

## Lingnan University SDG Report



### **Sustainable Development Goal 16 Report: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions** **By Roberto Castillo**

"Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions," stands as a cornerstone for a just and equitable world. It embodies the fundamental values of peace, justice, and strong governance that are essential for societal progress. In an ever-evolving global landscape, SDG 16 seeks to ensure that nations are built on a foundation of trust, accountability, and fairness, allowing individuals to live without fear and experience prosperity. Lingnan University's unwavering commitment to research and projects in this sphere has made significant strides toward promoting these values, helping to pave the way for a more harmonious and just global community. The projects briefly detailed below serve as compelling evidence of Lingnan University's researchers' commitment supports SDG 16.

#### **Representations of blackness in China**

Professor Janet Ho's extensive research on anti-Black sentiments in Chinese Weibo discourse and her critical discourse analysis of the discursive representations of Blackness on Chinese social media stand as remarkable contributions to Lingnan University's ongoing commitment to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 16, "Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions." In a socio-political landscape marked by deepening diplomatic ties between China and African countries, her work offers a profound understanding of the complexities surrounding peace and justice. By examining the under-researched issue of anti-Black sentiments at both the individual and societal levels within China, Janet Ho's research addresses societal inequalities and discrimination, aligning with the core principles of Goal 16. This meticulous examination of the interplay between anti-Black, anti-government, and anti-social class attitudes serves as a crucial stepping stone towards promoting social cohesion, inclusivity, and a just society.

Furthermore, Janet Ho's critical discourse analysis reveals the intricate strategies employed in constructing self and other representations, highlighting the evolving dynamics of racial discourse. Her findings contribute to the establishment of strong institutions that uphold human rights and social justice. These endeavours underscore Lingnan University's dedication to fostering an equitable and peaceful society, where diversity is celebrated, discrimination is challenged, and individuals from all backgrounds enjoy the protections and opportunities guaranteed by Goal 16.

## **Confucian Peace**

Another researcher whose work aligns with SDG16 is Professor Lucy Yu, from the School of Graduate Studies. Professor Yu's research delves into the pertinent question of whether Confucian peace could provide a solution to intercultural conflict. This inquiry is not only relevant to academic discourse but also holds significant implications for the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 16, "Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions." In a world where the United Nations strives for peace and inclusivity through peacekeeping missions and preventive diplomacy, yet international conflicts persist, Professor Yu's examination of Confucian peace offers a unique perspective on conflict resolution. By exploring the cultural roots of Chinese preferences and delving into the philosophical underpinnings of ancient Chinese thinkers, her work contributes to the understanding of how Confucian values may shape modern Chinese ideologies and approaches to conflict resolution. This research bridges intercultural divides and offers insights into Chinese conflict management strategies, aligning with Goal 16's objective of fostering peace, understanding, and cooperation between different cultures and nations. Moreover, by discussing the implications of Confucian peace for the United Nations and world leaders, Professor Yu's research adds to the discourse on promoting more constructive outcomes in conflict-affected contexts and building strong institutions that support ethical pacifism and peace.

### **Track-two Dialogues: Enhancing Peace between States**

International relations are characterized by mistrust and conflict between countries. The fundamental cause of this unfortunate outcome is the anarchic international system, which forces countries to be wary of other countries' intentions. Strategic mistrust is hence a systemic symptom of international politics and contributes to conflicts between countries.

To resolve mistrust, states often pursue strategic dialogues to promote better understanding of each other's intentions. While government-to-government dialogues are necessary, track-two dialogues, which concerns communications between societal actors of different countries, also play major roles in facilitating understanding between countries and peaceful relations.

#### *Hong Kong Dialogue on Sino-Japanese Relations, Sept 24-25, 2018*

Lingnan University's Centre for Asian Pacific Studies was a co-organizer of a major track-two dialogue between China and Japan in September 2018. The event was co-sponsored by the Association for Communication of Transcultural Studies, which is a semi-governmental institution supported by the Japanese government, the Statecraft Institution, which is a Beijing-based think tank, and GOSS Research Management, which is a think tank based in Hong Kong.

