

## S1 Ep.5 Build peace 2020

[00:00:00] **Intro:** [00:00:00] Welcome to the **Just for a change** podcast, powered by the Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship. First off, what you need to know about us, is that solving big social issues by thinking outside the box is what makes us tick. We love offering new perspectives on social innovation and social justice, so we hope you'll be inspired to make a difference wherever you are! **We're changing the way we're changing the world.**

[00:00:36] **Fergus Turner:** [00:00:36] Welcome to the **Just for a change podcast** with me, your host, Fergus Turner. Peace. Not really a topic that naturally fits within the current global narrative... just turn on the TV, radio or open your news feed on your phone. It often feels so far out of reach when you think of the crime, corruption, and conspiracy theories. The natural disasters, political tension and economic uncertainty.

[00:01:03] You've probably realised by now that we love talking about things that are hard and uncomfortable - not because our aim is to discourage or remind you of the challenges, but rather because we want to inspire change. Be it in your way of thinking about the world, or in the way you approach finding solutions. In light of this, we are delighted to share that this year the Bertha Centre has partnered with Build Up, a global non-profit and peacebuilding collective, to organise and host the 2020 Build Peace conference. The event will take place online from 6 to 8 November.

Build up brings together practitioners, activists, academic policymakers, artists, yeah. And technologists from around the world together, we will share experiences and insights on the challenges to peace in a digital era, hosted under the theme of social justice and pandemic.

[00:02:00] [00:01:59] In the digital age, the conference will also be a platform to showcase peacebuilding innovations that address these challenges. So why did the, if a center partner with both apt to host this conference? Well, we found that we share a way of looking at the world and at our work with a multidisciplinary lens and the global sensibility, while our focus in terms of projects remain local, we have a common interest in strengthening the ties between those that are passionate about peacebuilding and those that focus on social justice work.

[00:02:35] Then there's also the fact that both buildup and birth center love creating cohorts, convening across sectors and connecting the local South African context of peacebuilding and social justice with global insights learning and new technologies. The buildup team brings together diverse skills, mediation, negotiation, facilitation peacebuilding marketing, [00:03:00] media, filmmaking, and more.

[00:03:02] They use digital technologies to build peace, supporting peace innovators across the globe, working with local organizations to design and implement technology interventions for peace building processes. That address divisions in society to support the work built up. Also develops policy and research around the uses of digital technology for peace delivers online and in person training courses and hosts a global community of practice around peace and technology.

[00:03:32] In light of the diversity that the global bulk peace conference community represents. We decided to ask some of the speakers to greet us in their mother tongue.

[00:03:44] **voice pops:** [00:03:44] Hi, my name is Elloah and I was born in Brazil. I'm so thrilled and excited to share dance as a metaphor and an exercise to build peace. It's so easy to dance when life is going [00:04:00] well, and we feel safe right?

[00:04:02] At the same time when there's tension, it is pretty hard to move. So anyone experiencing disconnection in stressful situations is very encouraged to tune in for an experience of moving those rigid muscles and dancing of all things in times of conflict. (Greeting) .

[00:04:25] Hello. Um, my names are Cornelius. Um, it's quite long wound, but you can just call me Cola and I'm, I'm good with that. I'm Nigerian, i'm, studying, um, for a post graduate degree in music at university of Cape town. Um, as a performer on this, um, Conference or project. So you can expect there's fusion or like sounds written specifically for different poems that articulate, [00:05:00] um, different aspects of, um, society. Um, We've got a unique sound too to share.

[00:05:12] Hello everybody. My name is Maphumba chilumbo. My artist's name is brother asked you some of my music at the build piece 2020. I am a singer song writer based in Cape town, originally from the Congo D R and I speak Swahili and Chiluba and French. I also sing in them. What am I sharing again? Music for compassion. Hamoja hakuna matta.

[00:05:41] **Fergus Turner:** [00:05:41] We thought that the perfect opportunity to unpack some of the themes of discussion that you can look forward to at this year's conference. So today we are chatting to Ncedisa Nkonyeni from the Bertha Center, Helena Puig Larrauri from buildup as well as a representative from the Bertha Scholarship Community Merhawi Okbaselasi , who is also a member of this year's system justice labs, the external factors associated with the pandemic such as misinformation and the associated response.

