

PPU AGM 2026:

What Does the Peace Pledge Mean Today?

Exploring how the pledge helps us imagine and
build a different world.

Sarri Bater
www.openedge.org.uk

- Speak from your own experience “I” language rather than making generalisations or speaking for everyone.
- Please be mindful of time and space so everyone has a chance to speak. Aim to be concise, but without minimising your voice.
- If you tend to speak easily in groups, practice **leaning back** and making space.

- When others are speaking, **listen fully** and without interruption: **The intention is to understand what matters to that person, not to evaluate, agree or disagree, or decide if they are right or wrong.**
- **1–2 minutes each max. I will interrupt if I need to, to care for the space and time we have together.**

“War is a crime against humanity.

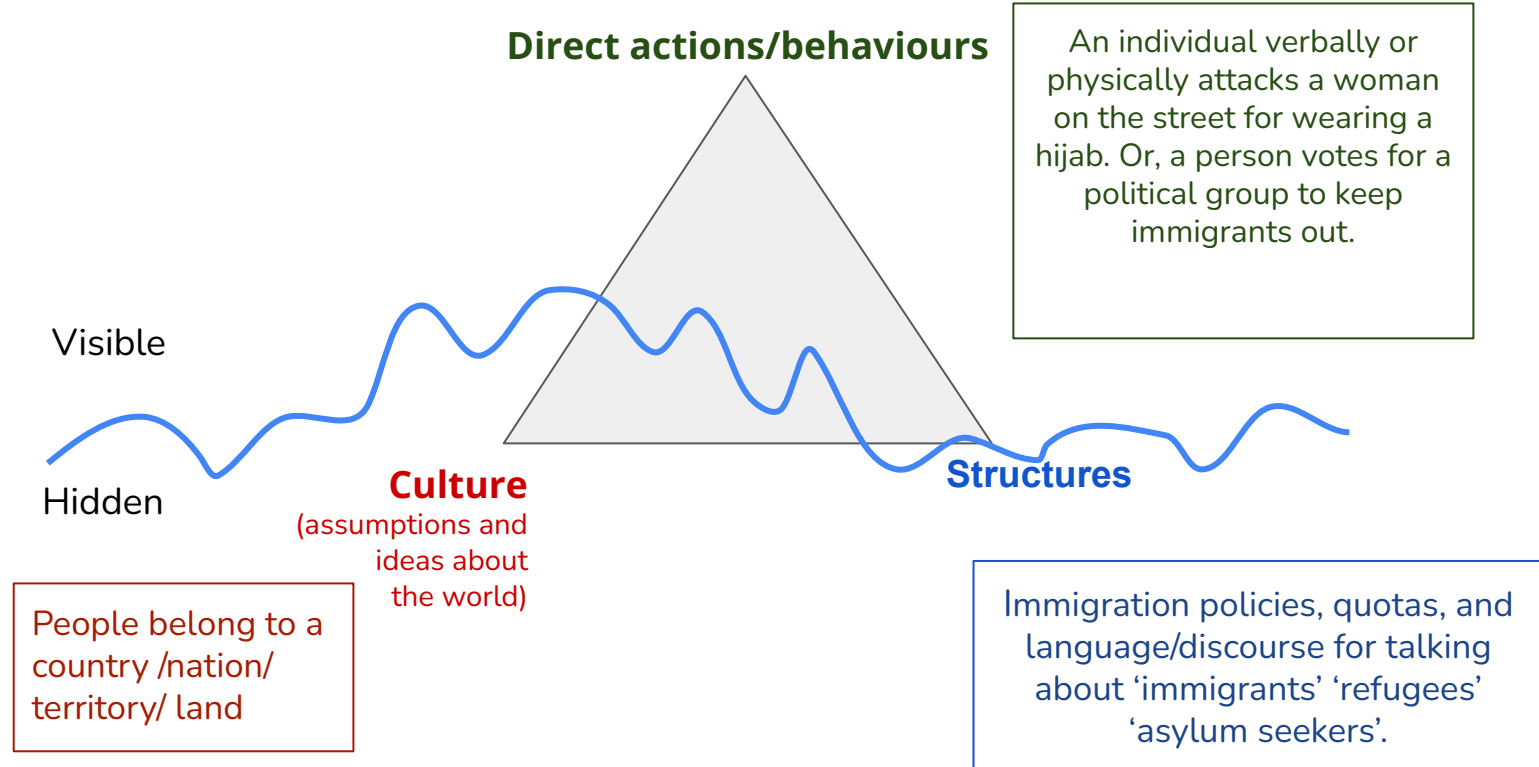
*I renounce war, and am therefore determined not
to support any kind of war.*

*I am also determined to work for the removal of
all causes of war.”*

- *When has the pledge influenced something you said, did, or chose?*
- *Did it feel difficult, empowering, isolating, grounding?*
- *If the pledge has not really shaped your life, what might that reveal? -Does the pledge sometimes remain more an idea than a lived practice?*

3 Elements of a System

All 3 levels exist together and reinforce each other.



