16 Development

No Development without Peace, No Peace without Development

Malin Brenk and Hans van de Veen*

Poorly planned and executed aid programs in conflict areas may fail to reduce suffering or may at worst inadvertently exacerbate it. Addressing conflict and supporting sustainable peace is a prerequisite for addressing human need. More and more agencies, as well as governments and intergovernmental organizations, seek to contribute positively to peacebuilding through adopting a conflict-sensitive approach.

Development aid, rehabilitation, relief – aid of whatever character runs the risk of aggravating conflict-prone tendencies within recipient countries and push them towards open violence in the following three ways, limiting the examples only to Africa (Incore, 2001):

. *Political dimensions:* aid can play into a divisive politics of distribution and retribution. It may interact with embedded structural violence (as happened in the case of Rwanda, where successive decades of development assistance laid the foundations for the 1994 genocide). It can be controlled and diverted to political supporters and away from opponents (Moi's Kenya, or the context of aid diversion in the war in Sudan). Or it can be hijacked to support particular political or military agendas (as in the progressive

militarization of the refugee camps of eastern Zaire between 1994 and 1996) or to

legitimize the power of particular state or non-state actors.

. *Economic dimensions*: aid can be co-opted into a corrupt patrimonialpolitics of graft

and redistribution (Mobutu's Zaire). It can become part of the "economy of war" that

develops during a conflict (Somalia in 1992) or a post-conflict. Or aid can substitute for

the responsibilities of a state, freeing up financial resources that can be devoted to the war

effort (as has been argued in the case of Rwanda and Uganda, and their war effort in the

Democratic Republic of Congo - DRC).

. *Socio-cultural dimensions:* aid can be misinterpreted as partisan support for a particular

political tendency or military faction. It can send out messages of superiority and bias

(religious, ethnic, national) through otherwise reasonable targeting decisions. It can

enflame rumors and incite suspicions (vaccination scares in DRC).

After the Cold War

Over the past decade, the mandate of aid has been extended significantly. To understand

this, one has to go back to the 1980s, when the end of the Cold War brought about far-

reaching political changes that culminated in a great increase in the number of civil wars,

especially in Africa and the former Soviet Union. While traditional diplomacy was

unable to cope with this kind of conflicts in remote areas characterized by deep social

divisions and weak governance, many non-governmental relief and development

organizations made their entrance. The international community, desperately looking for

possibilities to promote democratic and peaceful changes in those same regions,

enthusiastically supported the enhanced role of NGOs. As a result, humanitarian

assistance and development aid were confronted with a long extension of their mandate,

under increasingly difficult conditions.

Within a few years, a fierce debate emerged on the consequences of the growing

importance of humanitarianism and the new role of relief and development NGOs. While

working with the best intentions, they were accused of fueling war economies,

undermining social contracts, feeding the killers, etc. Humanitarian relief in complex

emergencies was called a "fig leaf", covering the disinterest of the international

community to seek lasting solutions to political crisis in countries that hold little strategic

value for Western powers. Within the humanitarian community itself there was much

debate regarding such issues as core humanitarian principles (e.g., neutrality,

impartiality) and military-humanitarian relations (e.g. protection). All this debate led to a

rethinking of the role of NGOs and more generally, of the role of humanitarian and

development assistance in areas affected by chronic political instability.

Donors invested in research and development policies that make a more explicit link

between poverty, conflict and aid. New criteria, policies and, on occasion conditionalities

were introduced. In 1997, the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC)

adopted *Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation.* The DAC

Guidelines urge the adoption of a "conflict prevention lens", that would integrate the

instinct to prevent conflict across all sectors of development activity. The Guidelines also

contain the crucial statement that "to work effectively towards peace, development

agencies need to work alongside partners in developing countries before, during and after the conflict."

In the wake of the OECD initiative, other donors adapted their own policy. UNDP-director Gus Speth advised that development assistance should never be stopped during a conflict, whenever possible.

"From a development perspective, we must have preventive development before the crisis. We must have ameliorative development during the crisis. And we must have curative development after the crisis."

The EU rethought its policy on structural stability in countries going through a process of transition, while the World Bank created a special post-conflict unit. In January 2001 the Bank adopted its policy entitled "Development Cooperation and Conflict", the strategic framework for its engagement in conflict-affected countries, focusing on conflict prevention, understanding the root causes of conflict, and integrating sensitivity to conflict in the Bank's activities. Its Conflict Analysis Framework enhances the Bank's capacity to analyze and address conflict as part of poverty reduction and other development strategies. In 2003 the World Bank released a new study *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy* (see box).

A number of bilateral donors such as CIDA (Canada), SIDA (Sweden), DGIS (Netherlands) and DFID (UK) also developed guidelines for conflict sensitive aid.

Several humanitarian and development NGOs nowadays are also addressing this linkage

by developing new mandates and policies for their projects. In Sri Lanka for instance,

DFID and Oxfam have been working together to design strategies to enable aid and relief

to be delivered more effectively in conflict-affected areas, including a preventative

capacity.

A general consensus seems to have grown that NGOs working in conflict situations have

to choose between to either stick their heads in the sand or confront the issues directly.

South African Jacco Cilliers, Peacebuilding and Justice advisor at Catholic Relief

services (CRS) is quoted as saying:

"*Depending on the nature of the conflict, using a variety of means, NGOs can contribute*

to the avoidance of violent conflict spiraling into full blown crisis. They can support local

communities and civil society organizations to work for peace and strong ties across

social groups. At the international level NGOs can lobby their home governments and

international organizations regarding pending violent conflict. There are no easy

answers regarding the role of NGOs in preventing deadly conflict, but we can be certain

of one thing if conflict prevention is not successful: the inevitable destruction of all that

we and the communities we serve have worked to achieve." (Towards Better

Peacebuilding Practices, 2003)

The Current Debate

If peace is the pre-requisite for development, human rights and justice, then humanitarian and development organizations should develop a much greater share of their resources to the fight for peace, first and foremost, to prevent as well as to put an end to deadly conflict. But what would that fight look like? The contemporary debate on the role of development aid as a contribution to conflict transformation focuses primarily on the relative strength and weaknesses of three inter-related approaches.

. The *Do no Harm* approach, developed by Anderson (1999), primary aims to avoid doing more harm than good, and is vitally concerned with the unintended negative impact of development aid, pointing out that these often tend to aggravate conflict rather than contribute to its resolution.

. The *Local Capacities for Peace* approach seeks to identify potential entry points for conflict transformation through development aid, and recommends that external donor agencies should focus on supporting local capacities for peace.

. The discourse on *peace and conflict impact assessment* (PCIA) stresses the need for a thorough analysis of the conflict context. From this develops a methodology for the assessment and evaluation of peace and conflict impact that offers a framework for peacebuilding.

See chapter 4 of this publication for a further elaboration on these three approaches.

Mainstreaming Conflict Prevention

Through the above-mentioned approaches - and several other recent research projects –
many lessons have been learned. It is however the implications of these lessons that
complicate the issue. How should one respond to the realization that aid can do a lot of
harm? What does that recognition mean in practical terms for humanitarian aid workers
distributing food to refugees in conflict areas? Further, the concept of conflict prevention
is not easy to grasp and to translate into explicit activities. For this reason, many
development- and humanitarian NGOs and workers have, so far, been reluctant to
implement the lessons in their daily routine.

Goodhand and Lewer (2001) argue that mainstreaming conflict prevention is easier said
than done. How far should this issue be incorporated into the agency's thinking and
practice? And how far should the mainstreaming be extended? Should development
NGOs change into peacebuilding organizations as well? The authors argue that NGOs
should indeed try to tackle the roots of the conflict, by working "on" conflict, but also
that they should develop a linkage between the conflict and their work, i.e. develop a
conflict sensitive approach, or learn to work "in" conflict.

However, Goodhand and Lewer warn that, when deciding to expand their mandates,
NGOs should guard against exceeding their responsibility and engaging themselves in the
conflict dynamics as such. This warning is coupled wit a second caution: before
policymakers decide on the actual agenda of development NGOs, the voices of those
actually engaged in the conflict should be heard. What are the experiences of and views
on the conflict reality they are faced with in their every day lives?

A number of agencies and programs have been experimenting with new approaches.

These include Oxfam GB in Sri Lanka and Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) in Mali. This

last case (see description after this chapter) is an illustration of an organization whose

involvement in peacebuilding grew "organically" out of its long-term commitment to the

development of the areas where it worked. NCA has successfully extended its

humanitarian mandate, not by losing its commitment to providing basic support to people

affected by war, but by creating ways and means to provide peaceful long-term solutions

to the conflict context as well.

At the organizational level agencies have implemented re-skilling through training

workshops, cooperated with research programs, and undergone re-alignments of aims and

objectives. It has been shown that introducing peacebuilding elements into daily practice

can be achieved in two ways:

. Top-down efforts: identified by headquarters and then disseminated downwards (like

Oxfam GB identifying conflict reduction as a regional strategic change objective);

. Bottom-up efforts: identified by people in the field – pressure from below, based on

experience, working with local partners and consultation with beneficiaries.

The most effective way of mainstreaming conflict prevention into aid and relief work

involves a combination of top-down and bottom-up efforts, conclude Goodhand and

Lewer.

Ongoing NGO experience shows that they have tried to mainstream the issue of

peacebuilding by adding it to the management responsibilities of the staff, appointing

conflict advisors, forming a special conflict unit, and investing in training and capacity-

building of staff.

Added Value

On its own, aid cannot promote peace. It should be part of a package of foreign policy

measures – including policy dialogue, preventive diplomacy, cultural, trade and

investment policies, and military cooperation - towards a conflict-affected area. To be

effective, Leonhardt and Nyheim (Fewer, 2001) argue, policy coherence between these

instruments is required, which means that they all should be applied with peace as the

ultimate objective in mind. If that condition is met, they say, there are three main areas in

which relief, rehabilitation and development aid can play a positive role in promoting

peace.

a. *Long-term conflict prevention*: Aid has the potential to address the structural

conditions (or "root causes"), which produce violent conflict, such as social

exclusion, lack of political participation, unaccountable public institutions, and

lack of personal security. It can also support people in creating institutions for the

peaceful resolution of social conflict and empower them to become involved in

conflict prevention initiatives. Such fundamental social transformations can only

be achieved in a long-term perspective. Despite ever-shortening funding cycles,

aid does have the capacity to offer such long-term commitment and support to

countries at risk of violent conflict

b. *Supporting peace processes.* During war-peace transitions and in post-conflict

situations, aid can help prepare the ground for sustainable peace. Experience has

shown that political negotiations (Track I) are unlikely to lead to a lasting peace

agreement, if a peace process that goes down to the grassroots does not support

them. The social groundwork for peace needs to be based on participation,

material benefit and security. In the early stages of the peace process, aid can

support citizens in creating social spaces for dialogue, generating public pressure

for peace and formulating as people-focused peace agenda. During peace

negotiations, their role as facilitators, mediators, and witnesses can be

strengthened, while later their participation in the process of reconciliation and

building structures to sustain peace is essential. Aid for post-conflict rehabilitation

and reconstruction can help build trust in the peace process by offering real

material improvements to people (e.g. new business or employment opportunities)

and making sure that the "peace dividend' is distributed equally among the

population. The transformation from a "culture of violence" to a "culture of

peace" requires that people can trust in their personal security and the institutions

of justice. Prudent support for a reform of the security services can assist in

bringing about this change.

c. *Addressing localized violence.* Development aid can support communities in

dealing with localized forms of violence and conflict. Such violence can range

from cattle rusting in rural Kenya to gang violence in the urban centers of Latin

America. These conflicts are often associated with high number of unemployed

(male) youth, the ready availability of small arms, and a deep disregard for the value of individual life. In this context, aid can assist people to develop community-based security systems, it can address the material pre-conditions of violence and support local mediation efforts. Traditional ways of conflict resolution can be very effective in these situations and should be explored and strengthened.

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Meeting the challenges

In a recent publication, International Alert also stresses the need for humanitarian agencies – when aiming for a "conflict-sensitive" practice – not to work in isolation. Increased consultation by donors with agencies before launching aid efforts and support for conflict-sensitive approaches and critical reflection throughout the intervention is necessary.

Complex emergencies in conflict zones do not develop or recede overnight. Despite short timeframes, agencies have an opportunity to influence the planning of aid at an early stage by advocating for a higher profile for humanitarian issues in overarching policy frameworks. Rebuilding local capacity to withstand and transform violent conflict is entirely consistent with traditional humanitarian principles. Humanitarian agencies can:

. strengthen the population's capacity to resist the effects of violent conflict;

. act as witnesses to remind warring parties of their responsibilities, thereby protecting the population; and

. adopt a "human security" approach that contributes to creating an environment where

people can meet their own basic needs.

Conflict, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding: Meeting the Challenges. 2003.

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Adopting Conflict Sensitivity

In the present debate, there seems to be consensus on the need to ensure that all

development actors (donors, national governments, international organizations) and

processes are conflict-sensitive, in order to counter negative aspects and seek to

contribute positively to peacebuilding. Conflict sensitivity is defined (International Alert,

2003) as the ability of an organization to:

. understand the context in which it operates;

. understand the interaction between the context and its intervention;

. act on this understanding to avoid negative and increase positive impacts on conflict.

To ensure conflict-sensitivity, actors should: 1) carry out a conflict analysis and update it

regularly; 2) link conflict analysis with the programming cycle; and, 3) plan, implement

monitor and evaluate interventions in a conflict-sensitive fashion. In practice, concluded

Andrew Sherriff from the Development and Peacebuilding Programme of International

Alert at the Dublin conference in March 2004, "there is certainly more conflict analysis

than before, but linking the conflict analysis to the program/project cycle is still limited.

An even bigger challenge is the relative impact of conflict-sensitive interventions if the wider environment is conflict-insensitive (an island of conflict-sensitivity in a sea of conflict-insensitivity). The role of advocacy in this scenario becomes critical."

Sheriff is referring here to what has been called the "project trap". Ensuring that a given project does no harm and does some good is an important first step. However, consider the case of the UK government in Nepal: while DFID is doing some path breaking work on understanding and addressing conflict issues in the country, the Foreign office is at the same time supplying short take-off aircraft to the Royal Nepal Army. A classical case of the left hand needing to know what the right hand is doing. In short, projects that build on better practice can be extremely beneficial within their given contexts, but conflict dynamics are almost never restricted to one particular geographic or political level, so there is a need to think beyond "the project" to the wider picture and links to other levels.

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Key recommendations

In its recent publication Conflict, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding, International Alert gives some more key recommendations for how humanitarian agencies can consciously seek to develop and strengthen a conflict-sensitive approach:

. Identify, partner with and build the capacity of local civil society organizations that are viewed by their communities as representative and legitimate, and that can play a positive role in more long-term local peacebuilding efforts.

. Integrate conflict sensitive principles and methods into core programming areas (rather than establishing separate peacebuilding programs), so as to minimize unintended negative consequences, increase accountability and strengthen positive spill-offs on peace.

. Where appropriate, seek to develop new partnerships with other international and local agencies who can assist in meeting the diverse needs created by violent conflict.

. Think through the potential impact of the humanitarian activity on the conflict dynamics and vice versa in the planning stage and incorporate women's and men's perspectives into the design. This includes appreciating the gendered impact of violence and the particular roles of women and men in post-conflict peacebuilding.

. Advocate for a higher profile for humanitarian issues and human security realities in overarching (donor) policy frameworks, based on in-depth understanding of realities on the ground.

. Develop and strengthen capacity to understand and analyze the operational context, including the profile, actors and causes of conflict. Comprehensive and on-going conflict analysis that extends beyond the immediate local operations to the national and regional levels should be considered an important element of adequate risk assessment, needs assessment and targeting.

. Invest in evaluations and lessons learned that are based on the perspective of legitimate and representative local partners, who are committed to peaceful change, and their constituencies, and ensure that these lessons are applied in on-going and future programs.

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Conclusion

Peace processes can only be sustainable when they are led or at least supported by the peace stakeholders themselves. External intervention is most effective when it provides assistance to ongoing local or national peace processes. When intervening, development and peace practitioners should not work in isolation but draw on each other's competencies (work together, learn form each other, and complement each other in strategy and action).

* Malin Brenk is editor of this book and Hans van de Veen is a freelance journalist.

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Resources

Lead organizations

Catholic Relief Services – USA

Peacebuilding programme

WebMaster@CatholicRelief.org

http://www.crs.org

Collaborative for Development Action – USA

Do No Harm – Local Capacities for Peace Project

cda@cdainc.com

http://www.cdainc.com

International Alert – United Kingdom

Development and Peacebuilding Unit

general@international-alert.org

www.international-alert.org

International Development Research Centre – Canada

Peacebuilding Programme

info@idrc.ca

http://www.idrc.ca/peace/

Saferworld – United Kingdom

Conflict Sensitive Development Approach

general@saferworld.org.uk

www.saferworld.co.uk/csd.htm

CARE – United Kingdom

Emergency Relief and Post-conflict Rehabilitation

info@ciuk.org

Forthcoming in:
People Building Peace II: Successful Stories of Civil Society
Edited by Paul van Tongeren, Malin Brenk, Marte Hellema, Juliette Verhoeven
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http://www.care.org

World Vision – USA

For contact, please visit website

http://www.worldvision.org

Additional websites

http://www.gtz.de/english/

German Agency for Technical Assistance – Offers a broad array of resources on conflict

and development

http://www.odihpn.org

The Humanitarian Practice Network – An independent forum for field workers, managers

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World Bank urges international action to prevent civil wars

International action to prevent civil wars in poor countries could avert untold suffering,

spur poverty reduction, and help to protect people around the world from negative spill-

over effects, including drug-trafficking, disease, and terrorism, according to the World

Bank study

Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy.

Contrary to popular opinion, ethnic tensions and ancient political feuds are rarely the

primary cause of civil wars, says the study. Instead economic forces such as entrenched

poverty and heavy dependence on natural resource exports are usually to blame. Because

of this, the study concludes that the international community has both compelling reasons

and the means to prevent such conflicts. It urges three sets of actions to prevent civil wars: more and better-targeted aid for countries at risk, increased transparency of the revenue derived from natural resources, and better timed post-conflict peacekeeping and aid.

"Every time a civil war breaks out some historian traces its origin to the 14th century and some anthropologist expounds on its ethnic roots," said Paul Collier, the lead author of the report, at its publication. "Some countries are more prone to civil war than others but distant history and ethnic tensions are rarely the best explanations. Instead look at a nation's recent past and, most important, its economic conditions."

Since 1995 the Bank has supported reconstruction in Bosnia, Rwanda, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, other Balkan states, East Timor, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Afghanistan. In response to these and other conflicts, international attention and the Bank's own work have focused increasingly on conflict prevention.

The new World Bank study analyzed 52 major civil wars that occurred between 1960 and 1999. The typical conflict lasted about seven years and left a legacy of persistent poverty and disease. The study found that the negative effects of these wars extended far beyond the actual fighting, to neighboring countries and to even to distant, high-income countries.

Perhaps surprisingly, neither ethnic and religious diversity nor income inequality increased the likelihood that a country would fall into civil war. For the average country in the study, the risk of civil war during any five-year period was about 6 percent. But the risk was alarmingly higher if the economy was poor, economically declining, and

dependent on natural resource exports. For a country like the Democratic Republic of Congo in the late 1990s, with deep poverty, a collapsing economy, and huge mineral exploitation, the risk of civil war was nearly 80 per cent.

"Failure to develop greatly increases the chance that a country will be caught in a civil war, and such conflicts in turn destroy the foundations for development," said Collier. "Countries can break this conflict trap by putting in place the policies and institutions necessary for sustained growth. Our new understanding of the causes and consequences of civil wars provides a compelling basis for international action."

The study challenges a common assumption that civil war combatants should be left to fight it our among themselves. "This attitude is not just heartless, it is foolish," Collier said. To start with, most of the suffering caused by civil war-death, injury, disease, dislocation and loss of possessions is experienced by non-combatants who have little say about whether the war should begin or how long it should last.

Moreover, the domestic costs of civil war continue long after the fighting ends. Countries that suffer a civil war often get locked into persistently high levels of military expenditure, capital flight, infectious disease, low growth and entrenched poverty. A country that has recently emerged from war is at especially high risk of falling into conflict again.

Local Wars, Global Casualties

But the negative effects do not stop at the border: neighboring countries suffer immediate and long term effects, including the costs of providing for refugees, increased infectious

disease (such as malaria, HIV, and tuberculosis), and higher military expenditure.

Throughout the region, investment dries up and economic growth declines, heightening

the risk that neighboring countries will themselves fall into civil war.

Globally, three major social evils are in large part the by-product of civil wars: hard

drugs, HIV and international terrorism. For example, about 95 percent of the global

production of illegal narcotics is located in civil war countries. Epidemiological research

suggests that the initial spread of HIV was closely associated with the 1979 civil war in

Uganda, and the large number of rapes along the border with Tanzania. Finally,

international terrorists need areas

outside of government control for large-scale training camps, such as those that Al Queda

ran in Afghanistan.

"The world is too small and tightly networked for the damages of conflict to be contained

within the country at war", said Nicholas Stern, World Bank Chief Economist and Senior

Vice President for Development Economics. "The study shows that even if we are not

prepared to act from a sense of common decency, self-interest dictates that the

international community must work together to reduce the numb er and length of these

tragic and deeply destructive conflicts."

An Agenda for Action

Fortunately, there is a growing record of successes in such collective action. For example,

new international regulations in the diamond trade have cut financing for rebel groups

dependent on "blood diamonds," helping to end rebellions in Angola and Sierra Leone.

Rich countries' agreement to make bribery of developing country officials a crime has reduced the corruption that is often a contributing factor in the onset of conflict. And an international ban on landmines instituted in 1997 has already halved the number of casualties.

"There is a growing recognition that there can be no peace without development and no development without peace", says Ian Bannon, head of the Bank's Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit. "Developing countries, donors, international organizations, NGOs and private firms have a common interest in ending civil wars and an untapped potential to build peace."

The study proposes a three-part agenda for action that incorporates a variety of initiatives already underway.

· *More and better aid.* Increased aid and changes in allocation and administration could make such assistance more effective in preventing conflict and in supporting countries recently emerged from war. These changes include targeting aid to the poorest countries, which are most at risk of civil war. In extremely poor countries with very weak governance, assistance should focus on a few simple reforms, such as improving elementary education or maternal health, in order to build the constituency for further reforms. The World Bank's most

concessionary assistance is already targeted in this manner and a growing number of bilateral aid programs are adopting similar allocation rules.

· *Improved international governance of natural resources*. Rich endowments of diamonds, timber, oil, gold and other natural resources are often associated with conflict,

poor governance and economic decline, in part because they provide a tempting source of

revenue for would-be rebels. The study proposes a series of measures to address this

problem: shutting rebel organizations out of international markets, as is being done with

diamonds; reducing poor countries' exposure to commodity price shocks through

insurance mechanisms; and increasing the transparency of natural resource revenues, for

example by establishing a common format for reporting payments and supporting public

scrutiny of how these

revenues are spent.

· *Coordinating reductions in military spending and sequencing military interventions*

with aid and reform. Civil wars often lead to regional arms races, which undermine

development and increase the risk of war. One solution is for regional political

organizations to negotiate coordinated cuts in arms spending, and for international

financial institutions to monitor compliance. When the international community

intervenes militarily to stop a war, the military and aid commitments should last long

enough for development take hold. This

typically takes four to five years, but peacekeeping forces and aid are often sharply

reduced after just two years, increasing the risk of resumed hostilities.

The study concludes that if these three sets of measures were put into place then civil

wars would be fewer and shorter, and countries emerging from war would be less likely

to relapse. As a result, the number of countries in civil war at any given time would fall

by half, to about one-in-twenty, from the current level of about one-in-ten.

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16.1 Peace Aid: Norwegian Church Aid in Mali

When an external group was needed to help sustain peace in Mali, combatants,

government, and local people, turned to an intermediary they had come to know and

trust. An aid agency became peacemaker.

A prolonged drought was taking its toll on Northern Mali during the great hunger in the

Sahel belt when Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) got involved with humanitarian

assistance in 1984. First, NCA workers set up a project office in northeastern Gourma to

provide immediate help to drought victims. Then, in 1986 in line with its longstanding

policy of following up emergency aid with longer-term development assistance, the

humanitarian agency expanded this operation into the biggest of its kind in the region: an

integrated rural development scheme embracing food production, environmental security,

rehabilitation projects and health services.

By 1990, long simmering tensions between the vast, isolated Northern regions and the

South-based government had turned violent. The conflict involved Tuareg and Arab rebel

groups, government troops, and various other factions. Northern Mali became virtually

lawless. NCA faced pressure to join other development agencies in leaving the area; over

a two-year period, the agency lost eight of its Malian workers who were accused of

partiality. NCA decided however to stay.

Furthermore, the agency representatives used official means to re-establish the

humanitarian function of the organization in the area, opening talks with government

representatives and setting up informal channels of dialogue with the main actors in the

conflict.

The NCA Approach

The peace engagement of NCA had several stages. In the early phase the NCA regional

responsible at the head quarter in Oslo and the resident representative in Mali developed

contact with their previous colleagues in the program who now had become actors in this

violent conflict. The deputy head and a development coordinator of NCA in Mali became

leaders in two rebel movements, while a health coordinator was appointed minister in the

government. Facilitating secret dialogues with the various parties was a high risk activity

that was undertaken. Information and political positions between were shifted between

the parties and meetings were also held outside the country.

After some time NCA felt a need not only to facilitate dialogues between the two parties,

but also to take part in international forums where Mali was on the agenda. By 1994, the

fighting in Northern Mali had caused the fall of a government – that of Moussa Traore, in

1991 - and the installation of democratic rule, but continuing clashes raised fears the

country would descend into full-scale civil war. Peace talks initiated by some traditional

leaders within their own communities - the village chief of Bourem hosted the first in a

series of such negotiations in November 1994 – were making progress. Nonetheless, a

more comprehensive, broad-based approach was considered necessary to make peace

sustainable.

The parties sought an influential neutral entity to assist peace moves and called on the

NCA to play this role. It was one of the few entities trusted by both rebels and

government through its aid work, NCA had developed good contacts, both within the

various rebel groups and inside the democratic government. Its staff knew Northern Mali

well, and was aware of the sense of hopelessness - especially among nomadic Tuaregs

and Arabs – that lay at the root of the conflict.

The popular sentiment among people about the Norwegian agency was captured in the

published testimony of a Northern Malian:

"The presence of NCA in Gourma even in the most difficult periods, kept reminding us

that peace was possible. Otherwise they would have left."

NCA itself was prepared to take on such a role. The organization, founded as a

humanitarian body in 1947, had already tested the idea of blending aid work and

peacemaking during an operation in Guatemala in the late eighties. NCA had gone to this

Central American nation to provide emergency aid after an earthquake in 1976, but found

its work was affected by the civil war. Rather than leaving, the agency used contacts and

local knowledge to help mediate between the warring parties. Some has characterized the

NCAs flexibility and ambitions - "as much as possible, where it is possible, whenever it

is possible" as an NCA-approach. In Mali this had at least a good effect.

In the second phase around 1995 of NCA's peace role in Mali, the organization appointed a Norwegian who had been previous staff person during the drought period to start a more proactive and planned peace engagement. Informal contacts were made with major actors in the conflict and important community leaders in the North. The consultant joined a small group of experienced civil society leaders who guided local peace initiatives already underway. They set up a facilitation group, which agreed to incorporate traditional skills into peacemaking efforts.

At the first community meeting they attended, nomadic chiefs agreed to encourage people in the direction of peace. A second meeting, at Bourem, on January 11, 1995, resulted in a local truce that ended fighting. A number of similar meetings followed, organized and conducted in accordance with traditional conflict resolution methods. These took place at Gao, Menaka and Asongo. One such meeting, at Aglal - across the river from Timbuktu - ended fighting in Timbuktu province.

The cumulative effect of these gatherings was the creation of a series of localized ceasefires between different movements. Eventually, organized violence stopped, in early 1995.

Amid the euphoria that greeted this development, though, many people were aware that more needed to be done to sustain peace. For one thing, the economic and social conditions at the root of the conflict remained largely unchanged. Further, the various communities kept their arms and many refugees were still afraid to return. Such underlying concerns needed to be properly addressed.

Listing Problems

The government tried to keep momentum going by organizing a series of regional
meetings involving people from all walks of life to discuss common concerns. Although
sometimes unstructured and ad hoc, these meetings demonstrated the existence of a
strong desire for peace among local people. The government encouraged civil society to
continue along similar lines.

Intercommunity meetings were organized to get people who shared the same land, used
the same resources and shared the same marketplace but who were divided by the
conflict, to discuss their concerns. Because of its neutral profile, NCA's involvement in
these meetings encouraged more participation. The agency also provided vital financial
support. The meetings blended modern and traditional approaches, tapping knowledge-
based experiences spanning generations. No single partner was allowed to dominate
proceedings; participants were encouraged to have an interest in the success of their
counterparts.

The facilitation group drew up a list of problems stemming from the war and asked the
various communities to develop solutions that would enable economic and social life to
function normally. These included ways of verifying information before taking action,
common approaches to armed banditry, integration of demobilized fighters and refugees,
and processes for collecting and controlling firearms. They were asked to come up with
solutions to conflicts over land and water use and encouraged not to discuss issues that
they could not control or solve.

The facilitation group established categories of people to play decision-making roles. Rebel leaders and politicians were asked to allow traditional village and nomadic elders, women's and youth groups, to take decisions. Since Mali is a Muslim country, support and endorsement of Islamic religious leaders were crucial, sometimes decisive. These leaders were present at all inter-community gatherings. Such decisions were made by consensus. Local politicians, representatives of the government, the armed forces and development agencies, participated only as observers.

The first meeting organized in this way, in Gourma, became a model for others during 1995 and 1996. Subsequent meetings were larger – thousands of people turned up to some – making it necessary to get additional financial help. Other donors became involved, such as the Canadian, German and Swiss development agencies and the Norwegian ministry of Foreign Affairs. A Fund for Reconciliation and Peace Consolidation in Northern Mali was created. The government set up special mobile units to buttress the peace process, help re-establish political administration throughout the country, and promote peace and development.

Just by talking among themselves, the different groups and individuals created an atmosphere of trust that delivered practical results. Combatants became convinced peace was real, and joined in the demobilization process carried out parallel to the peace talks held under the auspices of UN Development Programme (UNDP).

Flame of Peace

In March 1996, at a ceremony in Timbuktu, leaders of the various rebel movements and

government representatives, including President Konare, reaffirmed support for the

Malian constitution, and denounced violence. In the presence of many international

observers, they set fire to a pyre of thousands of surrendered guns. The symbolism of this

was not lost on those who witnessed it. It became known as the *Flame of Peace*, a signal

that war was over. Demobilization and reintegration has continued since then and the

government has taken steps to decentralize authority.

Looking back

An evaluation of the work done by NCA in Mali, by the International Peace Research

Institute of Norway, concluded that while conditions for peace already existed, the

activities of NCA helped to give these concrete form. The foundation laid, was built on in

later years, with further meetings and consultations.

The NCA experience is an interesting example of a development organization deciding to

remain on the ground even when conflict makes its functioning almost impossible, and

shifting successfully from development work to conflict resolution/management.

However, it is acknowledged within the organization itself, that "different situations

require different strategies". Whereas in Guatemala, its approach involved the Norwegian

government and a broader network of international supporters to engage in negotiation

meetings in Oslo; in Mali the NCA started off-the-record interventions among conflicting

parties on its own, but became directly involved in intercommunity meetings only in

response to local and external requests. Apart from funding the Norwegian government was not involved in the Mali process.

Its approach centered on dialogue and on promoting peace by providing venues and safe structures for interactions between conflicting parties. NCA staff who worked in such situations, say talking helps reduce conflict, produce areas for common action, and promote reconciliation.

Although NCA had been accused by some of siding with the Tuaregs, in general it was perceived as neutral - a crucial element in enabling it to play the role it did. It was known to have profound knowledge of the region and its culture, and people felt confident it did not have a political agenda. Another factor influencing the high degree of trust between NCA staff, local people and politicians, was the organization's record of caring for material welfare. The fact that it was a religious-based agency, also gained respect, even among the Muslim population, says Stein Erik Horjen of NCA.

"Churches can play a significant role in organizing negotiations, a role often governments cannot play."

In 1999, NCA institutionalized its work in peacebuilding and human rights/human security, by establishing a Department of Policy and Human Rights that reaffirms commitment to peace as part of human rights. Stein Erik Horjen explains:

"There are only a few people in my country working in this field. So we need to be

creative and cooperative, government and NGOs. I feel that the NCA has successfully

extended its humanitarian mandate. It has done this not by losing its commitment to

providing basic support to people affected by war, but by creating ways and means to

provide peaceful long-term solutions to the conflict context as well."

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16.2 A Journey Towards Peace: 2 St. Xavier's Social Service Society - India

The formation and development of the Jalampuri ni Chali Peace Committee was once a seed sown to strengthen the peace process in Ahmedaabad, but a little sapling has emerged from the ground. How it can be nurtured to grow into a tree is the challenge facing all concerned with peace in the city. St. Xavier's Social Service Society (SXSSS) has been instrumental in the birth of this sapling as a response to the intense communal riots in Gujarat in the beginning of 2002 and this is the story of its emergence. By Father Victor Moses S.J.

Four Muslim youths are sitting at the Shaher Kotda Police Station in Ahmedabad city sometime in August this year. The boys have been rounded up by the police from Jalampuri-ni-Chali on a complaint from people in a neighbouring chali that these boys have killed a dog belonging to them. The boys plead for their innocence, but the police have no basis for believing them.

Then one of the policemen recalls that Jalampuri ni Chali has an active Peace Committee which is well respected in the area. He asks the boys to call any of the Peace Committee members to vouch for their innocence if they wanted to be set free. One of the boys is allowed to go to the Chali and he returns with Abdul -Karim Abdul- Kader Ghanchi a member of the Jalampuri ni Chali Peace Committee.

The boys are in fact innocent and Abdul-Karim knows them personally. He explains to

the police the sequence of events leading to their round up and the boys are set free. Such

a thing would have been unimaginable in Ahmedabad city two years ago.

SXSSS

SXSSS has been involved in grass root development work in the slums of Ahmedabad

and in rural areas of Gujarat state in India since its inception in 1976. Over the years its

approach to development has evolved from relief and welfare work to development work

to interrelated initiatives that strive to empower people and struggle together towards

building an inclusive, participatory, harmonious and just society.

The vision of SXSSS is "to work for a more humane and just society through the

empowerment of the poor and the marginalized peoples; very especially women and

children, who are most vulnerable people in our society." The approach to this work is

through the interrelated dimensions of education, health, environment and community

organization. The major programmes of SXSSS are Innovative Education (INNED),

Community Health Improvement Programme (CHIP), Community Organisation and

Development (CODE), Social Forestry Programme (SAP), Rural Community Health

Workers Training Programme, Disaster Mitigation; Advocacy and Networking,

Orientation and Capacity Building. The Centre for Orientation, Research and

Documentation (CORD) functions as a resource centre to the other programmes.

SXSSS is also involved in an on-going peace initiative called SHANTI (which means

peace in many Indian languages) to promote peace through a variety of interventions at

grassroots and national levels. SXSSS presently works in 25 slums of Ahmedabad city

and Jalampuri ni Chali is one of them. Over the years the activities initiated under

SHANTI have included peace building programmes at the grass-roots, bringing children

of diverse faiths and cultures in programmes related to peace and harmony, organizing

public lectures, symposia, workshops on issues related to conflict prevention, justice and

peace, public interest litigation and filing law suits against communal discord and

injustices, bringing together religious leaders of different faiths for dialogues and prayer

meetings, building a documentation centre on matters related to the topic and bringing

out a dossier of paper clippings entitled SHANTI.

The approach of SXSSS to peace efforts has evolved over the yeas to presently focus

strongly on sustainable initiatives grounded in people's participation for peace. The

Jalampuri ni chali Peace Committee is an example of this current focus of the ir work

The Context of Jalampuri ni Chali

Jalampuri ni Chali has been an area prone to tensions and skirmishes even when there

were no riots or other external forces at play. The mix of Hindu and Muslim population

in the community has made it very vulnerable to fights and squabbles taking. This Chali

in the Saraspur area of Ahmedabad is right in the heart of the city and has existed for over

50 years, with the majority of the population being Hindu, some 225 families and

Muslims, 125 families. There has been a long history of on-going interaction and

animosity between the two communities in this area with both sides entrenched in their

stereotypes of each other. The communal riots of 2002 in Gujarat saw severe tensions

developing between the two communities in many parts of the state and Jalampuri ni

Chali was no exception. It was mostly the Muslim community that suffered damage to

house and property than the Hindus. Most of the Muslim families left the Chali to go and

live with relatives in safe places or in relief camps that had been set up for their safety.

Yet there were also some Hindu families which went to other camps for refuge.

In the interaction with the residents of the camps for relief work, SXSSS field staff

members came in contact with people from Jalampuri ni Chali during March and April o

2002. When relief shifted to rehabilitation, when people started making efforts to go

back to their homes in July and August of the same year, SXSSS also took up

rehabilitation work in Jalampuri ni Chali.

The initial interactions with the residents of the area led SXSSS to appoint a two-woman

team, one Hindu and one Muslim to assist them in overseeing the rehabilitation work and

reach out to all the affected people of both communities. This team suggested to SXSSS

that each of them enlist one member from each lane and each community to facilitate

good reach and representative ness in the area.

The Jalampuri ni Chali Peace Committee

There are six lanes in the Chali and therefore two representatives from each lane and one

extra person were identified as the thirteen members of the Peace Committee – seven

Muslims and six Hindus. The gender break-up was ten men and three women. SXSSS

encouraged the formation of this committee and facilitated the members to become an

effective forum. A general meeting of the residents of Jalampuri ni Chali was called in

December 2002 where they named the committee members by consensus. Several meetings were held in the area by the functionaries of SXSSS to clarify the role and functions of the Jalampuri ni Chali Peace Committee (JPC). The members formulated rules for themselves regarding holding regular meetings, attendance in meetings, responsibilities of members, etc.

There was consensus among the residents that this was a good thing to happen but there was also some cynicism and apprehension about the effectiveness of the forum. SXSSS played a facilitator's role by providing inputs for awareness raising and training to the JPC both in the area and at its office. Members were stimulated to take their responsibilities seriously, to play a neutral role in their interventions with the residents and to appreciate the importance of peace in the area. They were provided with structured opportunities to interact with resource people from other organizations, from other states and from other areas in the city.

The JPC became the focal point in the area for all interventions regarding rehabilitation work. The first responsibility was a detailed survey of all the affected households in the area, negotiating the amount of help for each household, seeing to the housing intervention to its completion, re-installing electric meters in all the affected houses, identifying loan recipients for SXSSS livelihood support intervention, ensuring proper end use of loaned amounts and assuring the repayment by the recipients. The rehabilitation efforts of SXSSS provided a very good basis for the JPC to gain credibility in the eyes of the residents and also with the field staff and leadership of SXSSS.

Countering the Remors

The atmosphere of the city was slowly improving, but the slightest rumor was enough to flare up tensions. Muslims were feeling very insecure and would desert their homes in a hurry at any sign of tension flaring up. Festivals, elections, public events were very trying times for the people and the government authorities after the riots. The JPC had to deal with these type of forces to establish its credibility.

Since its formation the JPC has effectively resolved several conflicts in the area, mobilized support from the community for celebrating national holidays and festivals, and has been active in development initiatives of SXSSS.

Its achievements include resolving a clash between Muslims and Hindus regarding police stopping gambling activities by Muslims but not taking cognizance of similar activities by Hindus and also when a Hindu boy was beaten by a Muslim boy of another chali; celebrating Ganesh Chaturthi, a Hindu festival, by Hindus and Muslims together; organising an exhibition against addiction; maintaining peace when there was communal tension in the city; celebrating Id, a Muslim festival, by both the communities; organising Hindu and Muslim youth to offer their services as volunteers to maintain peace during the Rathyatra, a Hindu mass procession involving thousands of people.

Continuing Development

The development interventions of SXSSS in Jalampuri-ni-Chali have centred around rehabilitation work after the riots, the Innovative Education (INNED) programme for school going children, the Community Health, organizing two self help groups (SHGs)

for savings and credit activities with the women, organizing a sewing class and observing Children's Day.

The JPC members have invested their personal commitment and conviction to peace to achieve what they have been able to. They have initiated dialogue between conflicting parties, learned to play a neutral role, persuaded people to forget the past and learned to relate to each other afresh, spened personal funds, faced criticism from family members and community and struggled to create unity among the residents. They have persevered even though some members have become inactive and have dropped out. The JPC now has ten members with five Muslims and five Hindus out of which seven are men and three are women. Reflecting on their growth and credibility some of them are quoted below:

When we came together in this committee, we had nothing but our faith, our integrity and our courage. We did not know what we would be able to do, but today we can look back with satisfaction at our contribution to peace in Jalampuri

We have overcome many obstacles, faced a lot of criticism from our family members and from the residents of the area but we persevered. The results have encouraged us to continue this initiative. Now there is no criticism.

Our worldview has changed our understanding of events, of the system, of our own strength and capability has changed.

Today the JPC has become known everywhere in our neighbourhood, in the Police Station, in government hospitals, in other organizations. We are recognized and our voice carries some weight.

Outcomes and Challenges

The impact of the JPC has been quite amazing. The residents have faith in them, though

everything is not always rosy and tension free. There is a credible forum and a

mechanism in place which can initiate steps to contain, resolve and prevent conflict.

The JPC has developed to be a representative forum of the people, owned and managed

by the people themselves. They have linkages with the NGO –SXSSS – whose support is

acknowledged, but they are increasingly able to act on their own.

They feel the need for formal recognition and means of identification when they are

dealing with the official system such as police stations, hospitals, munic ipal corporation,

because it will enhance their effectiveness as a link for the residents with the outside

world.

Dramatic personality changes for the better in some of the individuals on the JPC have

taken place. They recognize these changes and credit it to being a member of the JPC

coupled with the growing recognition and appreciation from the system to use their

leadership potential to help their fellow residents.

The JPC has provided a means to the members to actualize their leadership potential in a

positive way instead of in a negative way. A virtuous spiral is unfolding for peace and

development in the area.

They are able to articulate and identify the various types of conflict, the causes for it and

also the solution. They realize that for lasting peace the past will have to be left back in

the past, stereotypes of religious communities and behavior based on these will have to

be shed. They are learning to engage with each other in a positive relationship through community celebration of each other's festivals, national holidays, building a common front when dealing with the outside world.

They are able to articulate leadership qualities and skills in themselves and their peers on the JPC as well as the lack of these skills. They are able to articulate their own ambition for leadership positions and are willing to work hard for fulfilling them.

The development interventions of health and education by SXSSS have provided a day-to-day context for work and interaction with the community, the functionaries and their peers. It has helped to coalesce the JPC as a forum and also tested the quality of their leadership skills. Along with other factors they have been instrumental in building the credibility of the JPC.

The size of the JPC has reduced because members who are not regular in attending meetings have been dropped out, including the President. They did not feel the need to meet on the basis of rigorous regularity, but they remain active and will respond to the demands of the situation as and when needed.

The Committee is considering the pro's and con's of becoming a registered body versus remaining an unregistered forum in their search for identity and recognition vis-à-vis the outside world.

The importance of the facilitating role played by an NGO like SXSSS in capacity building of the JPC is understood and appreciated by the members. A sense of gratitude to SXSSS is very strong at present. How this bond will develop and the role that SXSSS will play in future is to be defined.

Lessons Learned

During the whole process there have been several lessons. It has proven to be possible to broker forums for peace even in situations of high mistrust and mutual suspicion between communities – an honest and neutral third party can play this role of brokering peace

A representative forum of people, which includes members of all the concerned parties is necessary to be the vehicle for sustained peace in a given community. Every event which sparks off tension becomes the testing ground for the neutral and ge nuine functioning of such a newly formed forum

The credibility of the peace forum has to be painstakingly established even at the cost of personal criticism by family and community members

Mutually negative stereotypes and images of opposing communities can be changed to positive ones by conscious efforts. Building trust through dialogue, stopping rumors, negotiations, reconciling differences, and bringing about change in behavior is possible

Capacity building efforts for the members of the peace forum have a role to play in sustaining it and improving its effectiveness. The energies of the people can be canalized into positive actions and activities which actualize their leadership potential. The forum created can become a vehicle for fulfilling latent leadership ambitions in a constructive manner.

Peacebuilding efforts and development interventions with the same set of people can become mutually reinforcing to the benefit of the whole community. The long term sustenance of both activities has to be planned by design.

Lastly grassroots initiatives benefit from networking linkages with other actors and

forums. Yet ultimately people have to represent themselves effectively at all levels from

grassroots to national to international.

The experience of JPC is symbolic of the symptoms and manifestations of the communal

conflict entrenched in religion which is experienced by people in many parts of Gujarat

and India. It is also suggestive of the actions and processes which can contribute to

lasting peace and provides a sustained mechanism for conflict prevention in society at

large.

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17 Early Warning, Early Response: Preventing Violent Conflicts

Takwa Zebulon Suifon*

The process of early warning as a means of preventing violent conflicts is rapidly evolving, although the debate over its relevance, appropriateness and role still rages. Experience with public health and transport systems has proven that diseases, epidemics and accidents are all, to an extent, preventable. So too is violent conflict.

It is a noteworthy development that we are no longer debating whether early warning is necessary, but how best to implement early warning systems. Moreover early warning and conflict prevention are no longer the preserves of governments, inter-governmental or international organizations. Small community-based organizations and national NGOs, and regional as well as international civil society networks, are now actively involved in early warning to prevent the menace of violence that has stained the beginning of the 21st century. Our current preoccupation is with how best to tap and enhance civil society's expertise in early warning and thus conflict prevention.

Issues at Stake

Early warning can be simply defined as the process of reading specific indicators or signals and translating them into some kind of anticipation of the likelihood of the emergence or escalation of violent conflict. It has three goals: prevention, mitigation and

management (which may also imply preparedness for response that can be regarded as mitigation or management). Since the Rwandan genocide of 1994, the debate over early warning has shifted from whether it is important, to how to generate an early coordinated and appropriate response. The major shift from the "why" to the "how" of early warning is reshaping the focus of conflict prevention globally.

The re-emergence of international terrorism on the international agenda after September 11, 2001 has further strengthened the call for systematic, institutionalized and coordinated early warning analysis and responses to mitigate violent conflicts. There is now better recognition that effective prevention requires better knowledge of the volatility of a situation and its associated risks (early warning); better knowledge and understanding of the policy measures available to address the issues (a preventive tool box); and the political will to apply such measures.

It is argued, perhaps rightly, that it is not the basic data or information about conflicts or potential violent conflicts that is lacking. Rather it is informed analysis and the ability to translate data into understandable and practical policy options along with the will to implement these options that are missing. This, however, is debatable. Inaccurate analyses and diagnoses, and hence faulty predictions, may lead to inappropriate prescriptions and the application of the wrong tools.1 Nevertheless, the inability to translate problems into sound and practicable policy options and failure to garner the necessary political will, seem to be the main problems.

Science and technology have turned weather forecasts and early warning about natural disasters such as typhoons, locust swarms and famines into an institutionalized practice with enormous predictive success. Early warning about deadly conflicts, in contrast, have essentially been ad hoc and uncoordinated. Disaster early warning is less complicated in terms of outcome and thus information sharing is quite easy. Political or humanitarian early warning on the other hand, often involves delicate questions, and there is a tendency for information to be hoarded. Increasingly, however, we are moving away from ad hoc initiatives as a wider range of actors are now becoming involved in early warning. These range from government embassies and related intelligence services to civil society organizations, such as national and international human rights organizations, and national and international NGOs, academic institutions, think-tanks and the media.

Current Debate

Debate continues to rage around various aspects of early warning with numerous theoretical variations and/or disagreements amongst academics and early warning actors. Key grounds for debate among actors include issues of coordination; whether to focus on short-term or long-term measures; how to communicate early warning; how to translate knowledge into action; how to generate a quick response; how to give gender a central role in early warning; etc. Rather than reviewing these polemics, debates and divergences, here we will focus instead on the critical question, "what can, and should be, the role of civil society in national and international preventive action?"

It has often been claimed that civil society, especially NGOs involved in early warning lack the coercive powers2 necessary to provide incentives to local actors and hence, are poorly placed to take preventive action. It is also said that they lack the capacity to mobilize resources and provide alternatives to conflict and escalation. This would be true if civil society operated in a world which had absolutely no connection to the state. On the other hand, it is believed that civil society organizations have a clear comparative advantage of grassroots experience, presence in the field, and personal contacts with the actors. There are many difficulties, vulnerabilities and risks involved in sounding a warning and of remaining neutral. However it also holds a great potential that is still largely untapped.

Critics of early warning caution its enthusiasts to guard against the possibilities of delusio n, perversion and even diversion, which, they say, are inherent in early warning. Firstly, they argue that the world is deluding itself if it thinks that future events can be foreseen and prevented. There will always be unpredictable factors including the actions of individuals themselves and the acts of nature. There is no satisfactory blue print for intervening effectively in internal conflicts. Secondly, the perversion theory argues that early warning can easily exacerbate a crisis and intervening in cases that are not well understood may have unintended consequences and perverse effects. As such early warning is quite likely to bring about what it hoped to prevent. Lastly, early warning, while desirable, involves "unacceptable costs" to the system of international preventive cooperation because of the trade-off and inducements involved. Early warning diverts money and energy that could have been spent elsewhere.

Countering this narrowly restricted view of early warning and conflict prevention in general, Schmeidl3 points out that too often there have been clear miscalculations in evaluating the cost of conflict. When compared with the actual cost of humanitarian assistance, conflict prevention is relatively cheap (even when the human costs of lives, livelihoods, displacement, trauma, and dehumanization are ignored).4 Schmeidl suggests that preventive action may also have to go "through the same struggle as preventive medicine in order to convince the world that prevention is not just better, but also cheaper than cure and symptom-oriented treatment".5 She supports her point with Michael Lund's argument (1996b, pp 397):

"The policy question that government officials need to ask themselves, stated in cost-benefit terms, is whether their government's portion of the shared present costs of launching multilateral preventive responses, plus any undesired side effects, would be far lower than the future costs of doing business as usual. Ideally, these calculations would factor in the human and material costs of possible wars, the consequent price-tag for peacekeeping and other attempted remedies, a nation's economic opportunity cost in lost trade and investment, and the political fallout for leaders who would have to handle a series of such quagmires. This comprehensive accounting is rare."

It is certainly true that there is little consensus on who should be involved, and who should do what, in early warning. This is due in part to the myth of the state and its security monopoly. States have often deliberately excluded civil society from the security arrangements both at border and grassroots levels. However, the number of state failures

around the world is rising, and many states have become too weak to protect their citizens and are unable to provide basic social amenities such as health care, schools and even food. Consequently the state and its security monopoly is becoming increasingly demystified. In some cases, the state itself has become the problem and this has opened up the debate as to what role non-state actors can play in early warning and conflict prevention in general.

Despite this, scores of early warning organizations and networks have emerged, but their micro-level success stories are often clouded by the very nature of prevention. When early warning successfully averts a conflict its importance tends to go unrecognized in a news media where only conflict makes the headlines. As the violent conflict did not materialize, the world does not realize, or even refuses to acknowledge, that early warning has averted a crisis. Civil society's potential as an agent of conflict prevention is clearly enormous. Indeed, successful breakthroughs by many civil society organizations at grassroots and community level have occurred unnoticed. The absence of a culture of publication and lack of coordinated strategies dedicated to highlight the achievements, are serious handicaps facing civil society.

Hitherto the preserve of inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) and a few international organizations, the field of conflict prevention has recently seen the arrival of new actors such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, International Alert, Safer World, Oxfam etc. who have all worked to further advance the early warning agenda.

