

Peace Through Commerce®



Catalyzing Multi-Sector Collaboration to Advance Peace Through Commerce

“Peace is the natural effect of trade.”

~ Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu,
18th century French political theorist

Context

Economic opportunity and prosperity are powerful forces for promoting peace. Recent research by Columbia University political science professor Erik Gartzke shows that economic freedom is about fifty times more effective than democracy in diminishing violent conflict. ¹

International trade, based on the rule of law and secure property rights within nations, encourages a peaceful coincidence of interests. Commerce leads to peace in various ways, including:

1. Trade requires at least a minimal level of cross-cultural understanding, communications, and collaboration. As it has done for millennia, the marketplace facilitates not only the exchange of goods and services, but also of ideas, beliefs, and customs, including music, food, and fashion. The bridges built between people and cultures through the marketplace foster understanding and peace.
2. Commerce cultivates mutual dependence among trading partners, which leads to a mutual interest in their respective survival and wellbeing. It also fosters friendship and deeper exchange.
3. Economic growth fueled by commerce leads to increased standard of living, which creates internal political stability, which highly correlates to peaceful relations with geopolitical neighbors.

Access to legal rights and protections for the poor foster entrepreneurial initiative generating ongoing investment in building small and medium enterprises, which elevates families, builds communities, and provides a stable, violence resistant context within and between nations.

Ethical trade, open access to markets in the developed economies for developing economies, conscious investment in developing economies, and broadly distributed entrepreneurial opportunity provide an unprecedented and unparalleled framework for advancing peace.

Research conducted and compiled in the Global Peace Index by the Institute for Economics and Peace affirms the complementary premise that peace is good for business thus promoting a virtuous cycle of investment and enterprise advancing peace, and peace advancing investment and enterprise.

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Based on this context, a fast-growing group of organizations is working together to catalyze ongoing multi-sector collaboration to advance understanding and application of the idea of peace through commerce. Among the organizations working together to catalyze this collaboration are:

The Institute for Corporate Responsibility at George Washington University
United States Institute of Peace • GW CIBER • AACSB • FLOW • APCO Worldwide
The Institute for Economic and Peace • International Institute of Peace Through Tourism
The Business Roundtable Ethics Institute • GW International Institute of Tourism Studies

We believe that widespread peace can become the prevalent form of relations within and between nations. And we believe that broadly based economic development with job and wealth creation fostered by legal reforms to provide access to opportunities to those currently disenfranchised, as well as by entrepreneurial education and training, mentorship, and support networks, will play a significant role in advancing peace.

On November 13 – 15, 2008, GWU will host a conference to advance this collaboration.

We envision forming a more formal collaborative network or alliance to foster communications, information sharing, and collaborative action to advance peace through commerce. Among the activities we envision engaging in together are:

- Research
 - Generating new research to refine the strategies for advancing peace through commerce
 - Packaging and promoting existing and ongoing research that illuminates the idea and application of peace through commerce
- Animating Stories
 - Packaging and producing stories, delivered through multiple media channels, that animate the effectiveness of peace through commerce in its diverse applications
- Educating young people
 - In schools and universities, to inform future leaders of the power of peace through commerce
 - Through Peace Through Commerce media content, events, travel and exchange programs
- Informing Public Policy
 - To reduce trade barriers that limit access to markets for developing economies
 - To provide greater access to legal protection and greater ease of establishing businesses for people in developing countries, especially to provide greater opportunity for the poor
- Promoting ethical, “conscious” investment and enterprise development by multinationals, which considers a; stakeholders, including local communities, the environment, and future generations
- Launching an ongoing public outreach, education and engagement campaign to promote the idea and application of peace through commerce, and to attract energy, talent, resources, and support for the Peace Through Commerce movement.

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