

# 4 CIVILIAN CRISIS RESPONSE, VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND PEACEBUILDING

## 4.1 Introduction

*Catherine Barnes\**

People based in a society are often best placed to understand what is going on and to identify specific actions that can be taken to address conflict issues and dynamics. Their insights can support the development of subtle and highly targeted strategies that do not necessarily require extensive resources or coercive measures, especially when addressed at an early point in a conflict cycle. Civil society players – including women’s groups, those working with minorities, indigenous peoples and youth, and religious organizations and leaders – are often particularly well suited to provide information and analysis and to suggest appropriate responses. Their insight should be maximized when exploring response options, which may require collaboration from key partners elsewhere in the global system.

Yet it can be difficult for local actors to mobilize support from outsiders unless there are trustworthy channels to convey this information and analysis to those who can effectively act upon it. This indicates the advantage of an integrated system – or at least a well developed structure of networks, interfaces and entry points – between local, national and international CSOs concerned with conflict and for their engagement with concerned governments and IGOs.

Civil society can serve as an alternative entry point in states and regions in crisis. The donor community and IGOs can support the mobilization of these social resources at all levels, including through political

accompaniment and financial support at the local and national level and through working constructively with Diaspora communities at the international level. Community and national CSOs can also take a range of actions to address conflicts in their midst and mitigate against outbreaks of violence, actions that are done sometimes with the implicit or explicit support of the government and under their censure.

Information and analysis about conflict is sometimes a highly sensitive issue. As it can affect national security, governments may consider it to be a matter exclusively in their realm. Perceptions of unscrupulous intelligence gathering and security service activities may further make it sensitive amongst the wider population, as allegations of ‘spying’ and interference may abound. Yet it is possible for CSOs and relevant officials to cooperate on early warning and early response systems. The system can involve key stakeholders and others with special expertise into a process to share information, strengthen joint analysis, identify options and opportunities, and provide necessary forms of support for implementation.

Inter-governmental and international actors can play a key role in facilitating and creating space for constructive dialogue and productive engagement between governments and civil society representatives. For this to work, however, their mandates and operational practices need to give priority to enabling this dialogue (and, consequently, mission staff will need to develop the necessary skills and capacities to do so effectively).

The following case illustrates one possible way in which CSOs and governments can cooperate in developing a system for responding to conflict, principally for addressing conflicts abroad.

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### 4.2 United States: Government and civil society collaboration for peacebuilding

*Charles Dambach*<sup>26</sup>

**Government and non-government actors have different perceptions on the same issue, also within their own circles. A serious exercise brought these differences clearly to light, and it provided a useful grooming for the actual fieldwork.**

Civil society organizations devoted to building a more peaceful world began to proliferate a quarter century ago. A few peace advocacy organizations precede this period, but most are less than two decades old. Even more recently, many organizations traditionally devoted to international relief and development have incorporated conflict resolution into their missions and programs. Mercy Corps, Catholic Relief Services, CARE, Oxfam, and others recognize the importance of peaceful, secure, and stable environments as prerequisites for successful social and economic development. Furthermore, dozens of academic institutions have created institutes and centres within their structures to not only study peace and conflict resolution, but also to serve as expert consultants and trainers. As a result thousands of citizen-based organizations are now devoted, in one way or another, to conflict prevention and resolution.

#### **Government gets involved**

During this same period, government agencies have recognized the unique and special discipline and practice of conflict prevention and resolution. Building a more secure, stable and peaceful world requires more than armed defence capacity and traditional diplomacy. It requires active application of peacebuilding concepts – establishing trust and normal relationships at the grassroots levels as well as among officials, and

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alleviating injustices, human rights abuses and poverty that can drive societies to use violence to achieve their objectives. Human security requires active measures to prevent violence from occurring, and sustained peace following armed conflict requires extensive reconstruction and reconciliation. The US government first became directly engaged in the concept of peacebuilding in 1981 with the creation of the US Institute of Peace (USIP). In the 1990s, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) created an Office of Transition Initiatives to help “local partners advance peace and democracy in priority countries in crisis.” A decade later the office on Conflict Mediation and Mitigation was added to the USAID structure. Its mission is “to change the way aid is planned and implemented” by taking the impact of instability and violence into account on aid decisions.

At about the same time, the Department of State entered the field with the creation of the office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS). “The Core Mission of S/CRS is to lead, coordinate and institutionalize U.S. Government civilian capacity to prevent or prepare for post-conflict situations, and to help stabilize and reconstruct societies in transition from conflict or civil strife, so they can reach a sustainable path toward peace, democracy and a market economy.”