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Civil society organizations involved in early warning: some prominent examples

The Swiss Peace Foundation through its FAST program is perhaps a pacesetter in early warning methodology development. Most early warning structures, especially in the developing countries, were inspired by, or owe allegiance to the Swiss Peace Foundation whose tentacles of mentoring and collaboration stretch from Europe to the Americas, Africa and Asia.

The International Crisis Group (ICG) is also renowned for its in-depth reports and analysis of conflict situations, both potential and actual, for preventive purposes. The credibility of the ICG is reflected in its cooperation with international organizations such as the UN and EU.

CARE International also promotes community-based early warning systems (COBEWS) for communities in high-risk areas of El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua in Latin America. The aim is to improve institutional capacities and its target communities' skills to better respond to disasters and conflicts.

The violent conflicts in Africa have earned it an unwelcome reputation as the region hardest hit by conflicts in the 21st century. State failure is already a reality in this part of the world and the trend seems to be on the increase. Developing an early warning mechanism to prevent a further descent into chaos and violence is clearly imperative.

In West Africa, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) is setting the stage for civil society-based early warning and early response through its early warning and early response network (WARN). WARN now operates in twelve of the fifteen member countries of ECOWAS and liaises with the sub-regional economic grouping to share

information and analysis on peace and security matters. In Nigeria where intercommunal

as well as interfaith viole nce between 1999 and 2004 has claimed more than 10,000 lives,

civil society is mobilizing to face the challenge of early mitigation and prevention. The

Network of Early Warning Monitors has emerged through a national strategy in the six

geopolitical zones. Strategically, the stability of West Africa depends largely on the

socio-political and economic stability of Nigeria as sub-regional powerbroker, and Ghana

as the gateway to West African stability.

The Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in South Africa is also a key organization in early

warning analysis and reporting in Africa. With huge experience and a vast reservoir of

expertise, the ISS is creating synergies with African civil society, governments, and inter-

governmental organizations such as the Southern African Development Community

(SADC) and the African Union (AU). Based in Pretoria, the ISS is thereby leading a civil

society revolution in Africa with a formidable documentation capacity.

Another example of early warning described in more detail later in this chapter, is an

innovative community-based and technology propelled project in Northern Ireland,

entitled the Mobile Phone Network which has provided an opportunity for volunteers to

play an important role in preventing potential conflicts from escalating into outright

violence. Mobile phones are used to report rumors, speculation and minor incidents or

skirmishes and so nip them in the bud.

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Challenges

A cursory review of its past successes and shortcomings shows that effective early

warning has been frustrated by a series of obstacles. Schmeidl6 identifies five categories

of such obstacles, even though, in practice they are sometimes so interlinked and

mutually reinforcing that they give the impression of a complex web in which it is

difficult to differentiate distinct categories. These obstacles are:

. *Situational dynamics*. The Cold War context has changed and early warning has shifted

from the realm of military security, to preventive mechanisms working for the sake of

humanity. The Baltic States were beneficiaries of this situational change. The geo-

political situations of some countries have resulted in them becoming centers of interest.

Also, there are certain situations and conflict settings which, because they are more

familiar to outside states, tend to encourage preventive action. Whether or not the

preventive action occurs by force, without the consent of the actors involved, is also an

important factor. Unwanted outside intervention may provoke detrimental outcomes. It is

therefore possible to conclude that certain regions of the world provide opportunities, or

an enabling environment, for possible incentives that outsiders can offer in order to entice

conflicting parties to accede to peaceful negotiation.

. *Political dynamics.* The political dynamic working against early warning is often the

most difficult aspect to tackle. Here the main problem is that the prerequisites for

successful preventive action (advanced warning; ideally eliminating or changing the

structures that lead to or accelerate conflicts; fostering structures that lower the chances

of conflict escalation) are diametrically opposed to the timeline upon which policymakers

work. Politicians generally want to please their interest groups or electorate and will thus do everything to satisfy their political interests rather than take politically costly decisions. In some cases, political actors have chosen not to take any action at all, thus creating a total impasse. The reward/cost aspect of appropriate early detection can also reduce the policymaker's receptivity to information about emerging threats, for early warning does not necessarily make for easy response. Rather, a warning of an impending crisis often forces policymakers to make difficult decisions.

. *Human-psychological dynamics*. This refers to factors that influence, or bias our understanding, or perception of situations. As when we hope for best case scenarios and ignore the likelihood that the reality will be considerably worse. When combined with political considerations, this makes for a situation in which political decision-making is blocked or stalled. Though there are important lessons to be learned from the past, decision-makers still tend to believe that their case is unique and so historical analysis has no connection with their present situation.

. *Institutional-bureaucratic dynamics.* The concept of early warning and conflict prevention can be succinctly laid out and clearly understood, but still fail if there are no institutional capacities to implement and thoroughly follow up the warning process. One of the greatest criticisms of the failure of warning in Rwanda was not because there was no warning per se, but of the red tape and bureaucracy within the UN system. Despite the UN's laudable intention to deal with the conflict before it reached a crisis, there were no proper channels to cope with specific warnings in a timely and appropriate manner.

A major area that remains a hurdle is therefore the issue of coordinating early warning information. Information technology has helped to improve information sharing tremendously, but the task of getting the right information into the right hands at the right time has not been fully resolved. Recently there have been calls for the centralization of early warning reports, preferably at UN headquarters. The UN-commissioned Brahimi Report, however, advised against this. Some actors in the field of early warning believe that the UN should not host such an early warning pool of information but should instead, tap into it. Consequently, a coordinated information structure that seeks to bridge the wide gap between warning and response is a paramount need.

There are also problems regarding mandates. Many institutions are unable to act in a timely manner to avert a crisis because they lack the mandate to do so. Response therefore reflects more the capacities or mandates of organizations or governments, or the geo-strategic location of the conflict theatre, and not necessarily an unwillingness to react to a warning.

. *Analytical capacity.* Apart from the impediments discussed above, there is also the possibility of a lack of analytical capacity and information over-load. A warning may not have been fully thought out, or it may be incomplete or faulty; often too little or nothing at all is stated about what should be done after the warning has been received. It is also important to avoid the problem of "under-warning", or of missing developing conflicts while at the same time guarding against "over-warning" by inundating policymakers with advice.

Schmeidl cautions that early warning does not always take into account its own impact

and should try to balance short-term considerations with long-term goals. Concentrating

solely on short-term objectives for instance may lead to long-term difficulties, while

some long-term strategic considerations can result in short-term hardships. Good early

warning demands very specific systems where important elements of the "what", "when"

and "how" are addressed. Faulty analysis may lead to misinterpretation and result in a

major backlash.[7]

Many attempts at prevention have been foiled and/or ignored by certain groups or circles,

some of who have direct or indirect incentives or interests in the economies of war.

Typically, relief-based organizations are more interested in contingency plans and the

resultant effects of crises than their prevention. The same applies to arms manufacturing

firms and brokers. A world without wars threatens their "profit" base.

So too, the burgeoning number of NGOs who are engaged in early warning are

competing with each other for space, funding, visibility and influence, and thus reducing

the possibilities for effective collaboration and coordination of activities.

Networking, coalition-building and concerted action among civil society practitioners is

highly recommended in early warning information. South-South and North-South

collaboration such as the initiatives previously undertaken by the Forum on Early

Warning and Early Response (FEWER)[8] and those currently undertaken by the Global

Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflicts, are an encouraging platform for

effective action. The sharing of success stories, experiences and lessons learned has

added strength to the civil society endeavors.

Lessons Learned

. Prevention is better than cure. The medical field tells us that prevention is better than

cure. Unfortunately, the world seems to be moved by visual images of human calamity

rather than reports into the likelihood of conflict. Such was the case in Rwanda, Kosovo,

and (now) Sudan. It takes a media offensive (the CNN factor) to push and pull the

international community when humanity faces the risk of conflict or genocide. However,

simply "naming and shaming" can be a powerful weapon in the hands of civil society.

Journalists should be trained together with the media owners on the virtues of journalism

which promotes peace rather than hate.

Early warning must free itself from the academic polemics and begin to learn the lessons

of the real world. Like democracy, the process should be allowed to flourish in its various

contexts. The complex nature of some conflict situations demands a sophisticated

analysis and response. On the other hand, early warning of community-based conflicts

requires very little in terms of funding. Use of local monitors and local languages in

communicating are valuable but cheap resources that need to be tapped to the maximum.

. Strategic partnerships. Early warning must be conceptually, strategically and

operationally backed by early response options. This could be accomplished through

strategic partnerships between civil society and inter-governmental organizations.

However, the relationships between CSOs and governments have long been viewed

through the prism of the donor and recipient relationship which has resulted in an uneven

exchange for both parties. In some cases, antagonism and apparent mistrust has been rife.

Increasingly, this conception is changing as better forms of partnership are emerging. In

the Horn of Africa, CEWARN, although originally tasked with monitoring and reporting

on the pastoral conflicts that have both national and regional ramifications, has linked to

IGAD (Inter-Governmental Agency for Development) to generate appropriate political

response. The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) has, for its part, entered

into a strategic partnership with the Economic Community of West African States

(ECOWAS). WANEP now operates a liaison office at the ECOWAS secretariat in an

interfacing strategy to bring civil society perspectives to early warning conflict

prevention in a conflict prone sub-region where the supranational scope of ECOWAS

constitutes an enormous response capacity. Engaging policymakers through analytical

early warning policy briefs has added more leverage and visibility as well as credibility

for West African civil society through WANEP.

Ultimately, the leverage of civil society arises from collaboration between a diverse

group of actors. Women and women's groups in particular should be encouraged to

participate in efforts to prevent conflict and build peace as they stand the greatest chance

of bringing warring parties to the negotiating table, as was seen recently in Liberia and

Somalia. Developing early warning systems must therefore take into consideration this

important, hitherto neglected gender dimension.

Conclusion

Early warning and preventive action are still on-going processes that need to continue drawing from the pool of lessons learned all over the world, from micro-level community to the national, regional and international scenes. In addition, early warning must be aligned with early response and this should take into consideration two basic recommendations: early warning must be comprehensive, embracing elements of information, analysis and response options; preventive action is not a tool but a strategy that must be on-going. Preventive action must also provide an opportunity for a comprehensive analysis of the costs of conflicts and the costs of preventive action. By linking structural to operational prevention, it is possible to show that conflict prevention is more meaningful when the structural or root causes of conflicts, such as poverty, political repression, social inequality, the violation of human rights and neglect of minority rights are addressed.

Speaking to the United Nations Security Council special session on transfrontier crime and the proliferation of small arms, light weapons and mercenaries in West Africa in March 2004, the UN Secretary General and West African leaders described small arms as West Africa's weapons of mass destruction. In the same tone, the Brazilian president on the eve of the 2004 UN General Assembly, while lobbying for a seat in the UN Security Council, declared that the greatest weapon of mass destruction is chronic poverty. Whatever one's perspective on weapons of mass destruction, the central message is that conflicts do not just occur. They are nurtured and cultivated. The vast inequality gap between the haves and have nots has also topped the agenda of the civil society-led world

social summit. Poverty related conflicts, coupled with the monster of youth

unemployment and consequent youth disaffection has been turned into anger. Civil

society therefore has a circumscribed but crucial role to play, and cooperation and

networking becomes the greatest source of strength and visibility. North-South and East-

West collaboration is not only crucial in this respect but critical.

* Takwa Zebulon Suifon is coordinator of the West Africa Early Warning and Response

Network (WARN) of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP). Takwa is also

liaison officer to ECOWAS.

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Notes

1 *The Responsibility to Protect, Report of the International Commission on Intervention*

and State Sovereignty By ICISS, (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre,

2001), p. 21.

2 I am highlighting Nicolaidis Kalypso views here. Kalypso is one of the leading critical

thinkers in the field of early warning.

3 "Early Warning and Integrated Response Development" By Susanne, Schmeidl, in

Romanian Journal of Political Science (Special Issue on Conflict and Reconciliation

sponsored by UNDP Office, Romania), p. 12.

4 In 1971, the total expenditure by refugee, disaster, and humanitarian relief agencies was

$200 million; in 1994 it was $8 billion. At one point UNPROFOR (United Nations

Protection Force) was costing $1.6 billion per year, accounting for half the United

Nations' total peacekeeping budget. The entire cost of the UNPREDEP Macedonia

mission has been less than the per annum budget of the International Criminal Tribunal

for the former Yugoslavia (Jentleson 2000,p.329).

5 "Early Warning and Integrated Response Development", By Susanne, Schmeidl p.12.

6 "Early Warning and Integrated Response Development" Susanne, Schmeidl p.8-10.

7 Ibid. p.19.

8 FEWER is undergoing restructuring.

Resources

Lead organizations

Amnesty International – United Kingdom

For contact, please visit website

http://www.amnesty.org

Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism – Ethiopia

cewarn@telecom.net.et

http://www.cewarn.org

Center for the Prevention of Genocide – USA

Phone (703) 528-1002

Fax (703) 528-5776

http://genocideprevention.org

Human Rights Watch – USA

hrwnyc@hrw.org

http://www.humanrightswatch.org

Institute for Security Studies – South Africa

African Security Analysis Programme

iss@iss.org.za

http://www.iss.co.za

International Crisis Group – Belgium

Crisis Watch Database

For contact, please visit website

http://www.crisisweb.org

Network of Ethnological Monitoring and Early warning (EAWARN) – Russia

anthpub@iea.msk.su

http://www.eawarn.ru

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) – Sweden

Early Warning Indicators System for Preventive Policy

sipri@sipri.org

http://www.sipri.org

Swiss Peace Foundation – Switzerland

Early Warning Project FAST

FAST@swisspeace.ch

http://www.swisspeace.org/fast/default.htm

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) – USA

For contact, please visit website

http://www.ochaonline.un.org

West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) – Ghana

Early Warning Early Response Network (WARN)

wanep@wanep.org

http://www.wanep.org/programs/early_warning.htm

Additional websites

http://www.reliefweb.int/resources/ewarn.html

Reliefweb – portal on resources and information on early warning

http://www.first.sipri.org

Facts on International Relations and Security Trends - a collection of databases

http://www.cprnet.net

Conflict Prevention and Post-conflict Reconstruction Network

http://geds.umd.edu/geds/

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<personal story>

Early Involvement

Mr. Max van der Stoel*

Since the end of the Second World War there has not been a single moment when arms were silent in all continents. In the second half of the twentieth century there were some large and several smaller armed conflicts between states. Also, armed clashes have occurred increasingly within states between groups with conflicting interests. Moreover, the growing sophistication of modern weapons has resulted in greater numbers of dead and wounded and more widespread devastation.

The lesson we can learn from these wars is that, once a conflict has become violent, it usually proves to be very difficult to put it to an end. On the other hand, experience shows that the best chances of preventing a conflict from escalating into violence present themselves in its early stages. The longer it goes on, the greater the danger of parties becoming ever more rigid in their positions and, as a consequence, less disposed to accepting compromise.

Paradoxically, the chances of the international community intervening at an early stage of an emerging conflict are usually small. Quite often there is a tendency to cling to the

hope that parties will find a solution themselves. Moreover, there are usually acute crises diverting attention from emerging ones. This applies to the Security Council which is the main world organ for maintaining peace and security, but equally to more directly interested states. When a conflict arises *within* a state, the Council is usually reluctant to get involved too closely during its early stages. Quite often it restricts itself to discrete diplomatic activities.

A different path has been chosen by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the OSCE. Shocked by the explosion of interethnic violence in Yugoslavia and aware that tensions between majorities and minorities might play a major role in several states of former communist-Europe, its participant states decided in 1992 to create the post of High Commissioner on National Minorities. His task would be to help diffuse inter-ethnic conflicts at an early stage. A step which had to be seen against the background of the 1991 OSCE Moscow Declaration on the human dimension of the OSCE, which stated explicitly that conflicts relating to human rights (of course including minority rights), were not only a matter of concern for the state in which they occurred, but just as much for the community of OCSE states as a whole.

In January 1993 I was appointed as OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities - a post I occupied for eight-and-a-half-years. I was involved in quite a number of emerging conflicts, and my experience very much confirms the view that outside involvement is usually most effective at a very early stage of a dispute. Moreover, I am convinced that certain basic rules have to be respected in order to maximize the changes of success of outside involvement in an internal conflict.

The fist is the need for strict objectivity. A mediator will never be accepted as such if he is the advocate of one side. Secondly, it is essential that he or she works as much as possible behind the scenes and behaves as " a silent diplomat". During a mission it might not always be possible to avoid publicity. But the mediator must be reserved in his comments because public advocacy of the formula he favors usually leads to parties re-emphasizing their positions, thus making it more difficult to show flexibility in later negotiations. Thirdly, the mediator must subordinate his personal views to rules and standards in various international instruments to which the state concerned is a party. A compromise formula based on these instruments is more difficult to reject.

Other regional organizations have no organs comparable to the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities but they too, in various ways, are showing increasing interest in making conflict prevention one of their most important objectives. It can only be hoped that they will increasingly succeed in doing this. It would greatly help to ensure that conflict prevention will acquire the central place in world politics that is so badly needed.

But more has to be done. Governments will have to be constantly reminded that paying lip service to conflict prevention is not enough and that action in this field has to become a priority. NGOs have a vital role to play in this respect, both in dialogue with governments and international organizations and in mobilizing public opinion.

* Max van der Stoel is a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. From 1993 to 2001 he served as OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities.

<end personal story>

17.1 Managing Conflict by Phone: The Mobile Phones Network in Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, where inter-communal violence has caused so much pain and suffering, an innovative community-based project enabled volunteers to play an important role in preventing potential conflicts from exploding into outright violence. The project, which was launched during a period of political transition, involved linking activists together in a network through the use of mobile telephones to enable them to respond to rumors, speculation, and minor incidents or confrontations, and to intervene before these potential conflicts could spin out of control. By Neil Jarman*

The militarized conflict in Northern Ireland effectively came to an end in August 1994 when the Irish Republican Army, which had been fighting the British state for 25 years, declared a ceasefire. However the ceasefire did not lead to a complete cessation of violence. Hostilities continued between the two main communities, the Protestants, who define themselves as British, and the Catholics, who define themselves as Irish. The focus of the conflict shifted to the many annual parades organized by the Orange Order, a Protestant fraternal organisation. These parades, which commemorate the seventeenth victory of the Protestant William of Orange over the Catholic King James II, have taken on great symbolic importance. Protestants view them as an important part of their cultural heritage, but Catholics see them as a symbol of Protestant dominance, and have frequently organized protests against them.

In July 1996 violence broke out when the police stopped members of the Orange Order in

Portadown from following their traditional route through a Catholic area of the town.

There followed a week of widespread rioting in towns and villages across Northern

Ireland. The worst of the violence occurred sixty kilometres away in North Belfast, a

highly segregated area, where working class Protestant and Catholic communities are

separated by numerous walls, fences and barriers, known locally as 'peacelines'.

Following the restrictions on the parade, violence broke out at many locations and, over

the next few days, over one hundred households were forced to flee their homes because

of intimidation and violence. Although the rioting soon died down, tensions remained high

in the area and outbreaks of inter-communal violence continued to occur throughout the

autumn and into the winter. Community workers in North Belfast were very concerned

that trouble could easily recur the following summer.

The violence in North Belfast in 1996 was underpinned by rumor, mistrust and suspicion,

and was fueled by a breakdown in communication at all levels. During the chaos

accompanying the violence, lines of communication within communities, between

communities and between communities and government agencies providing essential

public services collapsed. This meant that rumors circulated freely, with the corresponding

escalation of suspicion and unrest, facilitating further violence and counter violence. In

some situations attempts by the police to restore order only succeeded in provoking further

violence. Many people who left their homes had no easy access to the support of statutory

agencies. Instead, the community sector was mobilized to move and store their furniture

and personal belongings. Subsequent meetings between community organizations and key

housing agencies and the Social Services concluded that there was a need for both an

overhaul of contingency planning and a more flexible and imaginative response to major

public disorder.

Setting up the Networks

Staff at the Community Development Centre (CDC) in North Belfast developed a scheme

to respond to the problem of the breakdown of communications. They proposed providing

mobile telephones to community activists in each of the main interface communities,

which would be used to link all the people together in a network. It was hoped that such a

network would allow lines of communication to be maintained within communities,

between neighboring communities, and with the police, housing and other agencies. It

would also allow activists to remain on the streets to monitor the fluid situations while

remaining in contact with people in other areas and government agencies. There were

some concerns in official circles at the thought of providing community activists with this

relatively new and expensive technology, but after some debate, a government agency

agreed to fund the project for two months through the summer of 1997.

Staff at the Community Development Centre coordinated the project and formed the hub

of the network. They identified key groups and individuals from their existing community

networks who were prepared to participate in the mobile phone network. The network

members were all volunteers and included people from a wide range of backgrounds, male

and female, including a small number with links to paramilitary organizations. All were

involved in some form of community activity in their area. In many cases a community

group took responsibility for a phone and members of the group took it in shifts to respond to calls.

Each of the phone holders was given the phone numbers of all the other phones in the network, as well as contact numbers of key people in the most important government agencies. The phone holders agreed to keep the phones switched on twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week from mid-June to the end of August. They also agreed to contact other members of the network in response to rumors or concerns, crowds gathering, or minor incidents, and to respond to all such calls coming to them. The presence of the CDC staff in the network provided an extra line of communication if others failed to work, and also allowed people to pass messages via an intermediary, if they were unwilling to speak to an individual directly. CDC staff also provided support and backup to the activists on the street.

Over the summer many of the phone holders spent long hours on the streets trying to keep children (too often the ones who initiated the trouble), young people, and adults away from peacelines, stopping instances of stone throwing, calming tensions and refuting rumors. Frequently it would be dawn before people felt that the potential for violence or disorder had passed.

Often a rumor of a crowd gathering would encourage people onto the street, people on the "other side" would then perceive this group as a potential threat and stone throwing and violence could easily escalate. The phones allowed people on either side to ask questions of their opposite numbers and pass information back to their community. In this way rumors could be discredited and tensions reduced.

In other situations rumors of trouble might spread across areas of the city and car loads of men might arrive out of the blue to help defend an area from a perceived threat of attack. However, from the perspective of the "other side" the arrival of groups of men in a neighboring area might be seen as the prelude to an attack on them. The phone network allowed such rumors to be addressed very quickly and to calm the fears of people in nearby estates.

The phones were also used to synchronize attempts to reduce or stop the violence. On occasions when stone throwing began (often the precursor to more serious violence) members of the phone network would coordinate attempts to stop the attacks and move people back away from the peaceline, while explaining to the other side what they were doing. In some situations the phone network also utilized key local politicians to help reduce tensions, by getting them to speak to their counterparts on the "other side".

In other situations the phones allowed contacts to be maintained with the police so that community workers were given time and space to try to intervene and stop trouble before police in riot uniforms were sent in to a developing situation. The riot police were often regarded as an indiscriminate force whose arrival often led to an increase in violence. When local police commanders began to recognize the capacity of the people in the phone network to calm tensions, they increasingly turned to their community contacts as their first point of call.

Sometimes individuals might be no more than a few meters apart, even visible to each other across a street, but while political tensions would prevent direct contact, the phones provided the necessary means of communication to resolve a situation.

Finally the phone network also enabled community activists to link up with key agencies, such as the Housing Executive, who were responsible for public housing. This meant that people could quickly arrange for repairs to damaged property, such as broken windows, rather than having to wait for several days.

Efficient and Low-Cost

The mobile phone network in North Belfast functioned between 1997 and 2001. It began with mobile phones in ten interface areas in 1997 and expanded to twenty-five areas in 2000. Unfortunately, CDC was forced to end its activities after 2001, because of a lack of funding, so the formally sponsored North Belfast network also ended.

But the project has served as a model for similar networks established by other organizations, both in the Belfast area and elsewhere. In Belfast, groups such as Interaction and Belfast Interface Project have established networks in different parts of the city. In the summer of 2000 for example, more than sixty phones were being used by various networks across Belfast. The idea has also been adopted by groups in other towns with tense and problematic interfaces, such as Derry/Londonderry and in Portadown, and the model has also been adapted as part of a wider community safety strategy in a number of other areas.

Acts of violence and disorder have continued to occur in parts of North Belfast, but each year has seen a progressive reduction in the number of serious incidents and clashes between neighboring communities and in the number of households forced to abandon their homes. Although there is a complex range of factors involved in the reduction of

violence (and the wider political context is always an important factor), the active

participation of local community activists in responding to disorder has been an important

component in helping to keep the peace.

An evaluation of the mobile phone networks, funded by the Community Relations

Council, indicated that they are highly regarded by a diverse range of governmental

agencies as an effective and efficient form of communication that facilitates localized

conflict management. In some instances the networks have proved a useful way of

consolidating or extending working relationships between different interface communities

and building trust between the community and statutory sectors.

The networks have also proved a relatively low-cost option, (although, the networks

undoubtedly do require significant commitments of human resources, especially time

commitments from the participating volunteers). The costs are always dependent on the on

the number of phones, the length of time they are available for use and the number of calls

made. But the costs are small relative to the costs to employ police officers to do similar

work. At any rate, the money can be considered well spent if even one carjacking has been

prevented or one family is saved from being forced to flee their home.

This is not to say that there have not been problems in maintaining and sustaining the

networks. Many of those participating feel drained at the end of the summer because of

the time and energy spent responding to calls. A number of phone holders have been

challenged (and on occasion assaulted) by people within their own community questioning

their involvement in the network. There have been numerous complaints that people on

the "other side" have not been as responsive as might have been hoped. Also, a number of

people have complained that the police have come to expect too much of members of the

phone networks and put them under pressure to take a more interventionist role.

Furthermore a willingness to participate as a phone holder and the ability of people to

intervene effectively in emerging conflicts is often dependent on the wider political

context. The networks were probably at their most effective in 1998 when the feel-good

factor following the signing of the Belfast Agreement and the Assembly elections was

most apparent. In contrast it proved more difficult to mobilize people to participate in

2001, in large part because, in the face of feuding among Protestant paramilitary groups,

individuals and groups within the Protestant community were reluctant to participate.

One of the major difficulties the networks have faced has been financial; the lack of

funding commitments has meant that networks have often been set up later than they

might have been otherwise, and with less effective preparation. Ironically, the very

success and effectiveness of these community-based networks has contributed to the

uncertainty over future funding. If the network is successful, and calm prevails in the

communities, then this can create a response that "there was very little trouble last year -

so why do we need the phones this year?" But of course the phone network is about

spending money to try to ensure that nothing does happen.

When the original network was set up in 1997 mobile phones were still something of a

novelty, while now they have become much more widely available. That means,

fortunately, that the outside support previously required is not so critical. In fact, in some

cases people have created their own smaller networks, which they run in conjunction with,

and thus serve to extend, the established community networks. In other areas people even

feel that they can use their existing phone links with relevant people in statutory or

community groups without being part of a more formal network.

The original program established by the CDC in North Belfast may no longer exist, but

the notion of using low-cost technology to react to potentially dangerous confrontations in

divided communities such as those in Northern Ireland has proven its value.

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17.2 Working with the Local Wisdom: The NCCK Peace Program in Kenya

In the thirteen years since the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) first begin its Peace and Reconciliation Project, it has come to understand that there is an enormous reservoir of wisdom at the local level. "We're no longer telling people what's right or wrong; now we're hearing what people are saying is right themselves." Now they have continued this line by using local resources for effective early warning of potential conflicts. By Peter Gunja and Selline Korir[1]

One of the key challenges encountered in NCCK's peace work, and particularly in the areas inhabited by pastoralist communities in Kenya's North Rift Valley, were frequent and often devastating violent cattle raids take place. Well-trained and heavily armed young warriors executed these cattle raids with military precision. Not all the raids were surprise attacks. Well before the attacks there were signs of preparation, mobilization, and apprehension by would be victims, etc. NCCK personnel at the community level and members of the peace committees were aware of such rumors impending raids. The challenge was how to harness these signs into systematic indicators of such looming violence.

The NCCK, and its counterpart Nairobi Peace Initiative–Africa (NPI-Africa) believed that a properly developed and functioning system could contribute to the reduction of violence, if systematic information was sought, processed, disseminated and responded to appropriately. From the training of five of its staff members in early warning and

response mechanisms, the NCCK proceeded to enhance its early warning system especially in the areas inhabited by pastoralist communities.

In this regard, indicators that are very specific and unique to these communities were developed:

. *Movement to safer grounds* - This indicator refers to the observed movement of would-be victims of attacks, away from the perceived targeted area. In itself this is an indicator that the communities have ways of detecting impending attacks. Mostly women and children are moved to such places, as men and youths remain along the border keeping vigil

. *Alien footprints* — The communities are able to detect footprints of outsiders. The communities say that their "enemies" wear different styles of sandals.

. *Preparation rituals and rites of passage* — Traditionally cattle raiding is surrounded by preparatory rituals and taboos. These are carried out to bless the youths going to raid, and seek Devine intervention for their safe return. Given the large number of youths involved in such ceremonies, it is easy to detect the activity

. *Rumors* — As the saying goes, "where there is smoke, there is fire". Many of the whispers of a planned attack turn out to be true. These are therefore not to be taken lightly. Quite importantly, as per tradition, raiders often send word to their would-be victims, warning them of the forthcoming attack. In these communities, a "sneak" attack is considered cowardly and "ungentlemanly".

. *Women wearing the 'Prayer belt'*, — Women put on a special belt when their sons go out on a raid. It is believed that the belt ties the son to the mother when it is put on, thus

praying for and ensuring the sons' safe return. Nevertheless, in instances when the

women do not support the raid, they refuse to tie on the belt.

. *Fires lit at strategic places* — This is done as a means of communication to direct

raiders who may have lost their way in the bush. Fires are also lit to provoke the others.

. *Gunshots* — Gunshots are at times fired as a means of communication between raiders,

and in most cases it is done at specific times and specific points.

. *Deserted marketplaces* – When people hurriedly disappear from a market place,

especially during market days, this is often a sign that a raid is imminent. Maybe some

warning about a planned raid is heard, and thus people want to move to safer areas.

. *Presence of firearms and sale of ammunition* — When youths are sported carrying

firearms openly, especially the illegally acquired ones, then something ominous is in the

offing. At the same time, it is possible to notice the sale of ammunition, usually done

discretely, for example by women. Similarly, signs of alertness on the part of security

officers can be seen as an indicator that they have been tipped on a looming raid.

The NCCK has recently been able to use these indicators to set up a program that tries to

effectively detect impending raids or other attacks and to facilitate communities to

intervene. The program recognizes the vital role of effective early warning for early

action mechanisms at the grassroots and national level.

First introduced in 1997, early warning mechanisms operating at the level of Village

Peace Committees and Area Peace and Development Committees have been steadily

refined to address shortcoming in dealing with the dynamics of conflict in pastoral

communities and urban areas. The NCCK staff has benefited from international training

workshops on early warning and peacebuilding organized by NPI-Africa in 2002 and

2003.

In 2003, two workshops were organized to assess the efficiency of the early warning

system and develop proposals that would make it more likely that potential conflicts were

recognized early on, allowing for timely intervention. In July 2003 this resulted in a new

and enhanced Early Warning for Early Action system to be initiated.

Listening to the Local Voice

Listening to the local voice is the approach that has become the basis for much of the

NCCK's success. It is now recognized that cultural traditions, whether that be the

slaughter of bulls or reconciliation rituals, are vital and must be respected. In the African

context, where Christianity was introduced by missionaries who viewed African rituals as

mostly "heathen", the NCCK's acknowledgement of the role of traditional rituals in

peacebuilding and reconciliation represents a major recognition of local resources.

NCCK, the umbrella organization for Kenya's Protestant churches, is an organization

with a long and consistent record of promoting the spiritual, economic, and political

development of the country. In 1992, the Council launched the Peace and Reconciliation

Project in response to ethnic violence in western Kenya which had resulted in many

deaths and injuries, massive displacements, and much suffering among innocent

Kenyans.

The Council originally established the project to provide humanitarian assistance to the victims of the violence. By 1993, the project had recognized the need to move beyond humanitarian assistance to being involved in efforts to help displaced persons to return to the farms they had been forced to leave. Yet this could not be done in the absence of deliberate efforts to bring peace and reconciliation among the communities. The NCCK therefore teamed up with NPI-Africa, an already experienced peacebuilding organization, to begin their peacebuilding and reconciliation work. The Council's peace and reconciliation activities targeted aggressors and victims alike, with an emphasis on the need for both repentance and forgiveness to achieve reconciliation, resettlement and rehabilitation. In a very challenging and difficult environment marked with intimidation, threats and frustrations by the political establishment, the NCCK worked systematically and persistently to build a process that would eventually bring in even the politicians and government officials that were initially opposed to it.

In 1996, a third phase of the Peace and Reconciliation Project was launched with more extensive efforts focusing on community peacebuilding, development, and the re-integration into society of the victims of ethnic violence. The project helped to set up Village Peace and Reconciliation Committees and Area Peace and Rehabilitation Committees, which organized "good neighborliness' seminars", open to elders, politicians, community workers and other peace stakeholders. These seminars provided the stakeholders with the opportunity to discus the causes and effects of local or regional conflicts and to devise strategies to combat them.

In 2000, the Project began a fourth phase, still focusing on community peacebuilding and development, but also engaging in advocacy work. During this phase, the already established community peace structures were utilized, and peace actors at the community level were encouraged to develop appropriate strategies, methodologies and approaches to conflict prevention and resolution that could be effective within their communities. However, cognizant of the fact that an inherent weakness of this approach was that little effort was made to understand the underlying causes of conflict, NCCK established the National Agenda for Peace (NAP), with the specific mandate of linking community initiatives to higher decisionmaking through lobbying government entities to become more actively involved in conflict resolution activities.

Learning Process

A key element of the NCCK project is its evolution as a "process of learning". Although the NCCK was effectively engaged in community peacebuilding, the efforts were geographically limited. The NAP, for example, focused on thirteen conflict-prone districts, while the Community Peace Building and Development Project was primarily directed toward interethnic conflict in Western Kenya. The need to develop a program with a national perspective became evident, and so, in January 2003, the various conflict resolution activities of NCCK were consolidated under the NCCK Peace Program (NPP) with the unifying theme: "Mobilizing communities for peace advocacy, reconstruction and reconciliation."

The work undertaken under the NPP addresses both active conflict and the serious issues of inequity and injustice underlying Kenya's conflicts. The program is involved, at both the local and the national level, in activities as diverse as dealing with interethnic and politically based conflicts, cattle rustling, resource based conflicts, cross-border conflicts, the influx of illicit arms, increased crime rates in urban and semi-urban areas, the plight of the internally displaced people, inadequate government investments in security infrastructure, enactment of a clear land policy, and the creation of a new, enabling constitutional order.

At the local level, the council's peace program continues to build viable partnerships with various stakeholders such as the community elders, politicians and more community-based and non-governmental actors to address peace and development issues. On cross-border conflicts and illicit arms, NCCK works closely with the Uganda Joint Christian Council and is in the process of forging a partnership with the New Sudan Council of Churches. In the border regions, the project has developed a framework for facilitating cross-border community peace work to reduce cattle rustling and the influx of guns.

At Good Neighborliness seminars and *barazas* (public gatherings), the NPP has raised awareness about the need to avoid violence during election campaigns, targeted critical groups involved directly or indirectly in cattle rustling, such as the *Ngorokos* (youthful raiders) and *Laibons* (elders), and reached other crucial constituencies such as women. The project has established links with communities living along common borders by organizing sporting events, rehabilitating social amenities that bring communities together such as schools and cattle dips, and contributing to capacity building within

community peace structures. A number of women's groups have been strengthened through the establishment of income-generating activities and by facilitating seminars and workshops. Finally, the project is engaged in awareness-raising activities, particular through the distribution of its publication, the *Peace Update*.

Impact

At a general level, the key success of the NCCK is the initiation and sustainability of a peace process with strategic links from the community to the national level. At the local level, NCCK has noted some important successes. These include a decline in reported cases of livestock theft, arson, other property damage, and most significantly, violent attacks and killings; renewed possibilities for school age children from warring communities to interact with each other as they return to schools serving communities which NCCK has rehabilitated; the establishment of youth peace clubs, and the successful establishment of the Rural Women's Peace Link which has provided opportunities to women to be actively involved in peacebuilding work. Tangible results have also been recorded in the number of people who have returned to the lands they had earlier been evicted from.

During the 2002 national elections, some of its members were elected as civic leaders, placing them in positions to influence decisionmaking at their level. The elections and presidential transition were hailed worldwide as peaceful and exemplary. This contrasted with the previous two elections in 1992 and 1997, which had been marked by widespread violence. NCCK's ten-year work in the volatile Rift Valley and that of other peace

organizations throughout Kenya is thought to have played a major role in the peaceful elections and transition.

At the regional and national levels, the decision to integrate peace work into the NCCK structures of member churches throughout the country has yielded important dividends in the extension of its work. This was apparent, for example, during the weeklong global campaign against small arms, which reached Kenyans throughout the country. NCCK's strategy of inclusiveness has brought many new actors and organizations on board to pursue peacebuilding across the country. This, in turn, has prompted the government to draft a policy paper with the aim of better coordinating nationwide peacebuilding activities.

Furthermore, the NCCK has gained important influence in policymaking as the *de facto* representative of Kenya's religious communities on the government's National Steering Committee responsible for peacebuilding activities. This committee oversees a wide range of peacebuilding activities including the campaign against small arms, and the development of early warning and response mechanisms.

Challenges

The NCCK has come to a clear understanding that the involvement of community leaders is crucial to the task of resolving local conflicts. Indeed, a key lesson has been the drawing in of elders who themselves may be involved with instigating or supporting violence, and steering them to play more positive roles in their communities. This stems

from the observation that the *elderhood* institution in Africa was largely a force for the

good of the community, where all wisdom accumulated.

Therefore, mechanisms must be developed for sharing information, drawing on elders

who are strategically positioned to monitor and evaluate events on the ground, and efforts

must continue which encourage the creation of local and regional peace committees.

A key limitation to this institution is the lack of a legal framework. For example,

traditional mechanisms for compensation and reparation are not always recognized by the

national law. There is therefore a need to confer legal status on traditional compensation

mechanisms. Currently, such mechanisms function outside the legal system. As a result,

the official criminal justice system may still intervene in cases that have already been

resolved by traditional conflict resolution approaches.

Another key lesson has to do with partnership at different levels. At one level, NCCK

was able to forge good relations with funding agencies who supported the work

financially over the years. At another level, NCCK forged a working relationship with

NPI-Africa, that right from the beginning helped to shape the peace interventions of

NCCK, based on its experiences working in other settings in Africa. NCCK was also able

to build linkages with development-focused organizations at the community level, as a

way of linking peace and reconciliation with the livelihood concerns of the communities.

The NCCK has achieved much since it began its peace and reconciliation work in 1992.

Still, important challenges remain. Some are social or political, such as the challenge of

overcoming deep divisions among religious leaders, or transcending regional and

political differences to forge a united front as a church. Others are institutional, such as

the lack of peacebuilding skills among various stakeholders, or the lack of sufficient

resources to assure the sustainability of programs that contribute to peace and security.

Still, others are more fundamental: without addressing the root causes of conflict — such

as poverty, underdevelopment, and lack of opportunity — peace and security will always

be fragile. Addressing all these challenges is exactly what the NCCK sets out to do.

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Selline Otieno Korir has been taking daring risk by working to empower women and

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Note

1. With additional input from George Wachira, NPI, Kenya

18. Traditional and Local Conflict Resolution

Jannie Malan*

Ways of preventing and resolving conflict have become widely known in their current form, which has taken shape over the last eighty years. Dealing with conflict is not a new field, however. With regard to the ancient beginnings we have to rely on imaginative guesswork, but for reconstructing subsequent developments we can build on many traditions that have survived. These traditions are not only of historical significance, however; they can be of great practical value to all of us who are dealing with conflict and helping others to deal with conflict. What is therefore shared in this chapter is meant to encourage us to learn from traditional ways of dealing with conflict, and to apply the methods, insights and skills that are indeed relevant in conflict situations of our time.

Contemporary Validity

Some traditions are undoubtedly time-proven and of lasting value, but others have become old-fashioned and sometimes also ethically objectionable1. Debates are therefore continuing between and within groups.2 Often such discussions are mainly focused on cultural loyalty and current practicality. In many cases, however, racial and political arguments tend to complicate and intensify the debate.

From a Southern, post-colonial perspective3, for instance, the science of Conflict and Peace Studies that has developed in the 20th century may appear to be a neo-colonial import. It is true that this science was to a large extent an outcome of the struggles of disadvantaged people against economic inequity and social injustice. It is also true that in many cases civil campaigning did eventually bring about remarkable results: changed laws, regulations, structures, and some changed attitudes. Still, those who have struggled against the injustices of colonialism may resent the fact that the "new" methods and techniques of negotiation, mediation, arbitration and conciliation were mainly developed in the cultural settings of the West and the North.

Nevertheless, people in post-colonial situations are frankly acknowledging that important insights and skills have recently been gained by the relevant human sciences all around the world and that certain aspects of traditional methods may today have to regarded as anachronisms. It has also been admitted that adequate knowledge of the old methods is becoming relatively scarce.4

The typical two-fold conclusion of all the debating therefore tends to be something as the following:

. There are traditional methods that can still be used in appropriate situatio ns (for instance, the *Hozhooji Naat'aanii* restorative justice process of the Navajo nation in Arizona and New Mexico, *Gacaca* traditional courts in Rwanda5, *Kachoke Madit* meetings in Northern Uganda, and the *Ho'o Ponopono* process in Hawaii).

. In the light of contemporary insights and skills that have been developed all over the world, however, it is not merely a matter of reverting to ancient traditions. What may

especially be propagated, therefore, is the development of new homegrown methods in

which the best current practices and compatible traditions are integrated.

Using Traditional Methods in Appropriate Situations

An appropriate situation for the first of these two options would be one in which the

descendants of the people who developed the method are still loyal to the same cultural

context. The method may still be respected as a famous tradition, and may still be used,

regularly or occasionally. In certain cases some adaptations or amendments may be

required to make it acceptable in a contemporary rural or urban setting.

Let us briefly look at one example out of the vast number of traditional methods for

conflict management. The Ho'o Ponopono process mentioned above can be summarized

as follows (Partners in Conflict in Lesotho Project, Workshop hand-out). First, the

community leaders and the parties concerned agree on a person with the needed trust and

skills to facilitate the talks. At an appointed time and place, the community gathers in a

circle, which includes the perpetrators and the victims. The facilitator ensures that there is

agreement on ground rules. He or she emphasizes the objective of reaching a consensus

agreement on resolving the conflict. The starting point is to get the facts from each party

and from all who want to add a perspective.

The second stage is to go round the circle again, reflecting on why the conflict occurred,

how they each share responsibility, and what they might have done to prevent the

conflict. Then tasks for the future are considered. All can suggest ideas about

compensation or restitution, about community needs, and about preventive and/or

punitive measures. At this stage penitence and forgiveness may be offered. The fourth

stage is that of reaching consensus on tasks and the follow-up process. The parties and

others in the community commit themselves to actions for re-constituting good

community relationships.

In the final stage closure is achieved by burning all records of facts, closing eyes on the

past and choosing to move forward together. Only the consensus agreement, action

commitments and follow-up arrangements are kept.

Integrating Traditional and Contemporary Methods

An integration of traditional and present-day methods cannot be attempted in a superficial

way. The crucially important issue of compatibility has to be discussed until real

understanding is reached and appropriately implemented.

The inherently African semantic field of *ubuntu* provides a good example in this regard.

It signifies a socially caring and sharing way of thinking and living, which is well

captured in the rhyming Xhosa expression, "Umntu ngumntu ngabantu". Literally this

means that a human being is a human being through human beings. Or paraphrased: a

human being becomes a true human being through her/his6 relationships with other

human beings. Similar or comparable expressions are found all over Africa7 and

therefore, the issue of old and new ways of dealing with conflict cannot properly be

talked out if ubuntu-minded people are not involved in the planning from the beginning.

One striking example of a well-intentioned but unsuccessful attempt to combine

incompatible elements, was the United Nations' (UN) way of using the Somali tradition

of *Shir* (gatherings). This tradition is a bottom-up, inclusive process, supported and

sponsored by the community. The parties enjoy equal representation. Elders who are

experienced mediators and trusted by the community are chosen. Traditional methods of

problem solving are used, and the talks proceed according to an open timetable.

Agreements are reached through consensus, and are regarded as social treaties (*xeer*). The

elders are entrusted with authority and power to ensure the implementation of

agreements. The UN version of Shir, however, was a top-down process, held outside the

country. There was unequal representation, and lack of confidence in the representatives.

Politicians were involved, and not elders. There was a lack of understanding of the

problems, and a short timetable was used. No common xeer was reached (Murithi, Final

Report, pp 53-54).

There are two options if we want to achieve a valid integration of traditional and

contemporary methods.

The first is to incorporate a current insight into an old custom. In Burundi there is the

tradition of *Ubunshingantahe*, which is used for resolving conflicts and bringing about

harmony in the community. Membership is given to couples, but it is only the husbands

who officially sit in the meetings. The wives play an important role by counseling their

husbands and by being consulted by them (Murithi, Final Report, p 35). Apparently 80

percent of Burundian men are still in favor of this arrangement, but women activists are

campaigning to enable women to become direct and active participants in the meetings.

The second is to concentrate less on the great diversity of traditional methods and more

on their inner dynamic. We can do this without trying to generalize, or to construct an

"average" method, or to make up a model of eclectically selected details. What we can do

is try to imagine ourselves to be in the human contexts where these traditions originated.

We may then find that the most important positive influence which traditional methods

can have today should not be expected along the way of customs or terms, but rather

through the spirit which vitalized those methods and still radiates from them.

Timeless Essentials

The All-Africa Conference on African Principles of Conflict Resolution and

Reconciliation, held in Addis Ababa in 1999, was focused on traditional ways of dealing

with conflict. Twenty-one African countries were represented (of the 123 participants,

113 were from Africa) and no less than 70 percent of the sixty-four presentations

contained descriptions and discussions of traditional methods of particular groups or

areas. The objective of the conference was to explore marginalized indigenous

approaches to peacemaking in Africa, and possibly develop ways in which general

principles and tested practices from the African heritage could complement existing

approaches drawn from other sources (Murithi, Final Report, pp v, 97).

What follows is an overview of some core insights and experiences around which

traditional methods seem to have developed. Elements such as these have probably

enabled traditional methods to be trusted, honored and utilized throughout extended

periods and eras.

Taking Time to Talk Things Out

Talking things out is surely one of the most essential parts of dealing with a conflict.

There may be important differences, however, between the talking in current ways of

negotiating or mediating and ancient ways of really talking things out. In those days, talks

that continued over days or weeks were not uncommon. Participants were usually granted

the opportunity to say what they wanted to, without cutting them short. Furthermore,

people from an extended family, a neighborhood or a community were allowed to take

part. When talks took place under trees, there were anyway no doors or walls that could

keep people out.

While much time was spent in talking, it seems as if usually little time was wasted before

the talks began. In cases when the talking started soon after warning signals were noticed,

and at the place where this happened, it could even have prevented a conflict from

arising. If the social environment were upholding the traditional value that the society is

greater than the individual, the people involved would have been strongly oriented

towards social harmony. The obvious truth that prevention is better than cure must have

been discovered by our early ancestors, and integrated into their methods.8

Dealing with Root Causes of Conflicts

Another essential part of dealing with any conflict is penetrating to its root cause or

causes. Traditional methods seem to have taken this crucially important but potentially

difficult starting point seriously. As the metaphor "root" indicates, the searching for

invisible, underlying causes may require "digging" to depths. In some cases the inclusion

of the neighborhood or community in traditional talks might have facilitated this process,

but in other cases rumors, gossiping, blaming or partisanship might have complicated

everything.

Typical causes of violent conflict were (and in many instances still are) land issues (for

instance trespassing), animal issues (mostly robbery) and personal issue s (such as

rivalries). Due to the temporary or permanent scarcity of food or other resources, poverty

always was, and still is, a major reason for competition and conflict. In modern times,

poverty and bad governance are time and again highlighted as root causes. For today's

bad governance deeper roots are also mentioned: ethnocentrism, clanism, and greed for

power, prestige and/or wealth.

Being Oriented Towards Consensus

A process in which conflicts are talked out is usually a comprehensive one that explo res

the context in which the conflict originated, and works toward a consensus about a fair

and satisfactory agreement. Traditionally, the talking probably proceeded without fixed

procedures. The elders or chiefs could use their discretion to play certain roles or switch

to others. It could be a passive or low-key role, a facilitating or an advisory role, or even

a pressurizing or manipulating one. A guilty party could be expected or forced to repent,

apologize, ask forgiveness, and pay compensation. However, through the entire process,

the main responsibility of the leading figures was to guide the talks toward an agreement

that would reflect as inclusively as possible the consensus of the entire group of relatives,

neighbors, friends and acquaintances.

Promoting Relational Interdependence

The people of those early days must already have discovered that joint solutions reached

through consensus tend to be durable. When the parties concerned and the communities

involved have accepted ownership of the agreement and co-responsibility for its

implementation and monitoring, several advantages may follow. Behaviors may change

and relationships may be restored. Similar conflicts may even be prevented from

occurring.

The concern with relationships was indeed one of the core elements of traditional

methods. The calmer relationships before the conflict were reviewed, the tense relations

of the conflict were investigated, and a solution was sought that might contribute to

improved relationships in the future. This relational orientation was not only revealed in

family and neighborhood conflicts but also in political situations. "Reconciliation

politics…seems to be more consistent with many African traditions, which emphasize

community rather than individualism and competition" (Assefa and Wachira, 1996, pp

57-58).

The Mindset-Challenging Message

When we focus our attention on the main thrust of traditional ways of preventing conflict

and building peace, instead of just on interesting details, we can hardly evade the feeling

of being challenged to revisit our current methods. For instance, if we evaluate our

methods in the light of the essential elements of traditional methods briefly outlined

above, we may have to admit

. that we have lost the patience to allow parties the opportunity and time to really talk

things out;

. that while we do explore root causes of conflicts, we have not yet gathered enough

courage to tackle effectively our underlying problems of poverty, inequitable

development9 and bad governance;

. that while we praise the advantages of consensus, we have our convenient excuses for

sidelining and trying to silence the "difficult" customers (who may very well have valid

objections);

. that our obsession with performance and products has tempted too many of us to label

the dimension of human togetherness and relationships as unrealistic idealism.

The challenge is not simply to try and traditionalize our current methods by using old

terms in our manuals and old designs on their cover pages. Neither are we called upon to

try and convince communities that they should once again confirm their agreements by

bending spears or drinking bitter herbs.10

What we can do, however, is to imagine ourselves into the way of thinking out of which

traditional ways of preventing conflict and dealing with conflict developed. Furthermore,

if we discover to what extent both those and our methods are based on common sense, we

may be reassured that we are not expected to discard our present methods and revert to

practices of the past. We may indeed feel empowered to experiment with unhurried

talking, deep delving, consensus building and relationship healing.

Best Practices

Best practices, just as methods in general, should be used with modest realism. It is not necessary, however, to stretch our unpretentiousness too far. There is no need to think that the best methods can only be used in the "milder" areas of interpersonal and intergroup conflict. Nothing prevents them from being applied in the "harsher" areas of interethnic and interstate wars.

We have at our disposal the recent results of a worldwide research project on best practices, under the title of *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners* (Anderson and Olson). The findings showed how peace practices are indeed working in a variety of violent situations, but also how they might work even better. One of the significant findings was that the efforts to reach "Key People" should be linked to ways of involving "More People". It was also found that in both cases two kinds of change should be promoted: changes in attitudes, values and perceptions, and changes in politics, economics, and justice systems. What often proves to be of the greatest importance, is the translating of changed attitudes into changed structures (Alexander and Olson, 2003, pp 54-57, 64-69).

