

Peace as a Transcultural Language

from global agendas to local realities.

Theme Statement (NIU-Tetova Relationship)

The NIU-Tetova Center for Peace and Transcultural Communications advances peace as a transcultural language through a cross-border partnership connecting the Western Balkans and the U.S. Midwest. At a moment marked by democratic backsliding, rising polarization and contested truths, this partnership positions peace not as a distant ideal but as an actionable, locally grounded democratic practice.

We explore how global political agendas—ranging from human rights frameworks and international agreements to democratic norms—are translated, contested and enacted within local institutions, communities and everyday civic life. Drawing on NIU's strengths in civic engagement and public-service education and the University of Tetova's regional leadership in North Macedonia regarding post-conflict dialogue and municipal collaboration, we explore how language, narrative and inclusive participation can stabilize democratic practice and build durable peace infrastructures across diverse localities.

This volume builds from the NIU-Tetova Center for Peace and Transcultural Communications' ongoing collaboration, offering a shared framework for scholars, practitioners and policymakers working across divergent political and cultural contexts.

Guiding Objectives for the Edited Volume and Conference

This edited volume and accompanying conference aim to:

1. **Articulate Peace as a Transcultural Language**
Develop a shared conceptual framework that positions peace as an ethical, linguistic, and democratic practice operating across local, regional and global contexts.
2. **Translate Global Commitments into Local Practice**
Examine how international mandates (e.g., human rights frameworks and regional compacts) are interpreted, contested and enacted through municipal governance, education, public communication and community-based initiatives.
3. **Surface Transferable Models for Peace Praxis**
Highlight adaptable practices—including participatory governance, civic education, conflict mediation and deliberative pedagogy—that support democratic well-being across diverse cultural and political settings.

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4. Advance Equity, Inclusion and Accountability

Center multilingual, community-led approaches and develop evaluation tools that move beyond compliance metrics toward trust, belonging and civic capacity.

Conference Themes

Contributors are encouraged to examine peace as relational, contested and practiced, attending to power, equity, historical context and local realities.

Uniting Voices, Building Peace: From Global Visions to Local Actions

- This theme explores how peace is enacted through community participation, youth engagement and collective action across diverse local contexts. Contributions can address:
 - How global commitments and international norms fracture, adapt or gain meaning in local communities.
 - The role of activism and civic formation in shaping new grammars of peace and democracy.
 - Community-led peacebuilding efforts that foreground relational trust, participation and belonging.
 - Tensions between top-down peace agendas and bottom-up democratic action.

Community Participation, Public Discourse and Counter-narratives

- This theme centers language and narrative as sites where peace is built, challenged or undermined. Contributions can address:
 - How public discourse, counter-narratives and storytelling function as tools for peacebuilding or harm.
 - The role of language in democratic deliberation, polarization and reconciliation.
 - Multilingual, intercultural and community-based communication practices that expand civic voice.
 - Who gets to define peace, democracy and well-being—and whose voices are marginalized or erased.

From Global Agendas to Local Realities: Democracy, Peace and Well-being in Practice

- This theme examines how peace is embedded within democratic institutions, governance structures, and policy processes. Contributions can address:
 - When and how institutions stabilize peace, and when they reproduce exclusion or injustice.

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- The translation of global mandates (e.g., human rights frameworks, regional compacts) into municipal policy, budgeting, education and public safety.
- Institutional accountability, legitimacy and trust in fragile or contested democratic contexts.
- Case studies highlighting governance as a practice of peace, rather than a neutral system.

Building a Shared Civic Vocabulary: Education, Participation and Democratic Competencies

- This theme foregrounds education and civic learning as central mechanisms for cultivating peace and democratic well-being. Contributions can address:
 - How education systems build, or fail to build, democratic competencies and civic agency.
 - Peace curriculum and pedagogy across formal and informal educational spaces.
 - Pedagogical approaches that support critical dialogue, empathy and collective problem-solving.
 - The role of educators and institutions in sustaining democratic culture amid social fragmentation.

Systems of Accountability, Measurement and Democratic Evaluation

- This theme interrogates how peace is measured, evaluated and made visible, and the power embedded in those processes. Contributions can address:
 - What *counts* as peace, well-being and democratic success—and who decides.
 - The use of data, indicators and mixed-method approaches to evaluate peace and democracy initiatives.
 - Tensions between compliance-driven metrics and relational, community-defined indicators.
 - Innovative approaches to accountability that foreground trust, belonging and civic capacity.

Intended Audience

- Scholars in peace studies, education, political science, sociology, public administration.
- Policymakers and municipal leaders.
Educators, youth workers and civic organizers.
- NGOs and transcultural organizations working in democracy and peacebuilding.

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Contribution Types

- Research Chapters (empirical or theoretical).
- Conceptual Chapters (frameworks, models).
- Practice Profiles (case-based, reflective).
- Policy Notes (short, translational).
- Teaching and Training Modules (transferable tools).

Chapter Guidelines

- Length: maximum 15 pages, inclusive of references.
- Authorship: up to three co-authors per chapter.
- Required components:
 - APA scholarly citations
 - Short author biography and photograph (for each author).

Submission Process and Timeline

Proposal Submission Deadline: Sunday, Feb. 15, 2026

Proposal Requirements (1 to 2 pages):

- Working title.
- Author(s) and institutional affiliation(s).
- Chapter outline with major sections.
- Clear explanation of how the chapter funnels toward peace as a central concept.

Full Chapter Submission: Tuesday, March 31, 2026.

[Please submit your proposal online.](#)

Editorial Review Board:

- Vullnet Ameti (University of Tetova).
- Donika Kamberi (University of Tetova).
- Mary Earick (Northern Illinois University).
- Patrick Roberts (Northern Illinois University).
- Eric Junco (Northern Illinois University).