

# THE PEACEBUILDER UPDATE

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A publication of the  
DAMBACH FELLOWSHIP FOUNDERS' COUNCIL



**WELCOME  
STEPHANIE HASSAN**  
OUR SECOND DAMBACH  
PEACEBUILDER FELLOW

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# HELLO

Welcome to the third edition of the ***Peacebuilder Update***, a publication of the Dambach Fellowship Founders' Council. We intend for this newsletter to keep you apprised of news about the Dambach Peacebuilder Fellowship housed at Oklahoma State University's School of Global Studies.

The Council has endowed a fellowship to enable the School's graduate students to engage in meaningful studies to enable them to follow in the footsteps of our honoree, Chic Dambach.

In this issue you will have the pleasure of getting to know the second awardee of the Dambach Peacebuilder Fellowship, Ms. Stephanie Hassan of Nigeria. Ms. Hassan has already earned a Master's degree from the University of North Carolina Greensboro in Peace and Conflict but wanted to further her understanding of global dynamics and cultural contexts. She believes that way, the world can create more effective and sustainable peacebuilding strategies. We are also pleased to share with you Oklahoma State University's expansion of their collaboration with the Universidad Popular Autónoma del Estado de Puebla in Mexico with the opening of an office of the university there. And, we want to give you an update on what's been happening with the Peace Corps ever since they pulled their volunteers back home with the onset of COVID-19 and want to assure everyone that "The Peace Corps is Back!" Lastly, long-time friend of Chic Dambach, Victor Ochen, recently gave a TedTalk on War and Climate Change that you won't want to miss; find the link to his talk in the story about Victor.

**We welcome your feedback which you can send to:**

[info@dambachpeacebuildercouncil.org](mailto:info@dambachpeacebuildercouncil.org)

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# WELCOME STEPHANIE HASSAN

## OUR SECOND DAMBACH PEACEBUILDER FELLOW

### In her own words:

I began my academic journey in Nigeria, earning a bachelor's degree in mass communication from the National Open University of Nigeria. In 2021, I moved to the United States to further my education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG), where I obtained a master's degree in Peace and Conflict Studies. During my time at UNCG, I discovered a passion for community organizing and engagement. I gained valuable hands-on experience at North Carolina Peace Action, working with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on community organizing around nuclear disarmament.

After completing my master's degree, I worked with Amnesty International on a project aimed at ending gun violence in Austin and its surrounding areas in Texas. In this role, I contributed to organizing and fundraising efforts, further honing my skills in advocacy and community outreach.

It is my privilege and honor to be a part of the global studies program at Oklahoma State University. I believe that global studies and peacebuilding are inherently interconnected fields that together address the complexities of international relations, conflicts, and cooperation. By understanding global dynamics and cultural contexts, it is my belief that we can create more effective and sustainable peacebuilding strategies. My goal is to contribute to a holistic approach that bridges these fields, fostering a deeper understanding of global issues and promoting lasting peace.

Considering my background in Peace and Conflict Studies, I chose to pursue a master's in Global Studies to broaden my perspective in addressing global challenges. My expertise in peace and conflict resolution will complement my studies in global dynamics, enabling me to develop comprehensive solutions that consider both local and international contexts. I believe the knowledge gained from global studies will enrich my peacebuilding efforts by providing a wider lens through which to understand and address conflicts, ultimately leading to more impactful and sustainable outcomes.

I am very excited to join the Dambach Peacebuilders Fellowship, where I look forward to bringing my experience and voice to the forefront. I am eager to perform my duties in any capacity where my expertise is needed, contributing to meaningful change and peacebuilding efforts.



# OSU GLOBAL EXTENDS ITS MEXICAN COLLABORATION

A COLLABORATIVE OSU EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN  
THE UNIVERSITY'S TIES TO THE UNIVERSIDAD  
POPULAR AUTÓNOMA DEL ESTADO DE PUEBLA



In 2023 Oklahoma State University's School of Global Studies, which houses the Dambach Peacebuilder Fellowship, led a collaborative OSU effort to strengthen the university's ties to the Universidad Popular Autónoma del Estado de Puebla (UPAEP) in Puebla, Mexico. Part of the connection led to the opening of an OSU-Mexico office, the university's first such which will serve as a hub for students, faculty and staff to engage in exchange programs, student recruitment, study abroad programming and partnership development.

