

Ashok Panikkar

Curriculum Vitae

Meta-Culture
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PROFILE & MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Ashok is a mediator, facilitator, and teacher with over 25 years of experience in North America, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. He founded Meta-Culture, a thinking and human engagement studio in 2005. Meta-Culture is an internationally acknowledged leader in the research and practice of critical and creative thinking; conflict resolution; consensus building and dialogue. Ashok's projects at Meta-Culture include a pioneering, multi-year, multi-stakeholder dialogue in the garment and apparel sector in India called the Garment Sector Roundtable (GSR), and two spin off projects, the Joint Fact-Finding Commission, and the Women's Supervisory Training Program, as well as the Hindu-Christian and Hindu-Muslim Inter-faith Dialogues—an ongoing initiative to bring together leaders of religious communities in Karnataka for dialogue and relationship building. He also established the Public Intelligence Project, an advocacy and education initiative to explore ways to better manage diversity through promoting participatory democracy, dialogue, critical thinking, and freedom of expression. In recognition of Meta-Culture's work, it was the 2010 recipient of the Outstanding Leadership Award of the International Committee of the Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR). Ashok is also actively involved in the peace-building community. He is currently a CBI Global Network Member, and has been a member of the board of the New England Association of Conflict Resolution (NE-ACR) from 2004–2005, a member of the Board of Directors, Mediators Beyond Borders International (MBBI) from 2010–2012, and a founding member of the Community Company Dialogue Facilitators Forum of ACCESS, World Legal Forum in The Hague, The Netherlands.

EDUCATION

M.A. in Critical and Creative Thinking: 1996–1997

University of Massachusetts, Boston, USA

Diploma (equivalent to a B.A.) in Visual Communication: 1975–1981

The National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, India

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Guest Lecturer:

(2015) Karl-FranzensUniversität, Graz, Austria: *Inter-religious dialogue and conflict resolution*.

(2015) Erasmus University, Rotterdam, The Netherlands: *Conflict, Communication & Co-existence*.

(2012) Colorado University Law School, Boulder, CO: *International conflict resolution*.

(2012) New York University, NY: *Entrepreneurship and leadership style in a conflict resolution company*.

(2012) Cardozo Law School, New York, NY: *Secularism in India: An alternative perspective*

(2011) Boston University, Boston, MA: *Cross-cultural negotiation in business, MBA program*.

(2009) Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore: *Collaborative negotiation, Executive MBA program*.

(2006) Christ University, Bangalore: *Week-long course on conflict resolution, School of Social Work*.

(2002) Lesley University, Cambridge, MA: *Cross-cultural dynamics, Intercultural Relations Program*.

(1999–2001) Boston University, Boston, MA: *Creative writing, School of Communication*.

(1998–1999) Emerson College, Boston, MA: *Creativity and problem solving, Department of Communication*.

Lecturer:

Massachusetts Bay College, Wellesley, MA: 1998–1999

- Learning specialist and lecturer in critical thinking and higher order thinking skills

Alternatives, Experiential Learning Centre, Bangalore, India: 1988–1994

- Director and senior faculty at a higher order thinking skills education centre
- Designed and delivered courses in critical thinking, creativity, and cultural awareness

PUBLICATIONS, REPORTS, & CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

The Bare Necessities: The Decreasing Space for Dissent and Constructive Dialogue in Democratic Societies and the Need to Advocate for Freedom of Expression.

Presentation at the Mediators Beyond Borders International (MMBI) Congress Istanbul, Turkey: September 2013.

Presentation at the Conflict Research Society (CRS) Conference on Peace & Conflict University of Essex, UK: September 2013.

The Importance of Language in Conflict Resolution.

(2012). A response to the July 2012 publication by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and the Delhi Policy Group entitled, *Conflict Resolution: Learning Lessons from Dialogue Processes in India*, and circulated among conflict resolution and mediation professionals. Published online at:

http://c2d2.ca/sites/default/files/HDArticle_Final_Oct2011.pdf.

When Businesses Communities and Corporations COLLIDE: Managing Conflict in the World's Largest Democracy.

Presentation at the International Day of the ACR Conference, Chicago, IL: September 2010.

The Ramadan Controversy: Dilemmas in Mediating Between Cultures Through the Study of Dutch and Iranian Media Discourses in the Post-Iranian Uprising.

(2010). In Y. R. Kamalpour (Ed.), *Media, power, and politics in the digital age* (Pp. 191–202). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. Co-authored with Dr. Payal Arora.

Situation Assessment Report on the Kandhamal District, Odisha, India for CRS.

(2009). Report generated for Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to gain a complex understanding of the conflict dynamics in Kandhamal, and to provide recommendations for strategic peacebuilding and conflict resolution in the region. Available at: <http://bit.ly/11a5xHU>.

Digital Technology: Panacea or Faustian Bargain? The Cost of Communication and the Price of Civilization.

(2007). In N. Rajan (Ed.), *Digital culture unplugged: Probing the native cyborg's multiple locations* (Pp. 131–152). New Delhi, India: Routledge.

Working in an Unhappy Place: Re-engaging Disaffected Employees Through Conflict Resolution.