[00:06:15] For example, increased digital surveillance. I likely to be long lasting. The fact that the pandemic is happening in a digital age has been amplifying socioeconomic inequalities and is raising a set of particular social justice issues. This year is both peace conference. We'll focus on these social

justice issues and the Corona virus pandemic in the digital age, as it plays out across three sub themes, namely identity polarization.

[00:06:47] Urban space and surveillance capitalism. If that sounds like French to you, don't worry with our knowledgeable guests. We'll dive deeper into what exactly these themes suggest in just a moment. [00:07:00] Good afternoon. So happy to have on the line with us, Lisa, Elena, and met Howie speaking about both peace 2020 and in particular.

[00:07:14] Exploring some of the themes and what they mean to us as individuals. And in the context of the broader social spaces, we find ourselves a part to get going. Iliana. I'd like to ask you to kickstart this conversation by sharing a little bit more about what bold peace means to you as a founding director of build up. And of course the key protagonist in the conference as it's grown from strength to strength.

[00:07:42] **Helena Puig Larrauri:** [00:07:42] So thanks Fergus for having me here. Well, when I am, um, it's really nice to be able to reflect on, on that question. Um, I think, you know, that buildup actually came out of the first bill peace conference, um, which was not meant to be a conference at all.

[00:07:58] We were invited to run a [00:08:00] small workshop at MIT, um, and it quickly snowballed into, um, into a conference. Um, kind of went out of our hands and. I think maybe that's what build peace means to me. Um, it's now, um, it's been running since 2014, so this will be, uh, the seventh edition of the conference. And I feel like it's a, um, snowballing conversation about what it means to build peace in a digital era.

[00:08:30] And it has morphed and change and, uh, completely, um, left any control of the curators every year and over the years. So it feels more like an ongoing conversation over seven years with, um, some people remaining the same, some people changing different scenarios, different inputs and different perspectives on what it means to build peace.

[00:08:54] **Fergus Turner:** [00:08:54] And with that in mind, uh, given that. Very recently, [00:09:00] um, we made the decision to host this conference entirely online. What does that mean for delegates? What does that mean in reflection to this, uh, thought around geography and location. And finally, if you could maybe share for delegates. Or would be delegates who are interested in tuning in, in registering for the conference that is now entirely online, reflecting on a little bit about what that means for the global community and what that means for 2021, just so that everybody listening in is aware of our thinking. As we start to move deeper into this conversation.

[00:09:38] **Helena Puig Larrauri:** [00:09:38] So, I mean, you know, I think that there was a great interest from the buildup team and from the build peace community, I would say in, in hosting this conversation, I'm in Philippi village, in Cape town and in South Africa. Um, and of course we have lost some of that.

[00:09:54] Um, but it's interesting because I think that, um, You know, [00:10:00] if ever there was a year when it was going to be relevant to have a conversation purely online, then it's 2020 because the online landscape is so critical to everything that we're living through in 2020, it's defining how we're experiencing the pandemic.

[00:10:15] And in my view, it's defining some of the, of the particular conflict drivers that we are seeing in 2020. So I think that. We're bringing the conversation into an online landscape. And that also is interesting. The other thing I would say is that I guess, as you and I have discussed, we still very much want this conference to be rooted in the South African experience and the experience of Cape town in particular, and that will continue and is evident in the programming that we have conducted.

[00:10:43] Um, and finally, um, our, uh, our strong hope and our intention is for the conference in 2021 to in fact, physically take place in Philippi village and in Cape town. And I think it's interesting because, um, we've never had, um, the conference take place in, in [00:11:00] the same location, even if. It's not actually fully taking place in that location this year, but with the same kind of rooting two years in a row. So I'm also interested in how that conversation is going to develop, um, and, and what it will be like to be in that in Cape town in 2021.

[00:11:14] **Fergus Turner:** [00:11:14] Thank you. So moving on to a little bit more about how this connects to birth her centers, interest and sensibility in the context of social justice work, um, given the crises of the current day.

[00:11:30] Ncedisa, welcome and thank you for being with us. If you want mind sharing a little more about what Build Peace and what working with Build Up now in the present sense, but also possibly yeah. In the future means to you, to the system justice team and to Bertha center as a whole.

