

UC Berkeley Launches the Kühn Initiative for Post-Conflict Development Studies in Collaboration with Roots of Peace

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EINPresswire.com/ -- The University of California, Berkeley, is launching a new research initiative dedicated to cultivating peace through agriculture in conflict-affected societies. On Friday, September 26, 2025, the university's Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) will host the official opening of the Kühn Initiative for Post-Conflict Development Studies at the Brower Center in Berkeley, California.



Saffron pickers, Western Region

Developed in collaboration with Heidi Kühn—Founder of Roots of Peace,

World Food Prize Laureate (2023), and Nobel Peace Prize Nominee (2024 & 2025)—the initiative will focus on agricultural and economic development as pathways to stability in countries emerging from war.

The launch event, themed “Advancing Human Fraternity Amidst Global Uncertainties: Cultivating Peace Through Agriculture and Defining the Economics of Peace,” will feature a roundtable colloquium with leading scholars, policy experts, and humanitarian leaders, followed by a private reception.

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With the support of UC Berkeley, we now have an academic home to expand our mission and develop practical solutions for communities yearning for peace”

*Heidi Kühn, Roots of Peace
Founder*

“This is a historic moment—not only for UC Berkeley but for the global community,” said Heidi Kühn, a UC Berkeley alumna (B.A. Political Economics of Industrial Societies, 1979). “For more than two decades, Roots of Peace has worked in war-torn regions to turn minefields into farmland. With the support of UC Berkeley, we now have an academic home to expand this mission and develop

practical solutions for communities yearning for peace.”

The Kühn Initiative will bring together experts across fields such as agricultural science, natural resource management, economics, conflict studies, and international development. Areas of focus include:

- Developing knowledge of agriculture in post-conflict zones.
- Supporting research on economic renewal in fragile states.
- Studying the links between demilitarization and sustainable development.
- Promoting peace through agricultural stability and prosperity.

According to Asad Q. Ahmed, Director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, "This Initiative creates a vital forum that brings together the renowned expertise of Berkeley faculty on post-conflict development and the inspiring vision of Heidi Kuhn, who champions peace through agricultural investment. The Center for Middle Eastern Studies is proud to support this dynamic and forward-looking mission."

The partnership also draws upon the deep historical ties between the Kühn family and UC Berkeley. Heidi Kühn, her husband Gary (UC Berkeley, B.A. Economics, 1979), and their daughter Kyleigh (UC Berkeley, B.A. Peace and Conflict Studies, 2009) all carry on a legacy of service to the university and to global peace efforts.

The September 26 event marks the establishment of CMES's first peace-focused research center.

Event Details:

- Date/Time: Friday, September 26, 2025 | 12:00–2:30 PM
- Location: Tamalpais Room, Brower Center, 2150 Allston Way, Berkeley, CA
- Host: UC Berkeley Center for Middle Eastern Studies
- In collaboration with: Roots of Peace

About Roots of Peace: Roots of Peace supports the world's most vulnerable farmers and traders, removing the remnants of war and restoring agricultural productivity and prosperity. Roots of Peace is a humanitarian organization dedicated to the removal of landmines and the subsequent replanting and rebuilding of war-torn regions. Founded in 1997 by Heidi Kuhn, the goal of Roots of Peace is to turn minefields into farmland and support victims of landmine accidents. For more information [click here](#).

About the University of California, Berkeley: The University of California, Berkeley is one of the world's leading public research universities, renowned for its academic excellence, groundbreaking research, and commitment to public service. Home to more than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students, Berkeley has been at the forefront of global innovation and social change for over 150 years. The university's Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) is dedicated to advancing knowledge, scholarship, and dialogue about the Middle East, fostering

interdisciplinary collaboration and public engagement on pressing regional and global issues.

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