On top of these State Department and USAID bureaus, the Joint Forces Command within the Department of Defense has established a Unified Action program to link the military with the peacebuilding community and develop joint programs to help prevent and mitigate violent conflicts. None of these government initiatives are large, by typical government agency standards, but they reflect a growing awareness within the US government that alternatives to the use of military force are essential.

#### **Divisions in the conflict prevention field**

The emergence and proliferation of all of these nongovernmental and governmental peacebuilding organizations and agencies is, of course, welcome, but it also created a Tower of Babel and some jealousy and conflict within the conflict prevention field. This has

been particularly prevalent among the government agencies. Some questioned the motives and strategies of others. Others feared of duplication of services and programs. Everyone feared that the limited resources for peacebuilding may be spread over so many agencies and organizations that none would have the capacity – financial, staff and credibility – to achieve adequate results. Even the terminology and language used by various participants in the field caused some division and dissention. Furthermore, until recently, there had been little or no dialogue among them. Fortunately, most of these issues have now been resolved.

### **Alliance building**

US-based civil society organizations began to meet in 1999, and they formed the precursor organization to the current Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP). From the beginning, the primary purpose of this network was to facilitate dialogue, learning, and collaboration among its members (more recently, AfP has welcomed organizations from all over the world to join, and it has become more proactive as an initiator of collaborative action programs and as an advocate for appropriate policies and programs). The emergence of the Global Partnership to Prevent Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and its large conference at the United Nations in the summer of 2005 helped connect peacebuilding organizations worldwide. GPPAC's regional network continues to facilitate dialogue and collaboration.

In the fall of 2005, with leadership of the State Department's S-CRS, representatives from all of the US-based peacebuilding communities convened for the simple purpose of learning about one another. Leaders in peacebuilding from the Departments of State and Defense, USAID, USIP, InterAction (the network of relief and development organizations) and AfP shared information, ideas, concerns and aspirations. It was the first time all of these people and the organizations they represent had ever come together, and everyone left with a new sense of community and collective purpose.

### **A testing exercise**

In 2006, representatives from these same organizations began to meet regularly, and they agreed to create an

exercise to test the concept of collaboration. A steering committee was formed, and the group agreed to select a country or region for a collaborative conflict assessment and scenario-based planning process. The purpose was to test the premise that sharing information, ideas, and perspectives could lead to strategies for collaboration. The driving concept was that coordination of resources and collaboration on strategies and tactics should produce better results than individual, separate, and fractured action.

The group selected the Ferghana Valley (covering parts of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan) for the exercise, and arranged for a two-step process. The first was a two-day session to develop a collaborative assessment of the multiple drivers of conflict in the region. Mark Schneider, Vice President of The International Crisis Group (ICG) presented a detailed analysis of the conflict environment, followed by specific analysis from the perspective of each of the participating organizations and agencies.

The ICG analysis examined structural issues that create the grounds for conflict such as water, Islamic fundamentalist movement in the region, poverty and exclusion, and unemployed youth. They also noted serious proximate issues such as corruption, flawed electoral processes, and several specific events. Ethnic clashes are prevalent in all three countries, and drugs have become a problem. In Tajikistan, there are increases in arrests, and in complaints that those arrested are not a threat to the government. One critical issue is access to markets. Border restrictions affect trade where cross border markets are economic essentials. Geography adds to the challenges. There are 7 provinces in Ferghana Valley, and all are far away from the capitals of the three countries. With this analysis, the complexity of the conflict environment came into focus.

Following the ICG overview, each of the participating groups presented the assessment tools they use to understand conflict environments and then added their perspectives on the Ferghana Valley. The government agencies displayed sophisticated and often complex models. The NGOs tended to operate more on the basis

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of reports from their people in the field and news reports. Much of the US government perspective is based on the presence or absence of implications for the war on terrorism. NGOs, on the other hand, focus on humanitarian concerns regardless of the impact on US foreign policy and the threat of terrorism.

When it came to assessing the conflict environment in the Ferghana Valley, each one provided an analysis of the environment that reflected its own perspective and expertise. The Department of State saw a diplomatic problem. The Department of Defense saw a military problem. Relief and development agencies focused on social and economic issues. And, the peacebuilding community saw a lack of trust and inability of adversaries to communicate with each other.

Each was probably right in their assessments, but none came to the session with the full picture. By listening to the others and understanding their perspectives, everyone developed a more comprehensive view. The process produced a much better perspective on the full dynamics of the conflict for all of the participants, and it clearly demonstrated the value of collaboration.