Such findings should stimulate us to reflect on our methods and our mindsets. There are ways of thinking and doing, which have come a long way through human history with all-time wisdom and ever-relevant skills. There are also the latest insights, facilities and capabilities, which have made their way into current ways of thinking, acting and being.

So, whenever we are in a position to help prevent or transform a conflict, let us seek

clarity on the most appropriate approach and attitude.

Taking Traditional Methods Seriously

. We should duly acknowledge the cultural context of a potential or actual conflict

situation.

The cultural loyalties, affinities and sensitivities of the parties concerned are always of

crucial importance. If only one culture is involved, the interaction may be less

complicated, but not necessarily. If the situation is cross-cultural or multicultural, several

aspects should be taken into consideration from the very beginning.11 For instance: the

various ways of thinking and behaving, the need for mutual understanding, and the need

for a culturally inclusive team of facilitators.

. We should commit ourselves to as much preventive problem solving as possible. When it

is clear that a particular clue is not an unfounded suspicion but a real warning signal,

something should be done as soon as possible, and as close to the problem as possible. If

this can be done in the mode of pragmatic problem solving, so that "conflict" need not

even be mentioned in the name of the method, so much the better.12

. We should responsibly and creatively use the best available practices. Although the

various groups we belong to have respected traditions from a significant past, we happen

to be living in the world of today, where very relevant current practices are at our

disposal. These inevitably form our main frame of reference, and from these we can

chose the most appropriate approaches for each unique situation. We have to remember, however, that no method should ever be applied as if it were a prescriptive recipe. Open-minded receptivity to the needs and interests of the parties concerned, and innovative flexibility and creativity are always of crucial importance.

. Wherever appropriate, we should integrate meaningful traditions into our work.

Applying traditional methods, or incorporating traditional elements that are of lasting value, can have very important advantages. It may provide a sense of ownership, and strengthen our commitment to work towards consensus and co-existence. Moreover, these methods are usually simple and easily understandable. They tend to allow flexibility and creativity. They are not expensive, and the costs involved are often willingly shared by the community.

Finally, they may add an ancient, ancestral endorsement to the work we are doing nowadays.

. We should internalize the mindset of fellow-human togetherness and interdependence.

If this way of thinking and living has become part of us, conflict-preventing and peacebuilding attitudes, approaches and actions may follow spontaneously. For instance, groups and individuals can then feel free to be who they happen to be, to belong where they happen to belong, but also to allow others to do the same from their side. Then both "we" and "they" can become befriended in an ubuntu-minded "all of us". A particular field in which such interdependence has to be propagated, is the relations between governmental authorities and traditional chiefs and elders.

. *We should encourage and empower as many people as possible to apply their insights*

and skills.

The inspiring stories in this book and its predecessor testify to what ordinary people can

do. People across the civil society spectrum, from grassroots level to influential leaders,

can indeed initiate processes that may bring about breakthroughs to mutual

understanding, conflict resolution and reconciliation.

. *We should remain committed to particular and general conflict transformation.*

If we understand conflict as an everyday social phenomenon, which is always based on

some valid reason or perceived reason, we will not try to escape to a utopian retreat. We

will remain willing to listen without being shocked, and to talk out whatever has to be

talked out. We will not avoid root causes such as poverty and bad governance, and their

root causes. We will promote, according to the circumstances, structural changes and

attitudinal changes. In whatever the context, from local to international, we will work

towards consensual agreement that will not only resolve the conflict concerned, but also

contribute to the most cordial – or otherwise appropriate – relationships for the future.

Traditional ways of dealing with conflict can indeed encourage and inspire us. In spite of

the shortcomings they might have had, they have functioned in conflict-preventive,

peace-building and reconciliatory ways through the ages. They have enabled our

ancestors to address conflict-causing problems, reach consensual solutions, and rebuild

relationships. Today there are indeed situations in which we can still use these common-

sensical methods, either in their traditional form or with some modifications. There are

also many opportunities to multiply the potential effectiveness of contemporary methods

by infusing time-proven traditional insights and skills into them.

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management and resolution in Africa.

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Notes

1 The notorious apartheid of the old South Africa was an extreme example of inflicted

injustice, but not the only one. In the new South Africa, and Africa, gender discrimination

is increasingly opposed.

2 It is interesting and encouraging to hear about an ethno-cultural group (the Borana

Community of East Africa) who spends much of its time thinking about its culture and

making deliberate attempts to modify their customs. (Duba et al, Honey and Heifer, p.16)

3 Cf Wa Thiongo, Decolonizing the Mind.

4 According to questionnaire responses at a recent international seminar in Zambia (A

University for Peace Faculty and Staff Development Seminar on Gender and Peace

Building, Kitwe, July 2004), thirty gender and conflict resolution practitioners from

eighteen African countries revealed an average familiarity of less than 50 percent with

African-specific approaches to gender and peacebuilding!

5 This tradition is indeed being used to fulfil the need for restorative and reparative

justice (while the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda is just focusing on

retributive justice).

6 It is interesting to note that Xhosa does not use separate pronouns (as "her" and "his" in

English) for the two genders of humanity. Its basic frame of reference is simply that all of

us are human beings. This does not mean, however, that Xhosa-speaking people do not

recognize and respect the distinctive roles of women and men in human life.

7 For a good description and discussion of the ubuntu concept by various writers from

Africa, and for an example of ubuntu culture applied (guided by Prof. Lovemore Mbigi as

an ubuntu thinker) to transform a labor conflict, see Coetzee & Roux, Philosophy from

Africa, pp 41-50. Cf also Masina, "Xhosa Practices of Ubuntu in South Africa", in

Zartman, Traditional Cures for Modern Conflicts.

8 For a contemporary emphasis on conflict prevention, see Adebayo, Comprehending and

Mastering African Conflicts, pp 22-30.

9 To which may be added the frustration of educated youth, who did not manage to get

integrated into the modern sector and are no longer suitable to lead their local

communities. [Or delete footnote]

10 As in the Mato Oput tradition in Northern Uganda (Murithi, Final Report, pp 38-41).

11 In Davies & Kaufman, Second Track/Citizens' Diplomacy, a section on "Bridging

Cultural Divides" is placed within the first eight pages, and a chapter is devoted to

"Strategies for Effective Intercultural Conflict Resolution" (pp 149-160). Cf also Avruch,

Culture and Conflict Resolution.

12 "The desire to solve problems amicably is the main thrust of the African character"

Ngwane, Settling Disputes in Africa, p 51).

Resources

Lead organizations

ACCORD – South Africa

info@accord.org.za

http://www.accord.org.za

Centre for Conflict Resolution – South Africa

mailbox@ccr.uct.ac.za

http://ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za

Centre for Conflict Resolution (CECORE) – Uganda

cecore@africaonline.co.ug

http://www.cecore.org

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18.1 Clan Elders Act as Conflict Mediator: Somaliland

In Somaliland, traditional conflict resolution methods have been used to successfully resolve conflicts that resulted from a traumatic and destructive civil war. Councils of Elders provided for open discussion with all parties and acted as mediators. By Haroon Yusuf and Robin Le Mare*

In the last decade, a discouraging concept has gained currency: the failed state. The term has probably been first applied to Somalia, which disintegrated in the early nineties after civil war and a rebellion drove longtime dictator Siad Barre from power in 1991. Anarchy and violence soon reigned, as the competing militias of warlords fought for control of resources, territory, and power.

In the northern breakaway region of Somaliland, the new leadership hoped to avoid such devastation, but it was not to be. In January 1992, fighting broke out between politicians and members of the military. Towns were wrecked, economic life came to a standstill, and the optimism that had accompanied Somaliland's bid for nationhood had dissipated. However, while disorder persisted in Somalia, in Somaliland, order was restored. The chief mechanism for doing this was revert to some of the oldest strategies for resolving conflict. The mediators of Somaliland's conflicts were its tribal elders.

<Box>

A state without status

During colonial times, the British and the Italians each controlled a portion of what became, in 1960, an independent nation called the United Republic of Somalia. The idea was to unite ethnic Somalis, but from early on, rivalries between north and south caused friction and resentment. The situation only worsened after Muhammed Siad Barre seized power in a coup in 1969. Barre favored his own clan to the exclusion of others. In 1988, Barre's opponents formed the Somali National Movement and began a rebellion in the north against Barre's southern-based government. Barre responded with bombings of northern cities and a brutal campaign against the rebels. In 1991, Barre was forced from office. In the wake of the collapse of the Barre regime, the northern provinces — what had been British Somaliland in colonial times — declared their independence on May 18, 1991 and proclaimed the Republic of Somaliland.

Yet Somaliland has failed to win international recognition. The result has been that Somaliland is not a member of the United Nations, unable to pursue normal trade with the status of a sovereign nation or to get assistance from international financial institutions such as the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund. "The most disabling thing is the lack of communication with the international community," said the late Mohammed Ibrahim Egal, who was elected president in May 1993 by a council of elders. "We have no ambassadors. We only have international agencies." Before his death in 2002, President Egal called on the United Nations to grant Somaliland special status, as it had previously done for Kosovo, Palestine, and East Timor.

<End Box>

The Traditional System

The harsh environment from which Somalis extract their pastoral livelihood requires cooperation and the sharing of scant resources, and so a distinctive social structure evolved based on kinship, a system of ethical norms and rules adaptive to the pastoral, subsistence lifestyle of the majority of Somalis.

Two key elements of the kinship are blood-ties and a concept known as *Xeer* (pronounced "hair"), which is, essentially, an unwritten but loosely accepted code of conduct. *Xeer*, which combines Islamic *sharia* and customary law, emphasizes the values of interdependence and inclusiveness and forms the basis for social contracts or covenants between lineage groups. It defines obligations, rights and collective responsibilities (including sanctions) of the group. Within this "contract", members are pledged to support each other.

Xeer lays down rules for cooperative responsibility, and is a source of protection for individual and group rights. It does not eliminate strife but provides accepted and workable ways of dealing with disputes and conflicts. Some of the most important aspects of *Xeer* govern entitlements to common resources such as water and pasture land.

The Somali clan system is prone to conflicts but mechanisms exist to mitigate and resolve them. Dialogue, the mediation of Elders, religious sanctions, compensation, and military strength are all traditional means for resolving conflicts.

The Authority of the Elders

The relations among Somali clans are dynamic. When disputes arise over matters such as grazing rights, water, other resources, or political influence, they are arbitrated by what is known as a *shir* — a Council of Elders. The *shir* deals with relations between groups, in war and peacetime, and lays down the laws and principles by which members act. While all adult males are entitled to participate and be heard in a *shir*, reaching agreement is usually delegated to the Elders, who are drawn from all levels of society. An Elder (usually a man) may gain prominence and influence through attributes of age, wealth, wisdom, religious knowledge and powers of oratory. An Elder is a clan representative or delegate, rather than a leader with authority.

This pastoral society has no hierarchy of political units or political and administrative offices, but rather emphasizes consensus decision-making. Only at the clan level is there a post equivalent to that of a leader or chief – the sultan, *Garad* or *Ugaas* depending on clans. The sultan enjoys respect but not reverence, functions as arbiter and peacemaker in his clan and with other clans, and is said to be able to see "beyond the fight." In a conflict resolution setting, elders undertake the negotiations, while sultans approve the results.

Elders monitor and may influence grass-roots opinion. They act as mediators operating in open assembly, not secretly. They work on the basis of enlightened clan interest to produce efficacious results. Through these collective institutions and this rule-bound behavior, social order is maintained and conflict ma naged. Furthermore, agreed rules of warfare condition the scale of conflict (women and children are not targets), and typically, disputes over

grazing resources are characterized more by negotiations and the formation of alliances than

by warfare.

Turning to the Elders

With the civil war raging between 1988 and 1991, the Somali people turned to their

traditional mechanisms to deal with their problems. Confronted with the failure of the state

and its system of governance, and with the warlords' ascendant, they sought the guidance

and wisdom of the Elders to assist in the restoration of stability.

The challenges were enormous. A "crisis of legitimacy" prevailed. The society had

fragmented and the established state had collapsed. Clan rivalries had turned to open

hostility. Political figures who could legitimately claim to represent national constituencies

and who had the requisite authority to broker and enforce peace accords were in short

supply. Reconciliation efforts were undermined by powerful groups withvested interests in

continued instability, conflict and anarchy, and who threatened peace constituencies. Armed

young men with no faith in any type of 'government' roamed the streets of the country, and

a massive displacement of the population had occurred.

How the System Works

The traditional system became to be seen as a way out of this conundrum. Honest, willing

and credible Elders united and initiated a local council to represent their community

interests. Generally one or both parties to a conflict requested an Elder or an Elders' Council

to intervene.

Negotiations did not follow fixed procedures and time schedules. They were open, in terms of participants (all adults may participate), the setting of the agenda, and the establishment of dynamic processes. Generally, reference to past precedent was made, lengthy oral deliberations held and an Elders' forum created. The negotiations that followed would usually address such issues as access to resources and payments for deaths between clans. In Somaliland, overall cross-clan peace conferences were frequently preceded by sub-clan deliberations. Through this process perspectives were gathered, procedural steps negotiated, and the basic parameters set for moving toward a more explicit forum, guided by the Elders' Council (or *Guurti*). Only when these preparations had been completed could the larger peace conference begin. The entire process was a lengthy one; preparing for and holding such a conference commonly took 4 to 6 months.

Throughout the process, Elders prepared, moderated, listened, and often arbitrated procedural problems. The conference was a public meeting, involving not only lengthy speeches, but also even poetry. The elders functioned as a "court" and assumed broad and flexible powers to interpret evidence, manage the process of reconciliation, and help formulate the eventual consensus. While the clan elders authorized peace conference agreements, other community leaders — acceptable politicians and military leaders, religious figures, and poets — also played crucial roles.

Impact

The breakaway Somaliland Republic has been relatively peaceful compared with the chaos which has prevailed in Somalia, where warlords have gained sway and external intervention

has yet to show success. Beginning in 1991, Somaliland's elders organized reconciliation conferences at the inter-clan level and followed them with meetings at the district and regional levels. The most significant conferences were at Erigavo and Borama towns in early 1993.

The Erigavo conference produced a peace charter, and recognized individuals' rights to move, trade, and pursue their aspirations within the clans' boundaries. The charter also stipulated the return of property, land, and other resources occupied, stolen or looted during the war. Conflict resolution committees were set up at all locations to keep the peace and interpret the charter. With this process in place, peace has been maintained despite significant pressures from less stable neighboring regions.

The Borama Conference (January-May 1993) was the watershed for Somaliland's recovery and development. It brought together more than 150 *Guurti* members from all of Somaliland's clans, plus hundreds of delegates and observers from inside and outside the country. The significant successes of this conference were:

. The peaceful transfer of power from the liberation movement (SNM) to an elected president, Mohamed Egal.

. A Peace Charter that established a national security framework.

. A National Charter that established a bicameral legislature, creating for the first time an Assembly of Elders – or National *Guurti* – as a non-elected upper house.

. An elected lower house.

The nascent government was severely tested by conflict between its army and a militia associated with an opposition clan in 1995-6. A Congress of Somaliland Communities in mid-1997 took three months to resolve the conflict. An important decision taken at this Congress was to proceed with a process of demobilization of armed factions, and to consolidate police law enforcement and security authority in three security forces: the army, the police and a custodial corps. With factional disputes finally resolved, it was possible to condition recruitment into the security forces on the dissolution of local militias, the collection of both small arms and heavy weapons, and mandatory training for recruits. Much of Somaliland's subsequent peace and stability can be traced to the success of this Congress, which also adopted a new constitution and re-elected President Egal. The 1997 Congress also provided for a five-year transitional period, leading to constitutional rule. In May 2001, Somaliland implemented a new constitution, and mandated that elections be held by February 2002. Still, the government failed to enact the electoral law in time — so the Assembly of Elders asserted itself (as provided for under the constitution), and extended the term of President Egal and his government. President Egal died unexpectedly in May 2002, and was lawfully succeeded by his vice-president.

Somaliland has evolved a hybrid political system with elements of multi-party democracy, including a presidency and a legislative Council of Deputies, but with important elements retained from its traditional clan-based society. As scholar Mohamud A. Jama observes, (Somalia and Somaliland, 2003)

"The Council of Elders legitimizes the presidential exercise of power by providing

political justification for controversial and difficult actions and decisions by the

President".

Jama is not without skepticism concerning this hybrid arrangement, however. He sees a

number of risks.

"The system of clan-based political representation," *he writes*, "is effective in

establishing a basis of stability and peace, but inherently incompatible with holding

elected officials accountable for their performance."

He is also concerned about the risks of factionalism in a clan-based political system.

Somaliland's future is far from certain. It is a poor land, and without international

recognition, it has limited access to either development assistance or foreign investment.

Much of its infrastructure was destroyed during the civil war from 1988 through 1991. Its

government has no money to pay civil servants, teachers and health care professionals.

Young men without jobs but well supplied with arms and ammunition pose a threat to

security.

Somaliland has built what Rakiya Omaar, of the London-based human rights organization

African Rights, describes as "a broadly-based political framework for resolving disputes

in a peaceful manner."

The elders succeeded, says Omaar,

"because ordinary people gave them the authority to make peace and promote

reconciliation. In turn, they made their task a collective endeavor."

The existence of that framework, which draws on traditions that are deeply rooted in

Somali society, is not only reason for hope, but also serves as an example that others

might look to where the traditional structures of governance and authority retain more

influence in the daily lives of a country's citizens than do the structures of the state.

<Box>

Settling a water dispute

In the town of Erigavo, a water supply system was installed in colonial times. During the

civil war, the system was destroyed. The international development assistance

organization ActionAid was requested to rebuild the system, but before it could begin, it

needed to have clarity on a crucial question: to whom did the system belong, since its

previous owner — the government — had collapsed?

The towns' residents belong to four different clans. If one of those took control of the

system, that would not only be in violation of the Peace Charter, but would also be a

likely source of conflict. So before ActionAid would commence the system's

rehabilitation, a multi-clan management committee was established, accountable to the

Guurti, and agreements on the allocation of work (excavation, construction, etc.) were

signed. In essence, *Xeer* (law) governing the system was agreed in advance, defining

roles, rights and responsibilities of each actor, including Actio nAid.

Since completion in 1993 the system has served the people of Erigavo – and many rural

people who collect its water by tanker – with no further financial or administrative input

from the foreign civil society organization.

ActionAid observes that other international NGOs have failed, with unfortunate

consequences, to grasp the importance of the Elders, who retain ultimate authority at the

local level. There have been occasions, for example, when international NGOs have not

understood that they must consult with the NGO Coordinating Committee appointed by

the Council of Elders. These organizations found that in the end, they could not continue

their involvement in the very projects they had wished to carry out.

<End Box>

* Haroon Yusuf is Development resource person working with the Togdheer community-

based organization and Team Leader of ActionAid's programme in Somaliland. Robin Le

Mare represents that programme in ActionAid-UK.

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18.2 Revitalizing Tradition to Promote Reconciliation: Gacaca Courts in Rwanda

In an effort to come to terms with some of the consequences of the 1994 genocide, the Rwandan government revitalized a traditional mechanism for seeking justice: the Gacaca system. With its rules adjusted to 21st century's requirements and the specific post-genocidal context, the Gacaca court system seeks to enhance reconciliation and dialogue. It helped survivors and perpetrators of the killings realize that in many ways "both sides have been victims". The system also faces challenges and has been criticized by human rights organizations.

"The Gacaca jurisdiction has characteristics one cannot find in other judicial systems and which are needed to rehabilitate Rwandan society," the Rwandan government said in a statement issued in 2003, reflecting on its decision to introduce the custom based court system. Gacaca refers to a traditional Rwandan method of conflict resolution at the village level. In case of conflicts in a community, such as disputes over land, property damage, marital issues, or inheritance rights, meetings were convened between the aggrieved parties, presided over by community leaders. The meetings not only were meant to sanction violators of the village norms, but also to ensure that those accused, and found guilty, were again fully accepted as members of the community. Reconciliation between violators and their communities was at the core of the traditional Gacaca custom.

The idea of using the Gacaca system in dealing with the aftermath of the genocide had been discussed repeatedly since 1994. After a series of talks between representatives from sectors of government and civil society, the government mandated a commission to study how Gacaca could be applied in Rwanda's efforts to deal with the consequences of the crisis of 1994. This led to the establishment of the Gacaca judicial system by law in early 2001. Implementation of the Gacaca policy began a year later.

The Rwandan government decided to introduce the Gacaca court system partly for pressing pragmatic reasons. With 120,000 people accused of war crimes in prison, experts calculated that it would take 350 years before all defendants would be tried if the official judicial system and procedures would be pursued unaltered. The Gacaca system offered an opportunity to speed up the process in a responsible and effective way, Rwandan authorities thought. Gacaca does not replace, but is additional to two other judicial mechanisms that are in the process of trying the tens of thousands Rwandan prisoners who stand accused of having committed crimes of genocide.

In addition to practical considerations, interest in the Gacaca courts grew as a result of increased awareness that its traditional ways of dealing with conflict could be a major driver toward reconciliation between the surviving victims and perpetrators of the genocide. Putting an end to a traumatic event and reaching some form of peace and reconciliation is a major goal of probably any judicial or penal system and the Gacaca system was perceived to have particularly suitable characteristics to achieve this in the post-1994 Rwandan context.

The current Gacaca judicial system is not an exact copy of the traditional Gacaca custom but is loosely based on it. One of the differences is that local elders convened the traditional Gacaca meetings spontaneously, whereas the modern Gacaca system has been initiated by the Rwandan government and is being supervised by officials from the Supreme Court and the Ministry of Justice. Traditional Gacaca dealt with relatively minor interpersonal disputes, while the new version of Gacaca deals with genocide. Yet, similar to the old system, in the Gacaca "modern style", the local population acts as witness, judge and party to the trials. The government is relying on the population to testify before the courts, to recount the facts, disclose the truth and participate in the prosecution and trial of the perpetrators.

Categories

According to the plan, the Gacaca trials will be held weekly in 10,000 local jurisdictions, or courts, spread over the country, and will involve more than 250,000 popularly elected "judges" as well as the collective participation of all local community members as witnesses or jurors. The system was first implemented in a pilot project in June 2002. Since then, several hundreds of local Gacaca courts have been established. More than 107,000 judges were elected by the Rwandan population, chosen on the basis of their integrity, conduct and lack of involvement in the genocide.

Crimes are grouped into four categories – crimes against property (category 4), serious assaults against the person (category 3), criminal acts that place the perpetrators among the perpetrators and accomplices of intentional homicide (category 2) and crimes of the

highest level, which include those committed by leaders and planners of the genocide as

well as rape and sexual torture (category 1).

Category 2, 3 and 4 crimes will be dealt with by the Gacaca tribunals. The regular courts

will process category 1 crimes, which incur the death penalty. The different categories of

crimes are assigned to different Gacaca courts. Minor crimes are dealt with by the local

Gacaca courts, more serious crimes by Gacaca courts at the sectoral, district or provincial

level. The fundamental unit of the courts are the weekly meetings of the local (or

"cellule") courts that take place weekly within communities. While the Gacaca courts do

not have the power to administer the death penalty, they are empowered to impose

sentences up to and including life imprisonment. The sentencing system is flexible,

however, as all convicted offenders have the option of half of their sentences doing

community service projects. Convicted offenders who have confessed to their crimes are

awarded significantly reduced sentences.

Challenges

The initiative to establish the Gacaca court system was positively welcomed by the

majority of the Rwandan people. The international community slowly followed in seeing

Gacaca as a positive development. There seemed to be no better alternative and Western

methods proved to be too slow to deal with the aftermath of the genocide. However,

despite its positive focus on the communal process of reconciliation, the system was

criticized as well. Concerns and critiques evolved around logistical, legal and operational

issues and especially around the issue of participation.

Many observers agree that the Gacaca process faces enormous challenges not only in terms of the scale of the endeavor, but also in terms of its practical implementation. Judges have been provided with basic training on the Gacaca laws and the operation of the tribunals, but at the same time are expected to work on a voluntary basis. The lack of compensation for the judges makes it difficult for them to fully exercise their duties and makes them more vulnerable to corruption. Also, neither the defendants nor the victims have a right to legal advice or counsel. Human rights activists raised doubts about the competence of Gacaca judges. They pointed out there could be conflict of interest for the judges when their own relatives stand accused of crimes, and individuals being nominated judges who have themselves been accused of having committed genocidal acts is not impossible. There have been documented cases of elected judges being accused of having killed during the genocide, who were then removed from their position as a result of these accusations.

Other serious concerns have been voiced by human rights organizations. For instance, Amnesty International outlined a number of issues, including the unlikely adherence of the Gacaca courts to the principle of the presumption of innocence, reports of confession under torture and the lack of prohibition against double jeopardy, meaning persons already acquitted under a national court could still be tried under the Gacaca courts. These concerns and critics should seriously be taken into account, when judging the Gacaca system. However, one should also recognize that there will not be any easy solution to deal with the painful and challenging consequences of the genocide that took place.

As already mentioned before, another challenge the Gacaca system faces is the issue of participation. As the Gacaca laws do not envisage the provision of compensation, many of the survivors question why they should participate, particularly as the courts will not bring back their families. Testifying before the courts also presents risks for survivors, who fear retaliation from the accused and their families. The Gacaca courts are based on the idea that large sections of the population take part in the process as witness or judge. Some researchers, however, noted hesitance among the local population to fully participate in the weekly meetings. Of those who do attend meetings, ma ny seem reluctant to speak up out of fear that the accused may retaliate. Human rights activists also said Gacaca might be misused by people to make unbiased accusations against community members, and could increase tensions rather than enhance reconciliation. Some note that the system tends to ignore war crimes committed by the Rwandan Patriotic Army, which ended the genocide in 1994, but which is said to have committed crimes as well.

The Rwandan government has countered criticism by saying the Gacaca system should be judged in the context of Rwandan society and against the background of the events of 1994, which it said were unprecedented in world history and required original solutions. As before, in response to the critiques, it again adjusted the system in the summer of 2004.

All of these different issues aside, it must be remembered that the Gacaca process has only just begun. Whether these many issues continue to plague the Gacaca system or whether they are progressively overcome is a question that cannot be answered yet. What

can be stated is the significance of this process for Rwanda's future. The way local

communities will deal with these issues, will be a sign of Rwanda's ability to face the

challenges of the post-genocide period.

Impact

Several non-governmental organizations reported positive results from the Gacaca

system. "It is important to recognize that there are no easy solutions to dealing with the

aftermath of the genocide, particularly as such a large part of the population was either

directly or indirectly implicated," coordinators of a project geared towards women

conducted by the Rwandan ProFemmes Twesehamwe and international NGO

International Alert said in a report.

"The efforts of women's organizations testify to the hope that the Gacaca process

provides for ordinary people, to overcome the events of the past, and to the possibilities

for a peaceful future."

Within the Gacaca initiative, women have been playing an important role. For the first

time, women have been allowed to participate in the Gacaca process – more than 30

percent of the judges are female. The 1994 genocide in Rwanda had a devastating impact

on women. Thousands were killed and many more raped or subjected to sexual torture.

Women were also among the perpetrators of the genocide and make up 3.5 percent of the

prison population.

ProFemmes Twesehamwe, the main collective of women's organizations in Rwanda

International Alert have been working to promote women's roles in the Gacaca process

since 2002. "It is vital that women develop the confidence and skills to take part," a

report on the project pointed out.

"*Ordinary people have been confused over the difference between the traditional Gacaca*

process, used to address minor, civil disputes, and this new one that deals with crimes of

genocides. They need to understand how the process could help them to come to terms

with the crimes of the past. If women understand how the Gacaca system can do this they

will pass on the message to their husbands, families and relatives."

The project of International Alert and ProFemmes Twesehamwe works to encourage

women to participate in the new system of justice and to lobby decision makers in order

to ensure that women's concerns are taken into account by the legislation around the

tribunals. International Alert and ProFemmes Twesehamwe assume that the Gacaca

system needs to be continually adapted in order to meet new challenges. A major issue

has been the treatment of cases of rape and sexual torture. For a case to be categorized,

the accusations need to be brought before a public hearing. Although the Gacaca laws

allowed for special hearings for these cases, in practice, this was not happening. Women

were reluctant to come forward and speak about sexual violence. Twesehamwe lobbied

the authorities to bring about changes. In order to encourage more women to come

forward, the Gacaca law, which was revised in June 2004, now provides that victims of

sexual crimes, can submit her (or his) complaint to one of the Gacaca judges, rather than bring the complaint before the public hearing in front of the community. In the event that the victim does not have confidence in any of the judges of the Gacaca court, she can bring her complaint to the public prosecutor's offices.

At the community level, women have responded very positively to the Gacaca process and play an active role at the Gacaca hearings, Twesehamwe and IA reported. Women asked community leaders to hold more meetings, which suggests that they really are interested in understanding the process properly. One of the most important things that the project has managed to achieve, according to Twesehamwe and International Alert, is to create space for dialogue amongst the community about what happened in 1994 and the consequences that this has had for the population - both for families of the victims and those of the perpetrators. "In most cases this is the first time that there has been a public discussion on these issues," according to a report on the IA/Twesehamwe project.

"The dialogue meetings have enabled both families of victims and perpetrators to understand that both sides have suffered as a result of this genocide; that both sides have been victims. People have come to understand that many of the perpetrators were manipulated by the political leaders of the time."

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19 Dialogue Based Processes:A Vehicle for Peacebuilding

Edward (Edy) Kaufman*

"Dialogue" is the kind of term with which most individuals—whether parties or

conciliators to a conflict—can identify, and as such it has become a pervasive element in

the field of conflict resolution. While accepting its many positive connotations as a

vehicle for peacebuilding, we begin this chapter by clarifying the term's basic meaning

within a conflict situation. We then complete this introduction to dialogue by filling in

the remaining basic questions: when, who, how, which and where?

Rather than concentrating on governmental or official dialogue, we will focus on

peacebuilding by civil society, from Track II dialogues among "influentials" all the way

to people-to-people exchanges. Illustrating with examples from the five powerful stories

that give substance to this chapter, this introduction puts the spotlight on practice rather

than theory. Having lived most of my life in a region of violent conflict and having

facilitated conflict resolution work in other areas, I will draw on my personal experience

as a practitioner in making many of the following observations. Because of the wide

global scope and diversity of the communal and national conflicts discussed,

generalizations are to be understood as a flexible interpretation of numerous realities

What? The Intrinsic Meaning of Dialogue

Bringing the concept down from the heights of theoretical model, the Concise Oxford

Dictionary defines *dialogue* as a "Conversation; piece of written work in conversational

form." From this meaning, we see that dialogue is not necessarily a synonym of

negotiation, defined as the process in which we "confer with another with view to

compromise or reaching agreement". In our field of work, officials at best perceive

dialogue as a prelude to informal negotiation by governments. But at the level of civil

society, negotiation is perceived as merely a more advanced stage of dialogue. Rather

than take the proximity of both terms as a given, we should aspire to elevate dialogue into

an effective tool of conflict prevention and management, towards settling disputes in

nonviolent ways.1

However, to praise dialogue because "talking is better than shooting" may not be

adequate if we take the victim's vantage point. If structural violence as described by

Johan Galtung2 prevails, the dispute has not decreased through dialogue, it has just

entered into another phase. Hence, it may be more useful to analyze *dialogue* as a conflict

resolution tool in terms of costs and benefits, explicitly acknowledging its potential

downsides. Both sides of a conflict may experience the negative aspects of dialogue.

Typically, rejection of dialogue comes from the powerful. Even for a strong state actor

which is seen as holding most of the cards, negotiating with the enemy can be seen as a

sign of weakness; here, the state may prefer to avoid recognizing its struggling opponent

as legitimate. One effective tactic exploited by the top dog to postpone dialogue is to

accuse their opponents of using terror, without conceding that the tools of its own

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repression are perceived by this same opponent as "state terror". Although reluctance to

engage in dialogue can be derived from the arrogance of power, many critiques of

dialogue also come from the underdog. At times, the weaker party would rather wait until

they can enter talks from a position of strength.

More worrisome, the refusal to engage in verbal exchange comes not only from those

opposed to meeting with the adversary but also from those who have previously

participated in dialogue and have become either frustrated or disenchanted. Jonathan

Kuttab, a prominent Palestinian human rights lawyer, has articulated such counter

negative effects.3 A summary of his list of pitfalls includes:

. The generation of a false sense of symmetry between the oppressor and the

oppressed while the actual status between the parties is not that of equals;

impediments to true equality within the context of dialogue include technical

obstacles to participate, (restrictions on freedom of movement, adequacy of

preparation, levels of professional expertise and language skills, and availability

of advisory services), as well as in power relations (the ability to exercise

pressure, the language of diktats, patronage).4

. The tendency to ignore basic conflict issues and, in the effort to reach

agreement, the avoidance of tackling the most serious and divisive issues or

postponing them indefinitely.

. The tendency to accept the status quo and take for granted the present constellation of forces, focusing more on bringing an end to violence and less on justice and its structural causes.

. In the name of pragmatism, parties engaged in dialogue are often pressurized into compromising legitimate principles and abandoning positions generally held within their own community.

. When meetings include participants closely associated with state military or security forces, there is a fear that dialogue can be used as intelligence gathering. There is uncertainty as to when the motivation of the powerful is "know your enemy" rather than "understand your neighbor".

. Dialogue as a device for "divide and rule". As a counterbalance to this tactic, the parties may adopt a tacit understanding to present a unified front when confronting the other side. Natural divisions within parties are, therefore, formally overlooked when facing a common enemy out of a simple fear that their opponent may take advantage of their lack of unity.

. Labeling those that participate in dialogue as "legitimate partners" thereby de-legitimizing non-participants. Talking to some individuals or organizations may be a tactic used in order to avoid negotiating with more representative but problematic opponents.

. The intimidation of parties to dialogue may come from both sides. Within one's own camp, peer disapproval and even, at times of crisis, physical threats have kept many "towing the party line," while individually they may have been

tempted to consider alternative positions, some of these more moderate and

pragmatic than the group view.

. The "usual suspects" can monopolize participation in dialogue. Granted that

talking may involve some risks, but it also provides privileges, both tangible as

well as elitist. The warm feeling of acquiring new friends from the adversary's

camp may become an addiction in itself. As a result, the tendency has been

toward exclusion and unwillingness to share access or widen the circles.

. Last but not least, the tendency to make dialogue a substitute for action to

correct injustices. Dialogue can be seen as an academic exercise. Often, the

organizers see dialogue as an end unto itself and declare themselves satisfied to

repeat time and again this inconclusive experience with other groups.

In answer to Kuttab, I stressed the positive elements of dialogue and its value as a

necessary but not sufficient strategy for peacebuilding. For example, dialogue can

validate the legitimacy of the other when recognition has been withheld as a bargaining

chip. But over the years I have come to agree that promoting dialogue instead of action

can be used as an excuse for talking and talking without redressing the root causes of the

conflict. The fear of normalizing an abnormal situation is real. At the same time, I believe

that sustained dialogue diminishes misperceptions, prejudice and stereotypes. Hence, we

need to agree on some ground rules that ensure that talking is not a ploy to postpone

action towards a just resolution of the conflict. Dialogue could be a step forward, but

once that step is made, there is a danger of stagnation.

In short, dialogue should be a vehicle and not a destination. We need to understand why

the expression "we have nothing to lose" is not always shared by the parties involved in

the conflict, and that the suggested cost/benefit paradigm tells us that "we have a lot to

gain" provided that we maximize the promising positive results of dialogue and minimize

its potential negative consequences.

The goal of dialogue should be the transformation of participants into epistemic or

"learning" communities in which both sides develop a shared understanding of each

other's realities and are willing to invest a good chunk of their lives in changing it. A

pioneering example is from the height of the Cold War when dialogue among Soviet and

American scientists evolved into the formulation of and commitment to "arms control"

efforts.5

When? Alternative Strategies for the Cycle of Conflict

In relation to official processes, three phases of civil society "dialogue" can be

distinguished; "pre", during and after Track I negotiations. Or, if lined up in terms of the

level of conflict, we can focus on preventive work, Track II negotiations, and post-

conflict activities. As a rule, we can argue that civil society dialogue is relevant as long as

it is one step ahead of official behavior. So, how does this principle translate into the

different stages?

a) Stage One: When the effort is invested in prevention, before violence erupts or

immediately afterwards, there is often a situation where official communication between

the parties to the conflict has been severed. An example of *preventive* efforts in the absence of government action to redress conflict is civil society's resistance to cases of enforced segregation policies, such as in South Africa or the Southern United States. In both examples, inter-ethnic dialogue in itself was seen as an heroic and risky act. The joint marches and call for nonviolent means to redress discrimination encouraged change in the official governmental policies.

In the immediate aftermath of violence, the reinvigoration of stalled negotiations may also be possible as described by an Egyptian intellectual in When the *Guns Fall Silent*.6 The challenge for civil society organizations is to show sooner rather than later that there is a partner to talk with. The therapeutic effect of mutual recognition is important to both sides, and particularly to the party who has been denied legitimacy as a partner. When governments have been reluctant to negotiate, "influentials"-- who are separated nationally or ethnically across the divide but inspired by a common goal -- can initiate a pre-negotiation process, which holds the potential of pushing official representatives to overcome the barrier of sitting around the table together. Mutual recognition of partners to a conflict can be triggered by a Track II dialogue, as was the case between Palestinians and Israelis when they met secretly in Oslo for close to a year. These side negotiations helped advance the official process towards dealing with the substance of the conflict rather than the form. As described in this book, in the aftermath of the 1995 Cenepa War between Ecuador and Peru, the official negotiations started only after prominent citizens from both sides convened at the University of Maryland and became known as a peacebuilding group.

Often the power asymmetries between the fighting parties lead one side to call for direct

negotiations, while the other side will boycott any contact. Interestingly, calls for

negotiations may come from the more powerful side when they believe they are well-

positioned to achieve their goals through negotiation, or from the weaker side when they

assess that their aspirations cannot be achieved through alternative means, such as

continued armed struggle. And the preference for negotiation can shift depending upon

its perceived usefulness as well as evolving ideology. For example, from its

establishment in 1948 Israel was interested in negotiations despite Arab refusals to

acknowledge the so-called "Zionist entity." Negotiation was the official declaratory

policy of Israel from its independence until the peace negotiations with Egypt in 1978.

But by the time Palestinians had become more receptive to dialogue, Israel's policy had

also shifted to a refusal to talk with "terrorist organizations". Facing stagnation in official

negotiations or during periods of violent clashes, dialogue sponsored by non-

governmental organizations has been instrumental in breaking the ice and demonstrating

that there is a partner for negotiation. This is the case with the 2003 Geneva Initiative

launched by former Israeli Minister of Justice Yossi Beilin and Palestinian former

Minister of Information Yasser Abed Rabo. This initiative was among the triggers for the

Sharon government to undertake the initiative of pulling out from Gaza, first as a

unilateral act and now as part of a negotiated process.

b) Stage Two: Once official negotiations begin, if peacebuilders are to keep a step ahead,

they must be able to come up with creative solutions. At this stage, merely talking to each

other is secondary and the need to embrace a problem-solving approach requires the

parties to embark on more complex processes of negotiation. As in the Peru/Ecuador

case, the impasses as identified in Track I were addressed by Track II participants

proposing ideas such as a transnational ecolo gic park in a border area under dispute.

Numerous meetings took place between Israeli and Palestinians academics and NGOs to

address the issues postponed for a later stage in official negotiations, such as borders,

Palestinian refugees, Jewish settlements, and Jerusalem. With some issues, such as the

allocation of groundwater resources, their recommendations were instrumental in shaping

official agreements.

Sustained civil society dialogue helps to show that no breakdown in official

communication can stop the advancement toward peace, and at times, as in Northern

Ireland, it provides the promise of a mutually agreed outcome. When third party

facilitated negotiations eventually led the officials to come up with a shared document

such as the "Good Friday Agreement", the successful campaign of Catholic and

Protestant peacebuilders was crucial in ensuring the wide popular endorsement through

referendum.

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c) Stage Three: The post-negotiation stage when a peace agreement is formally reached

still leaves open many unresolved issues. Some of these issues are unmet interests but

many are intangible needs. International or domestic formal agreements often remain

totally or partially unfulfilled even a few years later. Particularly when growing

expectations are not met in a timely manner, the recurrent cycles of violence can begin

again. The gap that emerges when contrasting insufficient concrete achievements with

persisting grim realities can produce setbacks and reversals. Hence transitions to peace or

democracy need to be consolidated.

To be able to move from the management of conflict to a real transformation means

addressing not only the symptoms but also root causes. A process that supports personal

growth, an attitudinal change towards the Other, and the development of strong ties can

strengthen its own sustainability.7

During the so-called "post-conflict" period, one of the main challenges of peacebuilders

is to help launch a process of reconciliation. Reconciliation includes numerous aspects,

from material compensation to reducing impunity to justice. Among the intangible needs

are healing wounds from the serious suffering produced during the violent conflict, with

elements of acknowledgment, apologies, forgiveness, etc. In fact, a good process of

reconciliation should start its planning stages during the negotiation period and then

develop its implementation in the aftermath of the agreement. Later in this book, Hizkias

Assefa explores in more depth the nature of reconciliation processes.

How: The Tools of Dialogue

We can identify a wide range of tools, some related to the technical aspects and others to

the deeper meaning of mutual exploration. In terms of its complexity, dialogue can be as

unstructured as a spontaneous "walk in the woods" or as systematic as a problem solving

workshop.

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Spreading the word runs the risk of engaging peacebuilders in a one-sided

communication, which may indeed be just a monologue. But perseverance in some cases

has resulted in breakthroughs which eventually open up the authorities to new ideas. For

example, the Oxford Research Group began a traditional process of letter-writing to

decisionmakers, spreading from a cluster of concerned scientists to citizens-at-large, with

a shared concern with the need for nuclear disarmament.

But dialogue has also been developed through nontraditional techniques assisted by new

technologies, such as Internet chats and the establishment of virtual communities of

academics and intellectuals in regions of conflict. The use of videoconferencing can also

enable peacebuilders physically separated by the confrontational policies of their

respective governments to meet face-to-face through their computer screens.

Indeed, technology provides new avenues for communication. But the connectivity is

also dependent on the ability to deliver an effective message. For this, those involved in

dialogue need to develop the skills of articulating their views as well as listening in a way

that can maximize mutual understanding. Care is needed to prevent the clarity of the

message from being distorted by the "noise" of intercultural obstacles, or by the uneven

status of the partners in conflict (as is the case with gender differences in traditional

societies or class inequalities in modern societies). It is important for us to be trained in

how best to express our thoughts, choosing the sentences and words that not only are true

to our feelings and positions but also maximize receptivity. And, to ensure that our body

language and the tone of our voices are not threatening to the receiver of our message. On

the other side of the transmission process, we should train ourselves to become active

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listeners, a skill that helps us to put ourselves into the shoes of the Other. Furthermore, active listening also facilitates an introspection by the interlocutor, opening up to express his/her own needs beyond the known declaratory postures.

We also know that sustained dialogues produce better results than one-off encounters. There is no evidence to support the assumption that one-time contacts (such as mutual school visits or joint social events) can help to reduce stereotypes and are "better than nothing". In fact such exchanges may generate expectations for more and disengagement may result in the frustration of these expectations and an unwillingness to accept future invitations for interaction.

While objectives such as personal transformation and building intra- and inter-group relationships within and among the parties are meaningful in themselves, we should seek to maximize the investment. Dialogue is a step in the right direction, but over the years we have learned how to move forward from simply chairing and moderating meetings into facilitated processes that unite the adversaries in the search for common ground. Following the lead of Herbert Kelman8 and Edward Azar9, new approaches show that effectiveness depends on four autonomous but synchronized and progressive phases: an initial phase focusing on trust-building among the stakeholders, the participants, the facilitator and the methods used; a second phase developing both individual and group skills relevant for conflict resolution; a third stage building consensus on the identified agenda items; and the final phase addressing the challenge of re-entry, in which the participants bring back home their shared commitment to working hard towards the implementation of their agreements10. This innovative form of citizens' diplomacy also

needs to take into account the spiritual traditions across cultures, religions and civilizations and include these dimensions in the dynamics of the process.

Who? The Partners for Dialogue

In identifying potential dialogue partners, it is useful to map the various linkages between civil societies and the parties in conflict. If we imagine a diagram, we would place civil society in the center as the dialogue initiators and draw arrows outward from the center indicating different interactions that occur: first, we direct arrows horizontally between the two civil societies across the divide, which seems to demand the largest number of interactions with the Other. Then, within each party's civil society, we draw arrows vertically upwards towards the decision makers and downwards towards the general public of their own society.11 From our experience, most of the dialogue takes place across the divide between representatives of each others' civil society. Participants invest in these joint efforts with the hope of empowering each other and then influencing as agents of change their respective political and social processes.

The five stories in this chapter provide us with interesting examples of partners in dialogue. An English team of researchers struggling for nuclear disarmament launched the Oxford Research Group. The Group trained and mobilized about seventy teams to write sophisticated letters to decisionmakers in the UK and China. They then expanded to involve concerned citizens from other countries. This demonstrates a form of unilateral dialogue, in which active writers made contact with passive receivers. Eventually the

percolation of ideas in the minds of the decision makers allowed the unilateral action to

evolve into a true exchange.12

An interesting example of powerful intra-state dialogue is the transition in Georgia from

an authoritarian regime to a democratic state. The organizers of large demonstrations

were not only able to control violence, but also non-verbally communicated to aggressive

law enforcement forces their peaceful intentions by offering thousands of roses to the

police officers.13 These gestures are as important as words, and both together can have a

strong effect on reconciliation.14

The joint Israeli/Palestinian campaign "Hello Shalom, Hello Salaam" has generated close

to a half million telephone conversations worldwide between Israelis and Palestinians.

Organized by a prominent NGO, the campaign connects the grassroots populations from

both sides, often strengthening the dedication of those already committed to dialogue but

also generating curiosity among newcomers to hear and thereby recognize the humanity

of the Other.15

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Inter-Tajik Dialogue

A combination of actors participated in the non-official Inter-Tajik Dialogue, which

began in March 1993 when seven individuals from different factions in the civil war sat

down around a table in Moscow. At that time, they formed a unique channel of

communication across factional lines. Just past the peak of violence in a vicious civil war,

they could barely look at each other. By the end of 2000, after twenty-nine meetings, the

Dialogue continues. The Dialogue has helped to support a multi-level peace process that

includes government negotiators, highly informed citizens outside government, and

citizens at the grassroots level – all working in complementary ways that reflect these

roles in their respective roles. Participants in the Dialogue helped to start and then

maintained the involvement with the inter-Tajik negotiations and engaged in activities in

society a large. The Dialogue had been convened six times before the UN – sponsored

inter-Tajik negotiations began in April 1994. It continued throughout the period of

official negotiations and then through the three-year transitional period after the 1997

General Agreement and beyond. Because most of the participants were citizens outside

government, they were at the heart of Tajikistan "public peace process".

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Which? The Models of Dialogue

We can borrow from Jay Rothman16 the classification of four dialogue types,

categorized according to the nature of participants and objectives.

. Positional dialogue, adversarial in nature, focuses on articulation of positions, often in

the presence of a foreign or local observing audience for the purpose of scoring points.

Participants emphasize differences rather than commonalities. It becomes a dialogue of

the deaf: we stop listening once the adversary is in the middle of his statement and start

planning our retort. Even then, the exercise can have some positive results when

participants role play in-reverse, or come to the conclusion that dialogue serves as a first

unavoidable step for speaking their truths (or half truths) before moving into the search

for common ground.

. ***Human relations dialogue***, when differences of opinion on the substantive issues are

relegated to a secondary status, gears its main efforts toward a better understanding of the

Other. Methods of active listening help us to achieve this goal and even encourage

introspection. It can lead to the sharing of some of the needs, fears and motives that were

not articulated previously, paradoxically helped by the expressed empathy of the once

adversarial interlocutor.

. ***Activist dialogue*** occurs when "Partners in Conflict" have identified some common

ground and plan joint action in implementation. Being an activist may not be a

precondition for participation but this inclination toward action may evolve within the

participants as a result of the process dynamics. The dialogue process itself may move

individuals from "knowledge" to internalized "act-knowledgement."

. ***Problem solving approach***, the most ambitious of all, maximizes and integrates the

positives of the previous dialogue types and puts particular emphasis on how to

implement the outcome of dialogue when returning to the participants' respective

communities which continue to mistrust and be hostile to the Other.

Mixing the models may create more challenges than we can handle. Sometimes we can transform participants from the first approach into the second and then move on. For transformation to occur, civil society dialogue needs to take into account that conflict is typically not only between governme nts but also between the constituencies they represent. Hence inclusion of diversity of positions in the dialogue process is a priority for most types, avoiding the pitfall of simply "preaching to the converted". The limits of dialogue may exclude identified spoilers. However, when it comes to ideological and militant extremism, the challenge is indeed to move them away from being part of the problem to becoming part of the solution. Rarely can one hope for a conducive dialogue between extremes, such as the Islamic fundamentalists of the Palestinian West Bank and the militant Jews settled on the same land that they call Judea and Samaria. Provided that we know how to identify the type of dialogue that we can use, a gradual approach may include a peace activist or mainstream component on my side and an extremist group on the Other. Or as Mary Fitzduff explains "there will be no stable peace until the extreme Catholic and Protestant military organizations are integrated into the negotiation process".

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Third-party involvement

The role of third-party involvement needs to be carefully assessed. Although there are clear advantages in the parties conducting principled negotiations without a third party's involvement, the parties may choose to invite a third-party when facing a high level of violence or complex issues. Under such conditions, third-party facilitators might even invite themselves. However, conflicting parties grow weary of an imposed dialogue by outsiders and such forced scenarios rarely lead to productive outcomes. Inviting also a variety of third-party participants, makes a dialogue across purposes, like confrontations such as the UN General Assembly. On the other hand, third-party dialogue facilitators can be useful if they work to train and empower the parties to engage in direct dialogue.

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Where? The Impact of Context on Dialogue

The particularities of a conflict's context influence the form and success of dialogue efforts. While we tend to prioritize dialogue, and rightly in areas of violent conflicts, we need to remember that *most* of the time *most* countries and communities live in peace with each other. During these times and in these places, the absence of violence is not because there are no conflicts but because the communities opt to deal with these conflicts by nonviolent means, including dialogue. As described below, the context can determine a dialogue's various main functions.

. Dialogue is badly needed in *protracted communal conflicts*. Nowadays, the prevailing form of violent confrontation is within and not between states, or when one party is a non-state actor. Recognition as a valid interlocutor is essential to get the dialogue process going, and often it is less problematic for non-official actors to deal directly with players who are unrecognized by formal authorities. The relative advantage of civil society over state actors is especially evident when parties to the conflict include those responsible for violence against innocent civilians, actors which are labeled illegitimate partners in Track I activities and when governments are facing the dilemma of negotiating with terror, a major impediment for Track I. Once again, civil society exchanges have a relative advantage

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. The context of *transitioning democracies*, as has been the case in Latin America and Eastern Europe, introduces the dilemma of dialogue with regimes that have been involved in gross violations of human rights. Such authoritarian regimes have a history of crushing democratic opposition including killing their leadership, members, families and uninvolved bystanders. In some cases like Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, a "mesa de dialogo" (in the latter case, within military barracks!!!) with the military regime was acceptable to some opposition parties but not to others. In such cases, the ground rules for who can participate in the dialogue and for what purposes are essential if not life-saving. When regimes were too oppressive and no domestic forces could lead the way to

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dialogue, we have seen the contribution of either a regional or international third party, as

was used in facilitated dialogues in El Salvador and Guatemala

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. In many developing countries, environmental, water, and other *common pool natural*

resources have generated cross-border and domestic conflicts that cannot be resolved

without the involvement of all stakeholders. While the technical and legal ramifications

of environmental disputes demand that the negotiation itself be conducted by experts, it

does not preclude a transparent participatory process in which grassroots constituencies

are given an opportunity to be consulted from the early stages and to play a constructive

role in the implementation of the resulting agreements.