The event was held upon the occasion of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between China and Japan, with the goal of promoting mutual strategic understanding between the two countries. The background of the event was the rising security conflict between China and Japan in the recent decade, with roots in mutual strategic mistrust.

The event included over 30 experts from leading universities and think tanks in China and Japan and they discussed issues ranging from security relations to economic cooperation.

Professor Baohui Zhang, Director of the Centre for Asian Pacific Studies, delivered a speech on how to overcome strategic mistrust between the two countries.

### **Knowledge Transfer: Affecting the Ideas of Foreign Policy Practitioners**

Lingnan University's Centre for Asian Pacific Studies and the Department of Government and International Affairs use knowledge transfer to contribute to international peace and stability. Their activities seek to affect the ideas of foreign policy practitioners, such as diplomats, regarding the causes of conflict and ways to resolve conflict.

#### *Korean Peninsula Forum: Northeast Asia at a Critical Juncture, Nov. 22, 2019*

Lingnan University's Centre for Asian Pacific Studies was the co-organizer of a knowledge transfer event in November 2019. The South Korean Consulate General in Hong Kong was the co-sponsor of the event.

This forum sought to inform Hong Kong's diplomatic community about the dynamics of regional peace and stability in Northeast Asia. Experts from South Korea, Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Japan provided insights on how to build peace in Northeast Asia. Specific issues included Korean Peninsula security, US-China relations, China-Japan relations, and trilateral cooperation among China, Japan, and South Korea. The event was well attended by over 30 foreign diplomats based in Hong Kong.

Baohui Zhang, Director of Centre for Asian Pacific Studies, provided insights on how to manage Sino-US strategic competition to ensure regional peace and stability.

#### *Strategic Competition and Great Power Politics in the Indo-Pacific, Oct 12, 2023*

Lingnan University's Department of Government and International Affairs and the Department of Government and International Studies of Hong Kong Baptist University co-sponsored a knowledge transfer event in October 2022 on how to manage great power rivalry in the Indo-Pacific. Scholars from Lingnan University, Hong Kong Baptist University, and the City University of Hong Kong provided insights on how to prevent military conflicts in the Indo-Pacific region. Specific issues covered Sino-US rivalry, Sino-Indian rivalry, and Sino-Japanese rivalry. The event was well attended by the diplomats from over ten countries. The event enabled them to improve their understanding on how to manage great power rivalry to enhance peace and stability.

Baohui Zhang, Professor of Government and International Affairs at Lingnan University, discussed the fallacies of great power strategic competition and ways to avert both cold war and military conflicts.

### **Research Relevant for Enhancing Peace and Stability**

Scholars of Lingnan University have been engaged with research projects that are highly relevant for understanding the causes of conflicts between countries as well as ways to build peace.

Professor Baohui Zhang has been conducting research on the causes of rising international conflict and ways to achieve cooperation between the major countries of the world. He has published multiple articles on these issues in highly respected international journals.

He also regularly contributes op-eds on peace and stability issues to influential venues. For example, after the deadly Sino-Indian border conflict in June 2020, he contributed an analysis, titled “Preserving Peace Along the China-India Border,” to the East Asia Forum on how to prevent further conflict between the two countries. East Asia Forum is a highly influential online platform managed by the Australian National University to disseminate timely analyses of peace and security issues in the Asia Pacific region.

He has also shared his insights with leading media institutions on issues relevant for peace and stability in the Asia Pacific region. These include the Financial Times, the Time Magazine, the South China Morning Post, and the Japan Times. His comments and insights have contributed to better understanding of salient issues in the Asia Pacific region, such as conflicts in the Korean Peninsula, the Taiwan Strait, and the South China Sea.