[00:11:50] **Ncedisa Nkonyeni:** [00:11:50] Thanks Fergus. Um, and thank you for that question. You know, I was really itching to jump in when Helena was speaking about what [00:12:00] a Build Peace means to her. Because as you were talking and talking the evolution, um, of, of, um, I'll say the space, um, You know, I had this image of a tumbleweed, right? This tumbleweed that just kind of goes, and I love tumbleweeds by the way.

[00:12:17] Um, some people might think that troublesome things, but I love them. But at this, the sense of a tumbleweed that goes, and as it goes, it releases certain things and picks up certain things. But the things that drives it is the wind. Right. And I really love this notion of, and, and in your, um, And you will speaking.

[00:12:39] I mean, the wind was clearly she'd asked that question. What might that building peace look like? What might it look like to build peace is? So, um, and just as a person, I, I want to be part of that. Um, so it was wonderful actually. Um, when, you know, you and Fergus started communicating

around as [00:13:00] potentially partnering in on this, um, because what you've described as well, it's just, um, In this tumbleweed, there's just this kind of this responsiveness to a need.

[00:13:12] Um, and it's allowing of a momentum to, to, to follow and be driven to being responsive to this need. Um, and you know, at Bertha center, there's, um, we're aligned in the sense that, you know, when we would set up and this might have been covered earlier on the intention was to, um, Was to kind of, um, influence how future leaders, um, civil society, community members, how people became implicated.

[00:13:46] Um, in this work of a chain changing systems, changing the social systems that we're in addressing specifically, uh, structural injustice and, um, as the systems team. And we started off as a systems team growing [00:14:00] in one direction and the social justice team growing in another direction. And what happened is that this, this, this team systems team kind of focused along with capacity and kind of approached it from perhaps, uh, uh, Well, not solely, but it could be said from a head perspective, social justice was very much it's on the ground interfacing.

[00:14:21] Right. Um, and at some point very quickly into very quickly into both the portfolio is evolving. We recognized that the two social justice and systems thinking systems change, innovating and systems to point, these two are actually kin.

[00:14:40] **Fergus Turner:** [00:14:40] Thank you for that. Um, descriptive sense of what we mean by systems justice and, um, really, I want to walk over to Merhawi, uh, welcome. And thank you for being with us today, Merhawi and I happen to have first met as Bertha scholars back in [00:15:00] 2015. And Merhawi has joined us from the perspective of the urban space theme as part of the conference and also the urban space learning cohort or systems justice lab with that in mind, Merhawi, if, if, if you don't mind letting us know a little bit about your interest in so much as the system's lens, uh, contributes towards your work, your professional and personal journey in your work, as far as urban space geospace or violence and social justice are concerned.

[00:15:36] **Merhawi Okbaselasi:** [00:15:36] Thank you for against, um, in terms of specifically around my work, uh, within urban space. Um, so I've been working in the urban development space for the last 15 years. Um, the first, um, the first 14 years I've worked from the bottom, um, worked for [00:16:00] organizations like Slumlords international, some work good for, um, with informal settlement communities across the continent.

[00:16:07] And. And what I've always observed and experienced and, and work with, you know, different actors is just the, you know, the, the fragility, the pockets of fragility that we see across, across the urban landscape, like urban space, you know, in the South, but particularly everywhere in the continent than it had been in South Africa.

[00:16:33] You can see the, you know, the, the exclusion of being just within the urban, spatial, unjust within the urban context. Um, and now I have, um, I have transitioned into working for an organization that's too private sector point of view provides advisory services, policy, and institutional consulting. And. Um, level.

[00:16:58] So I think for [00:17:00] me, when, when you, when you approached me and we had our initial conversation, I was already grappling with, with connecting my experience, grounded experience of seeing a lot of, um, exclusions and challenges, particularly around slums in our continent and in our world. And then now looking at this from, from the, from a policy institutional perspective.

[00:17:28] **Fergus Turner:** [00:17:28] Thank you for that. So Merhawi, I want to go, um, I want to ask a followup around, um, If you can give an example, a one or two, an example from your experience, an example of the way that digital technologies, um, play a role in influencing the organization. Uh, and of course the conflict around open space.

[00:17:51] **Merhawi Okbaselasi:** [00:17:51] Um, I think like, just to start from, you know, like there's a link between, you know, the vulnerabilities and the [00:18:00] fragilities that the pandemic exposed and then the digital divide. So. I think first, just to start by reflecting on how the COVID pandemic actually exposed the urban fragility for building urban resilience.