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. For several decades most countries in Europe and the Americas have been called "zones

of peace"17 without inter-state wars. Hence, promoting a sustained dialogue as part of

the political culture is a sound preventive of international conflicts as well as contributing

to the decline of domestic riots and ethnic tensions. Institutionalized forums for

dialogue—from debating societies in the old Oxford and Cambridge universities to peer

mediation in schools—provide long-term guarantees of constructive means for conflict

resolution; such formalized practices should be expanded. Furthermore, approaching

authorities through constructive negotiations is a useful addition to the protest tradition of

many popular movements. But the promotion of a culture of dialogue should not only be

the prerogative of one part of the world. It is no less relevant in the context of

majority/minority protracted conflicts. Inter-ethnic dialogue, like the one conducted in the

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nine centers of the Nansen Dialogue Network in the Western Balkans, stimulates

renewed relationship-building in divided communities and is a crucial step towards

reconciliation. While at times dialogue is a process of rediscovering the good ties from

the past, according to the West Balkan organizers, their dialogue is inventing a new

partnership with the political culture of Western and Northern Europe.18 Dialogue re-

discovers historically positive relationships and encourages building of new relationships.

Conclusions

Dialogue is a tool for advancing conflict resolution efforts, especially within the realm of

civil society and unofficial contacts. But we must emphasize that dialogue in and of itself

is not a universal panacea, but a means to an end. While it is typically Track I dialogue

between leaderships that results in binding agreements, Track II activities greatly enhance

the feasibility of implementation, content, and commitment of the constituent populations

to these formal agreements. Perfecting negotiation skills of Second Tracks can transform

its inherent weaknesses into an asset. Citizen diplomacy provides room for flexibility,

informality and creativity that may be missing from official exchanges.

In-depth analysis of cases presented in this chapter has shown that peacebuilders have not

sufficiently employed approaching decisionmakers and engaging public opinion of the

Other. Exceptional cases -- such as the Oxford Research Group's contacts with Chinese

authorities or Israeli academics providing stimulating feedback to Palestinian NGOs

working to promote nonviolence -- demonstrate the potential of outreach exchanges.

Dialogue with the Other at all levels seems to be more conducive to solutions than

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monologues in which each side tends "to play chess with itself". However, we should not neglect the need to bridge the gap inside our own camp, generating a consensus-building process in our own societies that strengthens the ability to negotiate with the adversary. Hence peacebuilding often requires promoting dialogue within and across the ethnic, religious, community or national divide.

We should all engage in dialogue, even if only a few will be negotiators and influence changes in public policy. Dialogue should bring us one step closer to each other.

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Notes

[1] "In the conflict management field, the term *dialogue* refers to a method of getting people who are involved in an emotional, deep-rooted conflict to sit down together with a facilitator and to talk and listen, with the goal of increasing mutual understanding, and, in some cases, coming up with joint solutions to mutual problems." Heidi Burgess and Guy M. Burgess, *Encyclopedia of Conflict Resolution* (Santa Barbara, CA, ABC-CLIO, 1997)

[11] Johan Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (London, New Delhi, Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 1996).

[1] Jonathan Kuttab and Edy Kaufman, "An Exchange on Dialogue", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. XVII, No 2, 66 Winter 1988, pp. 84-108.

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[1] In the Israel i/Palestinian conflict, Palestinians often stress the Occupied/Occupier unevenness and ask for solidarity with the weak. However, some Israelis also emphasize their weaker position when taken in the context of a small country surrounded by what are perceived as hostile neighbors and rising anti -Semitism.

[1] Emanuel Adler and Beverly Crawford (eds.), *Progress in Post War International Relations*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1991).

[1] The name of a pioneering book calling for Arab dialogue with Israel, Sid Ahmed, Mohammed, *When the Guns Fall Silent,* (London, Croom Helm, 1975).

[1] For a more detailed analysis of the different approaches in the field, see Norbert Ropers, *From Resolution to Transformation: The Role of Dialogue Projects*, Berghorf Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management.

[1] Herbert C. Kelman, "Interactive Problem Solving as a Tool for Second Track Diplomacy" in John Davies and Edward (Edy) Kaufman, (eds.), *Second Track/Citizens' Diplomacy - Concepts and Techniques for Conflict Transformation*, (Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2003), pp 81- 106.

[1] Edward Azar, "Protracted Social Conflicts and Second Track Diplomacy". In J. Davies and E. Kaufman, op. cit ., pp 15- 30.

[1] Such an approach was applied in the Peru/Ecuador Track II case study in this book. For a full presentation, see E. Kaufman, "Sharing the Experience of Citizens Diplomacy with Partners in Conflict", and "Towards Innovative Solutions", in J. Davies and E. Kaufman, op.cit ., pp 183-264.

[1] For a concrete use of this framework see the "Lessons Learned and Best Practices" chapter in Edward (Edy) Kaufman, Walid Salem and Juliette Verhoeven (eds*.) Peacebuilding in the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict*, (Utrecht, ECCP, forthcoming).

[1] See in this chapter the section on the Oxford Research Group-UK, *How Individuals Can Make a Difference.*

[1] In the political tradition, the idea was developed from the words of the first Georgian President, Zviad K. Gamsakhurdia, "We shall throw roses instead of bullets at our enemies." See in this chapter section on Georgia, *Inside the Revolution of the Roses.*

[1] See Mitchel, Christopher, *Gesture of Conciliation*, (New York, St. Martin's Press, 2000).

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[1] For a full description, see in this chapter the section of the Families Forum, *Hello Peace Project – Israel-*

Palestine Territories, Building Trust, Promoting Hope.

[1] Jay Rothman, *Resolving Identity-Based Conflict*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass Publishers , 1997).

[1] Arie Kacowicz, *Zones of Peace in the Third World* (Albany, SUNNY Press, 1998.

[1] See in this chapter the section of The Nansen Dialogue Network- Western Balkans, *Engaging the*

"Other"

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Resources

Lead organizations

Berghof Research Center – Germany

Research Programme s on Dialogue and Conflict Management

info@berhof-center.org

http://www.berghof-center.org

Center for Humanitarian Dialogue – Switzerland

info@hdcentre.org

http://www.hdcentre.org

Coexistence Center – Uganda

uganda@coexistence.net

http://www.cecore.org

Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID) – Philippines

davao@iidnet.org

http://www.iidnet.org

Institute for Global Dialogue – South Africa

info@igd.org.za

http://www.igd.org.za

Institute for Multi Track Diplomacy – USA

Dialogue Initiatives

imtd@imtd.org

http://www.imtd.org/initiatives-dialogues.htm

Kettering Foundation – USA

The International - Civil Society Exchange Program

info@kettering.org

http://www.kettering.org

Nansen Dialogue Network – Serbia

nansen@sezampro.yu

http://www.nansen-dialogue.net/

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Conflict Management and VS Verlag, 2004, pp.255-270

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ethnic conflicts. Palgrave: Macmillan, 2001

19.1 Engaging the "Other": The Nansen Dialogue Network in the Balkans

A regional network of centers in the Western Balkans aims to stimulate dialogue in divided communities. In so doing, the goal is then to break down enemy images and to increase understanding of the perceptions, interests, and needs of those on the other side of the divide. By Steinar Bryn*

In Kosovo, local political leaders and administrative municipal personnel come together to find solutions to the ethnic division in their municipalities. In Macedonia, 25 young politicians of different ethnicities gathered in October 2004, to discuss the current challenges of Macedonian society. In Croatia, teachers, parents and official institutions cooperate on developing strategies to end the ethnic segregation in the school system. Journalists from several parts of the former Yugoslavia join forces to address the challenges and responsibilities of the media in ethnically divided communities.

In each case, the organization behind the activity is part of the Nansen Dialogue Network. The Network is attempting to make a contribution to peacebuilding in the Western Balkans (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Macedonia) by encouraging inter-ethnic dialogue and reconciliation and by making available a neutral and open space where the different actors in a serious conflict can meet face to face in truthful and honest communication.

The overall goal of the project is to support the region's peaceful and democratic development by encouraging dialogue, and to thereby bring the region's political culture

more closely into alignment with the dominant political culture of western and northern
Europe. A secondary goal is to influence public discussions of politics and policy in the
region. By applying the ideas and skills of dialogue, the Nansen Dialogue Network seeks
to empower people who live in conflict situations to contribute to peaceful conflict
transformation and the promotion of human rights. The facilitators try to stimulate the
cognitive analysis of the conflict and the experience of the "other's" position. The focus
is not on who is right or most guilty, but on how to encourage respect for democratic
principles, human rights, and peaceful conflict resolution, as alternatives to national and
ethnic chauvinism.

The Nansen Dialogue differs from other international peacebuilding efforts in its
emphasis on dialogue and reconciliation — just as essential to sustainable peace as are
the issues of security, economic development and democratization.

The Nansen Dialogue grew out of work initiated at the Nansen Academy in Lillehammer,
Norway. Founded in 1938, the Nansen Academy's aim, throughout its history, has been
to defend human dignity and human worth, and to serve as a meeting ground for people
of different cultural, religious and political backgrounds. Its *Democracy, Human Rights
and Peaceful Conflict Resolution* was launched in 1995, and has since then gone through
several different phases, among which:

a) In 1997, on the initiative of previous participants at the seminars in Lillehammer, the
project entered a second phase with the establishment of a "dialogue center" in Pristina,
Kosovo. In the next two years this center organized a series of dialogue meetings
between Kosovar Albanians and Serbs. Although the war in 1999 put an end to these

activities, the experiences from these meetings inspired the establishment of other Nansen

Dialogue Centers.

b) During 2000 and 2001, nine dialogue centers were set up in Skopje, Belgrade,

Podgorica, Pristina, Sarajevo, Mostar, Banjaluka, Mitrovica and Osijek. By 2004, sixty

full time staff members were engaged in promoting inter-ethnic dialogue both locally and

regionally. The core staff members were recruited from the Lillehammer alumni, thereby

creating a network of people with a common dialogue experience.

The participants at dialogue seminars testify to a dearth of dialogue spaces where people

from different ethnic background can come together and talk about political issues. The

Nansen Dialogue Network's most important contribution has been the creation of such

spaces, particularly in so called micro-communities (Mitrovica, Presevo Valley, Sandzak,

etc.) where new constellations and new ways of cooperation can develop, and where

community development depends on personal relationships.

Dialogue as a Methodology

Existing literature on dialogue is limited, apart from certain classics like Martin Buber's *I

and Thou* (1922). The Nansen Dialogue concept is therefore mainly constructed from

experiences in the field. It is simply a way of communicating which focuses on

understanding the other, rather than convincing him that you are right. This

understanding is a prerequisite for successful mediations and negotiations. In the dialogue

workshops we attempt to create a space of support and safety, where it becomes possible

for the participants to honestly communicate their experiences, feelings and more rational

thoughts. In a dialogue on the status of Kosovo, for example, the aim is not to find the

solution, but to explore the different standpoints and improve the understanding of why

people have such opposing views. This means to practice tolerance and active listening,

rather to pass moral judgment on the other's position or to seek out weaknesses in his or

her arguments. Then, as the next step, based on this deeper understanding of each other's

position, one can attempt to find acceptable solutions for all parties involved.

Dialogue center staff members are cognizant of the fact that debate is an important part of

the political world, and they are there to provide the very space for the important issues to

be discussed. In fact the deficiencies inherent to political debate in many parts of the

Western Balkan are a fundamental problem. So the dialogue centers have taken the

strategic choice to attempt to influence public debate over important issues, and

specifically to attempt to influence the tone of the debate. When engaging in public

debate, the centers will focus on bringing forward facts, providing space for all sides'

arguments, and arguing in favor of mutual respect between disputants. In short, the

centers argue that dialogue — an exchange of ideas and opinions — rather than diatribe,

is crucial to debate.

The very fact that the centers promote dialogue and reconciliation leads them to stimulate

democratic thinking, respect for human rights (particularly minority rights) and

awareness of modes of peaceful conflict resolution. As a result, the centers are becoming

key actors in civil society. The dialogue perspective stresses an understanding of

democracy as much more than an election and voting system. Indeed, a fundamental tenet

is that the essence of democracy is the acknowledgement that one might very well be wrong, which is why public debate in open spaces is necessary. To paraphrase John Stuart Mill, you don't really know your own arguments before you have listened to the counter arguments to your own position.

In segregated societies, the information systems are parallel. It is possible to grow up on one side of the river exposed only to certain ethnic "truths." If there is no interaction with the people on the other side of the river who are developing "truths" diametrically opposed to your own, your worldview is unlikely to be challenged. In a dialogue space, people can simply compare notes, share the explanations they have of different events, and confront each other with alternative interpretive frameworks.

Dialogue can turn out to have a radical effect because it challenges the very self-image and worldview of the participants. We have observed that opposing parties believe they have the same set of facts. They believe that questions such "what happened?" and "who did it?" have unambiguous answers. Their perception is often that the "problem" is that the other side *denies* the facts. In a dialogue setting it becomes obvious that the parties have quite different interpretations of reality and possess different versions of the "facts" — totally different analyses of history and the present — and quite different hopes for the future. Dialogue groups provide the necessary cross-fertilization between the parallel systems of information; suddenly the "crazy" behavior of the enemy becomes more meaningful when interpreted within a different cultural and political framework of understanding.

If one can come to understand (if not accept) the other's perspective, then one comes to

understand the "legitimacy" of a decision to fight for or against independence. One might

argue that a political position is born of one's own situation in society. It is logical that an

Albanian is in favor of an independent Kosovo while a Serb is in favor of Kosovo as a

part of Serbia. Through the practice of active listening and tolerance it becomes possible

to see that one's bitter enemy also perceives himself or herself as a victim of forces

outside his or her control whose own political goals represent an escape from misery.

This deeper recognition of the validity of each other's positions foster mutual respect and

makes it easier to enter negotiations. At this point dialogue partners may realize that

despite their differences, their human needs and interests are often similar. A qualified

facilitator can assist in shifting the focus from "position" to "interest", by making the

participants realize that they have common interests in economic development, quality

education, a reliable system of security, improved job opportunities, less corruption, more

independent media, clearer separation of politics and business – and the simple pleasure

drinking a morning cup of coffee in peace.

When the focus is on that which we have in common, it becomes easier to embrace the

thought of a civic state. Since politics most often is organized around ethnic principles,

the notion of citizenship in a civic state offers a concrete alternative to nationalism.

People are often very receptive to a clearer division between state and nation, where a

civic state does not threaten the different nations, but rather allows them to flourish in the

cultural sphere according to internationally recognized minority rights. Such a

multinational state offers an alternative to the sort of thinking about a strong nation-state

that leads members of each "nation" (ethnic Croats, Macedonians, Serbs, etc.) to believe

they have more rights in their nation-state (Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia, etc.) than other

citizens in the state.

A Range of Programs

The Nansen Dialogue Centers are involved in a range of activities to promote the

dialogue approach, including seminars, interactive workshops (addressing topics such as

human rights, mediation, negotiation and strategic peacebuilding), regional network

projects (e.g. the project directed toward journalists from nine different divided

communities), conferences on topics related to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and

instant response activities (lectures, public debates and hearings, roundtables and poster

campaigns, organized in response to burning issues in society).

Impact

Before the Nansen Dialogue Centers were established, the physical spaces for dialogue

were absent and the population groups had few opportunities to meet across ethnic

divides. The centers themselves provide "space" for dialogue, as do the seminars, and

these dialog spaces are being used to address the challenges these societies face. In

addition to this concrete infrastructure, lasting contact and relationships have been

established across ethnic divides between political leaders, young politicians, journalists,

academics, educators, government officials, activists within the NGO community, and

others who will take part in shaping the future of the region. A specific focus in 2004 has

been on local politicians in municipalities, where "doing good" for the whole community

is introduced as an ideal and alternative to ethnic struggle and competition. In

conjunction with this program focus, the Network organized a Regional Forum for

Young Politicians in Ohrid, Macedonia for six days in June 2004. More than forty young

politicians from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and

Macedonia participated in the forum. Such activities reflect one of the Network's chief

goals, to develop relationships across the borders, and to prepare young Balkan citizens

to assume leadership roles. The effectiveness of these efforts can best be judged by the

fact that many previous participants now occupy important professional positions as

journalists, lawyers, judges, political advisors, or in government.

Challenges

Working to promote inter-ethnic dialogue in an environment marked by ethnic violence,

insecurity, and enemy images is not an easy task. It is a long-term investment, with

unpredictable outcomes, requiring sustained commitment from the actors involved.

Therefore, it is important to be able to cope with setbacks, such as new episodes of ethnic

violence and renewed political instability, and to maintain motivation under difficult

circumstances. It is also a constant challenge to develop plans of action in an

environment of insecurity and constant change.

In addition, the staff members have to keep in mind their personal security in relation to

their work. Working with "the enemy" in multi-ethnic organizations in ethnically

segregated societies implies a risk of being labeled a "traitor". It has repeatedly been a

challenge to find the right balance between when to maintain a high profile and when to

be more careful, how to be on the "cutting edge" challenging the public to enter inter-

ethnic dialogue, without undermining the Network's credibility or endangering personal

security.

All the staff members of the Nansen Centers are locally rooted and subject to the flow of

information from within their own community. Consequently, the different staff members

adhere to different views about the political situation. A lesson learned is therefore that it

is important to have multi-ethnic teams in all offices where the society is ethnically

segregated, to ensure not only that the staff members are constantly challenged by each

other in their perceptions of the day-to-day situation, but also that the centers are

perceived as unbiased. Another challenge is connected to the regional dimension: since

the causes of the ethnic conflicts in the different countries are interrelated, the solutions

must also be explored on a regional level, not only in each state. The Nansen Dialogue

Network regional reach is what makes the network unique and is therefore its greatest

asset. Finding a balance between local and regional focus has, however, been a challenge.

A Model for Other Regions?

Not all divided communities end up in shooting wars, but whether the divisions result in

mild segregation, general mistrust, open hostility, or outright bloodletting, they are, in

general, accompanied by a total breakdown in communication, and as a result, a complete

lack of understanding of the "other's" position and perceptions. The model provided by

the Nansen Dialogue Network can be a useful one, then, for many divided communities

where well-meaning individuals are willing to listen to what their counterparts on the other side of the divide have to say. The fact that the effort in Kosovo fell apart, at least temporarily, as the tensions in Kosovo turned into a hot war, should serve as a warning that one should temper optimism with a realistic appraisal of human nature. Nonetheless, the dialogue approach embraced by the Nansen Dialogue Network and the nine dialogue centers does indeed still serve as an example of one way to break down the invisible barriers that separate communities.

<Box>

Mitrovica: inter-ethnic dialogue in a divided city

In 2000, Kosovo was firmly divided resulting from decades of inter-ethnic conflict and the horrors of the war in 1999. The city of Mitrovica was divided by barbwire and international armed forces. The security precautions were keeping Serbs in the North and Albanians in the South of the city. Most international actors in Kosovo believed dialogue to be impossible, particularly in Mitrovica.

In this situation, Nansen Dialogue succeeded in transporting a group of 25 Albanians and Serbs to Struga, Macedonia, in December 2000. The aim was to discuss what had happened and why, and what could be done to re-build society. Four of the participants in this first seminar became the core of the Nansen Dialogue group in Mitrovica, and organized ten new inter-ethnic dialogue seminars in the year to come. In a seminar for journalists, two of the participants discovered that they had taken part in the same battle, trying to kill each other in April 1999. This was the first time they met face to face and

they discovered that they liked each other. This is just one of many stories of meetings

across the ethnic divide.

The dialogue work in Mitrovica was so useful that UNMIK and OSCE realized the need

for a dialogue component in the repatriation work. Today, three Serbs and three

Albanians are working full time on this. Dialogue did not fail in Kosovo. Dialogue had

just never been properly tried.

<End box>

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Nansen Network Annual Reports.

19.2 Building Trust, Promoting Hope: The Families Forum Hello Peace in Israel /

Palestine

Contacts between ordinary Israelis and Palestinians are almost non-existent these days. Hello Peace allows both groups to contact each other — anonymously — simply to talk. In less than two years, close to 500,000 telephone conversations have been facilitated by the project, which aims to rebuild both trust and hope. By Aaron Barnea and Ofer Shinar*

"The leaders on both sides refuse to talk, but through Hello Shalom, nothing can stop the ordinary people - precisely those who have to face the most crippling consequences of the conflict - from trying to understand each other, which may end up saving lives". **"Peace on the Line", Nick Taylor, *The Guardian*, May 8ʰ, 2004**

In November 2000, the second Palestinian intifada had been raging for nearly two months, and relations between Israelis and Palestinians were at a new low. When a young Israeli woman named Natalia Wieseltier picked up the telephone to call her friend, it was not with the intention of being a peacemaker. But things took a strange turn. "A man picked up and said I had a wrong number," she told Nick Taylor of the British newspaper *The Guardian.* "I said who is this, and he called himself Jihad and said he was an Arab living in Gaza. Instead of hanging up, I asked him how he was. He said he was very bad,

his wife was pregnant and their town was under curfew, and we ended up talking for

about 20 minutes."

With this serendipitous wrong number, a tenuous bridge between one single Israeli and

one Palestinian was established, from which has developed an impressive project to

encourage dialogue between ordinary Israelis and ordinary Palestinians. The project is

called "Hello Shalom/Hello Salaam (Hello Peace)".

Hello Salaam, Hello Shalom is perhaps the best-known project of The Parents Circle —

Families Forum (The Families Forum), an organization of over 200 Palestinians and 200

Israelis who have lost children or other family members in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Members of The Families Forum believe that "to move beyond silent despair and

isolation, people must begin talking again — especially with people on the other side."

For almost a decade, The Families Forum has attempted to play a crucial role in

spearheading a reconciliation process between Israelis and Palestinians.

The Families Forum itself developed from the unique response of a father to the murder

of his son. On July 7, 1994, the body of 19-year-old Arik Frankenthal was found in a

village near Ramallah,. Arik, an Israel Defense Forces soldier and an orthodox Jew, had

been hitchhiking home on leave when he was kidnapped and murdered by members of

Hamas.

No revenge

Israeli society at the time was torn between the hope and despair. On one hand the government led by Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres showed a profound commitment to the peace process initiated at Oslo. But at the same time, the mass media fed the public a steady stream of images of terror, death, and bereavement.

Yitzhak Rabin's historic words of September 13, 1993, spoken from the White House Lawn, still resonated with the Israeli public:

"Let me say to you, the Palestinians: We are destined to live together, on the same soil in the same land. We, the soldiers who have returned from battle stained with blood, we who have seen our relatives and friends killed before our eyes, we who have attended their funerals and cannot look into the eyes of their parents, we who have come from a land where parents bury their children, we who have fought against you, the Palestinians - we say to you today in a loud and clear voice: Enough of blood and tears. Enough."

But some Israelis were unable to embrace the words that followed:

"We have no desire for revenge. We harbor no hatred towards you. We, like you, are people who want to build a home, to plant a tree, to love, live side by side with you - in dignity, in empathy, as human beings, as free men. We are today giving peace a chance and again saying to you: Let us pray that a day will come when we will say, enough, farewell to arms."

After each incident of terror, for example, the Terror Victims Association called for vengeance and violence against Palestinians. In response to the brutal murder of Arik Frankenthal, they raised the same cry. Then something new happened, something revolutionary. Arik's father, also an orthodox Jew, faced the group and said, "You don't represent me and my family. My Judaism is not one of revenge and hatred. I know that violence against Palestinians, revenge and inflicting bereavement and affliction to Palestinians will not bring back my son, but will cause more pain, more bereavement to other families in Israel. I call all of us to stop the killings, to stretch our hands towards the other in search of reconciliation. This is my view of authentic Judaism: a profound thirst for life and peace."

Other bereaved Israeli families echoed his thoughts. These bereaved families became the core of the future organization – The Families Forum — which called for peace and reconciliation rather than vengeance. The Forum was with Rabin, Peres and Arafat at the Nobel Prize Awarding ceremony, and was at Rabin's side on the tragic night of his assassination by an Israeli extremist.

Message of Reconciliation

The Israeli group soon approached bereaved Palestinian families, who enthusiastically embraced its message of reconciliation. The joint appearance of bereaved Israeli and Palestinian families had a tremendous impact on individuals in both societies. An

ambitious growing program was articulated and implemented, which included meetings

in Palestinian and Israeli schools with kids aged 16 to 18, bold public pronouncements,

and support for peace rallies. The Forum's actions attracted extensive media attention in

the form of TV and radio interviews and numerous articles in the press.

Notably, The Families Forum sees reconciliation not just as a process following conflict

resolution, but as part of the process which helps to bring violent conflict to an end.

Reconciliation allows each side to transform precisely those views about the other side

which led to a self-perpetuating cycle of violence. This transformation creates trust

between the two sides, a prerequisite for any peace process.

Empathy for those victims on the opposing side who have suffered loss is a key step in

the process of reconciliation. Empathy can create the emotional change needed to

undertake the transformation of beliefs which is inherent in genuine reconciliation,

generating such empathy has been a prime focus of the work of The Families Forum.

The activities of The Families Forum focus on victims who, instead of seeking

vengeance, choose to pursue dialogue with victims of the opposing side. And the Hello

Peace project of The Families Forum is, accordingly, a logical extension of this goal of

pursuing dialogue and reconciliation.

Creating Contact at the Level of the Individual

Forthcoming in:
People Building Peace II: Successful Stories of Civil Society
Edited by Paul van Tongeren, Malin Brenk, Marte Hellema, Juliette Verhoeven
Boulder: Lynne Rienner: June 2005

"Before, I thought Israelis didn't care at all when innocent Palestinians suffer and are

killed, but now I know they do care. And now I have hope that there can be peace."

Sammy Waed, Palestinian user of Hello Peace

"We are all people and want the best for our children and grandchildren. We have the

power to make a change."

Miriam Inbal, Israeli user of Hello Peace

Excerpted from "Palestinian-Israeli hotline melts hate", Deborah Blachor, Daily News,

Dec. 8th, 2002

"Instead of continuing to weep in frustration we should pick up the phone, hear the

voices, and continue onward with renewed hope, knowing that there's someone to talk to,

that the cycle of bloodshed can be brought to an end".

Hagit Ofran, *Israeli user of Hello Peace, letter to the editor, Haaretz, 11 October, 2002*

The Hello Peace project is an attempt to respond to the lack of trust and empathy between

the Palestinians and Israelis which, scholars say, is one of the primary reasons that the

cycle of violence continues. By getting thousands of Israeli and Palestinians to talk with

each other, and by publicizing this fact, the popular belief that "there is no partner for

peace" can be dispelled.

Hello Peace is the brainchild of Natalia Wieseltier and developed from that first errant

phone call. Recalling that initial contact, she says, "We weren't making apologies to each

other; I wasn't trying to make him feel better. We were just talking as individuals. At the

end of the conversation, he said he was amazed that Jewish people were able to talk like

that. He thought we wanted all Palestinians dead." After that phone call, Jihad discovered

Natalia's phone number on his own mobile phone, called her back the next day, and left a

message saying that the conversation had changed the way he thought. And then he gave

her number to his brother. Soon, a circle of strangers from the two sides of the Israeli-

Palestinian divide were talking to each other. Attitudes began to change. And that gave

Natalia an idea. The contact she had created by mistake led Natalia to approach The

Families Forum with a proposal to set up a system to allow Palestinians and Israelis to

talk to each other over the phone.

With Hello Peace, Israelis and Palestinians can call a special number — *6364 — and a

computer will automatically connect them to someone on 'the other side' who has

expressed a similar willingness to talk. Users do not have to leave their details or even

their telephone number, ensuring that their privacy is protected.

From the moment of inspiration until the project was officially launched, it took two

years of fundraising and preparation. In October 2002, the project started up with a

massive media campaign under the same slogan in both Arabic and Hebrew: "You can

talk about peace/pain/reconciliation". The publicity campaign leading up to the launch was undertaken on both sides of the divide in a similar manner and at the exact same time. This is crucial to the success, which depends on the perception that Hello Peace is totally unbiased. A second media campaign was conducted in October and November 2003, coinciding, completely by chance, with the intensive media campaign to alert the international community to the independent peace initiative known as the Geneva Initiative. With the synergies of these simultaneous campaigns, peacemaking received a new impetus, and public interest in peacemaking was clearly apparent, suggesting a grassroots movement for peace was alive and well in both the Palestinian and Israeli society.

Hello Peace endeavors to break down the psychological, if not physical barriers between the two peoples. If numbers can serve as a measure of success, than Hello Peace has been a resounding success, and stands as proof that many Israelis and Palestinians are willing to engage in dialogue; between the project's inception in October 2002 and October 2004, more than 480,000 phone calls had been made. Hello Peace is probably the broadest peace project ever implemented regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its success suggests that many in both societies remain hopeful that peace is possible and are willing to communicate and learn more about those on the other side.

With Hello Shalom a link has been established between the activities of The Families Forum promoting reconciliation over revenge among bereaved families, and the more general need among ordinary citizens on both sides to engage in a humanizing dialogue.

As Roni Hirshenzon, a member of The Families Forum notes, sometimes the conversations initiated through the Hello Peace system begin with arguments, but quickly, the parties will ask more personal questions, such as "where are you from", "how old are you?", "do you have children?", and so forth, and then, often, the anger dissipates. The intimate nature of the contact that is possible with the Hello Peace system allows both sides to view the other as human beings rather than nameless members of an impersonal mass. By creating contact at the level of the individual, participants on both sides come to understand more of the complexity of the situation and learn more about the circumstances and difficulties of those on the opposing side. This knowledge, which is generated by all who are involved with the project, is the basis for the creation of trust between the sides.

Impact

While an independent evaluation of Hello Shalom has yet to be undertaken, it can be said that its impact radiates out from the participants in three concentric circles: an inner circle which includes all those who have actively taken part in the project by talking with a person from the opposing side; a middle circle consisting of the friends and relatives of those who have used the system and who have heard about the project and its influence; and a third circle comprising those who have heard about the project either from news articles of from the media campaign. While the impact of Hello Peace on the inner circle is clear, the influence on those in the wider circles has also been notable. Those in the

"middle" circle who have heard about the conversations of their friends or relatives have

also grasped the significance of dialogue and are likely to feel more inclined to trust the

opposing side as a result. Those in the outer circle may also be influenced, especially by

the notion that so many have taken up the opportunity and used the system.

Challenges

Hello Peace now faces two challenges: first, to increase the number of users, and second

to create a sense of community, allowing the nascent dialogue to become a normative

part of the lives of many Israelis and Palestinians. This will not only legitimize the

project but will also give credibility to the opening of new and innovative channels of

communication.

Currently, thousands of calls are being made each month. The Families Forum now aims,

in the second stage of the Hello Peace project, to tie in other Families Forum activities to

stimulate more extensive grassroots activities involving both Palestinians and Israelis.

This second stage will focus on further development of the current telephone system, the

launc h of a new website, and a media campaign. Alongside the inventive use of

traditional means of communication, it will exploit technology to allow more people to

join in and participate in the dialogue, offering, for example, Palestinians and Israelis

ways to expand their communication to the Internet as well as to continue talking over

the phone. Already, The Families Forum, in collaboration with international NGO One to

One Children's Fund, are setting up an Internet site allowing Israeli and Palestinian youth

to communicate online.

Building trust between Israelis and Palestinians may seem to many to be futile after so

much violence, but Hello Peace has proven that where ordinary people make contact with

each other on a personal level, it is still possible to bridge the divide and rekindle hope,

which had long seemed extinguished.

* Aaron Barnea, who has lost his 21 years old son, Noam, due to the conflict, is the

Families Forum international relations director. Ofer Shinar, the Families Forum

Reconciliatio n Initiative's director, has researched reconciliation between Israelis and

Palestinians under the guidance of Alexander Boraine, the former South Africa's Truth

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Sources

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Forthcoming in:
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19.3 Creating Experience: The Oxford Research Group in the UK

By getting activists to enter into dialogue with those who make decisions about weapons, the Oxford Research Group opened up a new window in the struggle for nuclear disarmament. It took years, but gradually more and more decisionmakers became inclined to work with the Group and other NGOs on the challenge to develop security through a collaborative approach, and to abandon the old Cold War thinking based on fear and distrust

"When faced with a large system composed of many individuals, which is producing results you may want to change or influence, it is simply not true or realistic to believe that there is nothing one individual can do. With a small number of allies, the effects of the decision of one individual can spread dramatically throughout the whole system, and thereby change the decisions it produces."
Textbook of the Open University (UK) Systems Theory decision-making course

Official Chinese banquets are highly formal affairs, especially when they involve very senior government and military officials. Scilla Elworthy was bowled over by the atmosphere when she led an Oxford Reseach Group (ORG) delegation to Beijing in 1995. Walking up the long red carpet into the Great Hall of the People at the head of such a

delegation was, for her, the realization of a dream. She was brought down to earth when

her Chinese host, walking forward to greet "Dr. Elworthy", went with outstretched hand

straight towards the nearest male.

For the next three days, Elworthy and the Oxford Research Group delegation engaged in

a rare discourse. Seated around a huge square of tables, and, with the help of

simultaneous translation, military and civilian disarmament officials and independent

experts from the West discussed with their Chinese counterparts the topic of nuclear

disarmament in the context of "Global Security in the post-Cold War World".

Building Bridges

The visit to Beijing was a triumph for ORG. Since the early 1980's, the organization has

made persistent efforts to do something about the dangerous nuclear arms race based on a

simple idea: that the struggle against nuclear arms was best served by opening up

channels of communication for face-to-face, non-confrontational dialogue between anti-

nuclear activists on the one hand and government decisionmakers on the other.

Operating as a body of independent researchers with support staff, ORG first identified

who made the decisions on nuclear weapons in all the nuclear nations – the UK, the USA,

Russia, China, and France – and the Warsaw Pact and NATO, and how the decisions

were made. They then increased the level of knowledge among anti-nuclear activists

about the issues at the center of their concern by providing information packs, and

encouraging them to make contact directly by letter with one key decisionmakers in the

UK, and one in China. Traditionally, many of these decisionmakers – scientists in

weapons laboratories, intelligence analysts, military strategists, defense contractors and

civil servants - operated behind firmly closed doors. ORG's approach was that by

focusing on the personal and human relationships aspects of the arms race, they would

foster a lasting process of informed dialogue and openness leading, eventually, to policy

change.

Their approach effectively overcame some of the rebuttals commonly used by

officialdom to put off critics: that the subject was too complicated for ordinary people to

understand, for example, or that it should best be left to those in authority. In many

instances, such responses would be just an excuse for maintaining secrecy and for hiding

mistakes, accidents and waste. The ORG wanted to remove this veil, and in so doing

encourage greater public accountability for decisions on nuclear weapons.

ORG always stressed a collaborative, bridge-building approach involving:

"dealing with people, developing trust, finding common ground, building confidence".

In the early 1980s, when the organization started, the Cold War was at its height and

discussions about disarmament amounted to a dialogue of the disinterested. Conferences

held to discuss the issue were long on speeches, devoid of genuine dialogue, and short on

meaningful results. The different sides of the divide held fixed positions and, with the

atmosphere poisoned by Cold War thinking, there was no dialogue between official

government and military representatives on the one side and non-governmental and civil

society organizations on the other.

The idea of trying to change this culture by using a fresh approach came out of an experience Elworthy had just had as a delegate to the Second UN Special Session on Disarmament in New York in 1982, where she had seen nearly a million people demonstrating against nuclear weapons in the streets, without making any impression at all on the delegates inside the UN building. She came home, gathered friends around her kitchen table in Woodstock, near Oxford, England, and after several brainstorming sessions, Oxford Research Group was born.

Getting Started

The direct-contact approach developed by ORG began with a pilot project that aimed to facilitate dialogue between seventy groups throughout the UK and nuclear weapon decisionmakers. These included women's groups, Quaker organizations, doctors, teachers, church members, and others simply concerned about the build-up of nuclear arms, and at a loss as to what they could do about it. One thing marked out all these "pilot" groups: they were all willing to do their homework, and they were prepared to drop their traditional "confrontational" approach and learn the skills of dialogue. Each group "adopted" one British nuclear decisionmakers, and – in the interests of balance, and to ensure that the focus was widened beyond a narrow Western one – a counterpart from China.

Each group was provided with an information pack with contact details and background information on their British decisionmakers and his counterpart in China, and their specific area of responsibility. The pack also included a "How to" section, containing

detailed guidelines on how to write the first letter, how do deal with a "brush-off", how to persist, and so on. Above all they were encouraged to write letter to their decisionmakers containing no angry polemics, but respectful, to the point and designed to trigger a response. Just the seemingly straightforward act of writing a letter had an unexpected effect. Previously, some members of these groups had felt frustrated, helpless, depressed or angry. Being able to address themselves directly to someone of influence, in appropriate language and citing hard facts, changed their attitudes and feelings: they began to feel empowered by the process.

The activists also learned the value of persistence. In one case, a group of musicians and actors opposed to nuclear weapons wrote to the UK chief of defense staff every six weeks, for three years, undaunted by the one-line response he sent to each letter. Eventually, when this man left government and was promoted to the House of Lords, his maiden speech to that chamber included verbatim quotes from the letters he had been sent by the group!

Many activists became experts on the issues on which they worked, forcing officials to abandon the excuse that an issue was too "complicated" for the ordinary man or woman in the street. It was no longer easy for senior officials to merely pass the buck on to ministers, who would then instruct junior civil servants to send meaningless replies on their. They felt challenged to provide substantial answers.

ORG made secrecy and accountability in defense decision-making the specific focus of its research. During the period of the groups dialogue project, the British Ministry of Defence imposed a ban on senior civil servants and military officers having any contact

with ORG, but this did not prevent independent-minded officials from cooperating – thus
reinforcing the underlying principle of ORG's work: that, ultimately, individuals can
make the difference.

Spreading the Message

Very soon, helped by funds from Quaker charitable trusts, ORG was able to commission
expert researchers to carry out research into decisionmaking structures and published the
results in *How Nuclear Weapons Decisions are Made* (Macmillan, 1986) By 1998, ORG
had published thirty titles. In addition, it began to hold seminars and consultations
bringing together policymakers and their critics, using the dialogue methods it had
developed through the groups project. ORG eventually published these methods in a a
handbook called *Everyone's Guide to Achieving Change: A Step-by-Step Approach to
Dialogue with Decision-Makers*.

The groups dialogue project spread outside the UK. In 1985, ORG launched a Nuclear
Dialogue Project in the United States, linking concerned citizens groups with thirty
American decisionmakers. Five years later, a similar project was organized in Sweden
involving professional groups of medical practitioners writing to French and British
nuclear-weapon decisionmakers.

In time several professional organizations adopted what came to be known as the
"dialogue approach" as a model, including the International Physicians for the Prevention
of Nuclear War in their global Abolition 2000 campaign of 1999.

Meeting Critics Face to Face

One of ORG's most important roles came to be as organizer of international gatherings at which decisionmakers met their critics face to face. The conference in Beijing referred to at the start of this article is a case in point: it was co-hosted by ORG on condition that substantial and challenging issues could be raised. For its delegation, the group invited knowledgeable independent experts and some of the military and defense science contacts it had developed over the years. The delegation to China was therefore a rich combination of physicists, security academics, high-ranking military officers and peace activists.

Opening the seminar on the morning after the banquet, Elworthy caught some of the participants off guard by asking for two minutes of silent contemplation. She asked each person in the audience to imagine his or her image of a world without nuclear weapons. Everyone complied.

In the ensuing discussion, the Western and Chinese participants enagegd in deep discussion about the doctrine of deterrence, the risks inherent in building stockpiles of plutonium, and a timetable for phased disarmament. The tone and content of the discussion pointed to the real and practical difficulties of disarmament. Soon the seminar participants began talking to each other as human beings, rather than adversaries, softening the serious tone with the occasional touch of humor.

On the final afternoon of their visit to China, the ORG delegation was invited to the key Chinese institute for nuclear weapons research, including arms control. In a remarkably informal roundtable discussion which lasted several hours, staff there answered detailed

questions about subjects normally considered closed, such as a fissile material ban. ORG

discovered later that these were the only bilateral discussions on nuclear weapons taking

place between China and Britain at any level, even informally, during those years.

"I left China having learned one thing clearly," notes Elworthy.

"The manner in which most international relations are conducted is based on fear. The

entire doctrine of nuclear deterrence is based on fear. This is consequent upon a

hardware approach – we count weapons, we assess strength, we send spies out to

discover enemy secrets, we compete to have the newest, cleverest weapons.

We are quite capable of adopting instead a software approach, even at the very top.

Software would mean dealing with people, developing trust, finding common ground, and

building confidence. It is what the best of tough leaders do; it's difficult, challenging

work. It requires time. It requires flexibility and patience and savvy and wisdom."

Changed Attitudes

When ORG started, back in the 1980's, there was practically no dialogue between NATO

and the Warsaw Pact, no dialogue between government and military officials and NGOs.

Fear-based Cold War thinking polarised and poisoned the atmosphere. Such attitudes

have changed.

Today, ORG – still a tightly run outfit with a small budget - still adheres to the original

idea that underpinned its creation, although its focus has widened over the years in

response to changing demands and the altered social, political and international security

circumstances.

In 2002, it distilled its dialogue techniques developed over twenty years into an offshoot

body called the Oxford Process. The Oxford Process offers consultancy services, using

skilled, experienced facilitators, and the tried and tested methods of effective dialogue

with decisionmakers, which combine expertise on political and technical issues with a

recognition of the vital importance of building personal, human relationships.

Now, decisionmakers are much more open to working with the organization and other

NGOs on the challenge of developing security through a collaborative approach, and to

finally abandon Cold War thinking based on the notion that, as one Chinese army general

put it during the seminar in Beijing,

"My security is based on your insecurity."

What enabled Oxford Research Group to change attitudes to disarmament was its focus

on putting research tools at the disposal of *common citizens* through education and

training . By communicating directly with decisionmakers, it has shown them that they

can make a difference, and from the decisionmakers' point of view, made them aware

that entering into discussions with "ordinary" people can help them break out of outdated

approaches and attitudes, and develop useful policies for a more secure future for all.

In 2003 the Japanese Niwano Peace Foundation recognised Elworthy's achievements by

awarding her the prestigious 20th Niwano Peace Prize. The Foundation particularly

mentioned Oxford Research Group's work in

"building relationships with policymakers from all the nuclear nations, and bringing

them together with their critics to develop creative approaches to building down arsenals

and exploring nonviolent methods as a force more powerful than weapons in resolving

conflict."

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Source

"People Talking With Power."By Scilla Elworthy. In: *People Talking With Power*.

International Peace Bureau, Geneva, Switzerland

19.4 Inside the Revolution of the Roses: Georgia

The peaceful Rose Revolution that took place in Georgia in November 2003 has started a new wave of political change in this former Soviet Republic. This non-violent shift of power brought hope to the local population, as well as to the members of the international community. I am deeply touched by the overwhelming desire of ordinary people to choose non-violent approaches to change. By Irakli Kakabadze*

As the election period approached in November 2003, the party of Georgia's long-standing president, Eduard Shevardnadze, the Citizens' Union of Georgia, was divided into many factions. Most prominent amongst those factions was the National Movement for a Democratic Change, led by a young US-educated jurist, Michael Saakashvili.

Mr. Saakashvili had served as the head of a judicial committee in the parliament of Georgia, as minister of Justice, and finally as the head of Tbilisi's City Council – the elected local government body of the Georgian capital. His outstanding advocacy and interpersonal skills had transformed him into a clear favorite to win the next presidential election. His party and allies had gained support throughout the country and was expected to gather the most votes in the parliamentary elections of November 2, 2003.

The first results of the exit polls showed that the party was leading in practically all regions of Georgia. However, the government resorted to fraud and the results published on November 7 by the Election Commission were false. They gave first place to Shevardnadze's party and second place to the party of the autocratic leader of the breakaway republic of Ajaria — both had been showing single digits in opinion polls and

exit polls alike. This was a final blow to the disenfranchised citizenry of Georgia and they decided that dramatic civil disobedience was necessary.

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Inequality as a Source for Conflict

After a long history of being an independent state, although at times occupied by different conquerors, in February 1921 Georgia was occupied by Soviet troops. As one of the Republics of the Soviet Union, it soon became more centralized. Its resources and power soon became concentrated in Tbilisi, which was directly subservient to Moscow authorities.

The resulting unequal distribution of resources and power generated increasing dissatisfaction throughout Georgia . As a result, since the 1991 breakup of the Soviet Empire, Georgia has faced a number of serious internal problems. Three civil wars in Georgia, between 1990 and 1993, each claimed thousands of victims. Russian forces were sent into the conflict to protect Soviet interests. They naturally sided with each region's self-declared government in order to maintain influence on the Georgian state.

President Shevardnadze returned to Georgia in March 1992 with overwhelming Western support, promising to build a democratic nation-state. He started peace negotiations with breakaway regions, but did not succeed in building conditions for peaceful conflict resolution. There were many reasons for this:

  ✍ Neither the regions nor the Russian leadership trusted Shevardnadze.

- ✍ His style of leadership, although cosmetically changed, remained
  essentially based on the centralized Soviet government system.

- ✍ Structural problems had grown and the social environment for creating
  conditions for positive peace were completely absent.

- ✍ Widespread and systemic corruption resulted in massive draft avoidance.

- ✍ Misappropriation of funds, salaries below the poverty level (when paid at all), and
  public officials profiting from drugs and arms naturally contributed to the popular
  loss of faith in the government.

Georgia lacked favorable conditions for development and the creation of a truly
democratic society. Georgian society enjoyed a relatively free press, but problems with
corruption and mismanagement remained. Minimum wages were equal to roughly $20
month, pensions $14 a month, and these were very rarely paid on time. While a few in the
private sector prospered enormously, most of the population lived below the poverty
level. The wealth and resources were concentrated in Tbilisi; government officials took
huge kickbacks from various Georgian and foreign companies, whereas regional
governments had very little. New capitalism proved to be good for only about one
percent of Georgia's population. While people did not want to go back to the Soviet
years, they longed for a democratic, capitalistic system that supported social justice and
human rights for the whole population.

Despite, or perhaps because of, this economic inequality, the non-governmental sector
strengthened during the last six years of Shevardnadze's rule. NGOs made significant

strides in educating the general public about their civil and human rights. Foreign NGOs,

like the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, the Eurasia Foundation,

CARE, and MerciCorps, together with the local Liberty Institute, the International Center

on Conflict and Negotiation, and the Young Jurists Association managed to change the

political climate. People's consciousness of their rights and duties as citizens of a

democratic country grew. The time for a peaceful revolution in 2003 was ripe, but there

were many challenges ahead.

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Civic Disobedience

Some thirty to forty thousand people amassed at Liberty Square for several weeks in

November to protest the election. Protests escalated and the government brought ten

thousand armed police and soldiers to defend its headquarters.

The confrontation intensified after talks between the government of Prime Minister

Jorbenadze and Michael Saakashvili failed. Demonstrators demanded that President

Shevardnadze resign, allowing for new parliamentary and presidential elections. He

refused and the tension grew.

The other political parties were not powerful enough to challenge the president. The

troops were ready to defend the 'legitimate' government if the crowd attacked its

headquarters. The political leaders of the opposition therefore appealed to the

demonstrators to establish a non-violent, yet revolutionary Civic Disobedience

Committee.

The committee was created at November 10 and included film director Goga Khaindrava,

writers David Turashvili, Lasha Bughadze, and Defi Gogibedashvili, US-educated lawyer

Nicholas Rurua, Liberty Institute activists Giga Bokeria and David Zurabishvili, and

Young Jurists Association leader Tinatin Khidalsheli. The books of Gene Sharp, John

Burton, Richard Rubenstein, John W. McDonald, Dennis Sandole, and Johan Galtung,

together with works of Gandhi, the Dalai Lama and Georgian activist Ilia Chavchavadze,

a proponent of non-violent social change, were our guiding voices for the peaceful

revolution.

For a successful, non-violent completion of the revolution, temporary dispersal of the

demonstrating crowd was needed. Here creative thinking and decision making proved to

be crucial. The crowd had to disperse to allow the government to save face and to avoid

confronting the soldiers who were, at that time, ready to fight. The organizers decided to

encircle the government building for half an hour, giving a clear signal to the government

to resign before starting their final action. They circled the building and handed a

thousand roses to policemen and soldiers before returning to their homes. This changed

the disposition of the armed forces towards the peaceful demonstrators and won their

favor.

For the next five days, the Civil Disobedience Committee visited a vast number of

universities, organizations and regions, while opposition leaders continued working to

convince the population that the resignation of the existing government was necessary for the good of the country. Saakashvili went to Western Georgia and managed to bring in 30,000 people from Samegrelo and Imereti. By November 21, many people had also joined from Eastern Georgia.

On the morning of November 22, about 150,000 people assembled at Liberty Square. Opposition leaders and the Civic Disobedience Committee gave a final signal to the government to resign peacefully. It was clear that if the government used force, they would lose moral and legal power. The government refused once again and the leaders of the Civic Movement then made a direct appeal to the president:

If you do not resign, we will not obey you. We won't kill you and we will face death if your order is imposed upon the people. You can have our dead bodies, but you will never have our obedience again.

Those words of the great Mahatma Gandhi proved powerful. Thousands of people took to the streets to support the non-violent change of power. Rock musicians played for the demonstrators in a musical protest that lasted all night, very much reminiscent of Woodstock. All parts of Georgian society became involved in the process, bringing together everyone from scientists, doctors, and teachers, to farmers and students and all religious, ethnic, and sexual minorities—nearly 80 percent of Georgian society in total. Yet, the government remained unyielding.

How long would it be possible to hold peaceful demonstrations before somebody provoked the crowd? It was very important to leave a face-saving exit to the government,

but at the same time to not give up. The people clearly wanted the president out, but they did not want to see blood. Not necessarily in support of one or another political party, people took the streets, supporting the call for a non-violent change of power. They spoke out against the corruption and structural dysfunction of the existing regime. The old guard politicians, however, were not ready to act actively.

In these decisive moments, the young Saakashvili found enough resources within himself to conduct a very wise political campaign that would eventually lead to the unprecedented 'Rose Revolution'. He borrowed the words of the first Georgian President, Zviad K. Gamsakhurdia, "We shall throw roses instead of bullets at our enemies." And drew on the experience of the Flower Children during the civil rights campaign in the US, as his guiding principles for action.

The first Georgian president failed in his attempt to use roses as a non-violent weapon for progress and change—he did not have a well-trained, mobilized political team or the skills for waging a non-violent campaign for change. Also, many people thought this was an overly idealistic approach, which eventually destroyed President Gamsakhurdia. However, Saakashvili proved that peaceful change was possible in Georgia. This was the lesson for Georgians and all liberation movements around the world: the ideals of Martin Luther King, Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, and the Dalai Lama could actually be implemented and sometimes they could be more realistic than 'Real-politik' itself.

Independent media, especially the news channel Rustavi 2, played a major role in the success of the Rose Revolution as the media coverage contributed to the relatively high

degree of transparency during the revolutionary events. The media's involvement was

constructive, and their coverage of the tensions helped to prevent an outbreak of violence

in many cases. The information and views forwarded by independent channels were on

the side of prevention most of the time, rather than simply providing routine coverage of

heated confrontations or violent events. They covered problems that could have led to the

violence, supporting the nation's work towards peaceful solutions.

For example, Rustavi 2 showed a documentary about Mahatma Gandhi only six days

prior to the revolution and aired a special program on Satyagraha – non-violence, the

force that is generated through adherence to truth, or a way of life based on love and

compassion. Throughout the days leading up to the revolution, Gandhi's word,

Satyagraha, became used more and more by revolutionaries who felt that being firm in

truth and non-violence did not represent a retreat or sellout of social justice.

At the same time, the government did not find a useful tool against Gandhi's philosophy.

