

Hilda Osei

March 28, 2025

Kishwaukee College
21193 Malta Road,
Malta, IL 60150

Promoting Peace and Nonviolence: Lessons from Gandhi and King

Growing up in a community prone to tribal wars, I have always held a profound interest in conflict resolution. My earliest experience with violent conflict occurred when my aunt, the breadwinner of our family, was severely injured during the Alavanyo and Nkonya land border disputes in Ghana, leading to her untimely death. Beyond this, tribalism remains a significant issue in Ghanaian society, causing divisions that hinder national unity and progress. Witnessing these conflicts firsthand inspired me to take action, leading me to participate in various voluntary programs that promote peace, particularly during elections, where tensions often run high.

The peaceful messages of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. have profoundly influenced my approach to conflict resolution. Both leaders advocated for nonviolence as the most effective means of confronting hate and discrimination. They understood that violence only breeds more violence, while peace and dialogue pave the way for lasting solutions. Gandhi's philosophy of Satyagraha, resistance through truth and nonviolence, was instrumental in India's struggle for independence, demonstrating that oppression can be resisted without bloodshed. Similarly, Dr. King's leadership in the civil rights movement emphasized peaceful protest as a means of challenging racial segregation and discrimination in the United States. Their record of accomplishments serves as a powerful reminder that change is possible without resorting to violence.

As a college student, I believe education plays a crucial role in fostering a culture of peace. My plan to educate members of my college community about hate, discrimination, and nonviolent responses would include three key elements: awareness, discussions, and taking concrete actions.

First, drawing awareness would pinpoint historical and contemporary examples of violence stemming from discrimination. This could take the form of presentations, movie screenings, and guest speakers who share personal stories about the effects of conflict and the power of nonviolence. By drawing inspiration from Gandhi's and King's struggles, students would gain a deeper appreciation of the importance of peaceful activism.

Second, structured discussions would provide a platform for students from diverse backgrounds to discuss their experiences with discrimination and conflict. Inspired by King's emphasis on the "Beloved Community," a society based on justice, equal opportunity, and love, these discussions would encourage empathy and understanding. By engaging in conversations that challenge stereotypes and biases, students would come to see each other as equals rather than opponents.

Third, embarking on concrete actions would make my vision materialize. Some of these actions

include organizing nonviolent protests, community service projects, and community engagement. Just as Gandhi led boycotts and marches to oppose British rule and King mobilized peaceful demonstrations for civil rights, students can use collective action to promote justice and harmony within their communities.

The legacies of Gandhi and King have shaped my life and volunteer activities, reinforcing my commitment to peace. Through Ghanaian peace programs, I have seen how education and dialogue prevent violence. Implementing this plan at my college will empower peers to advocate for justice, equality, and respect.