[00:18:16] Um, and, and we're, the cities are as strong as the weakest link. So if we have a lot of. Millions of people living, you know, excluded in the urban peripheries and pockets of project spaces. Then we would not be achieved a project, sorry, a resilient city. And so I think, and also the pandemic also expose, um, besides, you know, the lack of basic services and people.

[00:18:46] Um, we're used to working in formal economy, not being able to earn a living. And I think during, during the pandemic, um, A lot of us, [00:19:00] including myself, were fortunate enough to continue working, you know, like to continue with, uh, with our jobs and earning. But a lot of people didn't don't have that access.

[00:19:11] And so there's that like, act like lack of access to technology. So I think that just kind of like the pandemic actually expose that. Um, and I see this initiative, like from city of Cape town, for example, To invest significantly in, in their, um, in their broadband network, um, to, to make it inclusive. So I think the divide and the lack of access to technology in the urban periphery subsidy of Cape town kind of made that more urgent.

[00:19:42] So, and obviously I think like the technology in South Africa, we have a very useful, um, you know, population. Um, who we can use technology to leapfrog to improve our governance. It's like urban [00:20:00] governance. So yeah, I think there's a big divide and the pandemic exposed, like the digital divide. But, um, I think that also like this, um, puts a lot of

urgency on, on the government, citizens on all of us to speed up the, you know, to, to make sure that technology becomes inclusive.

[00:20:24] **Fergus Turner:** [00:20:24] And it is the case that both piece as a platform and tends to be a call for participation and for sharing of social innovators, change makers, peace boulders, social justice work as an activist across the continent and globally to connect some of those learnings, insights and solutions that have come to the fore, especially during this time, as you've pointed out.

[00:20:50] I want to pass this onto Lisa to sort of a reflection from you in your experience as project lead. As portfolio [00:21:00] lead with these systems, justice team at the Bertha center in connection, in correspondence with some of our partners, with some of the people that we are working with.

[00:21:10] How has that insight, that mirror, how we points out, being reflected from some of the working partners with the systems justice team, that insight around this time of pandemic, helping to highlight some of the fragilities, but also point to a more urgency around applying a systems, change lens to social justice and peacebuilding issues.

[00:21:36] **Ncedisa Nkonyeni:** [00:21:36] I guess what we kind of hold true to within our systems, justice team, as well as the people that we meet work with, um, is and appreciation that's in for, um, For the way things are to change in order for access to be opened up or shared, um, with, um, those who might not have access [00:22:00] to the technological, um, opportunities that Merhawi was speaking about in order for that to happen.

[00:22:06] There are parts of the system that are going to have to let go of things that are going to be really uncomfortable to let go of. You know, there's having to be letting go of how I engage with power. Um, if, for example, I'm, um, uh, uh, an actor in the system that holds a lot of power, for example, um, it's having to perhaps potentially, yeah, we'll go of how I make sense of, um, or position, uh, people who are, um, in the system.

[00:22:35] So for example, um, uh, you know, from the central of Cape town, see people who on the periphery Cape Town, um, as only capable or only able to fulfill specific roles, um, only, um, um, possessing certain levels of agency. Um, that's not true, right? That's something I need to let go off. Um, [00:23:00] and, and I guess what we're kind of ruminating about and, um, ruminating on is how do we take this time um, or how can this time contribute to really, um, destabilizing the patterns that endure and cause the system needs to change to endure? Um, so that's something we've been kind of in grappling with, uh, I think in, in how we, um, think about the stuff and also in how we teach, how do we. Yeah, initiate that unlearning that will help and, um, advance the, the, the systemic unlearning that needs to happen in order for us to move to more kind of just more harmonious, most peaceful systems.

[00:23:58] Um, less, um, [00:24:00] less fragile systems. We, we, we, we, um, we make a distinction between a system that is resilient and adaptive and a system that is resilient and, and brittle. Um, and, um, um, and what I think any of the social systems that we're in are quite, brittle systems they're very resilient. Right. But, but if we don't take the Intel and the communication that we're getting from the pandemic right now, around these issues and, and, and, and, and, and, and, and put that information in service, to letting go of those, you know, really intractable bits that keep our system in place. Then we continue to operate in brittle system and we are lucky and we're passing up on the opportunity or no, I don't, I don't like to use that word because it sounds dismissive of a lot of things. Um, a lot of things, the struggle that this time has, has, has brought, [00:25:00] but, um, were we all passing up on something to turn this hard time into gold.