The rules of Satyagraha were translated into Georgian, published in *Peace Times*

magazine, and distributed to activists and demonstrators. Newspapers published papers

while radio and TV stations aired programs educating the public about conflict resolution

and the thinking of Gandhi, Johan Galtung, Richard Rubenstein, and other peacebuilders.

The Day of the Revolution

The events of November 22 were crucial for the Revolution. Political and civic leaders

assembled in Tbilisi's City Hall to finalize their plans. As President Shevardnadze tried to

convene his illegally elected parliament, the people stormed both the government and

parliament buildings, giving the police hugs and roses on their way in. The demonstrators

had established such good relationships with the armed forces through giving them food,

supplies and roses, that many of them laid down their arms, welcoming the spirit of

change.

Moments later, Michael Saakashvili delivered a final rose to President Shevardnadze,

who was than rushed out of the parliament through a back door. He did not resign

immediately. The next day the Russian foreign minister, Igor Ivanov came to Tbilisi and

facilitated a dialogue that eventually led to Shevardnadze's resignation and a peaceful

transition of power.

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Office coordinator for the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy. He was one of the leading

members of the Civil Disobedience Committee during the Rose Revolution and is based

in Washington and Tbilisi.

19.5 Taking the Constitution to the People: The Cizens Constitutional Forum in Fiji

Against a background of political and constitutional turmoil, coups and court-cases, a Fijian NGO is attempting to defuse a volatile ethnic politics by providing a safe space for the free and frank discussion of key issues within the community – whether the community is made up of the inhabitants of remote villages or recalcitrant politicians.

By Shoma Sharon Prasad*

After nearly a century of British rule, Fiji achieved independence in 1970. The British decision to protect the indigenous population from exploitation by other Europeans by importing Indian laborers to work on their sugar plantations laid the ground for ethnic tensions that are still being worked out in the independent state. With many of the Indian laborers deciding to stay on in Fiji, the island now has a flourishing Indian population – some 44 per cent of the total – while the indigenous Fijian population has fallen to around 50 per cent.

The ethnic tensions first came to a head in 1987 when two military coups staged against the Indian majority government led to the drafting of a new Constitution in 1990, which

was then amended in 1997 along multiracial lines. Elections in 1999 returned a coalition

government headed by the Fiji Labor Party under Fiji's first ethnic Indian Prime Minister,

Mahendra Chaudhry. However, in May 2000 extreme nationalists under the leadership of

failed-businessman, George Speight, launched a coup and demanded the revocation of

the multiracial constitution and the replacement with one that would allow only ethnic

Fijians to hold the posts of prime minister and president. This coup, during which the

prime minister and members of parliament were held hostage, ushered in a prolonged

period of political turmoil. New parliamentary elections held in August 2001 returned a

coalition government dominated by the nationalist Fijian United Party of Prime Minister,

Laisenia Qarase. However, he in turn faced a legal challenge from former Labor Prime

Minister Chaudhry, on the grounds that the constitution guaranteed cabinet seats for his

Labor Party.

It was in 1995 in this context, where constitutional debate expressed ethnic divisions

established in the colonial period, that the Citizens' Constitutional Forum (CCF) first

emerged. Widely regarded in the Fiji Islands and beyond as the leading human rights

advocacy NGO in Fiji, the CCF is supported by members of civil society in its fight for

human rights, constitutional democracy, the rule of law and the building of a

multicultural Fiji.

Power to the People

After two preliminary consultations, the CCF began its activities in 1995 and from the

beginning set about creating a space for dialogue and debate in order to achieve a

sustainable constitutional solution of the tensions between the different ethnic groups.

Initially this took the form of a series of workshops for political leaders, NGOs, religious

and community leaders and ordinary citizens on various aspects of constitution making,

which inspired people to make submissions to the Constitutional Review Commission

chaired by Sir Paul Reeves, the former governor general of New Zealand.

In this process international experts and jurists assisted the CCF in national consultations

on constitutional matters. Political and community leaders were invited to these

consultations to encourage dialogue and discussion and help build consensus on a new

democratic and non-racial constitution.

Having helped secure the adoption of the 1997 Constitution, the CCF has focused on

educating citizens about the new 'multiracial' constitution. A major instrument in this is a

popular version of the constitution, "Your Constitution, Your Rights", that is published in

English, Hindi and Fijian. Besides its use in schools, it has been serialized in the Daily

Post newspaper and has been widely distributed in the community. Through instruments

such as this the CCF works at strengthening democratic institutions by ensuring the full

implementation of the provisions of the 1997 constitution, building multiculturalism and

an understanding of human rights, and seeking a more proportional and fairer electoral

system.

However, the CCF has also taken a more direct role in the developments around the

constitution. In the 1999 election, the architects of the 1997 Constitution, the Soqosoqo

Ni Vakavulewa Ni Taukei (S.V.T) government and the main opposition party, the

National Federation Party (N.F.P) were defeated by a coalition led by the Fiji Labor Party (F.L.P). After one year in government, the F.L.P was deposed by a group of soldiers and some indigenous Fijian nationalist extremists under the leadership of George Speight. They held Prime Minister Chaudhry, and members of his government hostage in parliament for 56 days. The Fiji military forces commander decided to remove the president, abrogated the constitution in response to the demands of Speight's group and continued negotiations for the release of the deposed government.

As a vociferous and passionate defender of the 1997 Constitution, the CCF soon after these dramatic events took the bold step of supporting a human rights challenge by an individual, Chandrika Prasad, in the High Court and the Fiji Court of Appeal. Prasad contended that the commander of the Fiji Military Forces had not acted lawfully in abrogating the 1997 Constitution on 29 May 2000. The CCF led the NGO movement that organized the presentation of evidence in support of Prasad's litigation.

The High Court decided on November 2nd 2000 that the 1997 Constitution was merely suspended by the purported abrogation and came back into effect when the hostages were released. The Court also declared that the Interim Administration led by Laisenia Qarase was illegal. The government appealed against the judgment. The five judges of the Court of Appeal upheld the High Court judgment on 1 March 2001, declaring that the May 2000 revolution had been unsuccessful. The 1997 Constitution thus remained effective. Professor George Williams – one of the counsels involved in the Chandrika Prasad case – comments in an article in the *Oxford University Commonwealth Law Journal* (Summer 2001):

"It was the first time ever that the leaders of a coup had voluntarily submitted to the jurisdiction of a court only months after taking power. It was also the first time ever in Fiji's history that a court decision has restored a constitution and the democratic system of government created by it."

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Constitutional awareness campaign

Of all the work carried out by the CCF since its formation in 1995, the most effective has been its use of advocacy and public education to create awareness of constitutional and democratic issues among the wider civil societies ranging from grassroots communities to schools and religious groups. After the unsuccessful coup in 2000, the CCF has focused on building relationships, between communities using the Constitutional awareness campaign to encourage dialogue and reconciliation. This has been promoted through newspapers, radio, television and a website whic h provides a forum for dialogue on important national issues.

The main aims of the CCF's educational workshops are to counter the misconceptions that the communities hold about the constitution and to inform them about their rights. In the rural areas, this is done mainly through village workshops and through the distribution of booklets and pamphlets about the constitution and rights, such as *Your Constitution, Your Rights.*

Most of the CCF's activities are accomplished through volunteer efforts and respond to the needs of the moment. Educating people from different communities has required a major commitment. For example, between May and June in 2004, a prominent tribal chief led a multiracial team to areas in Tailevu North and Lower Naitasiri Provinces, over a period of six-weeks, and conducted thirty workshops in a total of 33 villages. Many of the supporters of the coup came from these areas.

A total of 943 people took part in these workshops. All households in the villages and settlements visited by the team now have a copy of the *Your Constitution, Your Rights* booklet. Important issues like the entrenched constitutional protection of indigenous owned resources such as land and fishing grounds, elections and the democratic process, the importance of following the rule of law and good governance issues associated with development were discussed and debated.

The program has met some apparent resistance from the Ministry of Fijian Affairs through the Provincial Administration. A number of calls were received, allegedly from the Provincial Office, requesting that the team would cancel its programs. However, the teams proceeded with their visits to the villages and were welcomed almost everywhere.

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Achievements

The response from the community at large was very encouraging. It appeared that people had very limited knowledge of the constitution and their rights. The impact of these educational workshops has not been measured and analyzed, but it is hoped that by

providing people with accurate knowledge of the disastrous consequences of the 19 May coup, the nationalists will find it more difficult to mobilize these villagers in the future.

The workshops and discussions also covered other issues that were important to the communities, such as the meaning of human rights. In every workshop through discussions, the importance of democratic process and its institutions, the need to support the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, respect for human rights and other cultures were emphasized. Women and children actively participated in the workshops with local police representatives, who at the same time used the opportunity to educate them about crime.

All the workshop discussions were recorded and reported to the CCF's Steering Committee members. In 2002, the CCF hosted similar grassroots human rights educational workshops in towns and villages of the other provinces, attracting a total of 2000 participants. All the issues covered were directly related to conflict prevention and peacebuilding in Fiji after the coup. During these rural education visits the CCF was able to identify a number of influential local people who have since been trained and are being maintained as part of this on-going grassroots education project.

The CCF has also organized workshops that focused on constitutional issues in the urban centers. These provided opportunities for discussing the Bill of Rights, squatter settlements and evictions, land rights, indigenous rights, and the foundation of a coalition government, multiculturalism, tolerance and peace building culture.

More recently the CCF joined with other NGOs to make submissions to parliamentary committees on subjects such as information technology, the freedom of information bill,

the defense review, and prison reform. The CCF has facilitated continued dialogue and

consensus among the non-government organizations, civil society and government.1

In 2002, the Fiji government after a lapse of eighteen years presented a report on Fiji to

the United Nations Committee on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

(CERD). The NGO Coalition on Human Rights in Fiji, for which CCF provides the

secretariat, presented a shadow report in Geneva.

After the two groups had presented their papers, a debate ensued in the national

parliament on human rights issues and the legality of the present government. Ordinary

citizens contributed to this debate through articles and letters in the three national

newspapers. The debate continued in the newspaper columns for weeks.

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The multiparty issue

The CCF has been deeply involved in the contentious issue of multiparty government in

Fiji. The Fijian Constitution stipulates that after general elections, the leader of the party

or coalition of parties that wins the election must invite parties with more than 10 percent

of seats in the seventy-one seat House of Representatives to be part of the cabinet.

On forming his government after the 2001 election, Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase

failed to invite the Fiji Labour Party into the government, the only party with more than

10 percent of seats. Consequently there has been litigation in the Supreme Court, which

recently ruled that the F.L.P was entitled to a proportionate number of ministries.

The CCF tried to encourage politicians from both sides to discuss the agreement for the formation of the coalition government. A workshop on multiparty government was organized for the two main political parties and the minority parties to enable them to have open dialogue and raise differences. However, this was not achieved because the ministers and MPs in the current government declined to participate.

The members of the Fiji Labor Party and other opposition parties did share similar concerns about the country's progress and recognized the importance of working together for the betterment of the nation. Apart from observing the development progress between the two leaders of the political parties, the CCF has also encouraged dialogue and participation of other parties and civil society groups on this issue.

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In another area of conflict and peacebuilding, the CCF is involved in the Vatukola Goldmines Trade union's twelve year-old court case against Emperor Gold Mines Limited. The CCF provided legal aid to the union. Although the decision of the Court went against the union, the CCF has continued its support in a study of the gold mines and the effect they have on their workers. Individual members and Oxfam Australia have assisted this.

CCF work has been reported widely in the news media, ranging from newspaper articles to radio talk shows. Overseas radio and television stations, Australian and New Zealand radio have frequently reported on the work of the CCF. Promoting and advocating the

work of CCF has been a key feature in encouraging open dialogue between civil society

groups publicly.

The aim behind all this community work is to motivate and create a well informed public

which could, in the long run, become the most effective watchdog for public finance, and

would act as guardians of the Constitution, democracy and the rule of law. The program

will enhance and foster tolerance, respect and goodwill within the many different

communities, cultures, and religious groups in Fiji.

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Note

[1] Internationally, the CCF's work has been made possible by assistance from the

European Union, AusAid, Nzaid, and Oxfam Australia. The CCF has also worked with

International Partner NGOs such as Conciliation Resources London and the European

Center for Conflict Prevention, and other overseas-based trade unions. High-ranking

academics have paid regular visits and have supported the work of the CCF.

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South and North Korean Women Re-Unite

After more than fifty years of partition on the Korean Peninsula, the scene on October 17, 2002 in Kumkang Mountain, North Korea, was a truly remarkable one: on that day, hundreds of women from the communist North Korea and capitalist South Korea were dancing and singing together. It was the closure ceremony of the South-North Women's Reunification Convention, with 357 participants from the South and 300 from the North. The conventions consisted of art & craft exhibitions, games, sport, joint banquets, cultural and musical performances, discussion groups and small group meetings. Women came from different sectors of society including agricultural, religious, business, academic, non-profit, and educational. Preceded by a smaller-scale Reunification Forum that was held one year earlier in the North Korean capital Pyongyang, this was the first large-scale meeting of women from both sides. The South-North Korean women's interchanges substantially contributed to reducing the decades-old antagonism and tension between both sides.

Women Making Peace initiated the Reunification Exchange program between North and South Korean women in 1997, with a campaign called Sharing Love Sharing Food. During this campaign civic groups and public support in South Korea were mobilized to collect money fore milk powder to send to the women and children in North Korea. This was one of the first acts of cross-border engagement between the two Koreas since the partition and it became the spiritual and ideological basis of the "Sunshine" policy of

the Kim Dae-Jung government, which resulted in the 2000 South North Summit Meeting between the leaders of both Koreas.

The women from South and North Korea ended their 2002 convention with a resolution, declaring that they would keep peace together so that there would never be war again on the Korean peninsula, and that women, the main victims of the division, should lead the way to reunification. When the South-North Joint Event for the Anniversary of the Independence Movement of March 1st was held in Seoul, North Korean women representatives joined with South Korean women to make a statement against war, and for peace and reunification, at their separate March 8 women's conventions. South-North Korean women's working level meetings have continued after the conferences and have been held six times up to September 2004.

According to Women Making Peace, the North South women's events and the continuous working level meetings have had a major effect on peacebuilding in Korea and on the prevention of military conflict. South and North Korean women have offered an example of how to practice reconciliation and cooperation together. Women have recognized their core responsibility and have tried together to open the way to human security.

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20 Campaigning, Creating Awareness, and Lobby and Advocacy: How to Influence

People and Change the World

Rebecca Peters*

Lobbying and awareness raising complement each other, and can be used very effectively in tandem. If public opinion is starting to move behind a cause due to an awareness-raising activity by campaigners, decision-makers who have previously been unreceptive to lobbying activity on that subject may change their attitude, becoming more willing to make time in their schedules, listen to lobbyists and then to support the cause.

Non-governmental organizations cannot change the world on their own. They can identify problems and what needs to be done about them. However those who must do the changing are governments. After all, it is governments that have the power to change laws, create new laws, and ensure that they are implemented.

NGOs have various tools at their disposal to influence government decision-makers to take specific actions. Awareness raising and lobbying are two important ones. Awareness raising is indirect, and aims to mobilize the power of public opinion in support of a cause. It can change public consciousness and arouse interest in an issue by providing information on the nature, extent and complexity of a problem, as well as what can be done to solve it. Such information can have an impact on the decisions made by

individuals on whether to buy a particular product, vote for a parliamentary candidate

who supports a particular cause, and so on.

Lobbying specifically targets the policy makers: the people in society who have the

power to change the laws under which we live. Classic lobbying consists of pressuring

politicians to take specific decisions – such as whether to support or reject a certain piece

of legislation – that can further a particular cause.

Making Use of the Media

One of the most important methods of raising the public's (and politicians) awareness of

an issue is to make sure that it is represented in the media. This means building

relationships with journalists who work on that subject so that they cover a campaign's

messages. They do, however, need information that is presented to them clearly and

concisely: the most important information at the beginning and contact details at the end.

Relying on the statistics or dense policy reports that might impress politicians is not

enough; journalists will not have time to read them. What they want is a story to tell.

However good the information is, however important it is that it be made public, the first

thing that a journalist will say is: "What's the story?" If campaigners have not provided

one, the journalist is unlikely to be persuaded to be interested.

One of the best kinds of story to tell is to illustrate a broad problem by putting a specific

human face to it. Telling the story of one person, family or situation – especially if it

involves children – is very effective when it comes to raising awareness because it gives

individuals something they can relate to. The public read and sees so much bad news in

the media that they can become de-sensitized; it can often seem to be happening to

people far away, with whom they have little or nothing in common. Campaigners need to

combat this by finding connections with the lives of the people who are suffering and the

public and the decision-makers. For example, during the war in Iraq in March and April

2003, a lot of the mainstream media coverage in Europe was focusing on the activities of

the coalition forces and the bombs they were dropping. However when a 12-year old boy

called Ali Abbas lost both of his arms and several members of his family in a US missile

strike, he came to symbolize the human cost of the war. The extensive coverage of his

plight increased public awareness and sympathy for the victims of the war.

Identifying one message that is accessible and understandable to the public, then

emphasizing it to the media, can be a powerful way of getting a message across.

Managing to change assumptions about one core issue among journalists can effectively

turn them into amplifiers and spokes-people. Part of the success of the International

Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) was the fact that it could rely on sympathetic

journalists to amplify their core message: ban landmines. Excellent backup research,

concisely presented, plus an effective website that continues to be constantly updated are

crucial additional tools that the ICBL can employ when dealing with the media. The

campaign has managed to alert public opinion and bring on board many governments all

over the world.

Most media work by NGOs is done on a limited budget, so it is important to focus on

gaining the coverage that will be most effective in raising awareness and support among

as wide an audience as possible. Is there a radio program that is listened to across the

country? Is there a morning newspaper that helps to set the media agenda for the rest of the day? Is there a particular publication that is read by politicians? This does not mean that coverage elsewhere, and at the local level, is not important, because coverage in any media outlet, as long as it communicates the message properly, can help to win new supporters to the cause. The point is that thinking about the audience can be more effective than aiming for sheer numbers of column inches.

Visibility of a cause in the media is a good start, but it does not mean that campaigners have won. It can even lead people to think that because it is being covered extensively in the media, that cause has already been dealt with. Activists also need to specifically target political decision-makers. A private meeting with a minister can yield more results than copious national press coverage, although of course the press coverage might have helped to get the meeting with the minister in the first place.

Gaining Political Support

Like journalists, parliamentarians are also busy, with many concerns competing for their time. However policymakers and politicians are here to serve the public, so there are usually clear mechanisms for community organizations to communicate with them. If a campaign group is headed by a high-profile community figure or public personality, the group can use them to set up a meeting with a relevant politician. But essentially any group should be able to ask questions of a parliamentarian and have the opportunity to meet them.

Organizations should think about which politicians are likely to support the change they are campaigning for, and then approach them for a meeting. Once they have the politician's time, they should ask them what would be helpful to them – they should not assume that politicians have all the materials they need to keep well-informed on their subject. People in government organizations would often like more information, so a crucial function that activists can perform is to keep politicians informed with research and information on forthcoming reports and events. While this benefits the politicians as they are kept informed, it also benefits the group involved as they gain a reputation as a reliable source of information – a crucial part of lobbying. Politicians may also reciprocate by keeping the group informed on topics such as forthcoming votes on their area of interest.

There are two more dimensions to gaining political support: constituency and the international context. Providing real solutions that actually will work is crucial in answering the all-time favorite question of politicians: who do you represent? A constituency will form around workable solutions, not just theoretical ones. Additionally, and especially when working in countries that are less well-off, political support may also involve international donors and NGOs. This requires more diplomatic skills: establishing good relations with donors, having a trustworthy image, keeping sound financial records are very helpful. Building what one activist calls "para-diplomatic" relationships with foreign NGOs, donors and diplomats can even be a decisive factor in making real change in countries that have a more difficult political environment than developed democracies.

Tackling Opposition

Campaigning is fundamentally an adversarial business. Our work at the International

Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), for example, does not only consist of

persuading the public and politicians that we are right. It is also about persuading them

that the pro-gun lobbies are wrong. This has the added drawback of making some

politicians reluctant to support us, because it is simpler for them to ally themselves with a

cause that has no opposition, such as a group raising money for cancer research.

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The International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA)

IANSA is the global network of civil society organizations working to stop the

proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. World attention is increasingly

focused on the humanitarian impact of these weapons, and IANSA brings together the

voices and activities of NGOs and concerned individuals across the world to prevent their

deadly effects.

Founded in 1998, IANSA has grown rapidly to more than 500 participant groups in

nearly 100 countries, with representation from many gun-affected regions. IANSA is

composed of a wide range of organizations concerned with small arms, including policy

development organizations, national gun control groups, research institutes, aid agencies,

faith groups, victims, human rights and community action organizations.

IANSA aims to reduce small arms violence by: raising awareness among policymakers,

the public and the media about the global threat to human security caused by small arms;

promoting the work of NGOs to prevent small arms proliferation through national and

local legislation, regional agreements, public education and research; fostering

collaborative advocacy efforts, and providing a forum for NGOs to share experiences and

build skills; establishing regional and subject-specific small arms networks, and

promoting the voices of victims in regional and global policy discussions.

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When it comes to lobbying decision-makers who are hostile to a cause, groups should

start by finding out what their specific objections are, and whether there are any

circumstances under which they could support their campaign. It is only by identifying

any obstacles that groups can hope to overcome them.

An unsympathetic politician or journalist may not be your only opposition; many NGOs

have to campaign against another group with opposing aims. IANSA's work is a good

example – our goals are difficult enough to achieve, yet in addition to facing the

opposition of powerful governments, we also have to counter the arguments – and money

– of arms industry lobbyists.

In short: campaigners must think about what matters to the people they are trying to

influence, and what their reasons are for not currently supporting the cause. Then they

should identify what they can do to meet the needs of those opposing them. A politician

may be reluctant to support a cause because of political pressure, such as not wanting to

alienate a specific industry. While there are some factors that activists cannot influence,

others they can – in this case, by offering a politician the opportunity to be publicly

associated with a deserving cause, a benefit that may outweigh their political concerns.

For example, in Australia when gun control advocates were lobbying for stricter domestic

gun laws in the 1990s, parliamentarians in some areas were uneasy about supporting the

campaign for fear of losing votes in their communities. So the campaigners approached

the politicians and offered them the opportunity to be photographed and thus associated

with local supporters of the campaign who were also widely respected by communities,

such as church leaders, the head of the emergency room at the hospital, and local police

chiefs.

Lobbyists should remember that it is important to target those who are already

sympathetic to a cause, as well as those who oppose it. Successful campaigns are those

that build coalitions of NGOs and politicians. A parliamentarian might broadly support a

cause, but it is important that activists keep him or her informed on the current debate to

make sure that they share the same information and aims. The Fatal Transactions

campaign is another example of how to build coalitions around a single core issue.

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Fatal Transactions

The Fatal Transactions campaign is a consumer campaign consisting of four international

human rights organizations (Global Witness, Medico International, The Netherlands

Institute for Southern Africa and Novib/Oxfam Netherlands) which was launched in

October 1999 to alert the public of the links between the global diamond trade and the funding of conflict in African countries such as Angola, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The aim is to pressure diamond companies to establish policies, controls and management systems to ensure greater transparency and accountability in the procurement of diamonds. The campaign has attracted extensive media coverage around the world, raised consumer awareness and helped to mobilize the diamond industry and governments into joint efforts to stop the trade in conflict diamonds.

One of the campaign's successes was the first international meeting of the diamond industry, including producer countries, which was held in Kimberley, South Africa, in 2000. The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme for rough diamonds is the result of three years of intensive negotiations that started there and then. A combination of innovative NGO investigation, an image-sensitive commodity, and a transnational company (De Beers) that realized the potential commercial risk posed by association with conflict got the process off to a good start.

De Beers, which controls some 60 percent of the world's uncut diamonds, responded from an early stage in the Fatal Transactions campaign. Although conflict diamonds represent only 4-10 percent of the world market, the company recognized the potential danger of an effective consumers campaign. In early 2000, De Beers announced that it would begin issuing written guarantees that the diamonds it sells do not come from any area in Africa controlled by forces rebelling against an internationally recognized government.

In November 2002 states, industry representatives and NGOs managed to reach

consensus on a document outlining the political as well as practical aspects of a

worldwide certification scheme for rough diamonds. Implementation started on 1 January

2003. Although the UN is not a formal signatory, it has been essential to the process

through its publication and dissemination of Panel of Expert report, through its leverage

on governments, and through its formal endorsement of the KPCS from December 2000.

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Societies in Transition

Awareness-raising and lobby campaigns faces additional challenges when conducted in

countries in conflict or transition. After war or a period of totalitarianism, those forces

responsible for this negative policy environment are still there and new democracies

(including the rule of law, respect for human rights and much more) still need to be

established. Besides, many countries have people within their borders whose main

concerns are bread and butter issues, which is not to say that they do not care about larger

issues – it is just not their main preoccupation. This is a hard situation to get out of.

Politicians may not have the strength or even the will to deal with the problems that are

the focus of the campaigns mentioned in this chapter, and NGOs need enormous amounts

of effort, energy and willpower to make politicians and the public at large listen to them.

Here, establishing contacts with sympathetic media and other coalition partners is even

more vital.

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Publish what you pay

Natural resource revenues are an important source of income for governments of over fifty developing countries. International oil, gas and mining companies pay billions of dollars a year to the governments of many less developed countries that are rich in natural resources, such as Angola and Nigeria. When properly managed these revenues should serve as a basis for poverty reduction, economic growth and development. Few of these countries' citizens benefit from this financial windfall, however, because of government corruption and mismanagement. Relying on companies to disclose information voluntarily has so far failed because they fear being undermined by less scrupulous competitors.

The Publish What You Pay campaign coalition consists of over 200 NGOs and civil society organizations worldwide calling for a mandatory disclosure, backed by legislation, of payments made by oil, gas and mining companies to all governments for the extraction of natural resources. The idea is that by knowing exactly how much revenue resource extraction is generating, communities can advocate with their governments for the productive use and equitable distribution of these funds. The campaign was launched by George Soros and founded by Global Witness, CAFOD, Open Society Institute, Oxfam, Save the Children UK and Transparency International UK. The campaign has led to the British government's launch of the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative, which is a landmark approached in encouraging governments and companies to maximize transparency.

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Lessons Learned

The harsh reality of campaigning is that *supporting a deserving cause is not enough in itself*. Activists need to be strong-willed and tough; being in the right does not on its own lead to winning the argument. There are lots of good causes competing for the attention of journalists, the public and policymakers, so organizations have to work hard to sell their cause. This means that good research is not enough. Research forms a core part of publicizing a cause and communicating the full extent of a problem. Too many campaigning groups conduct extensive research, then shy away from the adversarial arena of lobbying, which is where they could put that research to its most effective use. Awareness raising and lobbying should be used in conjunction with research; the two methods complement each other. Research data should be publicized to make use of it, while awareness raising and lobbying activity must be backed up by comprehensive research.

It is *vital that the information which activists provide be accurate*. Research is crucial to helping an organization establish and maintain a reputation as a credible source of information. Campaigners should never be tempted to overstate a problem; the problems we deal with are severe enough in themselves. If journalists, the public or policymakers feel a group has exaggerated a problem to gain support, they may withdraw their support, putting the campaign at risk.

The competitive campaigning environment also means that *activists need to consider all of the potential tools at their disposal,* such as getting celebrities or community leaders to speak up for their cause. When campaigners are absorbed in their own subject it is easy to for them to presume that it is obvious that the need for action speaks for itself and so celebrity backing is not required. Yet the reason that the intervention has not yet happened, and they are still having to campaign, is precisely because it is not yet obvious to everyone, and if a celebrity can help to raise the profile of the cause, it may be worth considering. A word of warning though – celebrities must be properly briefed, and committed to the cause themselves. Activists still shudder at the memory of a pop star who, on leaving a human rights fundraising event during the late 1980s, was asked by a journalist what she thought about the situation in South Africa. To the horror of anti-apartheid campaigners, she earnestly said that it was truly terrible that the rhinos were still being killed.

* Rebecca Peters is the director of IANSA, the International Action Network on Small Arms. IANSA is the global network of civil society organizations working to stop the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.

Resources

Lead organizations

Coalition for the International Criminal Court – USA

cicc@iccnow.org

http://www.iccnow.org

Coalition to stop the use of child soldiers – United Kingdom

For contact, please visit website

http://www.child-soldiers.org/

International Action Network against Small Arms – USA

info@iansa.org

http://www.iansa.org

International Alert – United Kingdom

general@international-alert.org

http://www.international-alert.org

International Campaign to Ban Landmines – USA

For contact, please visit website

http://www.icbl.org

Hague Appeal for Peace – USA

hap@haguepeace.org

http://www.haguepeace.org

Fatal Transactions Campaign – The Netherlands

ft@niza.nl

http://www.fataltransactions.org

Publish What You Pay Campaign – United Kingdom

coordinator@publishwhatyoupay.org

http://www.publishwhatyoupay.org

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20.1 Never Again: Archdiocese of Sao Paulo/World Council of Churches - Brazil

During the period of military rule, Brazilian army officers kept detailed files of those they tortured, who they tortured and even the methods used. They never imagined one day it would all come to light. It did though, thanks to a project undertaken with zealous eucumenical passion by a team coordinated by the Rev. Jaime Wright, under the auspices and the protection of Cardinal Paulo Evaristo Arns of the Roman Catholic archdiocese of Sao Paulo, and the World Council of Churches.

In September 1973 Jaime Wright answered the telephone in his office in Sao Paulo, Brazil and felt his world cave in. "Es caru," the voice at the other end said – "He is fallen". Then the line went dead.

The fallen was Jaime's younger brother, Paulo Stuart Wright. An assemblyman in the southern state of Santa Catarina during the early sixties, Paulo was stripped of his position when the military took power on April 1, 1964. He fled the country but returned clandestinely and was organizing peasant cooperatives and rural networks when he "disappeared".

The body was never recovered. But years later, Jaime Wright, a Presbyterian minister, uncovered the gruesome details of his brother's torture and murder. These were contained in one of the files of legal proceedings carried out in Brazil's military courts

over the period 1964 to 1979. Thousands of such files were retrieved from the army

archives under provisions of an amnesty law. Secretly copied and catalogued, they

became a chilling parallel record of the military authorities' own torture archives.

In 1985, with the transition to civilian rule underway, the more than a million pages of

documentation were synthesized into a best-selling book, *Brasil: Nunca Mais – Um*

Relato para a Historia. This graphic but objective account of torture victims and their

torturers, the instruments of torture, and results, was the most visible manifestation of a

project undertaken with zealous eucumenical passion by a team coordinated by the Rev.

Jaime Wright, under the auspices and the protection of Cardinal Paulo Evaristo Arns of

the Roman Catholic archdiocese of Sao Paulo, and the World Council of Churches

(WCC).

The project left another lasting legacy: a carefully assembled archive containing

thousands of files detailing repression and torture that provided a window into the

underside of Brazil during the years after the military took power in 1964. Such a detailed

record has no parallel in Latin America.

What it amounted to was an indictment of the Brazilian military rule (1979-1985). A

period when under the guise of eradicating "communist infiltrators", the state waged

an insidious campaign of terror on its own people. An era when anyone who voiced

opposition to the regime became a target, including those fighting for the rights of the

poor and land-less; journalists and members of the opposition political parties of the

left.

A particular characteristic of the violence administrated by the state was the widespread

and systematic use of torture. Thousands of people were subjected to acts of terror in

order to extract confessions of wrongdoing or sometimes just to silence any dissent.

Highly Detailed Files

In 1979, fifteen years after taking office, the Brazilian military accelerated what up to

then had been a slow stop-start process of liberalization, by offering an amnesty for both

political prisoners and state security agents who had carried out torture.

Human rights advocates representing victims warmly welcomed the amnesty for political

prisoners; the prospect of an amnesty for agents of terror deeply troubled many

Brazilians. But one particular provision of this amnesty provided a window of

opportunity.

In preparing amnesty petitions, lawyers for the political prisoners were permitted to view

official state records of their clients. Crucially, they were also allowed to keep these files

overnight, provided they returned them within 24 hours.

The files in question were extensive and highly detailed accounts of every person

abducted, tortured, interrogated and killed by the security forces. Brazilian army officers

were obsessive record keepers.

A group of lawyers realized that, though the process of accessing the files was ad hoc, the

contents were valuable. Even a tiny sampling would offer unique insight into the use of

torture in Brazil. They proposed the idea of acquiring such a sampling to Jaime Wright.

Knowing there was little help or sympathy to be had from his own Brazilian Protestant

churches, Wright went to his close friend, Cardinal Evaristo Arns, archbishop of Sao

Paulo, who had become an increasingly vocal critic of the junta, and Phillip Potter,

general-secretary of the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

Within a mater of days, Cardinal Arns gave the idea his personal backing. The WCC

agreed to provide funding and support. As the cardinal put it in an interview later:

"What unites us, you see, is the Gospel – what the Word of God tells us to do. In concrete

projects such as this one, there is no time to worry about the things that separate us."

Catholic bishops, some Protestant leaders, as well as laypersons, worked hard to comfort

the many victims of repression: 20,000 citizens were imprisoned during military rule,

many were tortured and killed, others disappeared or were forced into exile.

Church opinion on the issue was by no means universal. Some characterized the reported

incidents of torture as "isolated" and accepted that the alleged victims were "agitators"

and "terrorists". They trumpeted the official propaganda about the "social reforms"

undertaken by the military - literacy programs, highway building programs, schools,

social security system, housing projects.

In May 1971, a group of North American missionaries, meeting in Campinas, in the state

of Sao Paulo, defended these reforms and condemned church critics of the military like

Dom Helder Camara, archbishop of Olinda and Recife.

Not only missionaries, but also broad sectors of Brazilian churches took this line, or were so far removed from the oppressed peoples they were in no position to reach a definitive conclusion.

Given this situation, while Cardinal Arns provided a moral umbrella and some physical space, he could not use Catholic funds for the purpose out of fear superiors – not all of whom were sympathetic to such an enterprise – would raise questions and compromise the project's secrecy.

In this regard, the role of the World Council of Churches was crucial. The WCC had already developed links within the ecumenical community in Brazil. It was involved in collecting reports of illegal detention and torture from the early 1970s. It circulated this information on abuses and torture to appropriate United Nations bodies and concerned governments worldwide. Through various ecumenical channels inside Brazil, the WCC also provided moral and financial assistance to detainees and prisoners.

In addition, working through CESE – the ecumenical service agency – the WCC launched a campaign across Brazil to publicize the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Five million copies of the document were produced for churches in every single state. Each article of the declaration was accompanied by Biblical and theological references. In the seventies and eighties the world body had worked with Cardinal Arns to pressure the authorities for the protection and safety of union organizers from the military police.

Within a month after receiving the request, the WCC, through its Human Rights Office for Latin America, started covertly funding the Nunca Mais project. By 1980, the project

was in high gear. It was carried out in utmost secrecy. Lawyers working with the team

applied for the files under the pretext of preparing amnesty submissions. The documents

were photocopied and returned without arousing the suspicion of the authorities.

The project was carried out from a nondescript office building in Brasilia. There was no

sign on the door. Three photocopying machines were kept going ten hours a day, seven

days a week, copying the files in time for the lawyers to return the originals on time.

After the files were photocopied, they were transferred to Sao Paulo, microfilmed, and

spirited out of the country to the offices of the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

The courier who took the microfilm to Geneva, brought back with him cash from the

WCC stuffed into a money belt. In Geneva, the microfilm was analyzed and archived.

As Strong as any Justice

In 1985, the organizers realized the entire archives amounting to one million pages had

been photocopied. This material was condensed into a 7,000-page report detailing,

sometimes in minute detail, the extent of state repression.

Still operating in the utmost secrecy, the organizers employed two Brazilian journalists to

summaries this further into a readable and easily digestible narrative. Publishers were

found in Brazil and the USA, and on July 15, 1985, without any advance publicity, the

book *Brasil: Nunca Mais* (Brazil, Never Again) appeared in bookstores in Brazil.

It was a publishing sensation. Two weeks after publication, Nunca Mais was the number

one best seller in Brazil, a position it maintained for 25 weeks. It went on to become the

biggest ever non-fiction title in Brazil, eventually selling 200,000 copies.

Brazilians had heard accounts of torture and repression before. Huma n rights groups and other organizations had reported these. Now they had a vivid account of the who, what, how and why.

The project also made available for public consumption duplicate archives with the complete record of Brazil's military courts during the height of the repression from 1964 to 1979. Preserved on 6,946 pages, complete with statistical tables, was an alphabetical listing of 444 torturers whose names were taken from official military court records, their 7,363 victims - people accused by the regime of one type of political activity or the other, and placed on trial - and methods used.

As a corollary to the project, 10,170 publications that appeared during that period - published by almost fifty clandestine groups – were assembled in a library.

In September 1985, the recently inaugurated president, José Sarney, Brazil's first elected civilian president since 1964, signed the UN Convention Against Torture –a move many people argue was prompted by revelations in the book.

Some months later, when the list of the 444 tortures was released, it was found that many held high positions throughout the country. Some were promptly fired: others had their career paths blocked. In 1999, Brazilian medical associations began hearings to revoke the medical licenses of doctors who took part in the torture of political prisoners between 1964 and 1985.

While the amnesty of 1979 still prevents criminal charges being brought by the victims of torture against their perpetrators, those implicated by the book are now publicly known

for their crimes. The truth based in the revelation of the true horror of those crimes was

for many people as strong as any justice.

The late Jaime Wright saw the Nunca Mais project as preserving the memory of years of

repression. He said its great value was to provide the church and people of Brazil with an

instrument for work and struggle on behalf of justice so that the horrors that were

commonplace during the period never happen again.

"It is only when the causes of repression are eliminated that its effects – torture among

them – will disappear."

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Torture Lessons

The majority of the trials on which the files collected in the Nunca Mais project are based

- 4,460 out of the total of 7,367 - took place between 1969 and 1974, when Garrastazu

Medici ruled Brazil. A total of 2,127 persons were imprisoned during the government of

Castello Branco, from 1964-1966.

Some 38.9 percent of the victims were under 25 years of age. 91 were below 18 years of

age when charged and imprisoned. Of the 7,367 trials, 1,918 accused swore, under oath,

that they were tortured during detention – an high number given the likelihood that many

were too afraid to make such a declaration.

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20.2 Making a Difference: The Women Building Peace Campaign

The goals of the international Women Building Peace Campaign have been to get its concerns about women in conflict situations onto the agendas of nations, international bodies including the UN and the EU. Since the unanimous adoption by the UN Security Council of Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, the campaign is focusing on the translation of the rhetoric of the resolution into gender sensitive practice. By Ancil Adrian-Paul*

On October 31, 2000, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. It was the first time that the Security Council had so explicitly addressed the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women. It was, furthermore, the first time that the council had acknowledged the under-representation of women in official conflict resolution activities and the special role women can play in building peace and security. The unanimous adoption of Resolution 1325 also represented an important success for a broad-based coalition of activists. Many of them supported the global campaign Women Building Peace: From the Village Council to the Negotiating Table, which was officially launched in May 1999 by International Alert (the UK-based international NGO with extensive experience in conflict resolution work).

The Campaign

The primary objectives of the Women Building Peace Campaign were to influence the policies of international bodies – especially the United Nations Security Council and the European Union (EU); to ensure that women's perspectives are integrated into peace and security issues; develop a coalition of women's organizations working collaboratively to advance the issues highlighted by the campaign and, to stimulate the release of resources to support the work of women and women's organizations involved in peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and reconciliation.

Advocacy and lobbying for the resolution, along with a similar resolution at the European Parliament represented tangible milestones the campaign established for itself. Such a resolution could serve as a "policy tool" setting out specific actions to be taken by governments, the United Nations system and other organizations in support of women's inclusion in processes that affect their peace and security. The tool would also stimulate participating stakeholders to examine and adapt their own policies with respect to women's concerns and demands.

The Women Building Peace campaign was launched in response to five critical concerns articulated by women:

. Lack of women's inclusion in decisionmaking processes.

. Women's absence from post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation processes.

. Lack of sufficient protection for refugee, displaced and other war-affected women.

. The need to develop mechanisms to end impunity for crimes committed against women during armed conflict.

. Lack of sufficient and sustainable resources to support women's peacebuilding work.

One of the main goals of the campaign has been to raise visibility about these issues.

Beyond that, the campaign aims to "make women matter" — that is, to alter the processes

of conflict resolution and peacebuilding in such a way that both the concerns of women

and the often overlooked conflict resolution activities that they engage in become far

more central to "mainstream" conflict resolution activities. As one observer, Rita

Manchanda remarked, referring to the role of women in Kashmir, it was often the case

that, in the face of repression

"the women come out in their traditional roles as nurturers and as protectors of the

community. It is an empowering experience. It is the women who negotiate with the

security forces and the administration …it is both women's importance and weakness

that gives them the right to access the powerful and say: Give me justice".1

Key Stakeholders

In the forefront of this campaign was a loose grouping of NGOs2, calling itself the NGO

Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, which resolved to work together for the

Security Council resolution. They quickly realized that support from UN agencies and

key members of the Security Council would be critical in the process. Informed by

research, the members of the group systematically and persistently engaged the member

states in dialogue, providing information and analysis on the impact of armed conflict on

women in different regions of the world, the positive role women play in peacebuilding,

and the need to include women in peace processes and protect them from gender-related

violence, including such abuses as sexual torture, rape, enforced pregnancy, and forced

prostitution.

Items for discussion at the Security Council must be placed on the agenda by a Member

State. This was done by the Permanent Mission of Namibia, which had recently hosted a

conference on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multi-Dimensional Peace

Operation. Other member states such as Jamaica and Ireland offered support by

convening what have become known as Arria Formula debates on the resolution –

informal, unofficial meetings of the Security Council where non-members can speak

about issues they wish the Security Council to address.

The involvement of many agencies and individuals within the UN itself was essential. In

particular, the Fund for Women (UNIFEM) was especially key, for example by

identifying and facilitating the participation of women peace advocates from Guatemala,

Zambia, Somalia, and Sierra Leone. These women electrified Council members at Arria

Formula meetings with their personal testimonies, reflections, and perspectives on

women, conflict and peacebuilding.

The Strategy

In order to ensure widespread and representative support for the initiative and to shape

impact and influence policy at the global level, the campaign staff devised a multi-faceted

strategy.

Prior to the launch of the campaign an international conference brought together women from forty-eight conflict areas to share their experiences of armed conflict and their agency and positive role in peacebuilding. Key activities at the conference included discussing international mechanisms previously developed to promote women's advancement and empowerment, reflecting on the degree to which these mechanisms had been interpreted and entrenched into national laws, and examining strategies for future action. The women participating in the conference unanimously agreed on the need for a global campaign that would be a rallying point for women's demands and for increased visibility.

The launch of the Women Building Peace campaign followed in May 1999. Jordan's Queen Noor agreed to serve as the campaign's patron. Subsequent international events in 1999 afforded additional opportunities to launch the initiative internationally. Organizationally, a nineteen member, broadly-based advisory committee was established, including representation from women and women's groups based in countries in pre-conflict, hot conflict, and post-conflict situations. The advisory committee was supplemented with support from a myriad of local organizations that agreed to act as either local, national or regional focal points for the campaign, and over 350 organizations that signed on as campaign supporters.

The organizers were cognizant of the fact that grassroots' support was important for the success of the campaign, and accordingly held three separate regional consultatio ns with grass roots organizers, including many from conflict regions. Parallel with these consultations, policy dialogues were organized with key UN agencies — not just those

engaged with women's issues, but also development and security issues — focusing on

such matters as language, key issues to stress, and identifying agencies that would be

supportive of the campaign. Campaign staff engaged in policy dialogue with the

governments of Namibia, Jamaica, France, and the United Kingdom, and carried out desk

research and mapping of the women and peace policies of the fifteen European Union

member states, to facilitate future campaign activities.

In order for the campaign to be truly inclusive and participatory, activities needed to take

place at both the global and local levels. At the local level women engaged in translating

the campaign's information literature into local languages and distributing it in over 150

countries. They also launched advocacy campaigns locally in conflict regions including

Nigeria and Sudan. At the global level, organizations produced leaflets, posters and

collected signatures, among other activities.

Tactics

The approach embraced by the campaign was to develop a well-founded, carefully

researched understanding of the full range of issues related to women in peacebuilding,

and to use that knowledge to generate policy documents and recommendations to

disseminate to policy makers, parliamentarians, women's groups, church leaders, the

media and other interested constituencies. The campaign then followed up with personal

contacts, as well as activities such as round-table discussions and bilateral meetings to

raise awareness and press for action.

It was also important to raise awareness about the campaign and the issues, and to share

resources as widely as possible. One mechanism was the publication and distribution of a

newsletter. Additionally, the initiation and delivery of a global petition addressed to UN

Secretary-General Kofi Annan that listed the women's five demands contributed to

raising the profile of women's organizations and their peacebuilding activities.

Furthermore, the production of an interactive CD-ROM on Women and Conflict, the

establishment of the campaign's website, and the distribution of leaflets and other

information also contributed to raising awareness.

Exploitation of the synergies made possible by the collaborative partnership with the

broad coalition was invaluable for lobbying around Resolution 1325, monitoring

campaign progress, and a range of other activities. The campaign also readily took

advantage of the "leverage" that some of the participants enjoyed to advance the cause.

For example, International Alert had a degree of leverage with the UK's Department for

International Development (DFID) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)

because of its record of engagement in conflict resolution activities and its involvement

with women in peacebuilding.

Outcomes

The Women Building Peace Campaign has succeeded, in cooperation with the many

other individuals, organizations, and UN member states working on the matter, in placing

issues affecting women's peace and security firmly on the agenda of the international

community. In terms of policy impact — one of its main priorities — the campaign has

contributed to steering the policy debate first to focus on concrete reasons *why* a gender

perspective and women's views should be integrated into the policies of EU and UN

organs, and subsequently, to focus on *how* this can be achieved. The participation at Arria

Formula meetings — of which more are planned for the future — has been notable. The

staff has, furthermore, had input into a range of initiatives, including, for example, the

Brussels Afghan Women Leaders Summit that focused on Afghanistan's transitional

government and post-conflict reconstruction. In addition, the UK and other governments

specifically asked the campaign to provide assistance on the development of policies with

respect to women, peace and security.

There is no doubt that the campaign has succeeded in increasing visibility for women and

peacebuilding, with its campaign at the UN, at the EU, its petition campaign and

subsequent delivery to the United Nations of 100,000 signatures, and with additional

activities such as the establishment, together with UNIFEM, of the Millennium Peace

Prize for Women. The award of this prize to women and women's organizations from

several conflict areas raised their profile, and accorded them a degree of protection from

victimization and harassment.

The Resolution

Above all, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 stands as tangible proof of

the campaign and all other women and groups who campaigned for it. Its unanimous

endorsement by the members of the Security Council in October 2000 was swift and its

incorporation of all the themes that underpin the campaign surpassed the expectations of those lobbying for its passage.

Undoubtedly, the resolution is a step forward for women and a tool that can be used for political negotiations, quiet diplomacy and the mobilization of women and their organizations as well as UN agencies and other constituencies. Most importantly it is a tool that provides those addressing the issues of women in conflict with leverage that they did not previously possess, and a rationale for demanding accountability.

Yet the binding nature of the tool is undermined by the weakness of the language — relatively cautious words such as "encourages" and "requests" — compared to the originally proposed language. There are also a number of substantive weaknesses. For example, it fails to address early warning and early response mechanisms and makes no mention of mechanisms, benchmarks or success indicators that can be used to ensure state accountability. In addition, there are no mechanisms to ensure the protection and peace and security of women living in unrecognized states such as Abkhazia and South Ossetia (South Caucasus) and South Sudan in the Horn of Africa.

Follow-up

The passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 now frames the second phase of the campaign's work. During this second phase, it is incumbent upon the campaign to strengthen and deepen its alliances with the broad coalition and other groups that have been involved in the first phases of the campaign. One important aspect of the second phase of the campaign should be to connect directly to individuals and

organizations active in women's peacebuilding and conflict resolution activities,

translating policy into practice and rhetoric into reality. One aspect of this continued

work should be to conduct a "Peace Audit" — a mapping exercise of potential

instruments and mechanisms that can enable the implementation of Resolution 1325 in

each geographical area. This will be achieved by organizing consultations with relevant

interested parties in and out of government. Additionally, campaign staff is working on a

"know-how" project that will systematically document women's peacebuilding expertise,

the steps they take, the challenges they face, and the lessons they learn in order to

develop a body of evidence-based knowledge that can be shared with policy makers,

women's groups, and other constituencies.

In this second phase of the campaign, crucial issues such as small arms, post-conflict

reconstruction, peace support operations, and early warning have been identified with the

aim of carrying out further research to generate a more detailed gender analysis and

develop recommendations for implementation. The follow-up advocacy and policy work

is therefore focused on three distinct but inter-connected aspects: linking the policy to

women in the field, effective implementation of the tool, and highlighting emerging gaps

and opportunities for further research. Simultaneously, the campaign is providing context

specific case studies of how the resolution could be implemented to benefit women in

different regions and countries.

Conclusion

The Women Building Peace campaign has created opportunities and stimulated women's

organizations to reflect on how they can become more involved in securing their own

involvement in local, national and regional decision-making processes that impinge on

their peace and security. Engaging national and regional policy makers is essential for

continued success. To date, the campaign has raised awareness of the special position of

women as both victims of conflict and agents for conflict resolution. In so doing, it has

also highlighted the need for constant engagement and continuous monitoring of the

status quo. As this work continues, both formally and informally, civil society

organizations need to continually question the linkage between policy and practice and

how this is being effectively mainstreamed to benefit women on the ground. It is one

thing to articulate noble aims and to endorse an agenda embracing those aims. It is

altogether another thing to alter the facts as they exist in the real world.

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Resources

www.peacewomen.org/un/UN1325/1325index.html (Women's International League for

Peace and Freedom)

www.peacewomen.org/un/sc/res1325.pdf (resolution text. English)

www.peacewomen.org/un/sc/res1325.pdf (translation into other languages)

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1 Anderlini, S, Manchanda, R and Karmali, K (eds) (2000) Women, Violent Conflict and

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2 International Alert, the Hague Appeal for Peace, the Women's Commission on Refugee

Women and Children, Amnesty International and the Women's International League for

Peace and Freedom. Since then Amnesty has withdrawn from the group and the

International Women's Tribune Centre and the Gender Caucus for the ICC have joined.

20.3 Fighting Corruption: The Clean Election Campaign - Kenya

In December 2002, Kenya made history when democratic elections were followed by a smooth and peaceful transition of power, the first in the country's history. Many individuals and organizations contributed to this success, but the Clean Election Campaign deserves special mention. After the elections the successful popular movement initiated a Clean Kenya Campaign and even a Clean Africa Campaign: "The dirt in our streets, the dirt in our hearts, the dirt in our minds all needed to be cleaned."

The international NGO Initiatives of Change (or Moral Re-Armament at it was called then) launched the first Kenya Clean Election Campaign in 1995, in preparation for the general election that was coming up in two years time. Joseph Karanja, a 26-year old lawyer at that time, played a central role. Born into a humble African family, his story is not so much of rags to riches, but of rags to reforms; anti-corruption reforms that have transformed his homeland, Kenya.

Karanja was born in a country that already had become a one-party state then. Having gained its independence in 1963, it lost its democracy soon after when the opposition joined with the ruling party to form a stronger, harder rule. "I can remember as a small boy being sent to fetch water for my family from the communal water supply", Karanja said in an interview with the newspaper *Solomon Star*, "and being sent away empty-handed because I didn't have a party-card."

The one-party system meant that the leaders went unchecked and were able to do

whatever they liked with their young nation's wealth and people. "It was not that we

didn't pay our taxes", Karanja says, "everyone did, but those taxes went into the leaders'

back pockets."

After studying law in India and an internship with the United Nations Commission for

Refugees (UNHCR), Karanja made a decision about his career: "Kenya had stopped

working as a country simply because of corruption, and I wanted to do something for my

country."