*"Oklahoma State's presence on the UPAEP campus is an important part of deepening our ties in respect to our missions of teaching, research, collaboration and service," OSU President Kayse Shrum said. "The new office will be a catalyst for student and faculty participation in these programs. I have no doubt it will become a critical hub for student recruitment, study abroad programming and partnership development."*

The office is intended to support and reinforce OSU's strategic plan to become the nation's preeminent land-grant institution by creating opportunities for OSU students to develop critical intercultural and international perspectives so that they can better serve their communities and to bring research and expertise to meet society's most pressing issues.

*"The opportunities that this office will create for OSU students to better understand Mexico, our nearest neighbor, are unprecedented," said Dr. Randy Kluver, associate provost and dean of OSU Global. "We have a goal to dramatically expand the number of OSU students with experience in Mexico, which will not only make them better international leaders, but also leaders within their communities in the U.S."*

OSU and UPAEP students can obtain a dual master's degree in a number of fields, including global studies, business administration, international agriculture, engineering and technology management, and educational leadership studies; a dual Ph.D. degree in agricultural education, educational leadership and policies studies or education. In addition, students have the opportunity to participate in a bridge program in global studies.

For more information, click [here](#).



The OSU delegation and UPAEP board members cutting the ribbon to open the OSU-Mexico office.

# A THUMBNAIL

## PEACE CORPS

The Peace Corps is a program of the United States government whose mission is to promote world peace and friendship through community-based development and intercultural understanding. Since its inception in 1961, more than 240,000 Americans have joined the Peace Corps and served in 142 countries that have provided international development assistance.



### **The goals for the Peace Corps are:**

- 1.** To help the countries interested in meeting their need for trained people. Volunteers exchange skills and knowledge with community members to help create sustainable change through work in six sectors—Agriculture, Community Economic Development, Education, Environment, Health, and Youth in Development.
- 2.** To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served. Through their service, Volunteers share America and its values and also learn about local cultures, opportunities, resources, and people in their host countries.
- 3.** To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans. Volunteers immerse themselves in local cultures and share their experiences when they return home with family, friends, and the public. This helps promote cultural understanding, volunteerism, and public service.

All Peace Corps volunteers worldwide were withdrawn from their host countries on March 15, 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Just two years later, the first Volunteers began returning to service in March of 2022 from the 62 countries where they were serving. As Volunteers began returning to service, the resounding message has been: The Peace Corps is Back.

Chic Dambach, who served as a volunteer to a coastal fishing village in the nation of Colombia and who later served as the president of the National Peace Corps Association has said, “One of the most important values of the Peace Corps is that Volunteers live in the local communities and they eat the same food and dance the same dances as the local population. AND, they seek to learn from the local population just as much as they seek to help. It is an equal give and take - unlike the arrogant attitude that we know better than anyone that is so prevalent in other foreign aid programs.

For more information on the Peace Corps, go [here](#).

For more information about Peace Corps Volunteers returning to service following the pandemic, [go to this site](#) at the National Peace Corps Association.

# MEET VICTOR OCHEN FROM UGANDA

**“THE NIGHT IS LONG FOR A HUNGRY CHILD”  
– AN AFRICAN PROVERB**



Chic Dambach (left) introduces Victor Ochen (right) to a member of the United States Congress, Rep. John R. Garamendi (center) who represents the 8th District of California.

## **The Dambach Fellowship Founders’ Council has no greater friend than Victor Ochen of Uganda.**

Victor has become one of the leading spokespersons for the future of the continent of Africa and is recognized as an authority on the international refugee crisis. He is also a persuasive spokesman on the intersection between war and climate change. Recently he gave a Ted Talk which we believe you will find illuminating on these issues in which he proposed the creation of an international climate court. To view his Ted Talk sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation click [here](#). To view an interview of Victor by our own Chic Dambach about bringing peace to Africa, click [here](#). To learn more about Victor, read on .....

Victor Ochen was born in 1981 in Lira district of northern Uganda. His formative years were spent amidst violent conflict that displaced over 3 million people in Uganda, where over 60,000 children were abducted and forcefully recruited as child-soldiers, including his own brother. As a “war survivor”, he grew up in an “internally displaced person” (IDP) camp, and subsisted on one meal-a-day for over 7 years.

At the age of 13 years, Victor formed a Peace Club and bravely led the anti-child soldiers’ recruitment campaign amidst the war in northern Uganda. He spent the first 21 years of his life as a refugee in the IDP camps. Challenged by these hardships of war and poverty, growing up shaped his life mission to be part of the peace building and community development process with a focus on mobilizing youth and communities to contribute to peace and justice in northern Uganda.





Chic Dambach (right) introduces Victor Ochen (left) to former Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet (center) when she was still its director.

In 2005, at the age of 24, to fulfill his mission he founded and served as the Executive Director for the African Youth Initiative Network (AYINET). The organization's purpose is to respond to the dire conditions in a region that suffered over two decades of war and have addressed the harmful effects of violent conflict by focusing on healing as a form of justice. It has implemented a number of programs focused on youth advocacy, and building leaders and change-makers among the youth population. And it has actively engaged women and men in programs involving community empowerment, women participation and economic activities as a means of achieving gender equality.

The success of AYINET has thrust Victor into the African limelight. He has become one of the most important figures in Africa, a key reference when it comes to the struggle for human rights and justice, a product of resilience, a personification of struggle. He is a lead example on tolerance and nonviolence activism; who is creatively working to address the root cause of conflict in Africa. To learn more about AYINET view their video [here](#).

Victor has received several recognitions for his service to poor people and his inspirational leadership for peace in Africa. In 2015 Forbes Magazine named Victor as one of the 10 most powerful men in Africa, while Archbishop Desmond Tutu attested that "my heart swells with joy to see Ochen as one of the new hope for Africa". He is the first Ugandan and the youngest ever African nominated for Nobel Peace Prize (2015).

He was named as the UN Goodwill Ambassador for Peace and Justice and has also become a Global Advisor to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee on Gender, Forced Displacement and Protection. He has received several awards all recognizing his service to poor people and his inspirational leadership for peace in Africa.

Victor and Chic Dambach confer regularly, and he stays with the Dambachs whenever he travels to the US for high-level meetings in DC. When Dambach was asked what Victor's contribution will be to history, he replied, "Victor Ochen represents an emerging generation of young African leaders committed to peace, democracy, and respect for human rights. He is known and admired throughout the continent, and thanks to Victor and his colleagues, there is reason to be optimistic about the future of Africa."

# NEWS FROM THE COUNCIL



The Dambach Fellowship Founders' Council is pleased to report that as of August 15, 2024, we have raised nearly \$463,000 for the Dambach Peacebuilder Endowed Fellowship Fund.

Of this amount over \$380,000 has been received as cash donations while over \$82,000 has been given in estate plans.

Nearly 70 individuals, couples or family foundations have chosen to support the Dambach Peacebuilder Fund and we are more than grateful for everyone who has contributed to date.

## FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



The **Dambach Peacebuilder Endowed Fellowship Fund** was established by the **Dambach Fellowship Founders' Council** in honor of our contemporary **Oklahoma State University** alumnus, **Charles F. "Chic" Dambach**, whose dedication to the work of **Peacebuilding** has had a significant impact on the lives of people worldwide. We hope you wish to join us in helping change the world by contributing to the **Dambach Peacebuilder Endowed Fellowship Fund**. You can click [HERE](#) to do so, or mail a check made payable to the Oklahoma State University Foundation; attn.: Harlie Perry, 400 So. Monroe, Stillwater, OK 74074, USA. Include "Dambach Peacebuilder Endowed Fellowship" in the memo line.



## DAMBACH FELLOWSHIP FOUNDERS' COUNCIL

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We welcome your feedback which you can send to:  
[info@dambachpeacebuildercouncil.org](mailto:info@dambachpeacebuildercouncil.org)

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*gena koc*