[00:25:07] **Fergus Turner:** [00:25:07] I'd like to suggest I'd like to suggest the word invitation. I like that word. I'll

[00:25:13] **Ncedisa Nkonyeni:** [00:25:13] I'll second that suggestion on that note of invitation that I would like to highlight.

[00:25:20] **Fergus Turner:** [00:25:20] Another theme of the bull peace conference, uh, something that, um, really involves all of us, which is the way that identity may polarize and exacerbate conflicts and difficulties in all times, but particularly during times of great crisis and uncertainty.

[00:25:45] With that in mind, Helena, just sort of, and packing a little bit more specifically. What does identity polarization mean to you in the context of these times? And of course, in connection to Build Peace of platform to [00:26:00] unpack it.

[00:26:01] **Helena Puig Larrauri:** [00:26:01] One of the things that I've been paying a lot of attention to, um, is whether social media in particular. So that particular aspect of digital technology is a conducive environment for constructive identity identities to be expressed and formed. Um, And I think it's difficult. It's a really difficult question. Um, social media is fundamentally a surveillance capitalist enterprise, um, by which I mean that, um, it's, it's an enterprise that is built on the commodification of personal data for profit. Right. Um, and it does that by, um, essentially it needs to extract our ID, our attention in order to extract our data. Right. That's what social media is built to do. And that means that it has two dynamics that affect how we express identity. Um, one is that, uh, polarizing content content that requires you to take a position with your identity, [00:27:00] um, extracts attention, very effectively.

[00:27:02] Basically it captures our attention very well. Um, and so that promulgates on social media, um, much more effectively, the algorithms are built to promulgate that they're built to pull you down a rabbit hole that actually polarizes your identity. Um, and the second thing is that, um, Profiling



and using data in order to target messaging, um, is, is a very effective way to construct, um, identities that, that constructed belonging by exclusion, by the humanizing, right?

[00:27:34] And these two things feed off of each other. So you have people who are utilizing the profiling to put out, um, identity formation messages that are about excluding. And you have an algorithm that is, that is promulgating that further. Um, and, and, and so I think, you know, social media in fact, um, is, is contributing to the polarization of identity.

[00:27:55] **Fergus Turner:** [00:27:55] in closing I'd like to invite one by one mid Howie, [00:28:00] Lisa, and finally Elena to share how they hope you to bring your gifts. And what they hope to gift to you and many other delegates and contributors at the conference, Merhawi over to you.

[00:28:15] **Merhawi Okbaselasi:** [00:28:15] So I think, yeah, we've, we've unpacked, you know, a lot of the systemic problems and issues. Um, but, uh, in the urban space for my perspective, but like just, yeah, I think, um, there are also solutions and I think for me, the solutions would come from, from all of us coming together, the whole society approach, you know, instead of either waiting for government or for particular groups or individuals or organizations that have that power, that's the put too.

[00:28:51] So I think for me, yeah, I'll just to extend your, yeah, just to echo your invitation. We [00:29:00] this kind of space, um, to reflect on this kind of big issues is really important.

[00:29:05] **Ncedisa Nkonyeni:** [00:29:05] I think as individuals, you know, we carry our stories with us. We carry our values with us. We carry our intentions, our deliberations, as well as our operational competencies. And I think in bringing that into a space that's, um, in service to this question. How might we build peace? Um, you are bringing all of that into the space and contributing all of that into the space. And I think what the space is offering as well, it's just this beautiful interface between others, others who are like-minded who are pursuing this question very intently. And I think, and I'm not speaking from, and also carrying the Intel of how to transform the systems that they're in.

[00:29:55] **Helena Puig Larrauri:** [00:29:55] And I think maybe just building off of both of what you just said, and particularly [00:30:00] Lisa, what you just said about transformation. You know, I think Build Peace has been for me and for many who have participated a space of transformation. And what I've learned over the years is that transformation, um, requires one, many elements, but one element that we often don't speak about and that's imagination. And so I guess the gift that I ask that you bring.