The First Campaign

After having heard of the effectiveness of a Clean Election Campaign in Taiwan, he

brought together ten friends for a weekend conference to consider the situation in Kenya.

As a result, they decided to launch the Kenya Clean Election Campaign (CEC). 'I was

convinced that this was the right thing to address the corruption, violence, and apathy that

had become a permanent feature in our elections", says Karanja. "We decided to start

early because of the electoral process in my country; the government used to get the

Central Bank to print money to fund the elections – not their operations but for the bribes.

Either by intimidating people or bribing them, they would have the election tied up a year

in advance."

The group first approached religious leaders. They talked with the heads of the Catholic,

Anglican and other churches and the religious leaders of the Muslims. Three points were

put forward in these talks: 1) to ask people to commit themselves to accept no bribes, nor

vote for anyone who offered a bribe; 2) to encourage people to take responsibility for the integrity of the voting process in the voting booths, and 3) to encourage honest men and women to stand for election to parliament.

The religious leaders gave their full backing to this and encouraged CEC speakers to address their congregations, which over the succeeding months the CEC did. This proved a most effective way of reaching the ordinary voter, because on praying days churches are always full in Kenya. A group of businessmen helped to finance advertising the campaign in the Kenyan press and a printer undertook to print hundreds of thousands of leaflets without charge.

The 22 Catholic bishops invited "all Kenyans, especially the eight million Catholics, to support the campaign by signing the pledge form". The pledge, which was part of the leaflets, consisted of the promises not to accept bribes, when possible to prevent and expose actions that would distort or rig the election results, and not to take part in any violence. In all, over 700,000 pledges were signed and returned. The campaign leaflets also outlined fourteen qualities of a good leader, all of them non-political qualities, as a background for voting choices.

The campaign became extremely popular and quickly grew into a national movement, that many of Kenya's 33 million people took part in. Ordinary Kenyans invited campaign people to their homes to talk to various groups about the campaign. The people hosted campaigners, wherever they went. "The entire country was mobilized to support the campaign", says Karanja. "It gave an opportunity to every Kenyan to play their part in curing the rot in our country."

Also the media and other organizations gave their support to the campaign. For the government, it was hard to fight against it, because they could not openly come out against a campaign that was fighting corruption. "We made the campaign wholly a positive one", says Karanja, "we were not seeking to blame any particular party or individual but launched an equal challenge to all leaders not to take part in corruption." The apathy in the country, a result of the corrupt system, was broken. The campaign encouraged people to approach good leaders in their areas to stand as candidates. And so they did. Thirty candidates, who probably would not have stood for election but for the encouragement of Joseph Karanja and his colleagues because of the perceived corrupt nature of politics, won office. Eleven government ministers and 26 deputy ministers lost their seats and President Arap Moi's majority in parliament was reduced to four. Some members of his own party were no longer simply yes-men and his dictatorial power was reduced.

Keeping up the Momentum

The response that came following the 1997 elections was an encouragement to keep up the momentum. The campaigners started getting ready for the key 2002 presidential and parliamentary elections. This time, many other groups joined the Clean Election Campaign.

The Kenya Domestic Observation Programme invited the churches, the Hindu Council of Kenya and the Supreme Council of Muslims to monitor the elections. Another partner was Transparency International's Kenya chapter. The operation – funded by the

European Union – involved 20,000 Kenyans acting as observers: one for each polling

station. This helped in greatly reducing the election rigging.

Loopholes witnessed in the 1997 elections were sealed. This was done by fighting to

have the votes counted at the polling stations rather than moving the ballot boxes, which

would have increased the opportunity for them to be interfered with.

The team of Initiatives for Change managed to reach every region of the country;

messages that would have jeopardized fair elections were neutralized by the Clean

Election Campaign. The CEC activists distributed 140,000 leaflets and spoke on

hundreds of occasions on radio and TV talk shows, in schools and at public gatherings.

"CEC called on the electorate to pledge that they would not be party to any violence or

corruption and that they would report corrupt practices", Nairobi-based lawyer Francis

Kimani commented in *For a Change* (April-May 2003). "I still remember how a

congregation of about 3,000 people at the Christ the King Cathedral, Nakuru, was excited

when Joseph Karanja of CEC talked to them for ten minutes. The congregation was left

fully convinced that they could change things in Kenya."

A Big Success

This time the Clean Elections Campaign did even better. It turned out to be the most

peaceful and incident free election in the history of Kenya. The power of corruption in

elections was broken. The Kenya African National Union (KANU), the party that had

been in power since independence lost the election, as did the former president's

preferred candidate. A new government was voted in on the basis that it was going to

fight corruption. Despite the fact that there was no clear method of handing over power, the whole affair was a success. The new government immediately sacked many corrupt officials and judiciary. The chairman of the Kenya chapter of Transparency International was appointed by the new president to oversee and implement his anti-corruption program.

The ethos against corruption continued after the elections, also with ordinary Kenyans. Since the elections the Clean Kenya Campaign, also initiated by Initiatives of Change has been taking root in the country. The campaign asks Kenyans to speak up when acts of corruption occur. With success. Press reports speak of a growing number of cases where civilians forced police officers to return bribes. Karanja comments: "The people are now holding their government accountable by asking questions. The country is not clean yet, but at least something is happening. We won't stop until the job is done."

Spreading Around

Based on the pioneering work done in Kenya since 1997, Clean Election Campaigns were mounted in Sierra Leone, at the first democratic elections since the war, and in Ghana. With the help of CEC, a Clean Africa Campaign was launched in 2003. A secretariat is already in place in Nairobi.

The Clean Africa Campaign will be spearheaded by a traveling faculty to train potential leaders in honest and unselfish leadership. Nigerian Amina Dikedi, initiator of the campaign, wrote:

"Experience shows that leadership which is not corrupt, but is unselfish and capable of

reaching across historic divisions, receives an eager following. The Clean Africa

Campaign aims to encourage such leadership throughout Africa. Working in partnership

with churches, mosques, and other like-minded groups, it will make use of the extensive

network of Africans committed to moral change in their continent, and build on the

experience of the Clean Election Campaign in Kenya."

Now the campaign is even moving outside of Africa. It was decided to launch a Clean

Election Campaign following the Kenyan model for the Municipal Council elections for

the Solomon's Capital, Honiara, which are due to be held in 2005. It is hoped that it will

be a test for a nationwide Clean Election Campaign in 2006. Transforming the original

program from Kenya into a success with worldwide echo's.

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Sources

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20.3 Rage against the Regime: The Otpor in Serbia

In 1998, Serbian students responded to new restrictions on academic and media freedom with a highly unconventional movement called Otpor ("Resistance" in Serbian). The movement was leaderless and its tactics innovative and elaborate. Otpor helped to mobilize the Serb population and break through a barrier of fear. In October 2000, in part because of Otpor's unusual brand of nonviolent activism, President Slobodan Milosevic was driven from power. By Milja Jovanovic*

For those of us who grew up in Serbia in the late 80's and 90's, our world was one filled with war, economic and social disintegration, sanctions, bombing, political instability, ineptitude, and police brutality. We lived in a country whose institutions were manipulated by the ruling regime and where neither human rights nor the rule of law existed. Nationalism was the dominant ideology, and fear and suspicion of the outside world was such that many Serbians believed that the entire world was against us and wanted only to humiliate our people and destroy our country. The most negative of emotions prevailed: hopelessness, futility, apathy and despair.

The options, then, were stark and limited. Most of us thought our best choice was simply to pack our bags, to somehow secure an invitation from some connection in a "prosperous" country, and get out of Serbia. Another option was to try somehow to get

by, idling away the time, avoiding military service, attending university, or devising a

scheme — any scheme — to earn some money, and then just wait patiently for the world

to change. A third option was to choose not to wait, in spite of the hopelessness and

skepticism of all those who could not imagine Serbia as a prosperous democratic country.

The third option meant getting up every morning and doing something to change the way

we lived and felt. It did not matter how small, but the important thing was to do

something and work for a change.

President Milosevic and his regime ignored all three groups. He simply did not care if

tens of thousands of young people left the country. It did not matter to him if we had no

prospects for a decent life or a better future. As long as we were silent and obedient and

did not cause trouble, and as long as he could continue to lure enough of us into the army

to fight his "holy wars", he was satisfied.

We were not satisfied. That is why we created Otpor — the Serbian word for

"resistance". Otpor was our way of saying, "Mr. Milosevic, enough. This is unbearable.

And we hold you responsible, so you will pay."

Otpor was created out of rage, frustration, and anger — three emotions that were part of

the legacy that Milosevic bestowed on us. Those emotions became our weapons, and

once we understood that we could use the very feelings that were destroying us in a

positive, non-destructive way, we knew we would beat him.

Otpor was founded in October 1998 in response to two laws passed by the Serbian

parliament. One of these was a new media law designed to silence independent media.

The law allowed for immediate action, including closure and fines against media outlets
that broadcasted or published anything that might undermine Serbia's constitutional order
or integrity. The other was a law which completely violated our tradition of academic
freedom, giving government-appointed deans the power to arbitrarily dismiss professors
or order changes to the curriculum.

Many people might not understand why those two laws aroused so much outrage, but for
us, it was a case, to cite a Serbian expression, of the drops that caused the glass to
overflow. The media and university were sacred to us. They represented knowledge and
information, and those were two things we were not willing to sacrifice.

Otpor started as a small group of people who knew each other from earlier student
protests, the Belgrade music scene, and the local nightclub scene. Beginning with twenty
or so people who came together in October 1998, we had grown to about one hundred by
the end of the year. We called people we knew who shared our values and shared the goal
of removing Milosevic, and those who we knew had the will, the time and the energy to
fight.

Something Completely Different

With the political opposition in Serbia in complete disarray we made a firm decision to
create a movement rather than a political party. We had seen how political leaders
protected their own interests and fought among themselves instead of fighting Milosevic,

so we also decided that we would have no leader – no president, no director, not even a spokesperson. What we wanted above all was to show Milosevic that we had strength in numbers and that he would have to deal with us as a mass movement. Every night on the evening news we saw the regime's relentless and shameless propaganda, so we said:

"We will create a symbol that is stronger than their ideology, bigger than Milosevic, and goes beyond the symbols of the opposition parties."

Our symbol would be a clear statement: I am against this system; I am against Milosevic. The symbol that embodied that statement was a clenched fist.

We decided straight away that Otpor would be open to all who wished to join, whether they were from the left or the right. The only conditions were that you believed that Serbia needed freedom, and did not need Milosevic. Our strategy was to spread the idea of nonviolent resistance through everyday activism on the streets, and to give every individual in Serbia who shared our opinions the opportunity to show resistance, to be a part of the movement, and to express his or her political opinion. Our goal was to force Milosevic to hold early elections and to defeat him when they took place.

Our first target group was the young people – mostly because we felt that our approach to politics and our attitude, strongly influenced by pop culture, and our concept of a leaderless movement would resonate within our own generation. Beyond that, we felt that young people had been the key "missing ingredient" in the past. Many, if not most, of the people born in the seventies were against Milosevic but did not find a suitable representative in the existing political scene. So our thought was that they did not need

representation but rather a way to express themselves. By inviting them to join Otpor, we

would give them an opportunity to do just that.

Developing a Plan

We had an idea of what we wanted, but what we still needed was a plan. So that was the

next step. We began by asking ourselves who among our friends and acquaintances could

help us, and especially what journalists could write about us and how else we could make

our ideas known to the public.

Then we began to tak about possible actions. In fact, we talked about actions constantly,

because "doing" was important to us. We did not want a program that focused on writing

speeches, sending out press releases, or preaching to the converted or those who would

ignore us. We wanted to concentrate on "action", being out there on the streets and

making ourselves visible. So we started by spray-painting graffiti on Belgrade's streets

and facades. Everywhere you went, you would see the spray-painted clenched fists on the

walls, serving as a reminder of where you were living, who your president was, and what

your life was like.

At first, people disapproved. They did not want to think about politics. All they wanted

was peace, even if it was a false peace. Then we sprayed the provocative slogans and

their disapproval turned to anger. But at the same time they began to ask themselves,

"Who was this Otpor? What are they doing?"

In November 1998 the police arrested four of our activists during one of our "spraying sprees". They were each sentenced to ten days in prison, but the trials backfired, because soon the whole nation knew that Otpor was a movement of young people who were prepared to fight Milosevic's regime till the bitter end.

We decided to focus on the university and to try to reverse the restrictions on academic freedom. We started in Belgrade, urging a boycott of lectures and classes. Some of us were beaten up on the grounds of the university, but our action ended with our first small victory: the dean who had recruited the thugs to give Otpor members a beating resigned, and the state gave in to our demands to restore academic freedom.

Soon after that people from Kragujevac, Nis and Novi Sad contacted us, saying they also wanted to start Otpor branches. We met with them and came up with a plan of action. Taking Otpor to places outside of Belgrade turned out to be a turning point in Otpor's history. We spread like the plague: everyone wanted an Otpor t-shirt or a small badge with the fist on it.

Our plan was very simple: ordinary people all around Serbia would participate in different kinds of actions on the streets in their own towns and use the media to send a strong message about what people really thought. We also decided that we were going to carefully monitor everything the regime did and openly ridicule and criticize it. A lot of our actions were humorous and witty. We knew people were afraid of Milosevic and afraid of the police. The best way to break through that fear and undermine Milosevic's power was to employ humor to make him look stupid, small, and insignificant.

We took advantage of every opportunity to mock the regime's stupidity and brutality. There definitely was no shortage of targets for our ridicule. We had plenty of opportunities to expose the government, make fun of it, and show the people its true nature.

Soon the police started arresting people who were taking part in the actions. During 1999 and 2000, there were more than two thousand arrests of Otpor activists. Still, Milosevic failed to understand: as the arrests continued and the repression grew, the resistance grew even more. For every Otpor activist arrested, many more approached us to join our movement. Our parents and our grandparents also took notice, angered by a regime that would arrest 16- and 17-year olds. During the year 2000, our activists' base grew to 10,000, and then 30,000, and by September 2000, we had 80,000 Otpor activists.

The Otpor actions gave people, for the first time since the anti-government protests of 1996 and 1997, a feeling of unity and solidarity. Our actions included continued graffiti campaigns, demonstrations in front of military tribunals held to try army deserters, circulating clandestine newsletters, and displaying an effigy of President Milosevic on the street and inviting passers-by — for the price of one dinar — to punch it. We felt strong because we were all working together on something important — something that was going to change the course of Serbian history.

These were feelings that helped us to overcome the fear of change on which Milosevic had relied for so long — the fear that even though you have very little now, you would have nothing at all if he were to vanish from the scene. With that fear gone, and everyone

in the Serbian opposition— Otpor, opposition parties, the independent media, NGOs,

unions, professional organizations — working together for the first time since the end of

one-party politics in Serbia the pressure kept rising until, in July 2000, Milosevic

announced early local, federal and presidential elections for September 24, 2000.

On August 2, Otpor began what was going to be the biggest campaign ever conducted in

Serbia, the "Gotov je!" campaign, meaning, "He's finished!"

Otpor produced more than sixty tons of material for that campaign – t-shirts, posters,

brochures, flyers and, most important of all, stickers. The black and white stickers with

block letters declaring "He's finished" were probably the most important part of the

campaign. We usually placed them across Milosevic's own campaign posters – but they

also appeared on road signs and garbage containers, in shop windows. People put them

inside their cars, on their notebooks, and on their doors. They were everywhere. We also

returned to our early pastime — graffiti – spraying public transport vehicles, construction

sites, police cars, and building facades with the familiar stenciled fist and our bold

statement: 24.9.2000. "He's finished!"

On August 8, Milosevic turned 59 and we presented him with an ironic birthday card,

thanking him for robbing us of our childhood and plunging our region into war. "May

you celebrate the next one with your nearest and dearest on a deserved holiday in The

Hague," we said.

Otpor activists went everywhere, even to the smallest little village in Serbia, campaigning

door to door in a "get out the vote" campaign. We talked to people in person, organized

public meetings, protests, and demonstrations, and handed out our materials, encouraging

people to be active, to get involved, and to vote against Milosevic.

Everyone started to feel that the "He's finished" message was real — that it really would

happen. Milosevic was going to lose the elections. So he did.

On September 24, the people voted him out of power, although at least for a few more

weeks, he refused to admit defeat. Otpor and other groups had sent out an army of

election monitors, and the opposition parties had the data to prove that Vojislav

Kostunica was the real winner. The entire nation mobilized against Milosevic's attempt

to steal the election, and on October 5, with hundreds thousands of people gathered in

Belgrade, he finally bowed to the inevitable and acknowledged what we all knew:

Milosevic really was finished.

Latest developments

October 5, 2000 will be remembered as the day when Serbia succeeded with a nonviolent

movement in replacing a totalitarian regime with a democracy. Otpor had played a vital

role, using ingenious tactics, humor, and its unusual non-hierarchical organization. For

the extraordinary contribution Otpor had made to the end of the Milosevic regime, it won

MTV'S "Free Your Mind Award" in November 2000. Then differences began to emerge

within its membership about what strategies would be appropriate in the post-Milosevic

era, and many of its activists left Otpor. Still, it waged a successful campaign to hold

officials of the former regime accountable for corruption, and mounted a campaign

against organized crime. In November 2003, it re-organized itself into a political party

and polled 60,000 votes in parliamentary elections. Finally, in 2004, following its merger

with the Democratic Party, Otpor as a political party ceased to exist, the NGO does still

exists though, to resume activities when needed.

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Sharing the Experience

When looking at recent developments in the Ukraine, the scene looks familiar. It brings

back memories of similar images of Serbia and Georgia. The absence of violence, the

almost joyful atmosphere, the lack of aggressiveness towards political opposition, the

frivolous actions, the ironic posters and the enormous persistence of the thousands of

demonstrators. The protest is extremely well organized. Amongst the many reasons for

this, is the help of Otpor.

Otpor activist have set-up the Centre for Non-Violent Resistance. After having helped

youth move ments from Tbilisi in 2003, in the spring of 2004 they got in contact with

Pora, the biggest Ukrainian youth opposition movement. In April there were even some

eighteen young people that traveled to Serbia for a course on organizational and

negotiation skills, street protest tactics and how to monitor the elections to be able to fight

possible fraud. Some of Otpor's members tried to travel to Kiev to join in the protest, yet

they were stopped at the airport.

Still, their experiences have helped youth groups to act, both in Tbilisi and Kiev.

Although attempts to do the same in Belarus and Ghana failed, Otpor believes it was

because the time was not right for it, but that in the future the same familiar images will

arise again.

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* Milja Jovanovic was an Otpor activist. She is currently an art director and head of

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20.5 Protests Stop Devastating Nuclear Tests: The Nevada -Semipalatinsk Movement

in Kazakhstan

Established on the initiative of a poet, an anti-nuclear movement embarked on a

successful people's campaign to stop nuclear testing in Kazakhstan. The movement

sought inspiration abroad and developed tactics that turned out to be very effective in

the former Soviet republic. Within months, testing stopped. The test site was closed

permanently in 1991.

Bigger than Western Europe and the second largest republic of the former Soviet

Republic, Kazakhstan seemed to be a perfect location for performing nuclear tests. The

republic's remoteness, its relatively low population density and the presence of uranium

in its soil made Stalin's government chose the area as the place for nuclear experiments.

The first Soviet atom bomb detonated here in 1949, and in 1953 the first hydrogen bomb

was also tested in Kazakhstan.

The tests took place in the Semipalatinsk test range, an area of 18,000 square kilometers

in the northeast of Kazakhstan in a region where the vast steppes, so typical for

Kazakhstan, gradually give way to a mountainous area. Here, for decades the huge

mushroom-shaped clouds that go with nuclear explosions would appear several times a

year. Between 1949 and 1989, 456 nuclear tests - 340 underground and 116 in the

atmosphere - were conducted at the Semipalatinsk test site. It would take decades before

the painful consequences of the tests for the local population became clear. It would take

even longer until the population of Kazakhstan found the courage and an opportunity to

rise up against the tests and the people ordering them.

Changes in Health

The birth of the anti-nuclear protest movement in Kazakhstan was the result of an

unusual step taken by one of the republic's most prominent writers.

As the years passed, the people in the Semipalatinsk region began to witness changes in

their health. The number of birth defects increased, as did the number of cases of

leukemia and other forms of cancer. New diseases never heard of before began to appear

and to increase rapidly. Olzhas Suleimenov, a Kazakh poet, and elected as a Peoples

Deputy started to witness the suffering of the local people. He became more and more

concerned as he saw an increasing rate of cancer. He informed his colleagues in the

Supreme Soviet at the Kremlin that the nuclear testing resulted in serious health problems

in Kazakhstan. No one paid attention to him. The region was far away from the Kremlin

and very few of the People Deputies had any knowledge of radiation diseases.

In February 1989, as a direct result of two underground tests at the Semipalatinsk test

site, clouds containing huge amounts of radioactive gases passed over inhabited areas. A

military pilot stationed at a base not far from the test site informed Olzhas Suleimenov

that all the dosimeters in the town showed very high levels of radiation. The dosimeters

had been installed in the kindergartens and schools for the children of the military

officers. The pilot was very concerned about the future health of his children in

Kazakhstan.

It was clear to those concerned about the tests and their impact that they would risk arrest

by the Soviet police if they would protest publicly or seek to raise the issue in other ways.

Discussing problems related to a military program that was considered to be top secret

was a major taboo in the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, Olzhas Suleimenov decided to take

action. He chose a resourceful, yet risky way to reach as many people as possible in one

stroke. The poet, who had been accepted as writer by the authorities and was a member of

the Writer's Union, in early 1989 was invited to appear on a television program. He was

to speak about the cultural heritage of Kazakhstan and would read some of his poetry, the

writer and the program makers agreed. Unexpectedly, Suleimenov broke with the

program's script while live on air. With thousands of Kazakh viewers watching, he

pushed the papers about history and poetry aside, looked into the camera and addressed

his audience about the nuclear devastation he said had been going on in Kazakhstan. The

poet said the tests were not harmless, contrary to what the authorities had been telling

Kazaks for years and urged citizens to raise their voice. Suleimenov also referred to

recent international political developments when he pointed out that nuclear arms seemed

no longer necessary as the Cold War was coming to an end. "Why continue testing when

there is no enemy any longer?" he said in his speech. He mentioned international protests

were going on in other countries, a phenomenon unknown to most inhabitants of the

region. The poet in particular referred to activists in Nevada, counterpart of

Semipalatinsk as the site of U.S. nuclear tests since the 1950s. It was clear to him that the

example of activists in Nevada could be an inspiration for Kazaks, as well as a source of

practical information about nuclear technology and its impact on health and the
environment.

In his speech, Suleimenov told his audience that his interventions as a People Deputy in
Moscow had fallen on deaf ears. He stressed it was up to the citizens themselves to do
something. He then called on viewers to come to his office at the Writers Union the next
morning and promised he would help them organize a people movement against nuclear
tests. More than 5,000 people showed up. Much more then Suleimenov had expected.
They had to stand outside the building and Suleimenov addressed them speaking from a
balcony. Out of the mass meeting a committee was born, headed by a group of
intellectuals. That very day, Suleimenov and others established what they called the
Nevada-Semipalatinsk Anti-Nuclear Movement. The organization quickly came to
include a broad range of people, as divers as shepherds, doctors, housewives and miners.

Three Types of Diplomacy

From the moment of its creation the Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement embarked on a
series of activities. It organized peace marches, demonstrations attended by thousands of
people, international and regional conferences.

The movement set itself five basic tasks: to bring a halt to testing, to restore the
surrounding environment, to study the health of the population and win compensation for
those who had suffered, to join in campaigns against testing in other regions, and to bring
about the conversion of nuclear testing facilities so that they would serve peaceful
purposes.

Vladimir Yakimets, a Moscow scientist and one of the leaders of the movement, pointed out that the movement gradually adopted "a concept of three types of diplomacy". One he described as "people's diplomacy", meaning calling meetings and demonstrations. Another being "parliamentary diplomacy", aimed at getting deputies nominated in legislative bodies where they were in the position to propose legislation that was relevant to dealing with the issue. The third category was "expert diplomacy", consisting of liaising with experts and activists abroad who were campaigning against nuclear testing, such as in Nevada.

As a result of the protests, eleven of the eighteen tests planned for the year 1989 were cancelled. After a major test explosion in October 1989, 130,000 workers at the Karaganda coalmines declared that they would go on strike if the tests continued. Suleimenov raised the issue once more at the Supreme Soviet. This time it worked. In November the Supreme Soviet adopted a resolution in which it urged the government to discuss the issue to close the Semipalatinsk test site. A few weeks later, then President Michael Gorbachev announced the first moratorium ending testing at the Semipalatinsk test site.

On 29 August, 1991, President Nursultan Nazarbajev of Kazakhstan announced the formal, and permanent, closure of the Semipalatinsk test site. One of the major goals of the movement had been accomplished.

Extended Justice

The movement went on to acquire knowledge about radiation and its consequences for the region. "When our movement began its work, there were no reliable, independent studies of the medical consequences," Yakimets said.

The movement established a committee to study the consequences of radiation on the environment and health. Focal areas were the contamination of ground water and genetic mutations as a result of exposure to radiation. The group put significant effort into demanding access to archival material. It did obtain access to many of these documents and the group analyzed them.

The region is lightly populated. With about 330,000 inhabitants, Semipalatinsk was the largest population center and the test site was about 200 kilometers to the west of the city. Nonetheless, since the explosions and the radioactive clouds that were generated by them covered a vast territory, millions of Kazaks felt affected by them and were deeply concerned about the potential consequences once they realized what was going on and saw the first signs of mutilations and the proliferation of formerly unknown diseases.

It is now well established that the effects of the testing include sharp rises in cancer rates among the people of the region. This is especially true for the areas nearest to the test site. The incidence of lung cancer and digestive tract cancers is particularly high.

Mutilation, as a result of genetic disorders, has also appeared. Maidan Abishev, another leader of the Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement refe rred to a young woman, Renata, a bright-eyed, smiling 17-year old who is just 55 cm tall because of exposure to radiation while in her mother's womb.

About two million hectares of agricultural lands became radioactively contaminated. At three places in the area contamination is especially grave; here the level of background radiation reaches 100 times the permissible level. At one of these locations a so called "peaceful" test in 1965 created a new lake, as part of an experiment to find out whether the big nuclear explosions could be used to change the course of the northern rivers. "Not surprisingly, the lake is highly radioactive," scientist Yakimets said.

The group has been seeking a law to provide compensation to the victims. It also looked into the feasibility of clean-up measures, aimed at undoing at least some of the damage caused to the environment and reducing the risk of genetic distortions in future generations. Chromosome tests were revealing damage among people in the Semipalatinsk region, Yakimets said. "The nation is in state of stress," he commented in the early 1990s.

One of the strengths of the Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement was that it reached out to people abroad sharing a similar fate. The people of Kazakhstan did not limit their international outreach to Nevada. They also managed to forge ties with people in Japan, the only country that has experienced the devastation of nuclear bombs in wartime. Japanese experts and activists who have top-notch know-how about the impact of radiation on people's health came to Kazakhstan to investigate and provide advice. The Japanese team interviewed village people at schools and hospitals and learned that the nuclear tests affected virtually everybody in the vicinity of the site. Japanese activist Shunji Tsuboi, who visited the former test site in 2003, estimated that 1.2 to 1.5 million

people in Kazakhstan have been affected by the nuclear tests. Tsuboi was quoted as

saying in a press report on the visit:

"We saw the shocking ruins where the first nuclear test explosion took place in 1949.

People think that the A-bomb in Hiroshima city is the only existing testimony to the

damage caused by nuclear weapons. They should see the Polygon (Polygon is the

Russian word for 'test site', ed.) ruins, which have been exposed to broad daylight. A

mountain blown up, its remains lying around -- it looked like a scene from hell. I am not

exaggerating."

Ongoing activities

Almost fifteen years after the movement launched its first protests and began its

advocacy work, the Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement is still active. One of its focal

points in the first years of the 21st century has been seeking to streamline the many

national Kazakh projects aimed at alleviating the fate of victims of radiation and restoring

the environment. The movement has also been an active member of the Global Anti-

Nuclear Alliance.

The organization is operating against the background of international developments that

have been supportive of its goals. When the Soviet Union collapsed in December 1991,

Kazakhstan inherited 1,410 nuclear warheads, in addition to the Semipalatinsk test site.

Kazakhstan transferred all of these nuclear warheads to Russia. It began to destroy the

nuclear testing infrastructure at Semipalatinsk, a process that was completed by July

2000. Approximately 600 kilograms of weapons-grade enriched uranium was removed to the United States in 1994 under a joint US-Kazakhstan operation known as Project Sapphire. Kazakhstan, as an independent nation, also is a party to START-1, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test ban Treaty.

However, weapons-grade nuclear material remains in Kazakhstan, including three metric tons of plutonium at a shutdown breeder reactor in western Kazakhstan and small amounts of highly enriched uranium at two nuclear institutes. To the Nevada-Semipalatinsk Anti-Nuclear Movement it is clear that a lot of work still has to be done. According to figures of the state nuclear-energy company Kazatomprom, in 2001, only 1 million dollar was devoted to cleaning up the country's massive radioactive-waste problem, a drop in the bucket compared with the more than 1.2 billion it says it needs to deal with the crisis. Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement in 2003 protested plans by the government to begin importing medium level radioactive waste from other countries. The government said it needed to do this in order to help finance the disposal of its considerable toxic-waste stockpiles. The group argues the move would worsen Kazakhstan's own massive radioactive waste disposal problems by bringing more toxicity into the country. The group said it was also concerned about transporting nuclear waste, especially in the context if increased risk of nuclear terrorists using radioactive waste. Some activists pointed out that a country with rich oil resources and revenues from oil exports was not credible when claiming it lacked the money to deal with its own radioactive waste problem.

Much work clearly remains, however recognizing the enormity of what has been

accomplished so far, should give hope for even more being able to be realized in the

future.

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Resources

The Center for Nonproliferation Studies, based in Monterey, California, USA, has

extended documentation and up-to-date information available about nuclear

developments regarding nuclear arms and nuclear waste in Kazakhstan:

www.cns.miis.edu.

Peace is possible. By Fredrik S. Heffermehl (ed.). The International Peace Bureau, s.a.

20.6 Lessons from Campaigns of the 1990s :Innovations in Humanitarian Advocacy

A number of international campaigns that focused on the human face of war have met with varying degrees of success in the 1990s. Most notable success stories have been the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the campaign for the establishment of the International Criminal Court. This section explores some of the critical factors in success or failure.

Don Hubert*

The 1990s witnessed a striking increase both in the scale of humanitarian advocacy, and in its effectiveness. In the face of public calls for action, governments and multilateral institutions launched a series of international missions designed to resolve violent conflicts and to reduce their human costs. This action on the ground was complemented by efforts to develop new international standards and institutions to enhance the protection for civilian populations. Of particular prominence were four major international campaigns: to ban landmines, against the use of child soldiers, to create an International Criminal Court and to reduce the availability and misuse of small arms. Were these campaigns necessary? As the Secretary General has argued, "the protection of civilians in armed conflict would be largely assured is combatants respected the provisions of international humanitarian and human rights law."[1] There are, however, a

number of areas –some relating to restrictions on weapons, others related to expanding

protections for civilians- where the development of additional legal norms and standards

can help to reduce the human cost of conflict. In this context, it is valuable to have a clear

understanding of the reasons for the relative success of these four campaigns.

A comparative analysis of these four campaigns suggests that there are common elements

to effective humanitarian advocacy including: clear campaign messaging (advocating

stringent provisions within an explicitly humanitarian discourse); effective coalition

building (among and between NGOs, like-minded governments and international

organizations); favorable negotiating conditions (a strong chairperson, access for NGOs,

and decision by vote);

Table 1 below sets out a rough assessment of these three broad dimensions across the

four campaigns and highlights key factors that help to explain their relative degrees of

success.2 The text that follows explains in detail the eight dimensions, and how they

affected the specific campaigns.

<Insert Table 20.1. Comparing Humanitarian Campaigns of the 1990s >

Campaign Messaging

Campaign messaging includes the nature of the objectives sought and the way in which

those objectives are framed. Recent humanitarian advocacy have privileged the

development of stringent norms supported by strong majorities over lowest common

denominator outcomes supported by all. These campaigns have also demonstrated the

value of framing issues within an explicitly humanitarian discourse.

The strength of an international norm is dependent on both the stringency of the

provisions and the breadth of support those provisions command. In multilateral

negotiations there is a strong preference for universal norms, and this leads inevitably to a

tendency towards consensus decision-making. Yet the campaigns outlined above

demonstrate a willingness among a solid majority of countries to pursue bold new

standards. Both the landmine ban and the ICC were agreed by more than 120 countries

while at the same time having only a few prominent opponents. The considerable support

for a robust ban on child soldiers, while ultimately insufficient, further highlights the

prospects for pursuing stringent standards rather than universal support.[3]

There are good reasons to assume that the tendencies demonstrated in the campaigns of

the 1990s will be a routine part of humanitarian advocacy in the future. Existing universal

standards such as the Geneva Conventions are already more stringent than current lowest

common-denominator positions. As a result, it is highly unlikely that negotiations based

on consensus decisionmaking will be able to fill the gaps that exist in the international

legal framework protecting war-affected populations.

Furthermore, there is no necessary correlation between universal acceptance of

humanitarian norms and reducing the human costs of war. The destruction of landmine

stockpiles in countries recovering from civil wars will greatly reduce the risk of these

weapons being deployed in any future conflict, even when the acceptance of the universal

ban on landmines is still not universal at all. Similarly, the International Criminal Court

can proceed with investigations into atrocities committed in the Democratic Republic of

Congo and northern Uganda even in the absence of US support.

The second component of campaign messaging relates to how the issues are framed.

While each of the four campaigns identified above has focused on a humanitarian

objective—reducing the human costs of war—a humanitarian discourse has not always

dominated or even been widely accepted.

The campaign against child soldiers was, from the outset, couched in explicitly

humanitarian terms, but this was not the case for the other three campaigns. The crucial

turning point for the campaign to ban landmines was shifting the discourse from

disarmament (focused on the weapon, concerned with military utility, dominated by

conservative negotiators) to humanitarianism (focused on victims, concerned with the

human impact, engaging human rights and humanitarian experts). The ICC was first

promoted in the early 1990s as a response to narco-traffickers but ultimately succeeded

by focusing on the gravest violations of humanitarian law – genocide, crimes against

humanity and war crimes. To date, small arms advocates have devoted much of their

efforts to shifting the debate from illicit transfers to include state-state arms transfers. A

more explicitly humanitarian approach is only now beginning to emerge.4

Framing issues in humanitarian terms plays to the strengths of NGO campaigners and to

the weaknesses of their opponents. The landmine ban is instructive here, for although the

landmines treaty is undoubtedly a "disarmament" treaty, campaigners rightly recognized

that the disarmament discourse was inhospitable terrain. A humanitarian orientation not

only lent greater weight to the scale of human suffering. It justified avoiding politically

charged disarmament venues and their relatively conservative government negotiators.

Observers often mistakenly assume that the success or failure of a campaign is due to the

inherent characteristics of the issue in question. For example, landmines were inherently

easy to ban, while small arms are inherently difficult. Yet there is compelling evidence

that the way an issue is framed is more important than any "inherent" characteristics.

Among the greatest assets that campaigners have is the ability to frame the issue in ways

that make bold new directions in international action appear self-evident. An analysis of

these four campaigns suggests that even where multiple discourses are available to

campaigners, there are powerful benefits to situating the debate in an explicitly

humanitarian context.

Coalition Building

Coalition building is fundamental to effective humanitarian advocacy. At best, cohesive

coalitions are developed among and between NGOs, governments, and international

organizations. Key to the success of the campaigns on landmines and the International

Criminal Court were the strength and cohesiveness of both NGO networks and coalitions

of like-minded governments.5 In both cases, their overarching agendas were further

legitimized by the active support of various bodies of the United Nations (UN) and the

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Shortcomings in coalition building also account for the limited successes of campaigns on child soldiers and small arms. In the campaign for a robust ban on the recruitment and deployment of child soldiers, the NGO Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers mounted an effective campaign and the UN and the ICRC provided valuable support, but a strong coalition of like-minded governments never emerged. In the case of small arms, the relative weaknesses in coalition building are striking. The International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) was designed more for constituency building and information sharing than strategic advocacy. On the government side, Norwegian efforts in the late 1990s to encourage the emergence of a like-minded group of states were unsuccessful. Progressive states did collaborate to salvage the 2001 UN Small Arms Conference, and a regular meeting of governments active in the international debate on small arms in Geneva may provide the basis for a proactive grouping of states in the future.

While credit for humanitarian advocacy tends to be directed towards NGOs, the successes and the failures discussed above suggest that strategic coordination among like-minded governments is frequently the decisive factor. With landmines, the profile of the NGO campaign obscures the importance of the core group of states, particularly in the final months leading up to the Oslo Conference. The like-minded group played an equally fundamental role in securing the ICC statute as its cornerstone positions in many ways predetermined the outcome of the negotiations. In the case of the campaign on child soldiers, the limitations of the negotiating conditions to be discussed below could have

been overcome had there been an effective like-minded group committed to an outright

ban.

If governmental coalitions are the key to the successful conclusion of humanitarian

campaigns, NGO coalitions are the key to their emergence and development. NGOs are

most effective at identifying the overarching objectives and at securing initial

governmental support. In this context, one potentially counterproductive lesson that

seems to have been drawn from the landmines campaign is the emphasis given to

"partnership" between governments and NGOs. Although often called a partnership,

"strategic collaboration" is more accurate.6 This collaboration began only when a core

group of states adopted the agenda of the ICBL and was always conditional on

governments remaining committed to a complete ban.

Negotiating Conditions

Once campaign objectives have been identified and coalitions built, negotiating

conditions become a key determinant of success in securing new international standards.

The campaigns on landmines and the ICC both benefited from three specific

characteristics relating to the final negotiations: strong leadership from the chairperson,

and rules of procedure allowing both access for NGOs and recourse to decision by vote.

In both cases, provision for decision by vote was decisive. No vote was ultimately held

on the landmine convention, but there were opponents who would undoubtedly have

blocked consensus. In the cases of the Rome Statute on the ICC, seven countries voted to

reject the agreement.

Shortcomings in negotiating conditions also help to explain the less satisfactory outcomes

on child soldiers and small arms. Here, the pursuit of a consensus outcome significantly

weakened the final outcome. The predisposition towards consensus decision-making

within the UN Commission on Human Rights also substantially prolonged the

negotiations. In the case of small arms, the principal multilateral negotiations—the OAS

Convention, the Firearms Protocol of the Transnational Organized Crime Convention,

and the 2001 UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in

All its Aspects—have all represented a very traditional approach to diplomacy. The

objectives have been defined by states, negotiations have taken place in closed-door

sessions, and direct NGO involvement has been minimal. In particular, although the 2001

UN Conference was never designed to produce a legally binding instrument, the

negotiating context was extremely conservative. Access for NGO and alternatives to

consensus-based decision-making were rejected by a few recalcitrant states and lowest

common-denominator outcomes prevailed.

The stand-alone nature of the landmine negotiations has often been identified as a critical

component of the success of the campaign. There is no doubt that working outside

existing negotiating forums offered maximum flexibility. The example of the ICC,

however, indicates that operating outside traditional venues is not essential for successful,

fast-track negotiations. Whether within or outside formal institutions, the key to

successful outcomes is strong leadership by the chairperson, recourse to voting, and NGO

access. Formal negotiating venues where these conditions cannot be met should be

avoided.

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The International Campaign to Ban Landmines

Increasing awareness of the humanitarian implications of the use of antipersonnel

landmines in battle, led in 1991 to the formation of a broad based international NGO

coalition to call for a ban on antipersonnel landmines. Among the founding organizations

were Handicap International, Human Rights Watch, Medico International, Mines

Advisory Group, Physicians for Human Rights and Vietnam Veterans of America

Foundation. The actual International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) was officially

formalized in October 1992.

The key message of the campaign comprised three core elements: an international ban on

the use, the production, the stockpiling and transfer of antipersonnel landmines; a call for

increased international resources for humanitarian mine clearance; the development of a

mine-victim-assistance program.

The impact of this campaign was largely based on the strength and cohesiveness of NGO

networks and coalitions of like-minded governments. The concrete result of the campaign

was the adoption of the Mine Ban Treaty in 1997. However, the treaty did not mean the

ending of the ICBL. Besides the treaty, they have managed to shift the debate from a

focus on the actual banning of mines, to a feasible model for disarmament and peace. The

coalition still remains committed to work together to ban antipersonnel landmines, and to

monitor the actual state the implementation of the treaty. Currently the ICBL network

represents over 1,100 civil society organizations and NGOs that work together locally,

regionally and globally for a world free of mines.

For more information, consult the ICBL website: www.icbl.org

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The campaign to establish the International Criminal Court

Even though the establishment of an international criminal court was first considered by

the UN General Assembly in 1948, it was not until 1989 that the International Law

Commission was requested to resume its work on a draft statute, initially in response to

narco-traffickers. The scale of atrocities committed in Rwanda and Yugoslavia during the

nineties demonstrated the need for international criminal justice, and shortcomings of

national justice systems and ad hoc tribunals pleaded for a permanent institution.

Halfway through the nineties NGOs, along with like-minded governments formed several

coalitions to advocate for the establishment of an International Criminal Court (ICC).

Their purpose was to promoting and enabling a diplomatic conference on the creation of

an ICC in 1998. The result of these coalitions' work was not only a conference held in

Rome in 1998, but also the agreement of coalition members on six substantive principles,

all related to commitment to inherent jurisdiction over genocide, war crimes and crimes

against humanity, and to an independent and effective court that was not subordinate to

the Security Council.

Alongside this process, a handful of NGOs came together in early 1995 to form the NGO

Coalition for an International Criminal Court. Their goal was mainly to coordinate the

efforts to promote the creation of an effective and just court, and this resulted in various

activities: facilitating the exchange of information among legal experts and NGOs;

awareness-raising among a broader NGO constituency; providing research assistance and

monitoring the negotiations during the Rome conference in 1998; being part of numerous

official delegations.

The quality and credibility of their work and presence at the conference was remarkable.

Since then the coalition has grown to include over 2,000 NGOs from all over the world

and from all sectors of global civil society. These groups have all contributed to the

entering into force of the Rome Statute of the ICC in 2002 and the further establishment

of the court in The Hague. Their work still continues, especially in the area of worldwide

ratification of the Rome Statute, implementing legislation in ratifying countries,

monitoring and supporting the work of the court and continuously generating

international public support.

For more information, consult the coalition's website: www.iccnow.org

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The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers

Leading international human rights and humanitarian organizations formed in May 1998

the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers. Initiators were among others, Amnesty

International, Human Rights Watch, Terre des Hommes, World Vision and Save the Children. The coalition was established to revitalize the negotiations over the process and press for raising of the age standard for children to be recruited into the armed forces to the age of 18 years. However, the coalition had a broader mandate than advocating for raising the age standard. Over the past six years the Coalition has been at the forefront of efforts to ban the recruitment and use of child soldiers, to secure their demobilization and to promote their reintegration into their communities.

Key messages of their campaigns have been: advocating for the demobilization of all children being used as soldiers in armed conflict and the reintegration into their communities; awareness raising of child soldiers among the general public; calling upon governments to adhere to international laws prohibiting the use of children under the age of 18 in armed conflict.

In its fight to stop the use of child soldiers, the coalition achieved among others the adoption and implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict in 1998. It has also established national coalitions in 35 countries around the world and several regional coalitions. Currently they are active in monitoring and researching the use of child soldiers worldwide, and they continue campaigning and advocating against child recruitment by armed groups.

For more information, consult the coalition's website: www.child-soldiers.org'

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Small Arms Campaign

The banning of landmines, one category of small arms, has throughout the nineties led to increasing efforts to restrict the availability of the entire range of small arms. From the mid nineties these efforts have been led and supported by NGOs, international organizations and progressive governments. While government action has mainly been focused on stopping the illicit trade of small arms, the NGO community has become increasingly engaged in the security and disarmament perspective around the whole debate. Since the range of organizations involved is very broad, so are the objectives pursued. However, all these organizations were in 1998 embodied in IANSA, the global network of civil society organizations that works to stop the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. Additional roles in campaigning and advocacy are played by the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

IANSA's campaigning focuses on the following issues: awareness raising about the threat to human security caused by small arms; promoting NGOs work to prevent small arms proliferation through national and local legislation, regional agreements, public education and research; fostering collaborative advocacy efforts; establishing regional and subject specific small arms networks; promoting the voices of victims in regional and global policy discussions.

Greatest progress has been achieved in the restriction of illicit trade, mainly because state-consensus on this issue was rather easy. A lack of like-minded governments continues to hamper structural progress in the negotiations around restrictions on small

arms. However, for IANSA concrete achievements so far have been the set up of regional

networks to counter gun proliferation and a leading role in the UN small arms conference

process. IANSA continues to fuel the debate on small arms with research, campaigning

and advocacy.

For more information, consult the IANSA website: www.iansa.org

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Brown University. He is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies and

is a member of the editorial board of Global Governance.

This chapter is an abridged version of a more extensive analysis of the campaign to ban

landmines, including a comparison with the campaign to ban dum dum bullets in 1899

and a comparison with campaigns on the International Criminal Court, child soldiers and

small arms. See: The Landmine Ban: A Case Study in Humanitarian Advocacy. By Don

Hubert. Brown University: Providence, RI, 2000.

Notes

1 Kofi Annan, Report of the Secretary General to the Security Council on the Protection

of Civilians in Armed Conflict, Sept. 8, 1999.

2 The three main elements (and sub-elements) of successful humanitarian advocacy are

listed on the left of the table. The relative strength of each of these sub-elements are

represented by asterisks (2* = strong, 1* = weak, 0* = non-existent).

3 The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers sought a complete ban on the

recruitment and use (both direct and indirect) of children below the age of 18. The

Optional Protocol ultimately agreed prohibits the deployment of soldiers under the age of

18 but does not address indirect participation in hostilities or raise the age of voluntary

recruitment above the existing level of 15.

4 A similar assessment underpinned the decision by the Secretary General's

Representative on the Internally Displaced to distil standards from existing human rights,

humanitarian and refugee law in the development of Guiding Principles rather than to

pursue negotiations on a legally binding convention.

5 The International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the Coalition for an International

Criminal Court both mobilized hundreds of NGOs in advance of the respective

negotiations. On the government side, the thirteen members of the "core group"

organized regional preparatory meetings, developed a draft text and effectively steered

the final negotiations, while the sixty country like-minded group arrived at the Rome

Conference having already agree on five cornerstone principles to ensure a "independent

and effective" ICC.

6 For the use of the term "strategic collaboration" see David Atwood, "Tackling the

Problem of Anti-Personnel Landmines: Issues and Developments," Study on

Contemporary Issues in Arms Control and Disarmament, Zurich Security Forum, October

1998.

21. Civil Society: Participating in Peace Processes

Celia McKeon*

When people become directly affected by armed conflict, they develop a central interest in contributing to i ts resolution. Despite being confronted with harsh realities and huge dilemmas, civil society actors can make significant contributions to peace processes. Their capacities may help to create the conditions for talks, build confidence between the parties, shape the conduct and content of negotiations and influence the sustainability of peace agreements.

The nature of internal conflict in the post-Cold War era provides the most compelling argument for the participation of civil society in peace processes. It is not just that the consequences of brutal confrontation between competing military powers spill over to cause death and destruction among the civilian population; more gravely, we see the deliberate and sometimes systematic targeting of the most basic units of society by the conflict protagonists. Individual citizens, the family and the community are violated, coerced and subverted as part of the political, economic and socio-cultural strategies of the armed actors. This is the front-line of modern warfare. As people become directly affected by armed conflict, they develop a central interest in contributing to its resolution. Living alongside the armed actors, they have greater need, and greater potential to take part in peacemaking efforts. And as peace processes increasingly result in changes to

political, economic and social institutions and relationships in a society, people also have a right to participate in these decisions.

Contemporary peacemaking practice has to confront these realities and the challenges posed by them. Traditional diplomacy and conflict resolution approaches have largely focused on a narrow definition of a peace process - namely the crucial task of bringing the political and military leaders of opposing groups into a process of dialogue and negotiation with the aim of exploring, reaching agreement on and implementing measures to end violent conflict and create the conditions for peaceful co-existence. This approach is guided by the belief that the leaders have the power to reach decisions and bring along their constituencies in support of any resulting settlement. However, modern civil wars present strong arguments for a more holistic understanding of a peace process. Negotiations between the leaders of opposing groups do not take place in a social or political vacuum. They may sometimes be unable to adequately address the complex and dynamic inter-relationships between these actors and other groups affected by and involved in the armed conflict, including the parties' constituencies, the wider public and even the broader regional or international forces. People's independent initiatives in their towns and villages, as well as at regional, national and international level therefore have the potential to become key elements in a broader peace process that is capable of addressing these complexities.

The roles of civil society actors in peace processes are determined by a number of factors, including both external factors such as the attitudes of the warring parties and the degree of "political space" afforded to civic groups, and internal factors such as the resources

and skills available for groups to draw on. The particular combination of opportunity and constraint in each context will lead civil society to assume a variety of possible roles. For the purpose of this short overview, these roles are clustered into four broadly distinct and complementary approaches.

1. Advocating Dialogue as an Alternative to Armed Violence

For non-combatant groups in society, the simple but courageous act of publicly declaring "no" to war and violence can have a powerful impact on the decisions of the warring parties about entering into negotiations. In many situations, an explicit withdrawal of support for the use of military force by sectors of the public will influence the parties' analysis of the options available to them. The public "mood" regarding the conflict and the desirability of a peace process is an important barometer for the leadership of governments and armed groups to take into account.

Civil society groups can shift this "mood" by highlighting the unacceptable costs of the conflict and increasing the political stakes for peace. They can catalyze public mobilization for peace, whether through demonstrations, petitions or media campaigns. Groups who may enjoy a certain degree of moral authority in a particular society, such as religious leaders or elders, can use their influence to add weight to public calls for peace. Advocacy can take diverse forms and benefit from creativity as well as from the richness of cultural traditions. Among some of the many powerful examples of such initiatives, it is worth mentioning the public demonstrations organized by the Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative in northern Uganda, and the 1997 "Citizens" mandate for peace,

life and liberty" (*El Mandato por la Paz*) in Colombia, which resulted in the participation of ten million Colombians in a public vote in support of a negotiated settlement to the armed conflict. Across the world, women are frequently a powerful force in resisting war, through initiatives such as "Women in Black", whose silent demonstrations on the streets of Belgrade and Jerusalem offer solidarity with the victims of violence and demand an end to killing and injustice. All of these acts communicate civilians' attempts to resist collusion and articulate alternative approaches to violent conflict. As such they contribute to shaping the social and political context necessary to underpin sustainable dialogue and agreement between the opposing groups.

Educational initiatives can also make a crucial contribution to the broader socio-political dimension of a peace process, by challenging public perceptions about the conflict. This is particularly true in contexts where opposing groups promote divergent and mutually–exclusive analyses of the social and political context. Against the backdrop of armed violence, the careful presentation of balanced and inclusive accounts of the causes and dynamics of the conflict can facilitate changed understanding of the "other side", encouraging fearful, divided communities to re-assess the prospects of peaceful coexistence in the future. Moreover, in societies where violence has become the dominant mode of conflict resolution, civil society groups can play an important role in educating their membership and wider public constituencies about the possibilities of non-violent approaches to conflictual issues. Legitimizing dialogue as a viable and effective tool can encourage vital public support for political negotiations between the protagonists.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the crucial role of the media in a peace process. Reporting of progress and obstacles at the negotiating table can have a huge impact on public support for the process, as can the format and content of debate about substantive conflict issues. Local or international media initiatives such as Angola's Radio Ecclesia or Search for Common Ground's Talking Drum program in West Africa are just two examples of the many efforts to harness the power of radio and television to promote dialogue and understanding across the conflict divides.