The second session was designed to explore potential strategies for collaborative action. The National Defense University produced a ‘peacegame’ exercise to provide participants an opportunity to test the way they would react and take action if current conditions changed. The scenario included a hypothetical massive flood that caused enormous hardship. The immediate impact of the disaster could trigger violent disputes over the equitability of the allocation of scarce food, shelter and safe water. Longer term, it could cause permanent displacement of segments of the population and produce dramatic changes in the political climate. On the other hand, if managed properly, such a tragedy could become a unifying, peacebuilding opportunity.

The participants from government agencies and CSOs grappled with the roles each could and should play in this charged environment. They discovered ways some could address particular challenges better than others, and tried to develop systems and mechanisms to

facilitate coordination in a way that would minimize confusion and conflict.

The two-day session did not allow adequate time to resolve all of the issues, but it did illustrate how bringing everyone together in one room at one time in a spirit of cooperation could significantly enhance the prospects of a positive outcome.

The obvious limitation in this exercise was that it was just that, an exercise. It did not have any impact on a real situation – the all too real potential for violence in the Ferghana Valley. Even worse, no organizations from the Ferghana Valley participated. That would not, or at least should not, be acceptable in a real scenario. This exercise was carried out quietly because it was an experiment, and there was concern that it could have adverse consequences if it was conducted with local participation, and it did not work well.

### **From exercise to the real world**

Following this exercise, however, the Alliance for Peacebuilding took the initiative to seek to apply the concept to the real world – in the Ferghana Valley. With a modest grant from the Ploughshares Fund, AfP developed a conceptual framework for a collaborative violence prevention initiative, with Michael Lund as the chief advisor. Building on the Ferghana Valley experiment, AfP felt it would be most appropriate to explore the possibility of implementing a project in partnership with the Foundation for Tolerance International in Kyrgyzstan. The initial meeting took place at the GPPAC meeting in The Hague in the fall of 2006, and there was a follow up at the 2007 GPPAC meeting in Soesterberg. Additional planning meetings took place in Washington at the end of October with participants from government agencies and NGOs.

Early in 2008, FTI and AfP will co-sponsor a series of meetings with key civil society leaders and government officials in Kyrgyzstan. A joint team from FTI and AfP will meet individually with high level government officials, former officials, and Kyrgyzstan civil society organizations. The team will also meet with ambassadors to Kyrgyzstan from other countries, World

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Bank officials, UN representatives, and NGOs from the international community such as Mercy Corps, IRI, NDI, etc.

Following the individual meetings, the sponsors will host a meeting of representatives of all of these organizations and institutions. The format will be much like that used in the Ferghana Valley exercise. It will begin with a collaborative assessment of the drivers of conflict in Kyrgyzstan. The purpose of the assessment is to encourage all participants to listen to others in order to broaden their understanding of and appreciation for the multiple issues that require attention. The assessment phase will be followed by an analysis of strategic initiatives that can be implemented by each of the participants, working in cooperation with the others, to alleviate the stresses that could drive the country into violence.

Follow up initiatives will depend on the outcome of the sessions. If agreement can be reached on strategic approaches, and if there is a commitment to collaborate and coordinate, the team will seek to develop and generate support for a mechanism to coordinate long term implementation of the strategies. If agreement cannot be reached in the first set of meetings, the AfP and FTI team will seek to follow up with the participants to build the capacity to establish an appropriate strategy.

Collaboration as described above would seem to be a logical and necessary part of peacebuilding in any environment, yet it rarely happens. AfP and FTI view this initiative as a pilot program that will produce positive results and serve as a model for application worldwide.

### 4.3 EU: The EU-NGO relationship in peacebuilding – The role of civil society process

*Philippe Bartholmé*<sup>27</sup>

In many important policy documents, the EU has formally recognised the importance of NGOs. The *EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts*<sup>28</sup> adopted in Göteborg in 2001, recognises the need for cooperative approaches to conflict prevention, in order to address the root causes of violent conflicts and states that “exchange of information, dialogue and practical co-operation with humanitarian actors such as the ICRC, relevant non-governmental and academic organisations should also be strengthened”. Several other policy documents and statements provide a strong basis for consultation and cooperation with NGOs in all aspects of peacebuilding, including crisis management and development cooperation.<sup>29</sup>

The EU made important and welcome steps in conceptualising this cooperation but concrete and operational mechanisms to utilise NGOs’ expertise and to develop a real policy dialogue are still missing. In 2006, the Finnish Presidency of the European Union, recognising that greater efforts were needed to address these gaps, launched the first phase of a process now known as ‘RoCS’, the *Role of Civil Society*.