[00:30:23] Is your imagination because it is through your imagination that you can imagine why somebody would be called into a white supremacist ideology, even if that's the furthest from you that you could possibly currently

imagine. And it's through the imagination that you can understand, um, what it takes to transform and to cross that bridge.

[00:30:45] **Fergus Turner:** [00:30:45] And with that, I'd suggest a slight shift to our usual slogan, changing the way we're imagining the world.

[00:31:02] [00:31:00] **Simnikiwe Xanga:** [00:31:02] Hi, this is and I work on the youth development portfolio for the Bertha center. I'm so excited to be chatting to Analisa Jackson in this episode, positive outlook segment. Analisa Jackson is the Associate Director at Mary Hoch Center for Reconciliation and Executive Director at Unconventional International in New York.

[00:31:25] She is part of the Build Peace community and is involved in various peace building initiatives, including the Unconventional International, an organization, connecting young women peace builders with a community of peers and with the spaces and tools necessary to foster their growth and wellbeing.

[00:31:47] Analisa, welcome to the, Just for Change podcast. And thank you so much for taking the time to talk to us today. I'd like to dive right in and talk to you about the impact that Build Peace and the Build Peace [00:32:00] community has had in your life. When did you attend your first Build Peace conference? And what was your first experience at the conference?

[00:32:10] **Analisa Jackson:** [00:32:10] Hello? so great to be with you today. Um, yes, my first, uh, Build Peace conference was last year 2019. Uh, I attended the conference in San Diego.

[00:32:22] **Simnikiwe Xanga:** [00:32:22] That's so exciting. I'm such a fan of your work and find the holistic approach to wellbeing and creating spaces for support and leadership to young women so valuable.

[00:32:33] Also the work you involved in to advance peace and reconciliation at Mary Hoch Center is equally important. So in the context of Build Peace, could you share a bit more with us on this work?

[00:32:48] **Analisa Jackson:** [00:32:48] Thank you. Yes. So as, as you mentioned, uh, I'm based in New York city. Um, my work involves both, uh, my work as the associate director with the Mary Hochs Center for Reconciliation, [00:33:00] which is a center at the Carter school for peace and conflict resolution at George Mason University. And I'm also the executive director of Unconventional International, which is a growing network of young women working together to create a community spaces that foster wellbeing and leadership development for young women working for peace and justice.

[00:33:21] Um, and this space was really born out of friendship. It was born out of a lot of friendships where young women were resonating with different kinds of pain points, and challenges that we've experienced in our work and in our experiences leading from a place that is passionate and mission driven,

but finding that so often there's isolation and burnout that comes in these spaces.

[00:33:43] Um, there can be lack of support. Uh, both, uh, from the organizations and the institutions and wider structures that we're experiencing. So within Unconventional, we're creating spaces of re-imagining, uh, what this place could look like, what this world could look like if we were [00:34:00] able to lead from a place of abundance and lead from a place of flourishing.

[00:34:04] And so we're looking at ways to, to build that. I'd love to share a little bit about how the Build Peace Conference played a role in my, in my own journey and my experience there. Um, When, uh, when I went to Build Peace last year, I was so encouraged. I think the whole conference, uh, was really a breath of fresh air for me coming from the New York and DC peace-building world, where it's very policy focused, um, often a little bit, uh, a little bit more, um, structured. rigid then I like I'm often yeah the. Person in the room. Who's inviting people to explore movement or. Or dance or, uh, or stretching during the, during the conference break times and, uh, being part of the Build Peace Conference. I just found myself I'll all of a sudden in a room with a lot of likeminded people, um, and found that [00:35:00] the space was refreshingly creative. It was refreshing really, um, movement oriented and embodied. So many of the sessions involved, actual movement throughout the sessions. Um, we, we had an experience where we were actually crossing the border physically, uh, between the U S and Mexico. Um, and they was sessions also that, that featured yoga or that spotlighted, um, mindfulness or wellbeing of peacebuilders.

[00:35:28] So as a whole, it was, it was certainly an, a refreshing and encouraging space for me to be in as someone who was thinking about a lot of these ideas and at the early stages of launching Unconventional, um, together with, uh, with a few of my friends and colleagues.

[00:35:44] **Simnikiwe Xanga:** [00:35:44] Thank you. Make reference to some of the challenges and pain points that, um, you highlighted in the work that you you've been involved in and also being part of, um, the Build Peace conferences and clearly, [00:36:00] um, this has impacted your personal and professional journey.