2. Facilitating Dialogue between the Parties

Traditional diplomacy has largely relied on governmental and inter-governmental actors to facilitate talks or mediate between the conflict protagonists. Certainly, the leverage exercised by an acceptable governmental or UN representative can have a significant impact on the prospects for agreement. However, in situations of protracted internal conflict, violence often penetrates through the social fabric, involving a larger array of armed actors (often with differing levels of autonomy and accountability), as well as a complex tapestry of inter-connected and self-sustaining conflict dynamics at the community level. The state-based international system is comparatively ill-equipped to deal with the people involved in localized armed violence. In such situations, civil society actors – whether indigenous or external – are arguably best-placed to complement state-driven diplomatic efforts at the leadership level, given their comparatively low-profile, access within communities and greater flexibility than state or multi-lateral actors.

Civil society-led dialogue processes and mediation efforts can have a number of impacts: they can build trust and understanding between the grassroots membership of divided communities; they can assist in identifying and resolving local-level conflicts, which can benefit the communities affected as well as build confidence between the conflicting parties; they can create a safe, unofficial space for middle-ranking members of the conflicting parties to engage in problem-solving exercises in advance of negotiations. In some cases, modest activities by civic actors can even lead to their acceptance by the leadership to mediate formal negotiations.

The experiences contained in this chapter offer some specific examples of just such roles and impacts. In Mozambique, the opposing parties accepted the mediation of three representatives of the religious Community of Sant'Egidio, as well as the Catholic Archbishop of Beira, Mozambique. Their identity as parties without any political stake in the outcome of the process – nor any of the leverage exercised by foreign governments or multilateral institutions - informed their commitment to finding an outcome that would be genuinely acceptable to both sides and therefore more likely to be sustainable. In Northern Ireland, Peace and Reconciliation Group's quiet mediation work between the British security forces and the Irish Republican Army led to a de-escalation of armed conflict in the city of Derry/Londonderry and was an important opportunity for trust-building between the parties. In the Andean region of Latin America, a dialogue process between members of civil society in Ecuador and Peru created opportunities for shared analysis and problem-solving in relation to the long-standing border dispute between the two countries. Their work created a foundation of awareness and understanding among

the affected communities and contributed to the sustainability of the peace agreement

reached between the leaders.

In some situations, civil society actors may also become involved in providing assistance

to one of the warring parties, to help them consider the potential benefits of engaging in a

peace process and to assist them in their preparations. Where negotiations are taking

place between a recognized government and a non-state armed group, there may be

particularly compelling reasons for this role; armed groups can often be deterred from the

negotiating table because they fear domination by a government with superior resources,

negotiating skills and diplomatic support. While it is a delicate and often dangerous role

to play, it may result in the greater likelihood of a sustainable and effective commitment

to the negotiations by one of the parties. Again, and particularly given the sensitivities

surrounding internal conflicts, civic actors are often more able to take up this challenge

than governmental or inter-governmental representatives.

3. Monitoring Compliance and Violations

As well as causing devastating suffering to those affected, the perpetration of human

rights violations by any of the parties to the conflict is often cited as the trigger for armed

conflict or as a justification for escalating military engagement. Representatives of

governments and armed groups frequently argue that their choice of violence is

necessitated by the actions of the other side and that it is the only viable option for

protecting "their" populations. Whether unwittingly or quite deliberately, parties often

blur the boundaries between civilians and combatants, resulting in the death, forced

displacement or mistreatment of civilian populations considered to be associated with the

"other side". These violations further fracture communities, entrench fear and mistrust

and deepen the spiral of violence between the parties.

The collation of data on human rights violations is a vital task during armed conflict, and

can also make a significant contribution to a peace process. Parties often begin talks

without agreeing on a cessation of hostilities, and ongoing violations can therefore

constitute one of the primary reasons for distrust between them, and ultimately for the

breakdown of negotiations. While reliable and impartial data will not prevent these

breakdowns, it is a first step in clarifying responsibilities. It is therefore important that it

is seen to come from a reliable and impartial source and it is for this reason that civil

society organizations can have a particular role to play. International non-governmental

organizations such as Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch are credited with

providing accurate information on atrocities committed during armed conflict and their

work assists in putting pressure on the parties to engage in talks. It is frequently

complemented by locally-established human rights organizations who may document

violations against their community or even across society more broadly.

This documentation becomes particularly important after the signing of agreements

resulting in ceasefire arrangements. Such agreements increasingly contain provision for

monitoring, whether by international or national organizations. While this is sometimes

conceived as a military mission, there is an increasing number of examples of civilian

monitoring missions, including the international Peace Monitoring Group in Bougainville

or the indigenous civil society participation in the "local monitoring teams" in the province of Mindanao in the southern Philippines.

Finally, civil society human rights advocates may play a particularly important role in ensuring that peace processes and any political agreements reached address the structural injustices that gave rise to the conflict, as well as advocating accountability of and effective sanctions against perpetrators of violations. By promoting respect for internationally agreed standards, civic actors can help to ensure that peace agreements do not perpetuate injustice, discrimination or a climate of impunity.

4. Participating at the Negotiating Table

The notion that civil society actors play an active part in the political negotiations to reach peace agreements is still a long way from being an established norm of peacemaking. As mentioned earlier, the dominant paradigm continues to focus on bringing together the leaders of the combatant parties to reach an agreement able to fulfill their minimum requirements and bring an end to violence. However, in a number of countries, civil society groupings have mobilized to earn themselves an active voice in the negotiations – and made significant contributions to the peace process through their efforts.

One study has identified that there are at least three possible "modes" of civil society participation in peace processes: mechanisms for consultation, representative decision-making and direct participation (Barnes, 2002).

Consultative mechanisms create spaces for non-combatant groups in a society to contribute their views on the substantive issues being discussed in the formal negotiations between the protagonists. In this way, Guatemala's Grand National Dialogue and Civil Society Assembly were able to identify the root causes of the conflict and propose "consensus" documents on the substantive themes being discussed in the negotiations. In the Philippines, the National Unification Commission created forums at provincial, regional and national level for different social sectors to offer their perspectives on the causes of conflict and possible solutions. In both cases, although the outcomes of these consultations were non-binding on the parties, they made important contributions to national level agreements on the conflict. They also created new spaces for discussion between groups with widely differing expectations and facilitated the involvement of previously marginalized sectors of society.

Representative decision-making mechanisms have offered opportunities for groups with an agreed level of public support to take their place at the negotiating table beside the warring parties. Thus in South Africa and Northern Ireland, the negotiations were designed to convene a broad range of political parties in addition to the active combatants. In Northern Ireland, this arrangement enabled ten political parties, and in particular a group of women called the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, to have a place at the table and represent the interests and concerns of their constituencies. In South Africa, it brought together a range of smaller political parties alongside the African National Congress and the National Party. The subsequent constitution-making process opened the political process even further, inviting all South Africans to contribute their

suggestions on its contents. In divided societies, these mechanisms are essential in creating sufficiently inclusive processes that can be "owned" by a broad cross-section of the population, and thus less vulnerable to sabotage or breakdown.

Finally, "direct participation" mechanisms create spaces where all interested civilians can play a role in reaching political agreements to address violent conflict. For reasons of scale, these mechanisms often take place at a local or regional level to address the particular manifestations of the armed conflict in the immediate context. When the National Pact failed to bring an end to armed conflict in Mali, local civic leaders worked with an international NGO, Norwegian Church Aid, to facilitate numerous "inter-community" meetings. These meetings convened thousands of people, and led to local level ceasefires, trading agreements and reconciliation processes. The format also facilitated greater participation by women and children, and prevented the domination of proceedings by local politicians.

All of these examples indicate that space *can* be created for civil society actors to make an active contribution to the political negotiations to reach peace agreements. They also suggest that broader public participation can contribute to widening the agenda of issues debated, ensure greater emphasis on structural causes of the conflict, enable broader ownership of agreements reached and facilitate a degree of political reconciliation between participants – all factors that are likely to contribute positively to the sustainability of the process.

Challenges and Dilemmas

All the roles identified above present huge challenges and dilemmas to civil society actors. Firstly, there is often considerable danger in undertaking any of them, as promoting, facilitating or participating in peace processes is often not a popular position to take. Governments or armed groups may resent the pressure to negotiate, or consider the pressure tantamount to support for the other side. Public information that deviates from the party-line of one or other group may attract censorship or harassment. People or groups making financial profit from the armed conflict will have a vested interest in its continuation. Radicalized sectors of society may also be reluctant to concede anything to one or other of the warring parties through the inevitable compromise of negotiations. These interests represent considerable practical and political risk to unarmed groups of civilians promoting peace.

Ironically, once the parties do take a decision to engage in talks, these same unarmed groups of civilians may find themselves marginalized from negotiations. The warring parties frequently see themselves as the sole legitimate representatives of "their" people and may be reluctant to concede space or control of the negotiation process to a wider group of participants. The international community of interested governments and multi-lateral actors may compound this marginalization by confining civil society's role to the "post-conflict peacebuilding" phase – where there is important work to be done, but where the political frameworks have often already been determined.

In addition to these external pressures and constraints, civil society also faces its own internal challenges. The first relates to the heterogeneity of what is termed "civil socie ty": the diverse array of interests, groupings and agendas that are intrinsic to any large mass

of people. Given the devastating effects of armed conflict on communities, building alliances across political divides and identifying points of minimum consensus can be a delicate task requiring time and a great deal of sensitivity. With the capacity for independent initiative and action, developing a helpful degree of coordination and complementarity between different sectors and initiatives can seem an almost insurmountable challenge.

Ultimately, however, these challenges are matched by the wealth of resources and diversity of skills that civil society actors can bring to bear in peace processes. These capacities help to create the conditions for talks, build confidence between the parties, shape the conduct and content of negotiations and influence the sustainability of peace agreements. By contributing to peace processes in this way, civil society actors also play a part in long-term processes of change in how society deals with conflict, influencing social norms as well as the political culture of conflict resolution.

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relationships

Resources

Forthcoming in:
People Building Peace II: Successful Stories of Civil Society
Edited by Paul van Tongeren, Malin Brenk, Marte Hellema, Juliette Verhoeven
Boulder: Lynne Rienner: June 2005

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INCORE – United Kingdom

Research on Peace Processes Programme

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21.1 A Non-Threatening Approach to Peace: The Community of Sant' Egidio in

Mozambique

Sant' Egidio, a community of socially engaged catholic Italians, in the 1990s managed to achieve what superpowers and hardened professional diplomats could not: broker peace to end the civil war in Mozambique. The approach of the lay-organization hinged on personal contacts and cultural understanding of both parties. "Unlike governments, we had no political or economic interests to promote."

Located in the old Roman neighborhood of Trastevere, hidden behind the church of Santa Maria Trastevere, lies the Piazza Sant' Egidio, a small square from which the Comunità di Sant' Egidio derived its name and where it has its headquarters. The home of the lay community, a former sixteenth century monastery, hosted the negotiations in the early 1990s that led to the signing of a peace agreement between the warring factions of the bloody civil war in Mozambique.

Sant' Egidio's approach to mediation has been taken as an inspiration by many individuals and organizations seeking to resolve conflicts. Word about the community's "intervention" in the Mozambican conflict spread quickly, leading to invitations from all over the world for the community to mediate peace, including in Kosovo, Algeria, Liberia and Guatemala.

Although efforts to broker peace, as it did in the case of Mozambique, is certainly one of Sant' Egidio's biggest and eye-catching achievements, it is certainly not its only core

activity. Founded in 1968 by a group of deeply religious young students with a vocation to help the poor, Sant' Egidio chose prayer as one of its essentials, along with helping deprived people, often on a very personal basis. Until this day, the community focuses a lot of attention on its daily prayer sessions at several locations in Rome. Almost all members, most of whom have regular, often high-powered jobs, spend some hours a weeks to help children of poor families with their homework, provide food to homeless people, or in other ways help deprived persons in need. Over the years, especially after its successful contribution to making peace in Mozambique, the community became increasingly involved in seeking negotiated solutions to armed conflicts. In the perception of the organization's founder, Andrea Riccardi, this peace work is a natural continuation of its efforts to improve the lives of the poor. "War is the mother of all poverty, which makes everybody poor, even the rich," he once summarized the drive to commit himself to conflict resolution. Over the years, its activities have spread to other cities in Italy and to seventy other countries, and Sant' Egidio's membership has grown to over 50,000 in 2004.

Sant' Egidio stresses that every conflict is different and requires its own approach. However, the story of the Italian organization's involvement in the Mozambican conflict indicates there are certain specific characteristics in the community's handling of conflict and mediation that could be called a "Sant' Egidio method". Developing personal relationships and understanding the culture of the belligerent parties are some of its most dominant features.

The War in Mozambique

Sant' Egidio's involvement with the Mozambican peace process originated from a

personal friendship that started shortly after the African country had gained independence

from Portugal, in 1974. In 1976, a young Mozambican priest, Dom Jaime Gonçalves, was

studying in Rome and became a friend of the community. A year later he was nominated

bishop of the Mozambican port city of Beira. He shortly afterward returned to Rome for a

synod and took this opportunity to discuss the suppression of Christian churches by the

Marxist regime in Mozambique with his friends at the community. Sant' Egidio decided

to start to work to enhance religious freedom in Mozambique. In 1981, it arranged a

meeting between the then Italian communist party leader Enrico Berlinguer and

Gonçalves. Berlinguer promised to use his influence to persuade the regime in

Mozambique to soften its restrictions on religious organizations. This effort led to good

contacts between Sant' Egidio and the Mozambican government. The community also

managed to gain trust among the senior ranks of the rightist rebel movement RENAMO,

which was fighting the leftist FRELIMO-government since the mid 1970s. Thanks to its

good contacts, Sant' Egidio in 1982 managed to negotiate the release of priests and nuns

held captive by RENAMO. The community also had close ties to the Italian government

and the Vatican, which increased its credibility in the eyes of the conflicting parties.

The war between the national army of the FRELIMO-government and RENAMO was

bloody and distressing. RENAMO built up a gruesome reputation as the "Khmer Rouge"

of Africa, through a series of atrocities committed against the civilian population. The

Marxist FRELIMO-government, on its part, alienated large sections of the population

through its oppressive politics. Its economic policies also did little to help the country.

Mozambique's infrastructure and economy began to fall apart. This was one of the

reasons why Sant' Egidio organized several humanitarian relief operations in

Mozambique in the early 1980s.

After several efforts by foreign powers, including Kenya and the US, to broker peace in

the mid 1980s had failed, RENAMO, in April 1989 contacted the Vatican and Sant'

Egidio with the request to help setting up a unilateral cease-fire in Nampula province.

Sant' Egidio invited rebel leader Afonso Dhlakama to come to Rome. He accepted, after

some initial hesitation, and attended a few meetings set up by the community. At around

the same time, the FRELIMO government made clear, in contacts with Sant' Egidio, that

it was interested in direct negotiations with RENAMO. Sant' Egidio's leaders took this as

a signal to move quickly. They immediately made steps to convene a dialogue in Rome.

On July 8, 1990, representatives of the Mozambican government and RENAMO

officially met for the first time at the Sant' Egidio's headquarters, after some officials

from both parties had met informally at a World Cup match in Rome in June that year.

The official meeting was the beginning of a peace process which would last twenty-seven

months, consisting of eleven meetings under Sant' Egidio mediation, leading to the

signing of a peace accord on October 4, 1992. The mediating team consisted of Mario

Raffaelli, representing the Italian government, Matteo Zuppi, a priest and member of

Sant' Egidio, Andrea Riccardi, founder-member of the community, and bishop Jaime

Gonçalves.

No Magical Solutions

The Sant' Egidio steered peace process was treated with suspicion and apparent envy by

some outsiders. Every negotiating session that did not produce the expected result,

meaning peace on the ground or a cease-fire, was treated by the media as a failure.

Political figures who were excluded from the discussions found it in their interest to say

that the negotiations were going nowhere.

Prior to each meeting, a mediation team would talk with each side to find out what its

delegation was thinking of the current situation, and to brainstorm about their

possibilities and share information. This process was necessary to determine whether the

time was right to actually get together and sit around the table again. Only with the

explicit consent of the mediation team would the community organize a meeting between

the parties. If the team refrained from giving the green light, a meeting would not only be

a waste of time and money, the mediators reasoned, but could also have negative impact

on the entire process. In some cases, the team decided it was better to hold a secret

meeting, out of sight of the press.

The cautious and meticulous approach Sant' Egidio adopted, contributed to the creation

of an atmosphere in which close cooperation between the factions was possible. In

addition to the two Mozambican parties, many states and non-state actors became

involved as well, adding to the momentum and helping parties to come closer to one

another.

There is no doubt that the negotiating process was complex. The final result was the

outcome of a series of small steps gradually taken by the two parties in the conflict. There

were no magical emotional solutions for resolving the war. The reason is simple:

RENAMO would only lay down its arms if it would receive sufficient guarantees for the

post-war period: guarantees of its members physical security, guarantees that it would not

face legal prosecution, guarantees of free political life, guarantees of access to a

minimum of financial means in order to be able to set up its organization as a political

party, guarantees of being able to compete democratically for power. RENAMO moved

with a high degree of mistrust, not only toward its adversary, the FRELIMO government,

but toward everyone. RENAMO seemed to be convinced that a large part of the world

was on FRELIMO's side, and that almost everyone was its enemy. For this reason, before

giving up its arms, it wanted to accumulate all possible and imaginable guarantees.

It took the mediators time to understand this position and to get used to the exhausting

negotiating tactics of RENAMO. They had hoped for a shorter and less unnerving peace

process; yet they understood that the peace process could not be accelerated by handing

ultimatums to RENAMO, but by helping it to organize a political discourse and to

formulate rationally its fears and preoccupations about the post-war period. British

ambassador Richard Edis later commented that much credit was due to the skill,

persistence and what has been termed the legendary patience of the Italian clerical and

lay mediators, because these prevented the negotiations from breaking down.

The FRELIMO government, on its part, continually showed impatience with what it

considered to be the tortuous, slow pace of the negotiations. It frustrated the government

that RENAMO seemed to deliberately keep up the negotiations from time to time. The

apparent inability of the government, in the early stages of the process, to grasp the

concerns of the rebel group provoked RENAMO to raise the stakes even higher, out of fear that the government would try to get around its requests or would try to deceive it once peace would have been reached. Experts Moisés Venâncio and Stephen Chan, however, remarked that the FRELIMO-government also was partly responsible for the slow progress of the talks. "The Maputo regime expected the rebels to sign a peace agreement overnight," they observed in hindsight. "Maputo assumed that its superior political sophistication and what was generally seen as its wide support in the international community would facilitate a quick agreement with RENAMO. All FRELIMO wanted was a cease-fire and then to iron out what it thought were a few of the rebels' political issues. In fact, Maputo may never even have expected the rebels to insist so constantly that the talks should touch upon so many political questions. […] FRELIMO could not seriously have expected a movement with little or no political dimension to easily lay down its main negotiating weapon, military force, without getting some form of compensation."

As the process continued, it became clear that the issue of a cease-fire should be dealt with in the later stages of the negotiations, after other issues regarding the post-war period would have been ironed out. The turning point in the process came with the signing of a Preamble, a non-agenda document, in which the government and the rebel group, after they had barely overcome their stubborn political stances and mental reluctance, finally accepted the necessity of reaching a mutual acknowledgement of the other's right to exist. With the Preamble, the rebels recognized the legitimacy of the government within the existing legislative framework, and the government recognized

the legitimacy of RENAMO's desire to become a political movement. According to the

mediators, it opened the road to the final agreement reached in 1992, and signed by

Dhlakama and Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano. The peace agreement turned

out to be sustainable and was followed by democratic and free elections in 1994, which

further stabilized the country.

Conclusions

It is not easy to deduce rules from the Mozambican experience that could be applied

elsewhere. Peacemaking in all cases is constructed and shaped in specific conditions.

"There is no standard formula for making peace," as the Sant' Egidio mediators

remarked. But some conclusions can be drawn from Sant' Egidio's experience. "In

particular, the mediation of peace in Mozambique teaches us that cultural understanding

of the conflicting parties - which obviously differs from conflict to conflict - is crucial for

success," they said. Matteo Zuppi, one of Sant' Egidio's mediators, elaborated on the

difficulties of the mediation work. He said the mediators were dealing with two systems

of logic, going in two totally different directions. They had to use both formal and

informal, technical and less technical instruments. "I learnt that I had to join technique

with intuition and patience," Zuppi said. The mediators needed the parties to understand

themselves what they really wanted. They found a formula based on bringing together

parties who are driven by completely diverging motives and considerations. He added

that they heavily relied on personal relationships.

"I remember the U.S. State Department sent in a group of very good professional

negotiators to help the peace process. They kept drafting documents and proposals that

very much amused the delegations. In December 1991, they, quite rightly, tried to

achieve a Cristian truce. They were an officer and a lawyer, and they were very good,

very professional, so we let them go on. After a few days they were desperate. They

bumped into a wall of misunderstanding: technique could not substitute personal relations

with the parties and the ability to understand the way of thinking of personalities on both

sides."

Another characteristic of Sant' Egidio's approach was to refrain from putting pressure on

the parties or setting ultimatums. As it has no real power to back any threats it would not

have been able to do so convinc ingly. Therefore a "non threatening approach" was used.

The inability of the mediators to promise any financial gains, simply because Sant'

Egidio did not represent any donor or other body capable of disbursing loans or funds, is

considered to be another cause of their success. The mediators did not have military or

economic tools. They did not "buy" peace by offering money. Nor did they offer the

individuals who were negotiating peace the sort of per diem honoraria that are

characteristic of some of today's' peace processes, with the unhappy result of multiplying

the number of participants and lengthening the duration of negotiations, as the talks

themselves become a source of income for many individuals. The peace talks in Rome

were a clear example of a "result oriented" process, rather than a "process oriented" one.

The Roman peace mediation was politically realistic, attentive to the many legal, strategic, and diplomatic elements. It explored several approaches, involving various bodies and actors, but it was also simply based on the dream that everyone could make peace.

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21.2 Facilitating a Mutual De-Escalation Process: Quakers and the Peace and Reconciliation Group in Northern Ireland

By defusing tensions, a collection of unlikely but dedicated people succeeded in getting a peace process started in Londonderry that transformed relations between the opposing sides, making it less violent than any other city in Northern Ireland. It laid the basis for the cooperative relations that characterizes life in Derry/Londonderry today. Here's the personal story of John Lampen who was, with his wife Diana*, directly involved.

On 24 October 1990, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) took the family of Patsy Gillespie hostage, tied him into a car loaded with explosive, and forced him to drive it into an army checkpoint on the border of Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. It k illed him and five British soldiers. This had a deeply alienating effect on their supporters among nationalist (Catholic) people whose aspiration for a united Ireland gave the rationale for their campaign. (The IRA is a paramilitary group, and not the army of the Irish Republic.) They had repeatedly claimed that they were only at war with the British "occupation forces" and not the Unionist (Protestant) people of Northern Ireland - who of course saw it differently, since they wanted to remain part of the United Kingdom. Yet now the IRA was killing fellow Catholics too in the most callous way.

It was four years and many deaths later before the IRA declared a ceasefire. Yet these were the last soldiers to die at the hands of the Derry Brigade, and its level of military activity dropped by 60 percent afterwards in the city of Derry/Londonderry, the place where the civic unrest had started in 1969, the scene of "Bloody Sunday", and previously always near the top in the statistics of bombings, woundings and killings. This may have been partly due to the widespread disgust at the "human bomb" among those who had previously supported them. But its political party in the city, Sinn Féin, had two leading figures, Martin McGuinness and Mitchel McLaughlin, who were already looking for a way to shift the campaign from violence to a political process; and they were helped to do this by a collection of unlikely people, the Derry Peace & Reconciliation Group (PRG).

Gaining Trust

The PRG was the Derry branch of the Nobel-prize winning Peace People, but in 1978 it broke away because of the leadership's failure to consult the grassroots membership. It included several former members of the violent organizations on both sides, men who had decided to work for peace but still kept contact with their former associates. It also included members of the "respectable" part of the community, including the wives of a bishop and a high sheriff and also two English Quakers, my wife Diana and me, who had come to live in the city. The chairperson was Margaret O'Donnell, a nurse born in the Irish Republic.

The Group ran a program of Protestant and Catholic mixed events, such as sports contests, youth contacts, pensioners' theatre outings and family holidays. It had quieter roles; one was befriending local people ordered to leave Ireland by the paramilitaries (in Northern Ireland "paramilitary" always refers to the illegal organizations). Another was mediating between the nationalist community and the police and army when the security forces abused their powers. Margaret was appointed as a Catholic member of the city's Police Liaison Committee when no nationalist councilor would sit on it. She developed a sharp sympathy for the young (mostly Protestant) policemen patrolling a hostile community; and she saw clearly that whenever a policeman or soldier got away with misbehavior and his seniors dismissed the complaint as "enemy propaganda", their task became harder, the public more hostile and the IRA more eager to attack them.

Slowly the Group gained some trust both with those who were harassed and with the police who began to make redress and to discipline their men and women when needed. The ex-paramilitaries in the group made sure that their former organizations knew what the PRG was doing and why, and secured a grudging approval. For instance I suggested to the British government that they appoint Lay Visitors, ordinary citizens with the right to visit police cells at any time of day or night to ensure that detainees were getting proper treatment. The police came to see that this protected them against false accusations, while the IRA agreed that it gave some protection to any of their members being detained. They promised not to target the Visitors as "collaborators". Among others, Diana and Margaret from the PRG became Lay Visitors.

Tension Reduction

In 1989 the commanding officer of the Royal Hampshire Regiment, newly arrived in the city, asked the PRG how he could improve relations between his soldiers and the people of Derry/Londonderry. We asked if we could talk to the rank-and-file soldiers about the community's attitudes to soldiers and explain that most nationalists were not hostile to them unless soldiers had been harassing people. A cold response usually meant that someone was afraid to be seen by her neighbors being friendly to a "Brit". The soldiers responded well to the Derry-born Group members, seeing them as authentic members of their own class. The officers trusted Diana and me as English people who knew the Derry/Londonderry community well but could see both sides of a question.

Not everyone in authority liked the growing relationship with us; one police chief objected to "communication with the enemy". However, the local army commanders valued it greatly, and so did the government's security advisers. One brigadier said of the PRG,

"We knew that they had contact with the IRA and the IRA presumably knew that they were in contact with us. There was an understanding, certainly on our part, and I suspect on theirs too, that the conduit could not be used for intelligence purposes, otherwise it would be undermined and destroyed."

In 1991 the most senior British Army officer in Northern Ireland assured the PRG that every new regiment posted to Derry/Londonderry would be told to renew the relationship.

The local army commanders increasingly consulted the PRG, particularly the ex-paramilitaries, about operational matters. Advice was given on public order problems such as IRA funerals and political and traditional marches, and also on smaller matters such as whether people would respond better to soldiers if they wore berets rather than steel helmets and camouflage paint on their faces. Yet there was a danger that softer public order tactics would make the police and army into easier targets for the IRA, unless the latter could understand and appreciate the changes. In thinking about this, the Group were inspired by an American theorist, Charles Osgood, who in 1962 formulated the idea of "graduated reciprocation in tension-reduction" conveniently called GRIT. He realized that an escalating conflict usually grows without (or despite) communication; each party watches what the other is doing, and calculates what is the safest way for them to respond. This is how the stockpiles grow in an arms race. Osgood's insight was that this process could be put into reverse. Side A will not unilaterally disarm; but they can make a small reduction and wait to see whether there will be a response. If Side B reciprocates with a parallel concession, A can make a further move. Whereas complete disarmament requires a huge amount of trust, GRIT enables trust to grow as each side sees increasing evidence of the other's peaceful intent. Another beauty of GRIT is that the two sides do not have to negotiate until they are ready. Up till then deeds are speaking louder than words could. The outstanding example of GRIT was given by Mikhail

Gorbachev, when, after decades of fruitless Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, he simply made a large reduction in Soviet missiles and waited for western governments to respond.

In Derry/Londonderry the main source of violence was the conflict between the IRA and the British security forces. There were paramilitaries in the Protestant part of the community too, with whom the PRG had good relations; in fact the Group had managed to secure promises of "no first strike" in the city from both sides. To bring peace, what was needed was an IRA response to the British moves. So an ex-paramilitary PRG member and I began discussions with them and fo und a much more open attitude than we expected. We were encouraged to draw up a list of moves which either side could make as they began to trust the other's intentions: for example the army could stop indiscriminate house searches through a whole area, while the IRA could stop taking over people's homes as hiding places to ambush soldiers. The measures would at first be confined to the Derry/Londonderry city area, and made without publicity.

A possible problem was that British moves would often be obvious, such as dropping plans for a new police station on a contentious site; paramilitary moves, such as not attacking police when they were going to the assistance of the public, would be harder to identify - it could be due to voluntary self-restraint or more effective police tactics. Martin McGuinness raised another difficulty with me. He said,

"*You are talking about a bargaining process at the military level. But the IRA are not interested in that. They want to give up their violence, but they will only trade it for political gains. Otherwise their whole campaign would have been in vain.*"

I responded by saying that without initial trust-building measures there could be no successful political bargaining, but I am not sure if I persuaded him.

GRIT began in Derry/Londonderry, and survived a dangerous time in 1991, when a loyalist unit from another town went into the Republic and killed a Sinn Féin councilor. ("Loyalist" is the term for extremists and violent groups in the unionist community). The IRA saw this as a breach of the "no first strike agreement" and murdered the loyalist leader in the city, a good friend of the PRG, who had been protecting his opponents from attack by his own men.

Yet violence continued to diminish and the death toll in Derry/Londonderry became very small. Army and police "mistakes" and misconduct became rare. The journalist Ed Maloney reviewed IRA operational statistics for the Derry Brigade, and found that between 1986 and 1989 they accounted for an annual average of 13 percent of all IRA activities; between 1990 and 1993 the average fell to just under 5 percent. But because publicity was avoided, it was not easy to see whether this was an intentional process. At the end of 1992 I still felt unsure. I then asked Mitchel McLaughlin if there was a chance of a GRIT agenda being pursued, and he said, "What do you think we have been doing for the last two years?" He added that the Army had been responding. On another occasion a Sinn Féin leader said, "We were looking for a way to move towards peace; what the PRG did was to show us the nuts and bolts of a possible process." A senior British officer said that once a Northern Irish peace process was clearly starting, and

high-level discussions began on de-escalation, "It was possible to say that we have

already done that in Derry".

Helping to Move Forward

This account may suggest that, provided the channels of communication are there, the

process is easy. This of course is not true. In 1992 there was a "citizens' enquiry" on the

way forward to peace in Northern Ireland, with an international commission of

distinguished people who listened to submissions from many groups. In a private session

the PRG told them about the GRIT process, and unfortunately rather too much of this was

revealed in the subsequent *Opsahl Report* published in 1993. Sinn Féin leaders reacted by

angrily denying there had been any mediation process (which in a strict sense was correct

- GRIT is not negotiation). They said about me in a newspaper interview, "He's either

very flaky…or something more sinister." The PRG was sent a message saying I was now

persona non grata with the people I had been talking to; it wasn't clear for a time

whether Diana and I should take these remarks as a physical threat.

There are two possible reasons for this strong reaction. Ed Maloney believes that the

Derry leaders had been acting without the sanction of the ruling group in the IRA, the

Army Council - and also moving far ahead of the expectations of their members in other

areas. It was thus embarrassing to have their moves exposed in a well-known book. But I

think the major reason was that there had been secret talks between Martin McGuinness

and representatives of the British government since March of that year (also unknown to

most of the members). These broke down in mistrust in September, and soon afterwards a journalist ran a story on the front page of *The Sunday Times* revealing the existence of the talks and (wrongly) pointing to me as the go-between. The *Opsahl Report* appeared at about the same time. It is hardly surprising that this mixture of disappointment, suspicion, untruths and unwelcome revelation created a difficult and dangerous situation for Diana and me, who were "expendable". Luckily the other PRG members were able to maintain their trust and contacts.

What is remarkable is that despite this debacle, the GRIT process held, and a year later the IRA declared a ceasefire across Northern Ireland and asked for the start of the open all-party political negotiations which the British and Irish governments had offered. When this happened, a former Commander of the British Army Brigade in Derry/Londonderry wrote to us:

"I have thought so often that the roots of the initiative lay in Derry, which in some part showed the way (I think perhaps for the IRA as well as for the Army and others) and in that the PRG were central—in your philosophy and example and all you did to help us move forward."

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* Diana and John Lampen, since leaving Ireland in 1994, work as trainers and consultants in peace skills, both with children and adults. They work mainly in the UK, but also in Bosnia, Croatia, Denmark, South Africa, Uganda, Ukraine, and USA.

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21.3 Engendering the Peace Processes in West Africa: The Mano River Women's

Peace Network

While rebels and soldiers traded bullets and political leaders talked tough, women from three West African countries promoted negotiations and reconciliation. With refugee flow reaching unprecedented levels, the women's network helped to prevent the outbreak of hostilities between the three countries by bringing their leaders back to the negotiation table. By Femme Africa Solidarité*

In May 2000, at a meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, attended by women leaders and representatives of local non-governmental organizations, an initiative was launched linking women from Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea in an effort to promote peace. The Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET) adopted a mandate committing women from the three Mano River region countries to forget their differences and pursue a common agenda covering peace and sustainable development for their respective countries and the region as a whole.

Its formation marked the culmination of efforts facilitated, in the main, by Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS)1, which brought together women ministers, parliamentarians, journalists, lawyers, academics, researchers, and sympathetic individuals from the private sector.

MARWOPNET comprises roughly thirty umbrella organizations operating in diverse areas and focusing on promoting peace and development.2 Within a relatively short

period, MARWOPNET erected a network base that spread beyond the African continent, to include national, regional and international organizations. Its primary efforts focused on peace. This commitment was tested very quickly. With civil wars raging in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and tension on the rise in neighboring Guinea - a partner with the two West African nations in the Mano River economic alliance - the women of MARWOPNET launched a bold initiative in 2001 to get leaders talking to each other. It seemed a forlorn hope, given the depth of animosity among the presidents, but that was no deterrent.

Getting them to speak

A representative group of women from the three countries visited Liberia. On their arrival in Monrovia, President Charles Taylor was holding a cabinet meeting. He asked:

"Are you telling me that women leaders from Guinea are here in Monrovia? And women from Sierra Leone?"

Struck by their courage, and impressed by the effort they had made to reach Monrovia, Taylor agreed to meet the women and assured them of his willingness to sit down with his counterparts from Guinea and Sierra Leone.

Encouraged, MARWOPNET sent a delegation to Conakry. Guinea President Lansana Conte received them. Mary Brownell, a member of the delegation, told the president:

"You and President Taylor have to meet as men and iron out your differences, and we the women want to be present. We will lock you in this room until you come to your senses, and I will sit on the key."

President Conte laughed.

"What man do you think would say that to me? Only a woman could do such a thing and get away with it."

He agreed to attend a summit, declaring:

"Many people have come before to try to convince me to meet with President Taylor and I have always refused them, but today I accept because I believe in you. You are not part of the problem. You have not brought war, but your commitment and appeal have convinced me".

Next, the women went to see President Tejan Kabba of Sierra Leone who informed them he had already been contacted by President Conte and they had agreed to have their ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defense meet to prepare the ground for the summit, including Taylor.

Ms. Brownell, who was a veteran activist from Liberia, commented later that the leaders,

"know they have to listen because the women are not for war… (they) know that we don't want anything from them except peace."

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Areas of concern

Recognizing that peace, development and security are inter-related, MARWOPNET

focused on five critical areas of concern. Each of the women's networks agreed to take a

lead role in one area.

The areas, and their different components, were as follows:

. *peace process* (involving provision of training; establishment of a dialogue;

mainstreaming of gender; affirmative action; integration of a human rights approach);

. *peace mechanisms* (increasing awareness; increased participation of women in

international peace mechanisms; wide-scale education programs; greater interaction

among women's groups and other stakeholders; establishment of a strong communication

and information network and an effective early warning system; continued improvement

in the transparent management of cross-border movements);

. *security* (reduction and eventual eradication of arms in circulation in the sub-region;

increase of accurate information on the location of arms; decrease in and eventual end to

recruitment of child soldiers; establishment of a more secure environment for

development to take place);

. *reconstruction* (physical and psychological rehabilitation of war victims; social

reintegration of members of families and communities; restoration of basic welfare

facilities in the region; restoration of women's self-confidence and desire to start afresh;

empowerment of women to enable them to fully take part in the reconstruction and

development of the region; training of trainers for each country; training to address

psychological damage caused by war to child soldiers, other combatants, women and

refugees; training in housing reconstruction);

. *economic empowerment* (revitalization of the economic capacity of women, to stimulate

economic development; promotion of gender equity and sensitivity in the policies of

governments; strengthening the capacity of women to ensure their relevance and

competitiveness in the global set-up).

<End Box>

Dialogue

These meetings between MARWOPNET delegations and the presidents took place

between June and August, 2001. In early March 2002, at a three-day summit, in Rabat,

Morocco, presidents Taylor, Conte and Kabba agreed to jump-start peace talks, initiate

dialogue between the ministers of Defense from the three countries, re-open borders

between Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, rebuild diplomatic relations between the three

countries, decrease the proliferation of small arms and increase economic cooperation in

the Mano River basin.

By initiating dialogue among the three countries, MARWOPNET succeeded where many

previous attempts had failed. The founders of the network followed through on their

conviction that joint action would enable women to contribute meaningfully to the quest

for regional peace and security.

Their efforts were not limited to forcing direct political action. MARWOPNET sent

representatives on peace tours of the region, and participated in demonstrations by other

women's groups. The Network alerted the regional and international community to the

situation in the region, and played a critical role as intermediary between the various

factions involved in the Liberian peace talks in Ghana where it was invited as one of the

signatories to the eventual agreement. During the two months of their stay in Ghana, the

MARWOPNET delegation lobbied for inclusion of the peace agenda agreed in Abuja in

2000, as part of the Accra peace accord.

Sensitizing People to Peace

The Network's success in bringing leaders of the Mano River Union to the negotiating

table enabled women to secure access to decisionmaking structures - especially in regard

to peace and development processes - and created effective programs to return and

reintegrate refugees and internally displaced people to their homes.

MARWOPNET's concern for victims of conflict translated into a greater focus on

projects to help re-integrate refugees and internally displaced people into their homes and

communities. MARWOPNET's members visited refugee camps and drew attention to the

plight of those sheltered there. They launched advocacy campaigns to give visibility to

issues such as HIV/AIDS, economic empowerment, child soldiers and disarmament.

Provisions were distributed to the needy and international organizations increased their

lobbying efforts, highlighting conditions in the camps and urging more humane treatment

and increased aid to refugees. There was particular focus on helping people heal both physical and psychological wounds, especially the thousands of women and young girls in the camps who were victims of sexual violence.

In its ongoing work in these areas, the Network used specific strategies to achieve its objectives. MARWOPNET tried to sensitize people at all levels – from grassroots organizations to politicians – on peace issues, including advocacy, capacity-building, the benefits of linking with other ongoing initiatives, networking and partnership-building. It carried out research and disseminated information on existing peace initiatives, and promoted best practices in peacebuilding among women.

At meetings with rebel groups, and during peace marches and demonstrations, the women demanded the destruction of small arms, the reintegration and rehabilitation of child soldiers, better treatment of refugees and displaced persons, and increased cooperation between the Mano river states.

In the area of capacity-building, MARWOPNET's training sessions and workshops on peacebuilding focused on equipping women mediators from all walks of life with necessary skills in mediation, negotiation and mobilization techniques and instilling them with the determination to work for peace and promote a culture of reconciliation. The women have taught conflict resolution and negotiation techniques to media NGOs and representatives of civil society.

Recognized Impact

The achievements of MARWOPNET earned the praise of UN Secretary-General, Kofi

Annan who, in a report to the Security Council in April 2001, noted that MARWOPNET

"aptly demonstrates" the multi-dimensional, coordinated and regional collaborative

approach adopted by civil society bodies in their struggles to promote peace. A similar

endorsement came from the Organisation of African Union that year. The network earned

praise from the continental body for its "commendable efforts aimed at sustaining the

peace process in Sierra Leone and bringing about peace, security and stability in Mano

River region".

In December 2003, MARWOPNET was awarded the UN Prize in the field of Human

Rights by the United Nations General Assembly. This is an honorary award given to

individuals and organizations in recognition of their outstanding achievement in human

rights.

Conclusions

Despite the successes achieved by MARWOPNET, peace in the sub-region remains

precarious. There is an urgent need for the continuation and intensification of efforts to

empower women and enable them to continue their role as effective advocates for peace.

Although various international declarations and conventions call for increased

involvement of women in peace negotiations, African women continue to be sidelined in

this area. They have proven that they can negotiate through participation in the

MARWOPNET and other regional peace processes, but even when organized and prepared, they find it hard to secure necessary funds to attend negotiations. When they do obtain financial backing, they have trouble receiving accreditation. When they get accreditation, other participants tend not to take them seriously.

A number of crucial issues are on the table calling for the attention of womencaucuses involved in peace negotiations.

. How many women are participating in transitional governments?

. Will they participate in the drafting of new constitutions and thus be able to get gender issues into the mainstream?

. Will any War Crimes Tribunal take into special consideration violence committed against women?

. What protection will the international community provide to women who have taken risks?

One potentially powerful tool, whose implementation is vital to the rights of all women living in, or emerging from, conflict situations, is UN Security Council's Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. In order to effectively use this tool, African women must advocate for its implementation at the national level. The international community must support them, both politically and financially, in this endeavor.

The commitment expressed by United Nations Department of Political Affairs to support the women of Mano River to participate in peace negotiations, as well as the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women support for creating national gender machinery in war-torn countries, are examples of positive responses. African women must build partnerships with other women and men from around the world who share similar interests, both in sustainable peace and gender equality.

The many obstacles to implementation of peace initiatives include the absence of a good communication network between the groups, and between them and their various constituencies. It is therefore important that an effective communication mechanism - including such tools as Internet and e-mails - be set up and strengthened to ensure an easy flow of information among all concerned parties.

Women's groups have to seize every opportunity arising at the national or international levels. Recent initiatives in the area of post-conflict peacebuilding by the UN, World Bank, ECOWAS, the African Union, and so on, offer the chance for women living in, or emerging from, conflict situations, to overcome the obstacles listed above, and pursue peace initiatives.

* FAS was created in 1996 from a brainstorming session with a group of women lawyers, judges, academics and entrepreneurs, along with representatives from other NGOs and international organisations to promote, ensure and give a voice to women in resolving

conflicts and building peace. It functions within existing and emerging structures in

Africa and functions as a communication link between African Women.

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Notes

[1] With support from UN agencies, the African Union, Economic Commission of Africa

and the Economic Commission of West African States (Ecowas)

[1] The largest members included the Coordination of Women NGOs in Guinea (Cofeg),

National Women NGOs of Liberia (Nawol), Liberia Women's Initiative (LWI) and Sierra

Leone Women's Forum (SLWF). The Network has six organs: a general assembly, board

of directors, five multi-sectoral standing technical committees, three national country

focal points and a regional secretariat.

21.4 Small Steps towards Reconciliation: The Joint Committee for Democratization and Conciliation in Moldova

Most attempts from grassroots organizations to resolve the post-USSR conflict in Moldova have failed because of flawed processes and a lack of trust in the impartiality of the initiatives. The Joint Committee for Democratization and Conciliation however evolved from within communities on both sides of the conflict. It was the first local NGO to facilitate conflict resolution attempts at all levels of leadership. By Yuri Ataman*

In September 1998 a week-long seminar, the second in a series, took place in Albena, Bulgaria, focusing on the unresolved conflict between the Republic of Moldova and the breakaway region of Transdniestria. The main aim of the meeting was to facilitate collaboration between governmental and non-governmental sectors in Moldova and Transdniestria for the purpose of addressing the troubles of ordinary people. It also aimed to "kick start" the stalled processes of meditated negotiations and conflict resolution between the two governments, which had been initiated in 1993.

The seminar attracted a wide range of participants: NGO representatives, local and national authority leaders, journalists, business people, students, housewives, lawyers, military personnel, Moldovan and Transdniestrian governmental officials, and mediating ambassadors from Russia, the Ukraine and the OSCE.

Interaction between all these levels of leadership was highly productive and there was a perceptible move away from entrenched positions. Two subsequent developments were attributed to discussions undertaken at the seminar: the resumption of the inter-governmental negotiations, and the reduction of peacekeeping troops in the security zone separating the two sides.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the seminar was the diversity in leadership from both sides, engaging with one another, resulting in lines of interaction both vertically, within, and horizontally, between, the different camps.

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The Moldovan/Transdniestrian conflict

Moldova experienced severe problems following the disintegration of the USSR. In September 1990, as the result of a power struggle which had a significant identity-related dimension, the region lying east of the river Dniester, Transdniestria – where a majority of the population are of Russian or Ukrainian extraction – attempted to proclaim its autonomy. Armed conflict between the Moldovan authorities and the Transdniestrians broke out in March 1992. By July, when a cease-fire was imposed, hundreds had been killed and thousands had been forced to flee their homes. A security zone was created centered on the river Dniester, policed by Moldovan, Transdniestrian and Russian troops.

In 1993 the governments of Moldova and Transdniestria agreed to engage in political negotiations, involving mediators from the OSCE, the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

Attempts to bring these negotiations to a successful conclusion, however, continue to be

beset by seemingly insuperable difficulties. box>

Grassroots Efforts at Self-Help

Ordinary people were shocked and bewildered by the sudden outbreak of violence in

their usually peaceful country. One co-founder of a locally-based NGO expressed his

feelings of incomprehension:

"I could not imagine that people who had lived together for so many years, who

had created so many 'mixed' families, would divide on national lines, that events

could lead to a violent military conflict. But our world proved to be fragile and

ordinary people suddenly found themselves completely unprotected against

violence. During the conflict many within the population were seized by a

nationalist psychosis. Everyone was ready to go to fight against people who only

yesterday had been their fellow-countrymen. We became enemies."

Many were unable to make sense of the conflict and it was difficult to imagine what

could be done to resolve it. Attempts at conflict resolution by grassroots organizations

failed because of a lack of trust in the impartiality of the initiatives. Those programs that

were initiated by local leaders helped distressed people, attempting to impose a code of

conduct in their local regions.

An apprehensive Moldovan journalist invited Joe Camplisson into the conflict arena.

Camplisson is a community development and conflict resolution specialist from Northern

Ireland who had been assisting with community development needs in neighboring

Romania. Shortly after Camplisson's arrival some people came together within a self-

help process aimed at conflict prevention and development. They organized three

conferences in 1992 held in neutral, former Czechoslovakia. The first involved mainly

Latin - Romanian leaning - Moldovans, the second involved mainly Slav-leaning

Transdnestrians, and the third engaged participants from both sides of the conflict

interface.

From both sides Camplisson and his associates received repeated requests for assistance

with self-help attempts aiming at socio–economic and political development and with the

search for conflict resolution. Process participants from across the leadership spectrum of

the divided society then initiated, individually and in groups, an extensive range of

activities. In these, ordinary people engaged with political leadership and military

commanders.

Meetings were also held with President Smirnov, of Transdniestria and President Snegur

of Moldova, both of whom made an official request to Camplisson for assistance with the

resolution of the conflict. In 1994 they nominated six delegates to a conflict resolution

process. (Years later, in 2004, as government ministers, some members of these

delegations also represented their governments in the Pentagonal Bratislava Process of

mediated negotiations.) Initial successes within this process included joint public

statements by the main protagonists of their intent to treat their conflict as a problem to

be solved rather than as a reason for war. They would, they said, employ only non–

violent means in the search for solutions, and pursue a win–win outcome for the conflict

resolution process.

Camplisson and some of the specialists who had been assisting him formed the Moldovan

Initiative Committee of Management (MICOM), and funding was obtained from

Charities Aid Foundation (UK) and C S Mott Foundation (USA). Simultaneously,

Camplisson's local associates came together as the Joint Committee for Democratisation

and Conciliation (JCDC), drawing its membership equally from Moldova and

Transdniestria.

These two organizations now began to consolidate their unique partnership. MICOM,

acting as an "external third party", was able to bring a wealth of outside expertise to bear

on the problems facing Moldova/Transdniestria. For its part, the JCDC, acting as a

neutral "indigenous third party", brought the energy and commitment of ordinary people

to bear on the search for solutions. Their capacity for initiating and facilitating

meaningful self-help action was developed to a higher level.

A Multifaceted Program

In their programming, the JCDC and MICOM embarked on an ambitious program of

activities, one that has been sustained ever since. Numerous mechanisms were utilized:

facilitating workshops, study visits to Northern Ireland, seminars, and conferences. Some

of these activities focused on the needs of a specific sector - NGOs, village mayors, local

authority officials, and governmental representatives. Where possible, however, efforts were made to bring different levels of leadership together in a conflict resolution process to facilitate and share analysis of their most pressing problems and related needs.

The JCDC/MICOM seminar series held in Albena, Bulgaria, in 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2000 brought forward many governmental and non-governmental initiatives. Among these were the setting-up of an information center for NGOs, a mutual jazz festival in Bender, a program for assistance to unemployed people in Transdniestria and a rehabilitation program that assists people who had been suffering from the Transdniestria conflict and the Afghan war.

Each of the seminars addressed the burning issues of the day as determined by different levels of leadership. The focus of each seminar was tailored to the specific needs of one particular sector. Working alongside that sector's leadership, however were leaders from other levels. Participation in these seminars by the OSCE representative and the mediating Russian and Ukrainian ambassadors – at their request – became the norm. This was a clear indication of the growing importance accorded to the JCDC/MICOM program of work.

Bringing together participants with widely differing functions, positions, interests, ideologies and backgrounds served to open many peoples' eyes to the breadth and scope of the problems they were confronting. It also provided an opportunity for them to develop their potential for dealing with everyday problems, as well as advancing the search for conflict resolution.

A striking feature was the clear evidence of a reversal in totalitarian perceptions and

attitudes towards NGOs. This change of appreciation was identified by some of the

governmental participants, one of whom remarked

"I now have a more favorable attitude to the activity of NGOs and I will try to support

them".

Another said:

"I now have increased hope for the future knowing just how many dedicated, selfless

people are striving for the good of their communities."

Governmental representatives listened to, and expressed their gratitude for, the clearly

stated views of the NGOs during these seminars and workshops. NGOs on both sides of

the conflict interface stressed the importance of cultural exchanges and "people's

diplomacy" across the "peace line" and between the various ethnic groups. One who was

particularly enthusiastic about the work being done, stated:

"From now on I will strive to seek mutual understanding; I will have respect for the

position of others."

 And another promised:

"In my future work I will invite the participation of NGOs from the other side."

National and Local Impact

These seminars provided opportunities for informal meetings between the governmental representatives, where they could discuss issues in a manner not possible within the framework of the OSCE-mediated negotiations. In some instances MICOM and the JCDC were able to use such meetings to overcome impasses in the negotiation process. Indeed, an increasingly productive working relationship developed between the OSCE-mediated negotiation process and the conflict resolution process being facilitated by the JCDC/MICOM partnership. Complementarity has effectively been established between the two.

The difference between these processes was evident in Moldova. The conflicting governments engaged in both processes, but each had a different influence on the resolution of the conflict.

In the one, facilitated by the OSCE, they negotiate from positions of "power". It aimed at reaching a compromise agreement. In the other, facilitated by the JCDC/MICOM partnership, they had been engaging in a process of assisted analysis. It focused on sharing and explaining their respective "needs" within the circumstances. This process lent itself readily to the establishment of "parity of esteem" between the sides. In the field of conflict resolution this had not been thought possible because the one process was rooted in the power theory of conflict, the other in Needs theory. Some would say these are contradictory theories. The fact that complementarity between the processes nevertheless was consistently, successfully and demonstrably achieved has profound implications for similar situations in other countries.

