

Peter Cousins

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PERSONAL PROFILE

I am a PhD researcher, with a Masters degree in Conflict Resolution. I am a qualified mediator with five years in community mediation and have close experience of armed conflict from the Colombian context. I am a talented linguist, with an academic background in modern languages (fluent Spanish, German, French; basic Arabic). I am committed to peacebuilding through dialogue and nonviolence, and seek to bridge gaps between academia and activism. I am highly motivated with strong and sensitive communication skills. I have solid experience of training and facilitation, as well as management, strategic planning and supervisory experience. I adapt well to diverse and challenging scenarios, including and new environments and cultures. I take initiative and manage dense workloads with flexibility.

EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

University of Granada (Institute for Peace and Conflict Research), Spain Jan. 2019 – Present
PhD Candidate in Social Sciences (Culture of Peace)
Research area: historical, international peace movements and their contribution to civilian diplomacy.

Département d'Études de Français – Langue Étrangère (DEFLE), University of Bordeaux 3, France Jan. 2011 – June 2011
Intensive study to deepen key skills in French and understanding of French civilisation. Study of French and other Francophone literature.
Results: DEFLE 'Degré 3'; Diplôme Approfondi de Langue Française (DALF) C1.

University of Bradford (Dept. of Peace Studies), UK Sep. 2007 – Sep. 2008
M.A. Conflict Resolution
Diverse courses on peace studies and conflict resolution theory, and geographical conflicts in Latin America, the Middle East and Africa. Included submission of a 15,000 word dissertation.
Result: Awarded M.A. with Merit.

University of Oxford (Merton College), UK Sep. 2000 – June 2004
B.A. Modern Languages (Spanish and German), with one year at the University of Salamanca, Spain
The study of Spanish and German literature; developing sensitive translation, essay-writing and oral skills.
Awarded a prize by Merton College three years consecutively for continued high quality of academic work.
Result: Awarded B.A. Honours (Class 2.1).

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE IN THE CONFLICT AND SOCIAL FIELD

Fellowship of Reconciliation Peace Presence (FORPP), Colombia Aug. 2016 – Mar. 2018
Executive Director

- Strategic development – designing and overseeing progress towards programmatic, financial, operational, communication and political objectives.
- Organisational – direct line management of two coordinators, liaison with Board members and convening of Board meetings, recruitment as necessary.
- Networking and communications – maintaining visibility of FORPP in political spaces, organising delegations and speaking tours.
- Fundraising – leading grant-writing process, expanding donor base, prospecting for major donors.
- Operations – budgeting, funding tracking, monitoring of internal policies and procedures.
- Skills: strategic thinking; policy development; managing heavy workloads; communication; financial responsibility; networking; report writing.

University of York July 2015 – June 2016
Project Field Researcher: 'Navigating Risks, Managing Security, and Receiving Support: A Study of Human Rights Defenders', Colombia

- Identifying and carrying out interviews/focus groups with at-risk human rights defenders across Colombia for academic- and public-policy oriented research on protection mechanisms.
- Final outcome documents: Summary of Findings; conference presentation and book chapter (see below – 'Publications and Presentations').
- Skills: conducting interviews; security analysis and protocol; networking; academic writing.

Community Accord, UK Aug. 2011 – Jan 2015
Senior Community Mediator and Company Director, London and Bradford

- Dispute resolution between tenants of housing associations and in cases of special educational needs (SENs): engagement with parties in initial phases; designing and conducting joint sessions or shuttle mediation between parties; attending to all necessary administration.

- Business development – maintenance and development of relationships with referring organisations, securing/renewing contracts.
- Recruitment, training and supervision of new volunteer mediators and staff.
- Designing and facilitating bespoke training for those interested in mediation (students, government and public sector officials, etc.).
- As director (since April 2012 to date), discharging legal responsibilities as to the financial health of the company; strategic direction.
- Skills: active listening; diplomacy; sensitivity to impartiality, confidentiality; cultural awareness; patience, persistence, empathy.

Independent Monitoring Boards

Dec. 2012 – Jan 2015

Board Member – HMP Pentonville Prison

- Participation in a rota of prison monitoring visits and periodic attendance (as an observer) at prison meetings or adjudication hearings.
- Hearing and responding to 'last resort' applications from prisoners, including follow-up with the competent authority and the prisoner.
- Keeping full and timely notes of all of the above and submitting/contributing to Board reports.
- Attendance at monthly board meetings and mandatory initial and ongoing training.
- Areas of special responsibility: equalities and foreign national prisoners.
- Skills: impartiality and independence; report-writing; monitoring and observation; formulating questions; clarifying information; persistence; diplomacy.

British Red Cross, International Family Tracing service (IFT), London

Dec. 2012 – Dec 2014

Volunteer Tracing and Messaging Caseworker, London

- Undertaking comprehensive interviews with beneficiaries, with interpreters where necessary.
- Analysis of information provided by beneficiaries and online or specialist country updates for a country.
- Offering the tracing/messaging service if appropriate; carrying out follow-up and administrative tasks, including database management.
- Trained to attend immigration removal centres to deliver tracing/messaging services to detainees.
- Skills: conducting interviews; analysing information; active listening; sensitive questioning; knowledge of countries in conflict.

Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) USA

Jan. 2009 – Nov. 2010

International Human Rights Observer and Accompanier – San José de Apartadó and Bogotá, Colombia

- One year living in an isolated, mountainous combat zone, providing protective accompaniment to *campesinos*. One year in Bogotá office: logistical, analytical and emotional support to field team, administrative duties; accompanying other projects in Medellín and Bogotá.
- Represented FOR before *campesinos*, high-ranking military/police officers, civilian State institutions, local and international NGOs and the diplomatic corps, to develop and share observations about adherence to human rights norms. Periodic attendance at Urabá Humanitarian Round Table convened by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
- Permanent conflict monitoring and analysis in internal weekly reports.
- Trained new accompaniers in the field and in the office. Twice revised and thoroughly updated FOR's training manual for accompaniers. Contributed to preparation and delivery of a selection and initial training process for applicants in New York (Feb. 2011).
- Assisted in organisation, led and interpreted for two delegations of US citizens to Colombia. Assisted in preparation of and participated in four internal team retreats, to analyse outcomes and establish new goals/priorities.
- Skills: self-awareness; handling physical pressures of a rural area and mental pressures of a conflict zone including stories of personal trauma; analysis, diplomacy and advocacy; team-work in a small, tight-knit context.

Cornwall County Council, Research and Information, UK

Nov. 2006 – Sep. 2007

Research Officer: Equality and Diversity

- Wrote and implemented a research proposal enabling Cornwall County Council to improve service provision under equality and diversity obligations (literature and policy review, scoping extent of service delivery, recommended actions) in partnership with statutory and third-sector organisations.
- Contributed to the preparation, commissioning, data collection and statistical analysis of surveys undertaken by the Council.
- Skills: research and writing; sensitivity to issues faced by groups at risk of discrimination.

Emmaus Cambridge, UK

Nov. 2005 – Sep. 2006

Deputy Community Leader

- With Community leaders, handled all aspects of running the Community, including physical, emotional and mental well-being of 'companions' (service-users); considering applications to join the Community and receiving new companions; sharing responsibility for being 'on-call'; agreeing sanctions as necessary; running the on-site social enterprise, including receipt of material donations and oversight of finances; handling queries from the public; attending speaking events to raise awareness about the Emmaus movement.
- Skills: leadership and team-work; handling many diverse tasks at once in a fast-paced environment.

Full-time volunteering in Glasgow: **Development Worker, Glasgow Campaign to Welcome Refugees (GCTWR)**
Support Worker, Talbot Association

- At GCTWR: managed communications between core group and rest of membership; secretarial duties; organisation and participation in diverse events on asylum rights; visiting asylum seekers in detention; mentoring of asylum seekers and refugees as appropriate.
- At the Talbot Association hostel for elderly or otherwise vulnerable people: assisted service-users meet basic need and perform everyday activities; mentoring as appropriate, especially of the eldest and most vulnerable.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD OF LANGUAGES

Freelance Translator and Interpreter, Bogotá

Apr. 2018 – Dec. 2018

- Translation and interpretation with Grupo Austral, Amphibia BASE Group, and individual clients.
- Translation of the book *Academic Skepticism in the Enlightenment: Cicero in Hume's and Kant's Critique of Metaphysics* (Publicaciones Uniandes, currently in editorial process).

Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje (SENA)/Volunteers Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia
English Teacher

Feb. 2015 – June 2015

- Design, preparation and delivery of English language courses and assessments for students of vocational courses.

OTHER ACTIVITIES AND COURSES

Choral singer

as opportune, to date

Bass, currently with City of Granada Choir. Previously, *inter alia*, with New Tottenham Singers, London (also Secretary and later President); New Cornwall Opera, Cornwall; the Choirs of the Universities of Strathclyde (Glasgow) and Salamanca (Spain); and the Kodály Choir (Oxford).

Founding Member, Medyart-Mediación y Arte para la Paz (Medyart-Mediation and Art for Peace), Granada

May 2019 – Present

Founding member of a new organisation, dedicated to transforming social conflict in Granada and environs through artistic methodologies.

Co-Vice-President, International Fellowship of Reconciliation

May 2017 – Present

Board member providing strategic and financial oversight of a 100-year old global movement dedicated to world peace and nonviolence. Special responsibility for internal, movement-wide communications. Key achievements: helped to organise IFOR's 2018 International Council, and have (with Co-Vice-President) began editing a new IFOR magazine for its membership in three languages. www.ifor.org.

Founding Member, Rodeemos el Diálogo, London/Bogotá

Sep. 2012 – Dec. 2018

Civil society organisation dedicated to promoting a negotiated solution to the Colombian armed conflict, and a culture of dialogue amongst Colombians. Various activities including facilitation of victim-oriented events and public dialogues in UK and Colombia. I remain a Board member of the associated Foundation in Colombia. www.rodeemoseldialogo.org.

Accredited Observer, Misión de Observación Electoral (MOE)

June 2014/Oct. 2015/Mar. and May 2018

Observer at Colombian Consulate General, London, for presidential elections (2014) and across various polling stations for Bogotá mayoral- (2015), and legislative and presidential (2018) elections.

Open College Network, UK

Sep. 2007 – Dec. 2008

40 hours initial training, weekly commitment to casework and CDP; submission of reflections on practice; training of new volunteers mediators.

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- Chapter: Cousins, P. & Schmitz, E., 'Reconceiving Protection of Human Rights Defenders in Colombia: Some Considerations of Community Mechanisms and the Efficacy of the State' in Nah, A. (ed), *The Security and Protection of Human Rights Defenders at Risk* (Routledge, chapter submitted and accepted for publication, in editorial process).
- Lead organiser for the Special Roundtable on Colombia at the conference *Peaceful Relations and the Transformation of the World*, September 2016, University de Bradford.
 - Presentation: 'Protecting Human Rights' Defenders in a Time of Transition'.
- Chapter: 'Toward Prospects for Peace: Martin Luther King, Jr., Latin America and an Example of Colombian Nonviolence' in Baldwin, L.V. and Dekar P.R. (eds), *'In an Inescapable Network of Mutuality': Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Globalization of an Ethical Ideal* (Eugene-OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013).

REFEREES

Please see project proposal for details of referees.