator & Human Resources Manager, and provides support for the ACTS MA and PhD programmes. Hally is originally from Siem Reap, and has worked for eight years in Administration, Human Resources Management and Finance in several companies and NGOs. She has a degree in Finance and Accounting and is perusing her Masters degree in business administration. Email: henghally@gmail.com



Ms. Oum Sotheavy "Da", ACTS Accreditation Officer



From 2003 to 2007, Sotheavy worked as librarian & assistant for the Alliance for Conflict Transformation (ACT). She is highly skilled in performing a range of administrative duties. Since 2007, she has been working with the Centre for Peace & Conflict Studies, first as administrative assistant and later promoted to the role of administrator. Sotheavy, also referred as Da, has completed a Diploma in English at Paññasatra University Cambodia (PUC) and is a graduate in Social Science & International Relations from PUC. She is currently taking up Masters in Peace and Development. Email: sotheavyoum9@gmail.com