3 Elements of a system

All 3 levels exist together and reinforce each other.

Key Learning

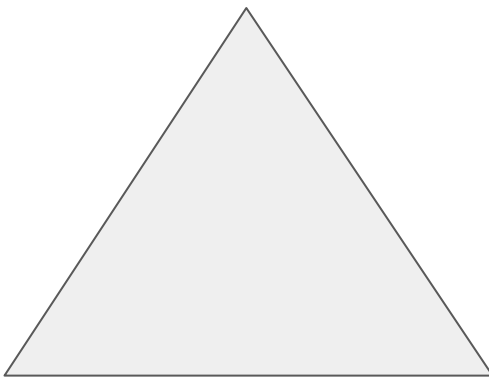
**Transformation at all
3 levels of 'the system'**

Direct actions/behaviours

These do not stand alone, they are supported/underpinned by structures and culture. Equally they inform and underpin structures and culture that develop.

*There is much power here, as our assumptions are **often invisible & we don't know they are at play.***

Recognising these assumptions is a root for making deep & sustaining transformation.



Culture
(assumptions and
ideas about
the world)

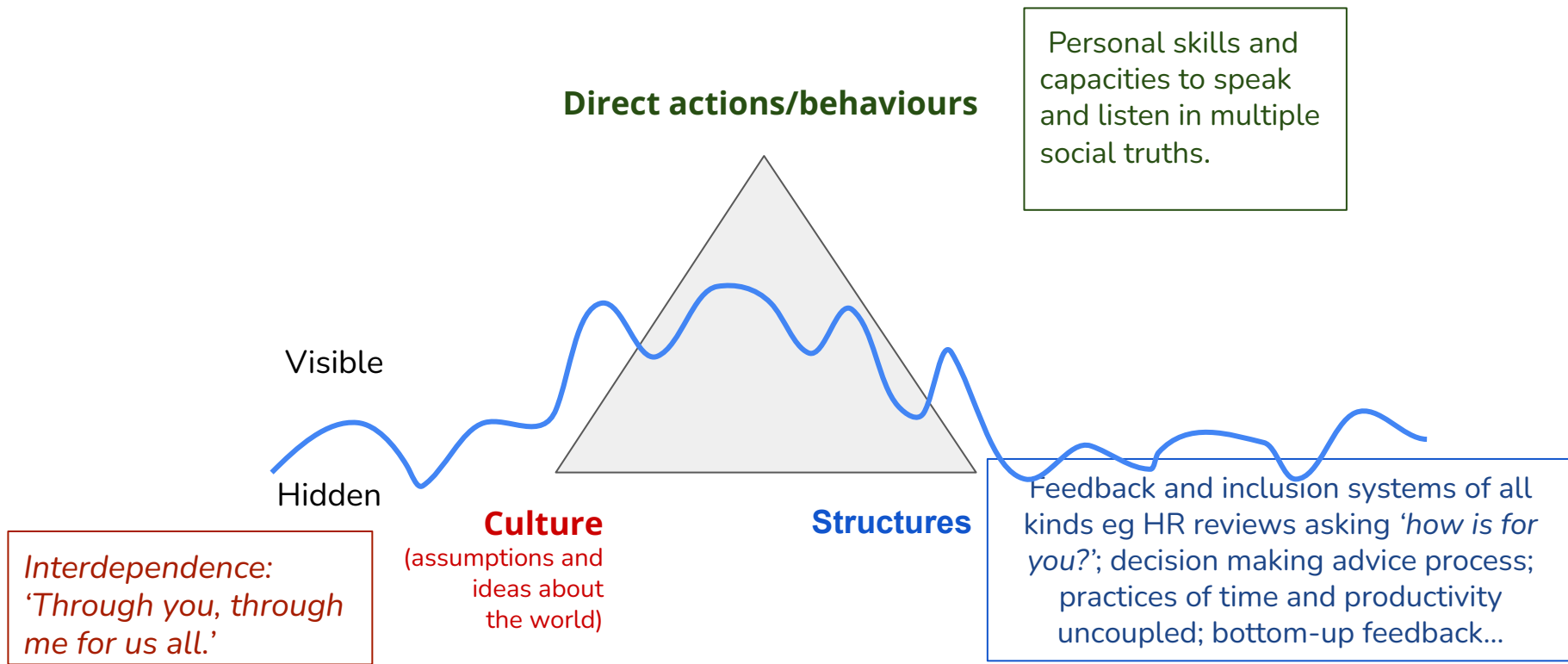
Structures

Some structures are visible, but some are invisible so we don't even know we are part of them.

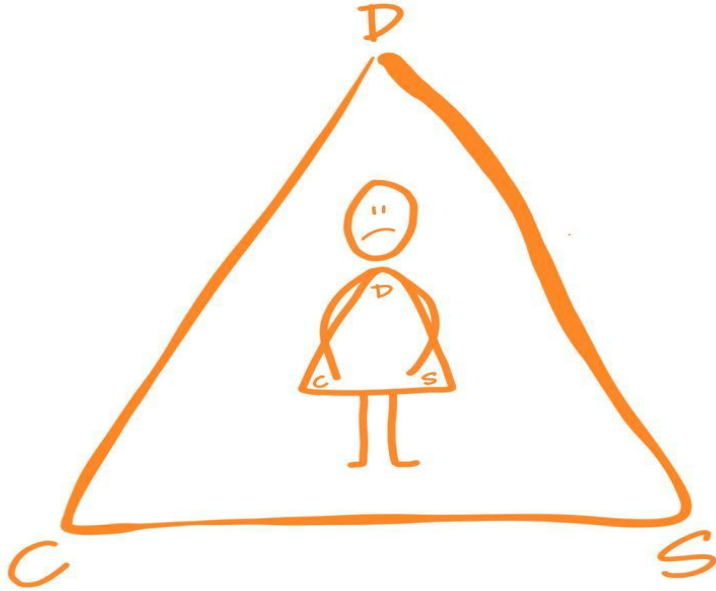
Johan Galtung, 1990, Positive and Negative Peace.

3 Elements of a System

All 3 levels exist together and reinforce each other.



We are in the system and the system is inside us...



“Our choice is to
examine our unconsciousness
or defend what we don’t know
we are part of.”
~David Monteith.

“Without inner change
there can be no outer change.
Without collective change,
no change matters.”
~Rev Angel Kyodo Williams

Violence, therefore war, is not just a single event. It is continuum, a system.

Peace, therefore, is not just the absence of violence, but also a system -the presence of different peaceful and peace making conditions.

So what would need to be present —culturally, structurally, and in our actions— for a system of peace to exist?

Direct actions/behaviours

ECOCIDE as a system of war

Culture

Structures

- Deforestation, mining, drilling, large-scale ecosystem destruction
- Pollution and contamination of land and water
- Forced displacement of communities and Indigenous peoples
- Intimidation of environmental and land defenders
- Militarised responses to migration and climate displacement
- Resource wars and armed conflict linked to territorial control
- Expansion of border policing and detention systems
- Public support for extractive or militarised policies framed as necessary for “security” or “economic growth”

- Nature is a resource for human use.
- Economic growth is more important than ecological limits.
- Humans are separate from nature.
- Some lands, waters, peoples, and ecosystems are expendable for the “greater good”.
- Nations or corporations are entitled to control resources.
- Security can be maintained through control, force, or protection of resources.
- Scarcity and competition are inevitable.
- Displacement of people is a consequence of “development” or environmental crisis

- Fossil fuel economies and extraction industries
- Colonial and neo-colonial systems of land/resource control
- Militarised protection of extraction routes
- Weak environmental regulation and enforcement
- Political systems heavily influenced by extractive corporate interests
- Border regimes responding to climate displacement through securitisation
- Land ownership systems that concentrate power and access to resources

>Ecocide is not separate from systems of war:

When societies become organised around extraction, disposability, competition, and unequal access to resources, violence becomes easier to justify and militarised protection of power and resources becomes more likely.

Environmental destruction can intensify conflict through displacement, scarcity, fear, and instability, while systems of war often depend upon the protection of extractive economic interests.

Direct actions/behaviours

Racism & Othering as a system of war

Culture

Structures

- Hate crimes, harassment
- Dehumanising language about particular groups or populations
- Racial profiling, over-policing
- Silencing, dismissing, or erasing people's experiences
- Scapegoating groups during times of fear, crisis, or instability
- Online and everyday normalisation of humiliation, exclusion, or domination

- Some people or groups are more valuable, civilised
- Difference is threatening or dangerous
- Safety and belonging come through sameness
- Strength is linked to domination, control
- Masculinity is associated with protection, toughness, or emotional suppression
- Certain groups are naturally dangerous, backward, irrational, or inferior
- Conflict is inevitable between "us" and "them"
- Hierarchies between people are normal or necessary
- Fear can justify exceptional treatment of certain groups.

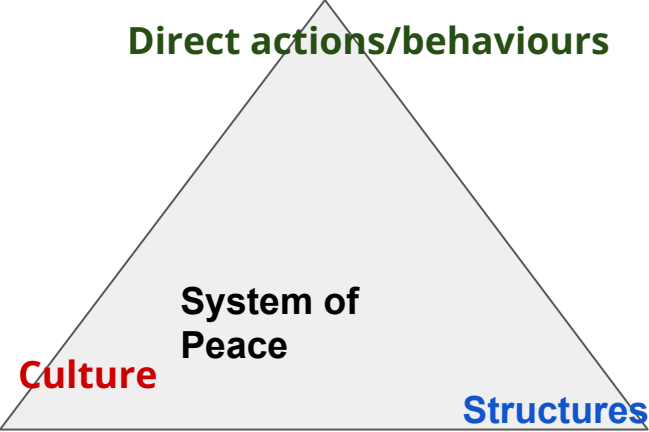
- Border regimes and immigration policies
- Unequal legal, policing, and criminal justice systems
- Colonial and racialised systems of governance and resource distribution
- Education systems centred around dominant histories and identities
- Media systems that reinforce stereotypes, fear
- Gendered divisions of labour, leadership, and safety
- Political systems that reward scapegoating or "strongman" responses
- Military and nationalist structures organised around protection from "threatening others"

>War depends on systems of separation and dehumanisation.

When societies become organised around fear, exclusion, hierarchy, and the idea that some lives matter more than others, violence becomes easier to justify.

Racism, sexism, nationalism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and other forms of Othering help create the cultural and structural conditions in which domination, exclusion, punishment, and violence can become normalised.

Direct actions/behaviours



- Listening across disagreement
- Sharing resources and mutual aid
- Repairing harm without humiliation or disposability
- Standing against dehumanisation and scapegoating
- Collaborative problem-solving
- Protecting vulnerable groups
- Participating in community decision-making
- Practising accountability and reflection

- Human wellbeing is interconnected
- Human and more than human well being is interconnected
- Belonging does not require sameness
- Conflict offers a learning, transformation, and deeper relationship
- Safety cannot sustainably be built through domination or exclusion
- Human beings are shaped by the systems they are part of
- We are responsible not only for our intentions, but also for the conditions we help create
- Power should be held with awareness,

- Participatory budgeting and community decision-making bodies
- Restorative and transformative justice programmes and practices
- Mediation and conflict transformation services in schools, workplaces, and communities
- Public libraries, parks, community centres, and shared civic spaces
- Universal healthcare, welfare, housing, and social safety-net systems
- Worker cooperatives and community-owned enterprises

- Independent journalism and public-interest media institutionsTrade unions, tenant unions, and collective organising structures
- Accountability systems and transparent governance processes
- Educational curricula that include multiple histories, critical thinking, and relational learning
- Accessible public transport and infrastructure that reduce isolation and inequality
- Immigration and asylum systems designed around dignity and protection rather than deterrence
- Environmental protections, conservation systems, and regenerative land stewardship programmes
- Community food systems, mutual aid networks, and local resilience infrastructures
- Early intervention and safeguarding systems for violence prevention
- Translation, accessibility, and disability inclusion infrastructures
- Structures for citizen assemblies, dialogue forums, and participatory democracy
- Institutional feedback and whistleblowing pathways that protect people raising concerns
- Time allocation and workload systems that make reflection, care, and participation materially possible
- Funding structures that support long-term community relationship-building rather than short-term competition

War is not sustained only by weapons.

It is also sustained by the stories, systems, fears, inequalities, and habits of separation that teach us whose suffering matters, whose safety counts, and when violence becomes acceptable.

Another way of saying this is:

War is not only a military event.

It is also a relational, cultural, and structural possibility that societies can become organised around.

Or:

If war is organised violence, then the causes of war include the conditions that organise people toward domination, disposability, fear, extraction, and separation.

Q1: If PPU took this wider understanding seriously, what might need to shift?

- What might PPU need to **do more of**?
- What might PPU need to **do differently**?
- What might PPU need to **pay attention to that it currently doesn't**?

Q2: Whose experiences are essential for this wider understanding of peace, but are not fully present in PPU spaces?

- Who is most affected by the *causes of war* we've named?
- Who is currently underheard or absent?
- What might make it difficult for them to be here?

The pledge is not only a statement about war.

*It is an invitation to imagine and build a different
world of Positive Peace.*

***Each generation must rediscover what it means
to live it.***

Please leave me any feedback,
audio or written

sarri@openedge.org.uk