[00:36:03] Um, I also would like to get a sense of, um, what area would you say really in your professional and your personal journey stands out in attending these Build Peace conferences.

[00:36:17] **Analisa Jackson:** [00:36:17] One thing that really stood out to me from the bill of peace conference was that it was primarily led by young people or younger people than most of the conferences that I had been attending, um, in, in New York and DC, as I mentioned.

[00:36:31] Um, and to me, there's something so encouraging about the resonance that comes when, when people gather and they start sharing ideas, whether it's. And sessions are a lot of times in the, in between session spaces where we're getting a coffee or going for a walk. And I think that, uh, when we're in spaces where we can normalize some of the challenges that we're seeing, or some of the pain points that we see in the, in the field or in the world that we're working in, we realize we're not alone.

[00:36:59] And the [00:37:00] things that we're seeing, we realize we're not alone in the challenges that we're experiencing. And so being in a place like the Built Peace conference, I personally was able to resonate with some of these challenges with other conference participants, as well as, um, yeah, just, it resonated with a lot of the sessions, uh, that that took place there.

[00:37:20] Um, and so I, I think. There was, there were certainly, um, wider issues that were addressed during the, during the session that stood out to me, but I think most of all, it was, uh, through the personal friendships and relationships that I built during the conference, that I was able to deepen some of the ideas that I had been working on or thinking about and really draw out some of those ideas that, um, that I've been reflecting on.

[00:37:45] Saying them out loud to someone who's at the conference and hearing them resonate with it and realizing that there might be more here. There's something further to lean into as, um, as we're going forward.

[00:37:58] **Simnikiwe Xanga:** [00:37:58] You mentioned earlier the [00:38:00] power of re-imagining possibilities. Can you share a little bit about how this has been part of your work and how this might have been encouraged by the platform of Built Peace?

[00:38:11] **Analisa Jackson:** [00:38:11] When we come together, oftentimes we are bringing in a lot of our own experiences or own stories into a space, but when we meet together, we're able to share more about this and resonate with one another.

[00:38:27] And I think that. So much of re-imagining happens when we start realising the things that we've been imagining might resonate or harmonize with things that other people are imagining. Um, and I think that that's actually a critical piece in movement building. I've really discovered that in my own work with launching Unconventional, um, findings, that the work that are finding that, that some of the areas of, of challenge or pain that I was seeing or experiencing resonated with other young [00:39:00] women in our field. Um, it, it inspired me to, to lean into those questions a little bit more, um, to lean into what could we do to reimagine a world where we're leading from a place of abundance or we're leading in a way that is centered a friendship, or it's centering the wellbeing of people who work for peace and justice.

[00:39:22] Um, and so being part of the bill peace conference, I think for came at a, at a beautiful time, in my own journey, in that reimagination process, I was able to share some ideas with other people at the conference and, and be inspired, um, to continue on that journey. Um, but also was inspired by the gathering itself and by seeing that collective reimagination that was happening in a gathering with a lot of young people who had fresh ideas about what it looks like to build peace and justice in our world. Um, and seeing how so much of the [00:40:00] culture shifting or movement building does happen. And it starts from a place of being gathered together in one space.

[00:40:07] **Simnikiwe Xanga:** [00:40:07] Well, Analisa, thank you so much. This was such an amazing conversation. And thank you for taking the time, um, to share your insights and your experience.

[00:40:20] **Fergus Turner:** [00:40:20] We believe that the Build Peace community is defining new peacebuilding pathways, enhancing citizen participation in peace by means of technology and creativity. Past conferences have served as catalysts for new projects and partnerships thanks to the great discussions and networking opportunities. As I wrap up this episode, I really want to encourage you to book your ticket for this year's event so you, too, can be a part of this incredibly necessary peacebuilding movement. Your voice counts. Please do check the show notes for the link to all the conference information that you need.

[00:41:00] [00:41:00] **Outro:** [00:41:00] Thank you for tuning in to **Just for a change**, powered by the Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship: the podcast where we offer new perspectives on social innovation and social justice. If you're curious about solving social issues in your community or believe we can make a positive, tangible difference in the world, then make sure you subscribe so that you don't miss any of our upcoming episodes! Also, remember to have a look at the show notes if you're interested in finding out more about the Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship.