Nobel Peace Prize Nomination 2015
Reflections by Evelin Lindner

November 2015

We warmly congratulate the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet for receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015 for their crucially important work!

At the same time, we are still very thankful that also our global dignity work was nominated for the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize. We were nominated by a group of people who, out of appreciation for the prize, wishes to refresh awareness of its roots. We are celebrating all of the 25 remarkable individuals and groups who were nominated as candidates, whose work is regarded to be in particular resonance with the will of Alfred Nobel. His intention was "that his prize should benefit the 'champions of peace,' he meant the movement and the persons who work for a demilitarized world, for law to replace power in international politics, and for all nations to commit to cooperating on the elimination of all weapons instead of competing for military superiority" (www.nobelwill.org/index.html?tab=7).

We are delighted that included in the list of 25, as representative of our Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies network, was Evelin Lindner, our Founding President. Her nomination is an affirmation of our global dignity work and her forty years of service and action to bring peace and dignity into the lives of all people, characterized by compassion, equal dignity, diversity, humility, and mutually beneficial collaboration. You can see her nomination on nobelwill.org/Lindner_nomination.pdf.

Please know that Evelin's nomination is *your* nomination! As you know, our dignity work is based on the African *Ubuntu* philosophy of "I am because of you!" and YOUR dignity work is crucial for bringing more dignity into this world! This nomination has been an encouragement for us all.

You are warmly invited to see Evelin's reflections on this deeply touching honor further down. If you would like to offer encouraging words to our global dignity family around the world, you are also invited to do so at www.humiliationstudies.org/news/?page_id=7974.

Altogether, the Nobel Committee received a total of 276 nominations for the 2015 Peace Prize, thereof 227 nominations of individuals and 49 nominations of organizations (this was slightly down from 2014, when a record high of 278 nominations were submitted). See also the preliminary list compiled each year by the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) of publicly known nominations prior to the announcement of the actual recipient (www.prio.org/About/PeacePrize/PRIO-Directors-Speculations-2015/).

We warmly congratulate the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet with the recognition for its decisive contribution to the building of a pluralistic democracy in Tunisia in the wake of the Jasmine Revolution of 2011. The prize was announced by Kaci Kullmann Five, Chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, at the Norwegian Nobel Institute, Henrik Ibsens gate 51, Oslo, Norway. Please see the announcement of the Nobel Peace Prize 2015 on 9th October 2015, www.nobelpeacecenter.org/arrangementer/se-annonseringen-av-nobels-fredsprisvinner-2015/.

Evelin Lindner Reflecting on Being Nominated for the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize

Dear Friend!

Please allow me to begin with joining in with the congratulations to the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet for receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015 for their crucially important work!

Allow me then to express my deepest admiration for all those individuals and groups who were nominated for the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize. I would also like to profoundly thank all those who included me in this nomination in recognition of the efforts of our dignity community. I so much appreciate their wish to nurture and protect the message of the prize – for the sake of peace and in the spirit of peace – a message that perhaps has never been as timely as now, when global crises call for windows of opportunity to be used rather than neglected.

To be counted among the extraordinary individuals and groups considered to be worthy of fulfilling Alfred Nobel's will is a humbling, breathtaking, and overwhelming honor. It gives me the courage to explore how my own *life project* connects with the efforts of many past Nobel Laureates. In particular, I think of Bertha von Suttner, who was not only the first woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, in 1905, her work was said to be Alfred Nobel's inspiration for including peace as a category among awards for chemistry, physics, physiology, medicine, and literature.

The message of von Suttner's 1889 novel, *Die Waffen nieder!* ("*Lay Down Your Arms!*"), is both daring and path-breaking. I read it as a youth, and since then, it has always stayed in the back of my mind. When I re-read her book now, I was deeply touched by its power, and how it provides direction and courage to us as much now as when it was written. Bertha von Suttner forged a trail and a tradition of peace work that set the highest of standards. It is at the heart of Alfred Nobel's vision of demilitarization and the soul of the Nobel Peace Prize. Her example places an enormous responsibility on humanity's shoulders to stay true to it. Personally, I profoundly feel this responsibility and it shapes and defines every minute of my life.

Gratitude, Questions, and Dilemmas

In the midst of feelings of great honor and gratitude, this nomination challenges me to also reflect on questions and dilemmas associated with this highest of prizes. I am keenly aware that these dilemmas need to be explained. For example, I know that bringing peace and dignity into the world is not even possible through individual achievement. It cannot be derived from recognition resulting from receiving an award. Awards and recognitions can bring attention to an important cause, yet, awards can also be misunderstood or even misused.

This nomination is an opportunity to let everybody know that *our HumanDHS work is always about the message, not about the messenger*. It is not about me being in a race for a

prize or "winning." Such concepts are antithetical to the very spirit of our dignity work. I wish this nomination to be understood as a recognition of *our* past progress and an encouragement of *our* future efforts as a community. If "good luck" wishes or "congratulations" were sent to me as an individual, this would rather sadden me because I would feel that my mission has failed. Instead, each of us deserves good luck with our efforts. Each of us deserves congratulations for uniting as a global community dedicated to bringing dignity and peace into the lives of others.

I see this nomination as a call for compassionate action and cooperation. We can't wait for politicians, global leaders, or even Nobel Prize winners to lead us to the peace we seek in the world. A global citizens movement is the only force, to my view, that is large enough to face the scope of present-day obstacles to peace. Enduring peace requires gathering a global community of collaborators who share in this effort and maintain it over long periods of time, also in the face of daunting adversities. The path to peace grows by cultivating mutually dignifying relationships, relationships that realize the spirit of the African concept of *Ubuntu*, "I am because we are."

Therefore, I can only feel comfortable with an individual nomination by making utterly clear that my contribution is to serve and nurture a global dignity movement. I am thankful that the nomination gives me a special opportunity to emphasize the significance of connection and collaboration in our shared endeavor to offer our children a peaceful and dignified world.

There is also the dilemma of different approaches to peace. Working globally, I strive to manifest peace and dignity in every step of my efforts, aspiring to dignity in all actions and initiatives. This emphasis stands in contrast to other long-held approaches. Please allow me to briefly explain. During the past millennia of human history, the world was much less interconnected than today. In a compartmentalized world the *security dilemma* reigned: "I have to amass weapons, because I am scared. When I amass weapons, you get scared. You amass weapons, I get more scared." In the context of a strong security dilemma, out-group relations follow the motto of Vegetius, "if you want peace, prepare for war," or that of Carl von Clausewitz, "the best defense is a good offense." In such a context, it appears to be prudent to build strong-arm systems that define peace in terms of control. In such a context, only "small peace" is possible, and it is extremely praiseworthy to work for it, while the larger context itself resists deeper change.

At the present historical juncture, the unprecedented level of global interconnectedness forces us to deeply rethink methods that grew out of the logic of the security dilemma. We can no longer afford to be content with peace defined as demonstrations of strength, domination, and control; we need to aim for more ambitious manifestations of peace. There is a need to be the practice of the peace we seek. As Gandhi observed, "There is no path to peace. Peace is the path."

My forty years of living globally have demonstrated to me in myriad ways, small and large, that in a globally interconnected world escalating militarization no longer works; particularly when cycles of humiliation traverse the globe in high speed, aided by new technology, it creates a short-term thin illusion of strength and security, a mirage. Humanity is at a crossroad, interconnectedness represents a profoundly new reality, where traditional strategies of domination that might have offered victory in the past now become collectively suicidal. It is overdue to move beyond being warriors, even *warriors for peace*. We can do better. We can

commit ourselves to doing everything we can to prevent the seeds of violent conflict from ever being planted. This means leaving behind confrontational traditions and styles of communication and preventing and reversing cycles of humiliation and violence, and instead cultivating a global climate of equal dignity enriched by a spirit of unity in our human diversity. See, among others, a Swedish based peace education project called the *The Dream of the Good*, by the Appeal of the Nobel Peace Laureate Foundation, an appeal issued by all living Nobel Peace Laureates (UN Resolution 54/, 243B) calling for a global movement for a culture of peace and teaching of non-violence in all schools around the world.

Some may suspect that I am a starry-eyed idealist, yet nothing could be further from the truth. My experience as a citizen of the world has taught me that, indeed, "if we want peace, we must prepare for peace" by patiently and persistently repairing, rebuilding, and replenishing relationships. This can be manifested at all levels – from micro to meso to macro levels – by focusing all energy on nurturing the social fabric of relationships, rather than hollowing it out for the sake of maximum profit, or fracturing it for the sake of glorious domination. Ultimately, nurturing relationships will be the most practical, efficient, and sustainable path to peace in our age of interconnectedness – and *everyone* can join in this effort. The future of humanity depends on our capacity to live within our planetary boundaries in mutually dignifying relationships. "It takes a village to raise a child" is an African saying. Nowadays, it takes the global village to hold its children. A world full of guns pointing at each other cannot manifest dignity, a world committed to wanting to "crush the enemy" will commit collective suicide. Only shared responsibility for nurturing the social fabric of the global village can turn the social and ecological crises of this village into opportunities.

As many other questions and dilemmas are brought to mind by this nomination, please allow me to share one more. With great sincerity and respect, I recognize the tradition of secrecy that surrounds the naming of nominees for the Nobel Peace Prize and its important rationales and benefits. Yet, I have begun to accept that the crossroad at which humanity stands calls for exceptional interventions. Humanity needs a wake-up call to see and grasp the historical opportunity for peace, rather than allowing the floor to be dominated by the noise of the drama flowing from ceaseless confrontation. I enthusiastically join in celebrating the creativity and courage of all those nominees who do crucial peace-generating, world-saving work, and who, by their actions, *walk the talk* of peace.

I very much value the Nobel Peace Prize and wish to do whatever I can to contribute to protecting and nurturing its message, a message that is more important than ever, at the present crossroad when a window of opportunity for radical global peace stands open. The group of scholars and thinkers who nominated our dignity work is as motivated by a deep-felt wish to protect Alfred Nobel's message, and their choice to make their nominations public is to be seen in this context.

For me, humility and modesty are at the core of dignity, and therefore also at the core of our dignity work. Bertha von Suttner's message is manifested in our approach more radically than may be apparent at first glance, for instance, in our emphasis on future-oriented nurturing by way of what we call *dignicommunication*. To be true to our stance of humility, we have considered keeping our nomination confidential. Yet, it soon became clear that it would have been

irresponsible to deprive the members of our global dignity family around the world. Since February 2015, the nomination has had invaluable results for our global community. In a world where speaking up for dignity is often difficult or even dangerous, this nomination has brought greater safety and support to members who dare to speak up, even when at risk. And since our work is profoundly in line with Alfred Nobel's intentions, we feel that protecting the members of our global dignity family through this nomination is justified.

My Ongoing Outlook

The image of the Blue Planet stands for a historically unprecedented time, a call to re-evaluate everything that history has taught humankind so far. I wonder why we, as humankind at large, seem to overlook the historic opportunity that is open to us, a window that may not stay open for much longer. Why do we overlook that we can co-create a decent world for future generations, a future without war in any of its forms? Why are military budgets still so big? Human rights promise equality in dignity, why is inequality on the rise? Why do so few people grasp the fact that global interconnectedness makes a world without war more feasible than ever? Why do so many people, when asked to escape from the maelstrom of war, remain caught in the past, thus re-creating it, and effectively closing down the very window of opportunity? Why do the world's citizens allow a global government/corporate nexus to be stuck in out-of-date competition for domination, competition that fuels war, violence, and environmental destruction? Above all, I ask, how can we work together to harvest the best of what helps create a dignified future, and leave behind what stands in the way?

Our HumanDHS community is one way of working together to bring forth the best of what helps create a dignified future for all people. Each of us is contributing according to our ability, and thanks to all of you, throughout the past decade, we have nurtured a dedication to dignity on all continents. We have formed a global family of scholars, activists, organizers, educators, and many others who join us on this long and hard path to peace. We walk our talk by being a social movement that nurtures diversity, rather than a traditional top-down organization, where one opinion rules. This means also that not all of my opinions are necessarily shared by all members in our movement, nor should they. In a world in which the concept of *Homo dominator* and *Homo economicus* seems to be the call of the day, our work flourishes by sharing the ego-free, renewable "super fuels" of *Homo amans*, which are love and humility.

This nomination shines a light on the importance of our shared quest. In celebrating this nomination, I urge us to remember that our efforts together are much bigger and more important than any prize. I wish to express my personal gratitude to the many thousands of members of our global dignity movement: it is your *courage-through-connection* that energizes our efforts to build a world that dignifies the lives of all people.

At this point, I wish to express particular appreciation to those at the very core of our dignity work. This work is possible only through holding hands with Linda Hartling in shared *ubuntu-satyagraha* leadership and through the support of such pillars of our work as Rick Slaven, Michael Britton, and Uli Spalthoff.

I call on each of you to realize that my nomination is *your* nomination for the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize!

With loving gratitude,

Evelin Lindner, MD, PhDs
Founding President, Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies
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Encouraging Everyone's Commitment to Dignity and Peace: You are Warmly Invited to Share Your Reflections

Each of us plays a vital role in bringing greater dignity and peace into the world. In recognition and appreciation of our global collaboration, we would love to hear your reflections, that is, what inspires your efforts and ongoing commitment to cultivating dignity and peace in the world? Thank you for allowing us to share your reflections with the many members of our global dignity family.

You are warmly invited to post your message here:
www.humiliationstudies.org/news/?page_id=7974.

Your words will encourage our HumanDHS community and encourage all who work for a world of peace, a world that dignifies the lives of all people.