

# Conflict Resolution Training Sessions with Indigenous Women Activists in Amazonia (Brazil)

Led by Martin Dinter (Department of Classics, King's College London), in collaboration with colleagues at the University of the State of Amazonas (UEA), the University of La Sabana and Fundação Muraki, this training programme has been co-developed in partnership with Indigenous women activists of the Association of Indigenous Women Putira Kapuãmu (AMIPK) in the Upper Rio Negro region of the Brazilian Amazon.





Figure 1 & 2: Illustrations of the Irene Project in the Amazon, by Indigenous artist Larissa Ye'padiho Mota Duarte.

## PROJECT SUMMARY

The project delivered conflict resolution training sessions with Indigenous women activists in the Upper Rio Negro region of the Brazilian Amazon, supporting community-led approaches to dialogue, mediation and peacebuilding. Led by Dr Martin Dinter (Department of Classics), the project adapted research on classical literature and the Socratic method into practical, dialogue-based tools designed for use in remote contexts experiencing increasing land and water conflicts linked to climate change.

Working in partnership with the University of the State of Amazonas, the University of La Sabana, Fundação Muraki and the Association of Indigenous Women Putira Kapuãmu, the project combined researcher-led training with locally facilitated replication workshops. Materials were visually and linguistically adapted, including translations into Portuguese and Nheengatu, to ensure accessibility and cultural relevance. By centering Indigenous women as facilitators and leaders, the project strengthened local capacity for conflict resolution while demonstrating how humanities-based methods can support peace education through ethical, collaborative knowledge exchange.

## HOW DID THE PROJECT COME ABOUT?

The project emerged from Dr Martin Dinter's ongoing research into conflict resolution, classical literature and the contemporary relevance of the Socratic method. Building on earlier AHRC-supported projects "Conflict Resolution through Classical Literature" and "Irene: Peace Education", this initiative sought to test how dialogue- and experiential-learning-based approaches could be adapted for use beyond academic and institutional settings, particularly in contexts where conflict resolution mechanisms are limited.

Through existing academic and civic partnerships in Brazil, Dr Dinter developed a collaboration with colleagues at the University of the State of Amazonas, the University of La Sabana, Fundação Muraki and the Association of Indigenous Women Putira Kapuãmu. Conversations with partners highlighted the increasing pressures faced by Indigenous communities in the Upper Rio Negro region, including economic hardship, livelihood insecurity, land and water disputes intensified by climate change, alongside the central role Indigenous women play in mediating conflict and sustaining community cohesion. The project was co-designed in response to these needs, with a focus on culturally responsive training that could be locally led, adapted and replicated within remote communities.



**Figures 3:** Participants in front of the “House of Thought”, conceived as a place to “think together”

## WHAT HAPPENED?

The project was delivered through a series of conflict resolution training sessions developed and facilitated in close collaboration with local partners in the Upper Rio Negro region of the Brazilian Amazon. An initial in-person workshop brought together Indigenous women activists to introduce dialogue-based approaches to conflict resolution, aimed at building shared understanding and reaching consensus, drawing on the Socratic method and adapted to reflect local cultural practices, languages and lived experience. The sessions combined facilitated discussion, collective reflection and practical exercises focused on managing disagreement, mediating disputes and supporting community cohesion.

Following the initial training, participants led replication workshops within their own remote communities. These sessions were designed to extend the reach of the project while embedding the methodology locally, with Indigenous women taking on facilitation roles and adapting the materials to their specific contexts. Participants travelled long distances by river to attend, highlighting both the geographical challenges of the region and the demand for spaces dedicated to dialogue and collective problem-solving.

Delivery was shaped by significant practical constraints, including limited infrastructure, high transport costs and pervasive poverty in some communities. In response, project partners sourced materials centrally and ensured that participation did not incur additional costs for attendees. Training materials were visually adapted and translated into Portuguese and Nheengatu to support accessibility. Across all activities, the project prioritized flexibility, care and collaboration, enabling the training to be meaningfully integrated into community-led practices rather than delivered as a one-off intervention.



**Figures 4:** Participants “thinking together” inside the “House of Thought”

## WHAT WAS THE PROJECT’S IMPACT?

The project strengthened the capacity of Indigenous women activists to lead conflict resolution and mediation within their communities. Participants reported greater confidence in facilitating structured dialogue, addressing disagreement, and supporting collective problem-solving in contexts where formal mechanisms are limited. Follow-up interviews also indicated a possible reduction in conflict cases brought to community leaders, although data is still being consolidated due to the sensitivity of reporting. By building on Indigenous women’s existing roles as community leaders and knowledge holders, the project supported locally grounded peacebuilding practices and expanded opportunities for safer dialogue, including women-led and, in some cases, women-only spaces, and also brought about increased recognition of women’s leadership in the communities.

A significant impact was the local replication of the training model. After the initial workshop, participants facilitated additional sessions in their own communities, allowing the methodology to circulate through existing social and kinship networks and to be adapted to different local contexts. This demonstrated that dialogue-based, humanities-informed methods can be meaningfully applied in remote, low-resource, non-academic settings when delivered through collaborative and culturally responsive partnerships.

Another tangible outcome was the emergence of a dedicated community space—the “Uka Umadüisá” (“Casa do Pensamento”, “House of Thought”)—an autonomous initiative led by Indigenous women that grew out of the training sessions. Inspired by the allegorical framework used in the workshops—especially the “Casa Grande” image in the workbook *Paths of Dialogue: Workshops for Peace and Conflict Resolution in the Amazon*—the House of Thought was conceived as a space to “think together,” strengthen women’s leadership, and develop collective responses to issues such as gender-based violence and broader community wellbeing.

At an institutional level, the project strengthened international research partnerships between King’s College London and collaborators in Brazil and Colombia, building trust and momentum for future funding and sustained collaboration. It also demonstrated how humanities-based methods can contribute to peace education through ethical, community-led knowledge exchange..

## MARTIN'S TOP TIPS FOR IMPACT

### 1. Design with, not for, your partners from the outset.

Impact projects work best when they are co-designed with trusted local collaborators who understand the realities on the ground. Allow partners to shape the format, materials and pace of delivery so the work responds to real needs rather than external assumptions.

### 2. Build flexibility into both budgets and methods.

Working in remote or low-resource contexts requires adaptability. Costs, timelines and priorities may shift once delivery begins, so impact funding should be structured to allow local partners to respond pragmatically to logistical, economic and social constraints without compromising participation.

### 3. Focus on capacity-building rather than one-off delivery.

Training models that can be replicated locally extend impact beyond a single workshop. Supporting participants to become facilitators themselves helps embed knowledge within communities and reduces long-term dependence on external researchers.

## FURTHER READING

- Reading: Construction of the House of Thought as Tangible Project Outcome. Available at: [https://www.instagram.com/p/DRfS\\_ghkR Td/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==](https://www.instagram.com/p/DRfS_ghkR Td/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==)
- Forero Álvarez, Ronald, Uribe Neira, Rafael, Dinter, Martin et al. (2025). 'The Irene Project: Classical Literature for the Promotion of Peace and Reconciliation in the Classroom'. In S. Nitu and A. Holmes Henderson (eds.), *Humanities Forward: Opportunity, Innovation, Policy in the 21st Century*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press (in print).
- Leillane Regina dos Santos, Carlos Renato R. de Jesus, Dinter, Martin et al. (forthcoming). 'Consenso Sócrático no Rio Negro: Relato de Experiência do Projeto Irene com as Mulheres Indígenas'.



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