During this first phase, the Finnish Presidency developed a project together with the KATU Civil Society Conflict Prevention Network, the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) and the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO). The overall objective of the project has been to promote increased understanding and awareness among EU member states and relevant EU decision makers on the impact that civil society can have on crisis management and peacebuilding. In this framework, Catriona Gourlay developed a report entitled *Partners Apart: Enhancing Cooperation between Civil Society and EU Civilian Crisis Management in the Framework of ESDP*.<sup>30</sup> This report, based on extensive consultations with relevant NGOs and EU Member States and institutions people, identified specific NGO assets, including their deep in-

country knowledge, analytical capacity, ability to train personnel, and capacity to represent an independent view, and presented recommendations on how to shape a real cooperation between the EU and NGOs in civilian crisis management. The report was the basis of a conference in Helsinki in September 2006, bringing together representatives from Member States, EU institutions and NGO to discuss these recommendations. An important outcome of this project was the *CIVCOM Recommendations for Enhancing Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the Framework of EU Civilian Crisis Management and Conflict Prevention*,<sup>31</sup> endorsed later by the Political and Security Committee.

This project focused deliberately on the narrow issue of interactions between European peacebuilding NGOs and the EU civilian crisis management structures. From a peacebuilding point of view, and as recognised by the EU Göteborg Programme, short term crisis response cannot be dissociated from long term conflict prevention. These two parts of the response to violent conflicts are internally divided inside the EU between Community and ESDP instruments.

With the new Instrument for Stability,<sup>32</sup> the EU has new means and tools for increased coherence and for

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28 European Council (2001), [www.eu2001.se/static/eng/pdf/violent.PDF](http://www.eu2001.se/static/eng/pdf/violent.PDF). Also available on European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (2006), [www.eplo.org/documents/eplo5yearafterweb.pdf](http://www.eplo.org/documents/eplo5yearafterweb.pdf)

29 See, among others, the EU Action Plan for Civilian Crisis Management, Council of the European Union (2004), [www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/Action%20Plan%20for%20Civilian%20Aspects%20of%20ESDP.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/Action%20Plan%20for%20Civilian%20Aspects%20of%20ESDP.pdf) and the Cotonou Agreement (2000) [http://ec.europa.eu/development/geographical/cotonou/cotonoudoc\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/development/geographical/cotonou/cotonoudoc_en.cfm)

30 *Partners Apart: Enhancing Cooperation between Civil Society and EU Civilian Crisis Management in the Framework of ESDP*, by Catriona Gourlay. Civil Society Conflict Prevention Network (KATU), Crisis Management Initiative, European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, September 2006.

31 Council of the European Union (2006a), <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st15/st15574.en06.pdf>.

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cooperation with relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental actors, particularly with the creation of a Peace-Building Partnership.

In this context, the RoCS process was continued with a new focus. The question of cooperation and coordination in the field as well as of the coherence between conflict prevention and crisis management were central in the follow-up project developed by the German Presidency, together with EPLO, CMI and the Bertelsmann Foundation<sup>33</sup>. This new project continued the conceptual development of the cooperation but started to move towards more practical steps. Two case-

studies focused on the cooperation and consultation in the field (Somalia and DRC). Another important step was the start of a now ongoing process of briefings by NGOs in CIVCOM. Since the German Presidency, NGOs are invited to address this advisory committee for civilian crisis management on specific issues. This experience has been continued under the Portuguese Presidency of the EU and should continue with incoming Presidencies. So far, NGO experts with field experience discussed with European diplomats ongoing or planned missions in, among others, Afghanistan, Kosovo, DRC Palestinian Territories or Guinea Bissau.

The practical aspects of the RoCS process will be developed further under the Slovene Presidency of the EU, which is committed to continuing the CIVCOM consultations and wants to work jointly on a specific thematic issue. The Slovene Presidency will also have the responsibility to revise the recommendations on EU-NGO cooperation.

32 The European Parliament and Council of the European Union (2006b), 1717/2006, [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/documents/legislation/legal\\_bases/stability\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/documents/legislation/legal_bases/stability_en.pdf)

33 See the final report of the project. See also Partners in Conflict Prevention & Crisis Management: EU and NGO Cooperation, Crisis Management Initiative, European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, Bertelsmann Stiftung and German Presidency of the European Union, August 2007.