(2004). Paper published in *The Systems Thinker*, Pegasus Communication Inc.: Boston, MA.

Taking the Caffeine Out of the Classroom: Why Learning Through Reflection Requires a Different Kind of Energy.

Presentation at the 3rd Conference on Teaching & Learning, Lowell, MA: 1999.

In Case of Fire, Grab the Arsonist: The Myth of a Secular Society.

Presentation at the Madhyam Conference on Secularism & the Press, Bangalore, India: 1994.

SELECT WORKSHOPS & LECTURES DELIVERED

Workshop on Inter-faith Dialogue

Presented for the International Institute for Democracy & Electoral Assistance, Stockholm, Sweden: 2015.

Workshop on Inter-faith Dialogue

Presented for the SvenskaMuslimer för Fred och Rättvisa (Swedish Muslims for Peace & Justice), Stockholm, Sweden: 2015.

Master Class on Meta-Dialogue

Pre-congressional workshop on innovative dialogue processes at the MBBI International, Bucharest, Romania: 2015.

Workshop on Collaborative Negotiation

Presented at Karl-Franzens Universität, Graz, Austria: 2015.

Workshop on Humor in Mediation: A Creative Tool or an Indulgence

Presented at Karl-Franzens Universität, Graz, Austria: 2015.

Workshop on Conflict Resolution in an International Context

Presented for the United Nations mediators and peacebuilding staff, New York, NY: 2012.

Why is Joe the Plumber Peeved? Mediating Between Minority Rights and Majority Fears

Keynote lecture at Regis University, Denver, CO: 2011.

Keynote lecture at the Mediators Beyond Borders Congress, Los Angeles, CA: 2011.

Belinda Beyond Her Borders: Mediating Across Cultures

Featured workshop at the SMU-MBBI International Training Institute, Plano, TX: 2011.

Mediating Inter-religious Disputes in India

Keynote lecture at Cardozo Law School, New York, NY: 2011.

Seminar on Non-judicial Ways of Dealing with Community Disputes

Presented for the World Legal Forum as a founder member of the Community-Company Dialogue Facilitators Forum (CCDFF), The Hague, The Netherlands: 2011.

Workshop on Conflict Resolution and Consensus Building

Presented for the 4th Asia Pacific Mediation Forum (APMF) Summit, Bangkok, Thailand: 2011.

Practicing What Mediators Preach: The Mediation Centre as a Learning Organization

Lectures given at various venues in Boston, MA: 2010.

Humor In Mediation: A Creative Tool or an Indulgence?

Keynote speech at the NE-ACR Summer Institute, Wellesley, MA: 2004.

Workshop on Conflict Management & Conflict Resolution

Presented for Procter & Gamble, London, UK, and Brussels, Belgium: 2004.

Presented for The Partnership Brokering Institute, Cardiff, Wales, UK: 2004.

Appreciating Authentic Diversity and the Creative Opportunities in Conflict: How Mediators Can Help Move Parties Towards a Deeper Appreciation of Differences

Workshop presented at the Annual Conference of the NE-ACR, Shrewsbury, MA: 2002.

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS & CONTENT AREAS

Core skills include:

- Consulting, coaching, and mentoring
- Program leadership, project management, capacity building, and leadership development
- Curriculum design, workshop development, teaching, and training
- Facilitation and mediation
- Organizational management
- Writing, public speaking, outreach, and networking

Content areas include:

- Conflict resolution, mediation, consensus building, and collaborative problem solving
- Critical & creative thinking, independent reasoning, innovation training, and decision making
- Diversity management and cross-cultural communication
- Developing processes for participatory democracy in organizations and communities

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE: TRAINING & CONSULTING

Lead Trainer:

- Design and deliver highly-rated training programs and consultation for clients such as the National Planning Commission of India, the World Bank, Green Peace, Asian Development Bank, Catholic Relief Services, Accenture Technologies, Confederation of Indian Industry, Daimler Financial Services, General Motors, Indian School of Business, Nokia, Infosys Technologies, LG, Mercedes-Benz R&D Centre—India, Nike, and Nokia-Siemens Network.

Principal Consultant:

- Advise and coach senior managers in conflict management, negotiation, change management higher order thinking skills, and cross-cultural communication.
- Mediate and facilitate disputes at community and organizational levels.
- Lead facilitator of the pioneering Garment Sector Roundtable (2009–2013) and consultant to its ongoing projects (the Joint Fact-Finding Commission (JFF), and the Women's Supervisory Training Program (WSTP).

- Partner with organizations such as the National Planning Commission of India; Confederation of Indian Industry; Compliance Advisory Ombudsman of The World Bank, Washington, D.C.; The Asian Development Bank, Manila, Philippines; The Consensus Building Institute, Cambridge, MA, USA; The CSR Initiative of the Kennedy School of Government, Cambridge, MA, USA; and Catholic Relief Services, USA.
- Lead facilitator of the Karnataka Hindu-Christian and Hindu-Muslim Inter-faith Dialogues, and lead facilitator and consultant of a public dialogue in Athens, Greece on issues related to immigration in association with the Hellenic Mediation Centre and Mediators Beyond Borders International (MMBI) in April 2013.
- Designer and facilitator of a unique program to create a culture of excellence in critical thinking and creativity at the Step By Step School in Delhi. The program includes training a group of teachers and student leaders over a year who can institutionalize this process in the school.

Special Projects

Socrates Last Stand (2015–present)



- A series of creative dialogues for the public, which aims to radically question the way we think and engage with the world. This program examines everyday concepts and themes that we take for granted.

Ah!Wake (2013–2015)



- Meta-Culture's 4-day residential programme and transformational learning workshop, which seeks to explore conceptual frameworks in order to understand our world at a deeper level through the methods of critical and creative thinking.

Public Intelligence Project (2013–2014)



- A research, education, and advocacy initiative that seeks to manage diversity and reduce conflict through more effective participatory democratic methods, and by advocating for freedom of expression.

Major Grants Procured & Funded Projects:

(2012–2013) – The Embassy of The Netherlands in India

- €100,000 procured for funding the Karnataka Hindu-Christian Inter-faith Dialogues.

(2012 – 2013) – S. D. Shibulal and K. Dinesh, Co-founders of Infosys Limited

- \$10,150 procured for funding the Garment Sector Roundtable.

(2011) – Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)

- \$25,000 procured by the CCDF for Meta-Culture to educate and train companies and NGOs on corporate communication and dispute resolution processes.

(2008) – Catholic Relief Services (CRS)

- \$23,680 procured to conduct independent, third-party research and analysis of riots between Hindus and Christians in Kandhamal, Odisha, India.

Just A Start Corporation (2000–2004)

Director of Training and Lead Mediator, Mediation for Results (MFR)

Cambridge, MA, USA

Trainer:

- Designed and created the training and education division of the organisation.
- Led projects for the Training Development Corporation (TDC).
- Communication and conflict resolution training for staff of various non-profits.
- Designed and delivered training for in-house staff and partner agencies for the Massachusetts State House of Representatives between 2002 and 2003.

Mediator and Conflict Resolution Consultant:

- Responsible for projects relating to workplace and organisational conflict.
- Consulted on cross-cultural conflict management projects for the New England Dressage Association and the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Centre's (BCNC).
- Mediator, coach, and conflict consultant for the board of trustees.
- Conflict resolution consultant for the Tri-City Housing, Malden, MA, USA.
- Conflict resolution consultant for a mid-sized human service agency.
- Conflict resolution consultant for a human service agency that employed a diverse cross-cultural staff.

A World of Difference Institute of the Anti-Defamation League (1997–2005)

Trainer

Boston, MA, USA

- Senior trainer and consultant of the ADL curriculum for diversity and anti-bias workshops.
- Participants include teachers, administrators, students, and community leaders in the New England area.
- Experiences include training high and middle school students as peer trainers.

Boston Public High Schools (2004–2005)

Consultant & Facilitator

Boston, MA, USA

- Facilitating a series of dialogues between student groups and teachers and administrators.

Arlington Diversity Task Force (2004–2005)

Consultant & Facilitator

Arlington, MA, USA

- Facilitating community dialogues on gay marriage between advocates and opposing groups.

Boston City-Wide Dialogues on Racial and Ethnic Diversity Initiative (2003–2004)

Consultant & Facilitator

- Facilitating community dialogues on issues related to race and ethnicity around Boston, MA.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Partnership Brokering Institute (October 2012) – Wales, UK

Training in partnering processes between communities, companies, and government.

Vantage Partners LLC (May–December 2004) – Boston, MA, USA

“Train the Trainer” workshops in “How to have Difficult Conversations.”

Vantage Partners LLC (November 2004) – Boston, MA, USA

Roundtable on alliance management.

Harvard Law School (June 2004) – Cambridge, MA, USA

Advanced negotiation workshop, Program of Instruction for Lawyers.

Public Conversations Project (2003) – Watertown, MA, USA

The Power of Dialogue training program.

The National Conference for Community & Justice (2001–2002) – Boston, MA, USA

Selected for the Lead Boston class of 2002, a civic leadership development program for emerging leaders of the City of Boston.

CDR Associates (2000) – Boulder, CO, USA

Certificates in collaborative processes in public policy clashes and facilitation skills development.

Mediation Works Inc. (2000) – Boston, MA, USA

Certificate in mediation and dispute resolution.

A World of Difference Institute of the Anti-Defamation League (1996)

Diversity and anti-bias training program in Boston, MA, USA.

Summer Institute of Facing History & Ourselves (1996) – Boston, MA, USA

Anti-bias training institute.

SELECT PROFESSIONAL SERVICE & AFFILIATIONS

Consensus Building Institute – (2014–present)

Global Network Member

World Legal Forum in The Hague, The Netherlands – (2010–present)

Member of the Community–Company Dialogue Facilitators Forum (CCDFF) of ACCESS

Mediators Beyond Borders International (MBBI) – (2010–2012)

Member of the board of directors

The New England Association of Conflict Resolution (NE-ACR) – (2004–2005)

Member of the board of directors

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCIES

English, Hindi, and Malayalam