Aside from successful efforts in bringing diverse levels of leadership together at a national level, the JCDC identified and enhanced local capacity for self-help through:

. improved relationships between local people, between them and soldiers on the checkpoints of the area. As a result of which more small day-to-day situations began being resolved more easily.

. facilitated analysis and constructive dialogue leading to collaborative action between local administrations from towns and villages on each side of the river Dniester.

. initiation of a program in which mayors sought to clean up their respective stretches of the river and transform it into a nature reserve.

. encouraging four towns (two from each side of the Dniester) to organize Christmas festivities involving 400 children, who performed a concert in Transdniestria and then walked across a bridge over the Dniester to perform the same concert in Moldova.

. organizing seminars that targeted the needs of marginalized sectors of society. One seminar, for example, endeavored to give a voice to young people and assisted in the building of a youth network. These seminars involved people from all three regions: Moldova, Transdniestria and Gagauzia (another region of Moldova which has experienced war-related tensions).

. the JCDC was actively involved in work in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, being the chair in 2002-2003 of the Assembly of NGOs from Byelorussia, Moldova and the Ukraine dealing with conflicts, which is part of the

Working Group of NGOs from the CIS on Prevention and Resolution of Conflicts - a

network of NGOs working within the CIS.

Working towards the Future

JCDC members are united and motivated to do something constructive about the

situation. Coming together as the JCDC they found a common purpose. All members of

the JCDC are volunteers. The JCDC chairman is its full-time executive director. With the

support of two part-time staff he, in conjunction with MICOM's office in Northern

Ireland, maintains an operational base in Moldova. The JCDC is continuously monitoring

the most pressing issues of the day, while addressing the leadership needs of different

sectors of society, mainly through assisted analysis and training. Whenever resources

permit, the JCDC also seeks to consolidate and expand its community development and

conflict resolution networking activities.

It is currently implementing two new programs: one entitled "Restoring the integrity and

stability of the state – a common cause for all people of the Republic of Moldova",

designed to assist different leadership levels in their attempts to determine their

respective roles in relation to the processes of state reform and resolution of the conflict.

The other, entitled "Strengthening Co-operation between Local Authorities and Civil

Society", is part of the Peacebuilding Framework Project involving Moldova,

Transdniestria and Gagauzia.

The work is not finished in Moldova, but as one member of JCDC pointed out:

"In the beginning I was not sure that the problems could be solved and I am not sure

even now that they will be, but what the Committee [JCDC] does is to move us with small

steps towards resolution. We can see results and this is positive. There was a time when

the work of the Committee was in a deadlock and there were even doubts if it would be

able to exist, but the other members managed to allay my doubts."

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Resources

An account of MICOM/JCDC activities in Moldova/Transdniestria between 1992 and

2002 can be found in the book *From Conflict Containment to Resolution.* A pamphlet,

The search for conflict resolution: lessons drawn from a community development

strategy, is available free of charge to community organizations; this gives a concise

overview of the Moldovan initiative and presents guidelines and lessons drawn from

community development and conflict resolution practice there. The book and the

pamphlet are available from Island Publications, 132 Serpentine Road, Newtownabbey,

Co. Antrim, BT36 7JQ, Northern Ireland, UK.

The work of the JCDC and MICOM has also been described in a thesis by Susan Allan

Nan, George Mason University, and in *War Prevention Works, 50 Stories of People*

Resolving Conflict, by Dylan Matthews for the Oxford Research Group, UK (2001).

21.5 A Second Way : Grupo Maryland between Peru and Ecuador

Civil society leaders played an important role in the process that led to the signing, in 1998, of a peace treaty that settled a protracted border dispute between Peru and Ecuador. Their role in fostering conditions for wide acceptance of that agreement, offers a model for dealing with such conflicts in the future. By Inés Cevallos Breilh and Sahary Betancourt*

In 1995, for the third time since 1941, Peru and Ecuador went to war over a disputed frontier region in the Amazon basin. The skirmishes that took place in Alto Cenepa were the most serious of the three armed clashes. On this occasion, the confrontation triggered an intense process of diplomatic negotiations. There were calls for a ceasefire, a separation of forces and negotiations to find a definitive settlement to the longest-running border dispute in the Western Hemisphere.

The diplomatic initiatives concluded, eventually, with the signing of a peace accord on October 26, 1998, in Brasilia. Running parallel to the diplomatic moves, was a process referred to as *citizen diplomacy* – and initiative in which civil society groups discussed issues underlying the conflict, and ways of resolving it without official and diplomatic constraints. This took place under the auspices of a long-term program run by the University of Maryland in the USA called "A Culture for Democracy in Latin America". One of the projects included in this program got different partners, including the Pontificia Catholic University of Ecuador, to establish an Innovative Problem Solving

Workshop under the theme "Ecuador and Peru: Towards a Democratic and Cooperative

Conflict Resolution Initiative".

Finding Common Ground

The workshop took place in August 1997. Some twenty members of both Ecuadorian and

Peruvian civil society, including academics, business people, civic education and human

rights specialists, journalists and representatives of environmental Non-Governmental

Organizations (NGOs), attended it. The aim was to help these individuals and groups

establish their roles as "stakeholders in the conflict" and find and define a common

ground from where to look for its resolution.

The dialogue between civil society groups from Peru and Ecuador - referred to as Track

Two diplomacy - centered around a series of workshops. Track One was the official

diplomatic activity involving three Latin American nations – Brazil, Argentina and Chile

– and the USA, as the regional superpower. These countries were neutral guarantors of a

1942 treaty that settled the first border war.

According to Edy Kaufman and Saúl Sosnowski, in a background paper on the process,

"The peace treaty signed by Ecuador and Peru in October 1998 was not only the

culmination of a successful and, at times, difficult diplomatic process; it was the faithful

reflection of the transformation of society in both countries that shored up official

diplomacy in order to achieve a bi-national consensus for peace. By this means, the

longest-standing border conflict in the Western Hemisphere reached its end with a

culture of peace, hopefully difficult to derail, and likely to become the norm between the two nations."

The input provided by the respective civil societies in the diplomatic process was indispensable to the eventual outcome. The direct involvement of the various groups, helped create useful lines of communication between official negotiations and non-official contacts. This made the negotiators aware of the sentiments existing among citizens – and ensured acceptance that the agreements, once signed, would be accepted by ordinary citizens, who were, in fact, the real actors who must deal with its implementation.

The Grupo Maryland, as the civil society leaders were known, drew on a method developed at Maryland's Center for International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM). Their efforts and ideas were carried out through a series of workshops. The first one, held in Maryland in August 1987, took place while diplomatic activity was in full swing, involving the foreign ministers of Ecuador and Peru and the Guarantor countries.

Participants, designated "Partners in Conflict", were chosen because they shared common traits related to profession, gender, age, location, and the like. Efforts were made to understand what each group and individual wanted. What were their needs? What motivated them? Through a process of problem-solving, common ground was sought among participants through written consensus. This involved getting them to personally accept their shared understanding of the roots of the conflict, and ways of resolving them.

The workshop format and methodology allowed participants to express themselves freely in a confidential atmosphere. In this atmosphere, fresh approaches and ideas were raised. The high status of some of the participants themselves was helpful. Several were prominent individuals whose views were respected by those involved in the Track One diplomacy.

The "Partners" were divided into working groups dealing with their specific areas of expertise. Ten persons were invited from each country. They were encouraged to feel free to speak their minds. These working groups studied the role of civil society in the context of negotiations between the two countries, with the objective of getting them to discover ways in which they could contribute to the ongoing process between the two governments. Participants analyzed the origin of the conflict and explored fresh ideas for resolving it, without resorting to violence, and in a democratic context.

Most agreed the frontier conflict tended to resurface whenever there were problems between the civilian and military inside each country, or at times of significant political change. Others said the real reason for the conflict was the social changes underway within the two countries. Some traced the war attitudes to the education system of the two countries, which inculcated such ideas in children.

Using methods emerging from conflict resolution workshops held in other regions of the world, the participants followed a number of steps and engaged in various exercises, including trying to imagine an ideal for relations between Ecuador and Peru thirty years from now.

Answers ranged from the existence of stronger political and economic ties to greater cooperation - including disappearance of the frontier - more efficient management of natural resources; integration of infrastructure such as highways, electricity, water, and the like, to integration of the two populations, enhanced presence of civil society in governmental decisions, greater democratic participation and creation of allied programs to fight the socioeconomic crisis and poverty.

They were then asked to change perspectives and imagine the worst possible scenario: what would happen if the conflict was not resolved for another fifty years? Some of the scenarios painted included continued confrontation and conflicts; slowdown in economic development and growth; irrational exploitation of the land and the subsoil, affecting the ecosystem of the zone in conflict; violent colonization of each side of the frontier, leading to increase in poverty and displacement of the native communities.

Some participants pointed out that in polarized societies like Ecuador and Peru, powerful people benefited from these confrontations, and that arms manufacturers were also beneficiaries. They concluded that the main question was how to create a culture of conciliation in educated societies to manage a conflict culture internal and external. Each member was asked to explain the official position of his or her government. Participants from the two countries painted two completely different realities – convinced it was the correct one.

In the "reflective" stage of the project, they were encouraged to listen to one another and find ways of communicating. The groups were divided to discuss designated areas that

could be seen as the foundations of the conflict such as historical, cultural, economic,

political, geographic, paradigmatic and psychological root-cause.

Members also pointed out that the press could be used to manipulate information to

influence public opinion. The "rain of ideas", an elaboration of proposals and activities

that could be undertaken by civil society followed this step. Five workgroups were set up

to examine the environmental problems of the region, the role of the press, the role of

businessmen in the development of the economy, and possible contributions of civil

society to official diplomacy.

Mood of Optimism

By the time of the second workshop, took part at the Pontifical University of Ecuador, in

Cashapamba - near Quito - in March 1998, progress in formal diplomatic negotiations

created a mood of optimism, though there were still unresolved problems.

More participants were invited to this second meeting, including several representatives

of the indigenous people living in the conflict area, and members of the church, to

provide real knowledge of the situation on the ground. Since some participants from the

earlier workshop had, by this time, been invited to become official members of the

diplomatic process, new participants replaced them.

The focus was on concrete actions that each member could take, given his own

professional position. Goals set earlier were reviewed. Particular attention was paid to

political order and psychological impact that could condition implementation of the ideas

when presented in another context. Topics discussed included determining the actual

border region.

The workshop featured a reflective phase during which subjects of a "bi national" nature

were raised. Participants were encouraged to examine "mutual confidence measures" that

could reduce tensions and prevent confrontations. This whole exercise established the

necessity of identifying common interests that can change conflict situations and

opportunities for cooperation.

Many proposals from various workgroups were presented to the press and citizens

participation groups and businesses. A 'Declaration of Cashapamba' was produced, and

details of the proceedings were reported in a newsletter that was sent to media outlets in

the two countries and presented to an Ecuadorian minister and the ambassador of Peru.

The presidents of the Chambers of Commerce of Lima and Quito signed a cooperation

agreement. Looking back, one of them, Hugo Sologuren Calmet, president of the Lima

Chamber of Commerce commented:

"The academic exercise through which we presented our positions regarding the conflict,

allowed for the mutual internalization of an issue that can only be resolved through

negotiation. From this perspective, the business sector has already made progress. The

chambers of commerce of Quito, Guayaquil and Lima have recently subscribed to a

treaty of cooperation. Business people from both countries have met on the border to

reaffirm bonds of friendship and fraternity that joins them. Delegations of Ecuadorean

business people have traveled many times this year to Lima."

Continuing the Process

A third workshop, in 1999, in El Pueblo, a village center not far from Lima, the Peruvian

capital, concentrated on reinforcing the new peace treaty drafted by officials in the Track

One sessions, and ways of implementing some of the ideas raised by the participants

themselves. The officer in charge of implementing the peace agreement was asked to join

the group. The foreign ministers from both countries were invited to attend, in their

personal capacities, and share their views with partic ipants.

<Box>

A legacy of colonial rule

The border dispute between Ecuador and Peru is a legacy of colonial rule. Spain

governed both countries; when they declared independence in the early part of the 19th

century, the exact perimeters were not clearly defined. From the 1820's onwards, leaders

of the two new republics of Ecuador and Peru, used the threat of foreign invasion of

sovereign territory, as a convenient rallying cry whenever domestic and political

upheavals threatened.

This practice was facilita ted by the rough and barren nature of the terrain in the disputed

region, and the lack of clear documentary evidence as to its ownership.

In 1887, both countries agreed to submit the dispute to international arbitration under the

King of Spain, without dis carding the possibility of reaching a negotiated solution on

their own. In April 1910, as the arbiter prepared to issue his ruling, the two nations

mobilized their armies in the border region. The arbiter resigned, fearing his

pronouncement would trigger a war.

Unable to reach agreement on their own, Ecuador and Peru continued to dispute

ownership. In 1941, they went to war over it. Peru won. The Rio de Janeiro Protocol, an

international treaty, established norms for a definitive solution. Four countries were

named as Guarantors – Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the USA.

The treaty was never fully accepted by Ecuadorians - who as the losing side in the 1941

war, was forced to accept conditions considered damaging. In 1981, there was another

conflict, in which Peru again imposed its military superiority. This was followed by

another, in 1995, in which Ecuador prevailed.

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For the fourth and final workshop, in Cuenca, Ecuador in August 2000, Grupo Maryland

tried to strengthen planning and implementation of joint ventures between Peruvian and

Ecuadorian institutions and people in the border regions. Participants felt it was essential

that multiple steps be taken to "broaden fraternization among different social sectors."

Further, it urged citizens to watchcarefully what was done with funds destined for border

development.

This workshop ended with the adoption of twelve recommendations for civil society in

Ecuador and Peru. These covered areas like greater citizen participation, supporting

sustainable development projects in the disputed border region, paying attention to things

like health, taking account of the interests of indigenous peoples, and the involvement of

the press, trade unions, educational institutions, popular organizations, and other groups.

The experience taught that this "second way" or citizen diplomacy, offered a new

approach to conflict resolution in Latin America. It was possible to carry out such a

program because of the high level of development achieved by civil society in Latin

America over the last two decades, and the interest shown by professionals in alternative

methods of conflict resolutions.

Conclusions

Grupo Maryland has demonstrated that conflict resolution is an important component in

efforts to reinforce democratic institutions and create a democratic culture. An effective

democracy cannot be defined only as having a representative government of the majority;

it also means the existence of different ideas.

The ideas raised and discussed at the Grupo Maryland workshops, were taken on board

during the diplomatic talks, and played an important role in the peace process which

ended with the signing of an agreement between the two countries. Some of the projects

proposed, are developing slowly, consolidating union and confidence between the

populations of the two countries.

These meetings generated new and creative solutions to the conflict and raised awareness

and eagerness for peace within the civil societies of both countries. The relationship of

co-operation and trust devebped were maintained after the signing of the peace

agreement, leading to improved relations between important sectors of the neighboring

countries. It had not been the first such agreement, which taught that such documents

alone do not hold guarantees. However, the active role of civil society, before, during and

after the peace process, might have been the key to hold on to the process this time.

The involvement of civil society represented a strong message for governments of the

two countries that the people were truly in search of a common ground for peace. The

fact that some participants at the first meeting were invited to become part of the official

peace process not only shows that this message was heard, but also that it was

appreciated and recognized as being of great importance.

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22. Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

Not Only a Job for Soldiers

Wolf-Christian Paes and Sami Faltas*

Former United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld is believed to have said, "Peacekeeping is not a job for soldiers, but only soldiers can do it".[1] Over the years, this has become a cliché, quoted time and again in speeches and articles. How much sense does this adage make today? In one way, it is still valid. Soldiers are still needed for peacekeeping, even though they are often poorly prepared for it. However in other ways, the old chestnut deserves a rest. Clearly, in the past decades, peacekeeping has become "a job for soldiers", but it has always been absurd to claim that "only a soldier can do it"[2]. In these days, it is clear that there are also important roles to play for the non-military actors such the clergy, professionals of all sorts, and NGOs. This chapter will examine these roles.

Military Preeminence

Since the end of the Cold War, peacekeeping has become a highly visible, increasingly familiar, and very important and honorable mission for the military. In a large and growing number of countries all over the world, military peacekeeping has become an integral part of defense and foreign policy. As peace operations multiplied in the 1980s and 1990s, the military enhanced their predominance. Increasingly, they were considered the professionals par excellence who are called in to do the job, even if ultimately the

politicians remain in control. This is easy to understand. Nothing signals the will of the

international community to preserve the peace as powerfully as the arrival of Hercules or

Antonov troopships carrying large numbers of armed and presumably neutral

peacekeepers. In the tense and uncertain conditions just before or after a war, military

peacekeepers can potentially provide the stability that may preserve the peace.

So strongly is peacekeeping associated with Blue Helmets that one might overlook or

underrate the essential roles played by civilians. Diplomats, politicians, civil

administrators, observers, police officers, religious leaders, teachers, doctors, business

people and many other civilians are usually needed to help consolidate the peace. No one

would seriously claim today that civilians should keep out of peacekeeping, but there is a

tendency to focus on the military element as the most important and to relegate civilian

elements to support roles.

What do we mean by the predominance of the military in peace operations?

The problem is not a lack of civilian control. The Force Commander of a UN peace

operation reports to the head of the UN mission, the Special Representative of the

Secretary-General(SRSG). From the SRSG upward, the chain of responsibility is entirely

civilian. The UN Secretary-General is the servant of the UN Security Council, which

comprises the representatives of fifteen national governments. In theory, and sometimes

also in practice, these governments are accountable to elected parliaments. In many

countries, independent media and civil society groups also monitor their actions. Similar

arrangements are made in peace operations that are not conducted by the UN, but by

regional organizations or national governments. As a rule, military peacekeepers are under civilian control.

Nor can one claim that military peacekeepers always get what they want. In many cases, they get much less than they need, with grave consequences. Some of the worst disasters of peacekeeping can be traced to the failure of politicians to give the military the troops, the equipment, the authority and the guidance they needed to do the job properly.

The point we are making is that military perceptions, military requirements, military ways of doing things and military 'facts on the ground' have a strong influence on peace operations. This may be due to the unique functions of the military, their high visibility, the resources they consume, and the risks to which they are exposed, compared with other actors. They dominate because they are the first in line, and no one else is taken equally seriously.

Soldiers are sometimes charged with tasks that would normally be done by civilians. Whether this is appropriate is always open to question. In 2000, Condoleeza Rice, soon to become George W. Bush's National Security Adviser and currently the newly-appointed US Secretary of State, said with regard to Kosovo, "Carrying out civil administration and police functions is ... going to degrade the American capability to do the things America has to do. We don't need to have the 82nd Airborne escorting kids to kindergarten" (*Washington Post*, October 23, 2000). Sending children back to school is important both in its own right and as a symbol of restored peace. The issue is whether this needs to be done by soldiers.

In this chapter we are concerned with the role of civil society in peacebuilding. We will focus on the removal of the tools of war from post-conflict societies, as well as the de-mobilization and reintegration of fighters. We will not dispute that soldiers have a crucial key role to play in peace operations, but we will criticize the pre-eminence hegemony of the military and stress the need for civil society to assert itself, to be heard and to actively involve itself in peace building.

Building Peace after Conflict

When an armed conflict comes to an end as the result of a peace settlement or a military victory, this does not mean that peace has come to stay. In a sense, this is when the real trouble begins. People face a ravaged and volatile society. Repairing the physical infrastructure will be a big challenge. Treating the wounds, grievances and traumas torn by years of violence and hatred will be even more difficult. One needs to remember that these changes are not linear. Building peace is not like building a wall, brick by brick. It is full of breakthroughs and setbacks. In places like Afghanistan, Angola, Colombia, Liberia and Sierra Leone, all too often "after the war is before the war." Even after the fighting has stopped, the logic that led to war will persist until it is replaced by the logic of peace.

Unless the fundamental political and socio-economic causes of the conflict are removed quickly, a return to warfare will remain a distinct possibility. This is particularly the case if "peace" is brought about not so much by a settlement among exhausted parties but rather by the intervention of the international community. In this case the superior

military power might force groups to accept a peace agreement even though they feel

cheated out of victory. The international presence might gloss over some of the

grievances that drove the conflict, but this will not build a sustainable peace.

The most important actors in a peace process are the former enemies and their com-

munities. If they are serious about turning their backs on war, this is the best foundation

for peace. However, they often need external assistance. If this is not available in time, in

adequate amounts, and in an appropriate form, then the peace process may fail.

Unfortunately, the countries that would be in a position to provide such help are not

always willing to allocate sufficient funds, equipment and troops for peace operations,

especially if they have no strategic interest in the area concerned.

However, even when donor countries have shown a strong commitment – for example in

the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq – winning the war has proved easier than winning the

peace. International peacekeeping forces have great difficulties in combating armed

groups employing traditional guerilla tactics, particularly if their members enjoy some

support among the civilian population. While these militia groups are unlikely to win an

outright military victory, their actions can make a country ungovernable. If this is

combined with the international reluctance to establish a permanent military presence and

the onset of donor fatigue, it is often just a matter of time before the peacekeepers are

withdrawn.

One of the key challenges of any post-conflict situation is the disarmament and

demobilization of the armed groups and the reintegration of their members into civilian

society. Ex-combatants that are not properly demobilized form a pool of dangerous

individuals, which can be easily tapped by politicians or criminals seeking recruits for new endeavors. Similarly, weapons and ammunition left behind after a conflict - or looted from state-run arms depots - often find their way into the hands of criminals or political opportunists. Given their physical nature, small arms and light weapons are particularly prone to be smuggled across regional borders. Following the end of the civil war in Mozambique in the mid-1990s, many AK-47 assault rifles ended up in the hands of criminals in neighboring South Africa, which was then at the peak of a crime wave. Similarly, when more than half a million firearms were stolen from police stations and military depots in Albania in 1997, Albanian insurgents and criminal groups all over the Southern Balkans benefited from the sudden increase in supply.

The 'R' is Different from the 'D's

There are two distinct phases in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process. During the first phase, often spanning a period of a few months to one year after the cease-fire, cantonment sites are established where fighters assemble, hand in their weapons and receive medical attention. Often they are also offered financial incentives, vocational training and trauma counseling. During this critical time period, peacekeeping forces provide security and mediate between the warring factions, while the actual implementation of the demobilization process often rests with civilian organizations.

If disarmament is mostly a military function, demobilization is in essence a civilian operation (Gleichmann et al., 2004), and needs to be carefully attuned to subsequent reintegration. All too often, the people in charge of demobilization promise the ex-combatants benefits that the reintegration program is unable to provide.

The second ("reintegration") phase of the process starts with the departure of the ex-fighters from the cantonment site and lasts until they have successfully returned to civilian life. Numerous studies (Pauwels, 2000; Kingma, 2000) have shown that this part of the process can easily take up to ten years. Its length is directly related to the duration and scope of the conflict: the longer the fighting took, the more difficult it will be for combatants to return to civilian life as a result of severed social ties and traumatization. Similarly, it is easier for a society to absorb former combatants if the fighting directly affected only a comparatively small number of people, leaving the social fabric largely intact. Obviously, if the infrastructure has not been severely degraded, and the economy is growing, it will be easier for ex-combatants to find a new livelihood. Unfortunately, these favorable conditions are not often encountered in the aftermath of today's wars.

The countries that once formed Yugoslavia are, in that sense, luckier than most. Due to the short duration of their wars in Kosovo (Heinemann-Grüder and Paes, 2001) and Macedonia (Matveeva et al., 2003), many former fighters were able to return to their families without the assistance of a formal demobilization program. The challenge is much greater in Afghanistan and Angola, where wars were raging for decades.

Unfortunately, the challenges of this second phase are often underestimated by program planners, and inadequately funded. Rehabilitation and emergency relief funds are usually

highest immediately after the end of fighting (when the capacity of a country to absorb

them is the lowest) and then dry up completely after a period of three to five years when

international attention is captured by events elsewhere.

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Bringing in the Civilians

One can identify several obstacles to the establishment of a sustainable peace following a

period of armed conflict. Some of these may have already existed before the original

conflict broke out, while others were caused by the fighting:

. Grievances, such as the distribution of power and resources between competing ethnic,

religious, social or political groups.

. Mistrust and feelings of hatred towards parties that are held responsible for committing

atrocities during the conflict.

. Traumas and the establishment of a "culture of violence" whereby people who have

experienced warfare themselves are accustomed to solve conflicts by violent means.

. Destitution and lack of a perspective among former fighters who have often learned no

civilian skills and who find it hard to return to civilian life.

. The destruction of a country's infrastructure and public services, combined with a lack

of economic opportunities.

Frequently, these problems are compounded by slow, uncoordinated and ill-advised

attempts to help on the part of what is optimistically called the international community.

Donors often engage in wishful thinking, basing their assistance projects on creating ideal outcomes instead of making a realistic assessment of possible scenarios and preventing the worst of them from happening.

Some or all of these factors might be experienced collectively or individually by former members of the armed factions. Returning to their villages after long periods of absence, they may find themselves less than welcome, their land and cattle lost and family ties cut. Others might prefer not to return to their place of origin because they fear retribution for atrocities committed during the conflict. Without much of an economic perspective, the relief usually experienced after the ceasefire often gives way to new grievances – under these circumstances some may return to a life of violence. This is made easier by the fact that armed groups rarely ever demobilize completely. Usually substantial amounts of arms and ammunition are hidden in caches as a form of "life insurance", while many former fighters retain some informal contacts to their former comrades-in-arms.

In a nutshell, if peace is to become durable, the challenge for civil society is to overcome these obstacles by contributing to psychological and spiritual healing and by assisting the reintegration of former combatants. This is not, nor can it be, primarily a job for the military.

Some Western armed forces have started to complement their peacekeeping role with limited relief activities, such as the distribution of food assistance to refugees and the rehabilitation of wells, hospitals and schools under the label of "civilian-military cooperation" (CIMIC). For example in Afghanistan the allied forces have established Provincial Reconstruction Teams in a number of locations, which are supposed to

integrate relief activities with peacekeeping duties. Many humanitarian and development

agencies are very critical of such attempts to merge military and civilian functions

(Heinemann-Grüder and Pietz, 2004). Besides, there is reason to question the cost

effectiveness of using soldiers for such tasks.

Assisting in the healing of a nation is a task that rests squarely on the shoulders of civil

society, most particularly religious leaders and bodies. Seeking reconciliation – for

example through the establishment of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions during the

1990s in South Africa and Guatemala – would be more difficult, if not outright

impossible, without the leadership of the clergy. Elsewhere, the churches take the biblical

word of turning swords into ploughshares literally by collecting weapons among the

civilian population and handing out tools such as sewing machines and bicycles into

return. The best-known project of this kind was started in Mozambique by the Anglican

Bishop Dinis Sengulane in 1995. Called the "Transformation of Arms into Ploughshares

Project" it combines elements of civic education with the collection of weapons, some of

which are then turned into pieces of art (Faltas and Paes, 2004).

Elsewhere secular organizations such as the Patriotic Movement Against Crime

(Movimiento Patriótico Contra la Delincuencia - MPCD) in El Salvador rose to the

challenge of mopping up weapons left behind among the civilian population after

protracted civil wars. With the support of the business community, which felt particularly

threatened by the raise in violent crime following the end of the war, MPCD in 1996

launched a Goods for Guns program that provided agricultural tools and sewing machines

in exchange for weapons. The organizers stress that this is not a buy-back program but

that citizens would be compensated for their "contribution to the development of a

peaceful and secure future for El Salvador". This underlines one of the often forgotten

aspects of voluntary weapons collection – while removing a deadly weapon from society

is important, the fact that people surrender weapons for a nominal reward can be even

more beneficial by helping to establish trust between communities (Laurance and

Godnick, 2001). Unfortunately, in many post-conflict countries, business is unable or

unwilling to engage in such peacebuilding efforts.

Linking Peacebuilding to Development

It seems obvious that sustainable peace will be hard to achieve in the absence of

economic opportunities and human development. It is equally clear that development can

hardly be sustainable in conditions of violence and insecurity. At present, the realization

is growing in circles of international development cooperation that in postwar societies,

poverty reduction and improved security must go hand in hand. It is only recently that the

development community has begun to overcome its aversion against engaging with

former combatants in an attempt to assist their reintegration into civilian life.

In this context, program planners are often facing the following difficult question: should

we focus on former fighters in an attempt to steer them out of the way of future trouble

(and in a way rewarding the perpetrators by offering privileged access to job creation and

training programs)? Or should our programs focus on more vulnerable groups, such as

women, children and refugees (which would have little direct impact on the stabilization

of a peace process)? One possible answer to this problem is to do both. Community

development programs, which directly benefit larger segments of the population by

rehabilitating the public infrastructure, can also serve to provide training, jobs and

rehabilitation for former combatants.

Something along these lines was attempted by the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in the

Republic of Congo (Congo-Brazzaville), which experienced a bloody civil war during the

1990s. Unlike most other DDR programs this one did not take part in the context of

international peacekeeping and did not provide for collective "phase one" demobilization

in a cantonment area. The program assisted some 7,250 ex-combatants and helped to

collect and destroy more than 11,000 weapons. In addition to very limited vocational

training (one of the weaknesses of the project), the former fighters were helped to

establish 2,270 micro-projects enterprises, which provide income-generating

opportunities. Some established small businesses, while others took up paid employment

in government agencies and private companies. The program was supplemented by a

separate, but related community-development project also run by UNDP that provided

job opportunities in the reconstruction of the communal infrastructure. While this project

benefited the whole community, it offered former fighters work experience and the

opportunity to rehabilitate themselves in the eyes of communities affected by the war

(Haden and Faltas, 2004).

It must be added, though, that while micro enterprise is a positive intervention, the

international community should not assume that all ex-combatants in developing

countries (or elsewhere for that matter) are born entrepreneurs, the same way as many

people in the developed world are not capable of running a business either. This kind of

microeconomic activity is useful at an initial stage but it can in no way be a substitute for

medium and large-scale economic activity, be it industrial, agricultural, infrastructural or

any other type of upscaled economic activity that provides sustained employment.

Some of the first successful attempts to link community development with disarmament

in a country that had not experienced recent armed conflict were the "weapons for

development projects" run by UNDP between 1999 and 2004 in Albania. During the riots

of 1997, the Albanian government requested UN-assistance in retrieving some of these

weapons. During a pilot project in the Gramsh District, UNDP pioneered the idea of

linking development grants to the surrender of weapons.

By using collective rather than individual rewards it was hoped that the project would

benefit the whole community (rather than just those individuals who had stolen the arms).

It also wanted to encourage local people to apply peer pressure on their more reluctant

neighbors to ensure that weapons collection program would meet its goal. UNDP later

introduced a nationwide competition for development grants. These were now awarded to

those communities collecting most weapons in relation to the population number. The

development activities include upgrading the physical infrastructure, such as access

roads, the urban lighting system and telecommunications equipment, renovating post

offices and constructing footbridges.

While the total number of arms that UNDP-sponsored projects have collected so far in

Albania – some 20,000 – pales in comparison with the number of weapons still at large,

the projects have has been extremely successful in raising awareness about the danger of

civilian-held illicit weapons and by promoting a culture of peace (Faltas and Paes, 2003).

Everyone's Job

Half a century ago, civilians like Lester Pearson3 and Dag Hammarskjöld helped to

establish a clear and legitimate role for soldiers in peacekeeping. Today, we need to

reassert the role of civilians and civilian organizations in the keeping and building of

peace. No one will dispute that there is a need for civil-military cooperation in the quest

for sustainable peace, but there is great uncertainty about how best to go about such

cooperation.

Building peace is everyone's job. Soldiers are needed to provide the order that will allow

a fragile peace to grow, and to disarm combatants. Their help is also required in

demobilizing combatants, though that is mostly a job for civilian administrators, doctors

and trainers. In becoming civilians and members of communities, ex-combatants will

again need the help of development workers, trainers and other professionals. Religious

leaders, traditional chiefs and other people of influence will also have an important role

to play. But most of all, the former fighters will need families and communities who are

willing to open their doors and their hearts to them, despite all the problems that can be

expected. Here lies the biggest challenge of all.

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Notes

[1] However, the UN Archives in New York, the Hammarskjöld archivist at the Royal

Library in Sweden, several friends and colleagues of Dag Hammarskjöld and the authors

of this chapter were unable to verify the quotation.

[1] It is obvious from Hammarskjölds writings that he considered military-civilian co-

operation essential to the success of peace operations

[2] Lester B.Pearson was president of The Seventh UN General Assembly and was in 1957

awarded Nobel Peace Prize for his greatest diplomatic achievement, the proposal of

sending UN peacekeeping force to the Suez Canal area.

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Met opmaak: Engels (V.S.)

Met opmaak: Engels (V.S.)

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<Personal story>

The Importance of Civil Society in Arms Control

Dr. Oscar Arias, former President of Costa Rica, 1987 Nobel Peace Laureate

During my term as president of Costa Rica from 1986 to 1990, I learned first-hand the devastating effects of arms transfers on poor and war-torn places. In Central America, the arms shipments that were supposed to resolve the region's ideological clashes in fact prolonged and exacerbated them. We would later learn that the civil wars in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua had caused more than two hundred thousand casualties, mostly civilian. Conventional weapons imported from the Soviet Union and the United States were involved in the vast majority of these deaths.

Peace cannot take root unless the deepest causes of conflict are brought to light, examined, and publicly discussed. Arms betray this delicate process by adding to intolerance, deepening present grievances and making agreement more distant. Today, in troubled regions such as Sudan and Colombia, cheap and readily available weapons continue to poison efforts to establish peace for future generations.

By the end of my presidency, I was convinced that the arms trade represents the single most significant perversion of human priorities in our era. In talks at universities and political forums, I have emphasized that the arms trade, and its accompanying glut of military spending, exacerbates and prolongs wars, criminal activity and ethnic violence; destabilizes emerging democracies; and inflates military budgets to the detriment of health care, education and basic infrastructure.

I have not found this theme completely and utterly depressing over the years, thanks to a stubborn faith that speaking out will always galvanize at least one person in the audience to action. Also, I know that my efforts are not for the sake of rhetoric, but for publicizing and reinforcing an Arms Trade Treaty movement in close collaboration with members of civil society.

The Arms Trade Treaty, originally known as a Code of Conduct on Arms Transfers, was formulated in 1997 by eight Nobel Prize laureates: me, Ellie Wiesel, Betty Williams, the Dalai Lama, José Ramos-Horta, and representatives of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, the American Friends Service Committee and Amnesty International. The treaty calls for a ban on transfers of weapons to governments that repress fundamental democratic and human rights, or that commit acts of armed international aggression. To date, over twenty Nobel Prize winners, a growing group of governments and thousands of individuals and organizations have expressed their faith in the ATT as both morally sound and politically necessary.

Since October of 2003, a grassroots campaign to ratify this treaty into a binding piece of international law has been advancing in seventy countries around the world. Building consensus for international arms control implies simultaneous action in a kaleidoscope of social, political and economic issues: police training in human rights, and military accountability to democratic governments; anti-corruption controls at the local and federal level; better educational opportunities for children, and peace curriculums in the schools; gender equity and access to employment. Civil society groups have found innovative and dynamic ways to combine the cause of arms control with human

development agendas. In Brazil, for instance, the NGO Viva Rio has advocated national gun control laws, while building yout h clubs and microcredit programs in poor neighborhoods affected by gun violence. And in Costa Rica, the Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress has launched a public education campaign on the public health impact of small arms, with a special component for peace training in the public schools.

The Arms Trade Treaty has roots in many different regions, historical experiences and individuals; and this diversity is a great strength, driving the movement's dynamic growth. Clearly, a campaign to regulate the global arms trade brings us head to head with some very entrenched interest groups, and it could take years, even decades, to move forward. In this struggle, the moral and political leadership of civil society, from schools to church councils to public action groups, is fundamental. It has been thrilling to watch in the past decade as the ATT has gathered worldwide momentum, a rising tide that grows out of the tiny ripples of every individual act of creativity and leadership.

<end personal story>

Met opmaak: Lettertype: 12 pt, Engels (V.S.)

22.1 Former Rebels use Market Forces to achieve their Social Ideals:

New Rainbow in Colombia

After deciding to demobilize, a group of Colombian former guerrilla group found out the harsh realities of post-conflict life. They decided to take their destiny in their own hands and founded a company with a social conscience. However, they found out that building peace is much harder than making war.

The dramatic developments that transformed Eastern Europe's political scenario in the 1990's turned the world leftist movement upside down. In Colombia, a large group of 800 rebels, set adrift by the break-up of the Soviet Union, broke away from *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (National Liberation Army), one of the guerrilla groups engaged in nearly four decades of armed conflict against the government.

The former university students, who had been inspired by the Cuban revolution, denounced violence at Flor del Monte on April 9, 1994 and demobilized. The event generated considerable publicity, and much excitement. *"Flor del Monte, Flor de Paz"* ("Blossom of Mountain, Blossom of Peace"), said one headline. Yet once it was all over, the former rebels faced a stark new reality. Their past associations left a stigma: no one wanted to employ them. At the same time they faced hostility from former comrades.

In search for a way forward, they consulted experts and did research. Gradually, as the euphoria turned into doubts about future prospects, they entered into discussions with the government about the way and means of re-integration and examined carefully the

methods used by other demobilized groups locally, and internationally. It became clear

they needed to find their own way.

With help from various European governments, including the Spanish, Dutch and the

European Community, they set up a corporation, which would be and would try to make

a difference. Nuevo Arco Iris (New Rainbow) was, at one level, a business: it was set up

to make a profit. At another level, its founders wanted Nuevo Arco Iris to fulfill the social

transformation ideals for which they fought as rebels.

So while committed to making a profit, Nuevo Arco Iris also supports projects that help

promote peace and achieve social justice. It aids human rights, promotes negotiation and

post-conflict efforts, and other conflict resolution initiatives. Parts of the company

statement, and some of the literature it produces, read more like that of a development

agency or NGO than a business enterprise. As is stated in a background document:

"For the Corporation Nuevo Arco Iris, a perspective of development compatible with an

opening for peace and the reconstruction of a democratic state imply public and private

elements that permit the full realization of the needs of population."

The document goes on to highlight the Corporation's determination to support

"the settlement of employment and the integration of citizens; the guarantee of the

economic rights, social, cultural rights for everyone; priority attention to people affected

by poverty and internal conflict, and the creation of conditions favorable to regions and social sectors that enable them to reach national and international markets".

Nuevo Arco Iris has accumulated substantial assets by Colombian standards. It owns a 35-room hotel in downtown Bogotá, operates a construction firm which has built hundreds of homes, runs an agricultural brokerage firm, and various other enterprises. It has offices around the country providing permanent jobs for 200 people of whom about 115 are former rebels. While working according to a standard business model, it remains a non-profit organization depending in part on funding. Proceeds from the businesses are used to channel money into social change programs, including civilian actions to stop the civil war, environmental issues and agricultural business sustenance to support improvement in public services.

\<Box\>

A highly stratified society

Colombia is a highly stratified society, separating traditionally rich families and the poor majority. This situation has fed the growth of left-wing insurgents who have been battling against the government for forty years. Right-wing paramilitary groups, sometimes in the pay of drug traffickers and large landowners, and backed by some within the armed forces, have entered the fray as well. More than 35,000 people have been killed by the violence over the past decade. Many have been forced to flee their homes.

\<End box\>

Security Major Concern

"Building peace is much harder than making war," says Rodrigo Osorno, a former rebel who now is a member of the Nuevo Arco Iris's board. He notes that ex-guerrillas generally face hostility from comrades they left behind – and from right-wing paramilitaries who distrust them. Security is a major concern: fifteen Nuevo Arco Iris's members have been killed in recent years. Forty bodyguards are employed to protect employees.

"FARC – Colombia's largest rebel group – see us as traitors, the paramilitaries see us as part of a large guerrilla strategy; the military has us in their files; businessmen lack confidence in us," says Antonio Sanguino, chief executive of Nuevo Arco Iris. "It has been a fight to win space in society, to win respect."

Both the commercial and public sides of the corporation's work are gaining trust. Its success is viewed by some as an example of how to disarm and demobilize more combatants and prevent them from sliding into organized crime. In 2003, almost 1,750 rebels deserted guerrilla armies; 1,300 did so in 2002. Nuevo Arco Iris is just one of a number of demobilization and reintegration programs operated by former rebels.

The government's efforts to end the protracted conflict involve use of a two-pronged approach of military attacks and the olive branch of peace negotiations with Marxist rebels and right-wing paramilitary organizations.

Integrating thousands of former combatants to make the transition from mountains to urban centers, from rebels to civilians, is not easy. Many could end up jobless and homeless – and drift into crime.

Nuevo Arco Iris's executives say the corporation's commitment is to promote territorial alliances between public and private entities that increase disposable resources for productive investments; promote community organizations to support social actors that serve as vehicles for development programs, and facilitate social cohesion.

It is engaged in microfinance, the provision of subsidies aimed at reducing extreme poverty, and supporting programs to improve conditions of communities in areas like habitat and environment. The corporation helps with incorporation of technology for clean production and alternative production techniques.

It carries out programs for entrepreneurial development including identifying and finding employment possibilities. Further, it is committed to civilian efforts to promote peace, construct a good social order and restore peace and reconciliation at the centre of national life.

It is involved in teaching children about conflict resolution and training human rights workers to run a crop substitution program for coca farmers. One program, Jovenes en Accion (Youth in Action), involves more than 180 young people in Bogotá in various income-generating community activities.

The company identifies the internal armed conflict as

"*perhaps the major obstacle to the viability of Colombia as a nation…the armed confrontation…has generated a militarization of conflicts and civilian life, led to violations of fundamental rights of people and left many victims. The construction of a peace agreement and the promotion of mechanisms to resolve these conflicts, constitute areas of priority for the democratization of Colombia*".

Nuevo Arco Iris's activities also extend to the hotel sector – focused, in particular on small and medium-sized hotels in Bogotá – and occupational health. Its programs also support self-employment projects for poor women in several towns.

In this regard, one of its projects tested the viability of a School for Democracy, Peace and Tolerance. This involved introducing eighty community leaders, de-mobilized fighters and others, to subjects such as local development, political culture, environment, ethics, and the like. The project was carried out in several towns in the province of Sucre.

In Accordance with Market Forces

Overall, New Rainbow aims to combine business enterprises and development and peace initiatives to improve Colombian society, with special focus on ex-combatants.

These ex-comrades have no qualms about using the very system against which they fought, in order to generate money to pursue their ideals. "We believe the market can generate wealth, which benefits people in the long run," says Sanguino, who runs the enterprise from offices in an old neighborhood of Bogotá, the Colombian capital.

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A seven-member board of directors oversees Nuevo Arco Iris' activities. "Our companies

have to be competitive," says Sanguino. "They have to play in accordance with market

forces. We have to offer services that people want."

He notes that his experience and that of other combatants in this area shows the need for

flexibility from various institutions, the public and NGOs. "The transition that we have

achieved is an engagement between public and private sectors. The technical and

financial support of the international community was also critical."

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Source

"Bogotá's Social Capitalism, Led by a Marxist of Old." By Juam Forero. *New York*

Times, February 6, 2004

22.2 Transforming Arms into Ploughshares: The Christian Council of Mozambique

Met opmaak: Engels (V.S.)

In Maputo, Mozambique the artists work with an unusual material, the scrap of destroyed weapons. The small arms and light weapons leftover's they work with have been collected as part of the Transforming Arms into Ploughshares Project. A program that was launched in 1995, three years after the long-running civil war in Mozambique came to an end. By Albino Forquilha*

In 1992, after the signing of a peace agreement in Rome, the situation in Mozambique was still very unstable. The country had been torn apart by some sixteen years of civil war and a decade of independence struggle before that, combined with many natural disasters. The United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) that followed was a success in many ways, it managed to help in preventing the combatants from again picking up their arms against each other, to demobilize most of the soldiers and to assist in holding open, although delayed elections.

Yet, disarmament was never considered a big issue and even though some 190,000 weapons were collected, most of these leaked back into circulation after ONUMOZ left the country in 1995. Significantly more were never confiscated and remained in the hands of former combatants and civilians.

At the same time, in October 1995 the Christian Council of Mozambique (Conselho Cristao de Moçambique), an umbrella organization of Protestant churches and organizations, established a Department of Justice, Peace and Reconciliation. The general

aim was to strengthen democracy and civil society by encouraging the population to
participate in active peacekeeping activities, while promoting reconciliation and
facilitating the initiation of productive activities by the people themselves. It set out to
focus on four primary activity areas, one of which was the Transforming Arms into
Ploughshares or TAE Project (Transformaçao de Armas em Enxadas).

The moving force behind the project has been Bishop Diniz Sengulane, of the Anglican
diocese of Lemombo in Mozambique, who encouraged his compatriots to participate by
warning them that

"to sleep with a gun in your bedroom is like sleeping with a snake".

Two other notable contributors in the early days of the TAE Project were Graça Machel –
the widow of Mozambique's first president and wife of Nelson Mandela – and Masaru
Kataoka, a Japanese advocate for peace and reconciliation.

The TAE project developed several general and specific objectives. In general it set out to
help build a culture of peace, to support and maintain a peaceful post-war transition in
Mozambique and to offer an alternative lifestyle to arms holders. All in line with the
overriding aim of the Christian Council to establish a culture of peace. However, in
relation to small arms and light weapons, it formulated much more specific targets, being
to collect and destroy all weapons in circulation, to transform these arms into
"ploughshares", i.e. offering useful tools in exchange for their weapons, to reduce

violence and educate civil society about the results of arms and violence and to transform the collected weapons into sculptures and other forms of art.

The primary device for stimulating people to cooperate with the program has been its use of incentives that were thought to generate income in the long run. Before, disarmament had often been promoted by giving out cash incentives, but problems with black market stimulation and the short-term effect of this, inspired the organizers of the TAE project to try something new. Common products handed out to people bringing in guns were bicycles, hoes, construction tools, sewing machines, cement bags, school equipment for children, various raw construction materials, typewriters and wheelchairs. Although there has been criticism that much of the incentives were aimed more at rural necessities than urban desires, in general the products both in reality and symbolism gave the people a new beginning.

The TAE Project managed to tap into an apparent desire of people to disarm. Research has shown that while plenty of weapons were being collected, arms-related crimes were also rising in the country. The relative success of the program has hence been explained by pointing at the political momentum that was holding many Mozambicans in a spirit of hope for peace and democracy. The TAE Project in this context represented a known actor they trusted and that shared their desire for a culture of peace.

This theory is supported by the periods successful collection that collided with hopeful developments in politics and the fact that at times when, because of lack of funding the project could not offer incentives for the weapons handed in, there were still people bringing in their arms. Such does point to the complication though that with these types

of weapons collection programs, it is very hard to reach those people that hold guns

because of economic motivations.

Pieces of Art

Upon collection weapons were immediate ly destroyed or at least made unusable. In the

beginning the collection teams went from village to village bringing with them mobile

bench-saws. However, since this proved to be very expensive, people were later requested

to bring in the arms to collection spots, normally churches. At the end of the day, in small

public ceremonies, the weapons were sawn into pieces.

More importantly though, the program did not stop there. The feeling existed that

something needed to be done with the scrap of these weapons. The ongoing battle against

the circulation of small arms and light weapons needed stronger support. Therefore, it

was decided to ask local artists to make pieces of art, monuments or practical objects of

the scrap. The monuments were placed in public places, like parks or squares. The art was

combined into an exhibition that has toured both within and outside the country.

Hundreds of works of art have been made from arms fragments, which has resulted in

sculptures of motorcycles, birds and animals, and a jazz player; traditional African

statues; and functional objects such as tables and chairs. As Gonçalo Mabunda, the young

artist who created a saxophone from the remnants of a bazooka and several AK-47s,

comments,

"I wanted to depict the opposite of what the arms were meant to do. I made an instrument that makes noise and gathers people for joyful celebrations, versus an instrument that makes noise and scatters people in a song of death."

This last part of the TAE program has been seen by some as the most successful and most important aspect of the program. The monuments and the pieces of art give a strong symbolic message of peace. The transformation of weapons into objects of art stands as an important symbol to all of Mozambique's citizens. They represent the end of the war and of violence in general and are a reminder of how weapons created to kill can be transformed into objects of beauty and harmony for families. They call on a new generation, now assuming its place in steering the course of the nation, to articulate values and opinions rooted in peacebuilding rather than violence and destruction. Not coincidentally, the program also gives young artists exposure that is beneficial, of course, to their own development and commercial success.

As said, the TAE artworks have been and continue to be exhibited in Mozambique itself and around the world, in Portugal, Germany, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Sweden, Belgium, Canada, the USA, Australia, France, South Africa, Japan, and the United Kingdom, and at the United Nations Building in New York during the Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons in 2001. Such exhibitions have offered an example to other countries and organizations of the potential benefits of an innovative disarmament/demobilization program. In January 2005, a three-meter high work entitled "Tree of Life", the biggest sculpture created since the start of the project, is scheduled to be put on display for five

years at the British Museum in London. The revenue of these exhibitions and the profit of

selling some of the works are used to continue the work.

The Broader Picture

TAE also engages in an extensive civic education program among those who participate

in the weapons exchange, as well as members of their surrounding community. To secure

the work they have done, the program conducts follow-up projects with weapons

exchange participants to solidify the foundation upon which a culture of peace can firmly

rest. In addition, at the national and international level, TAE is involved in more

generalized programs to promote peace and reconciliation.

To further promote a culture of peace, the TAE has set-up a variety of other activities,

ranging from demonstrations to theater pieces. The specific objectives of the educational

initiative have included demonstrating the dangers of weapons circulation and their

impact on crime; explaining the dangers of landmines and explosives; engaging in

discussions on citizen responsibilities in civil society with regard to the ongoing project

of peacebuilding and reconciliation; and follow-up activities to maintain contact with

beneficiaries of the program following the initial weapon exchange.

The TAE project's success has been, to a significant degree, a reflection of the

establishment of a strong partnership and the building of trust among the chief players,

including the government of Mozambique, the former adversaries the Frente de Liberaçào

de Moçambique (FRELIMO) and Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (RENAMO), and

those within the Christian Council who are responsible for actual operations. Confidence

in the Christian Council is in large part due to the fact that it played a role during the

peace negotiations. Yet, success has also been dependent on building confidence at the

grass roots level; TAE has cultivated relationships and worked hard to build trust with

local communities and with ex-belligerents.

Indications of Success

The TAE project has continued for a very long time in comparison to similar weapons

collection programs in other countries. The number of collected war artifacts is over

800,000, of which over 350,000 weapons of different types (the rest is mainly composed

of explosives). These are notable amounts, but with estimates of the total number of

weapons in circulation running into the millions, they remain just a fraction of the work

that still needs to be done. Even the combined efforts of the TAE Program, ONUMOZ

and the other ongoing disarmament program in Mozambique, the Operations Rachel – a

series of collection operations conducted by the Mozambican and the South African

Police Forces – only have been able to collect a margin of the total numbers of weapons

in circulation. Yet the quantity of weapons collected is only one way of looking at the

success of the TAE program.

TAE has identified several indicators that it views as significant for still seeing the

program as a success, including the perceived achievement with which target group

members reintegrated into society, the revenue generated by new tools, the number of

people affected by the exchange (directly and indirectly), the level of beneficiary

satisfaction with the exchange, and the beneficiaries' perception on his or her

involvement in the community before and after exchange. Still, it is difficult to gauge the

full impact of TAE. What is known is that over 70,000 families have benefited directly

from the project through the incentives their received, which facilitated them to start

small social projects in their communities. Another indicator is the yearly reduction of

crime in Mozambique. There is also anecdotal evidence of the benefits realized through

the weapons exchange program. Some of the most notable success stories include:

. A local woman who received a sewing machine in exchange for weapons has launched a

successful business and she now employs eight people.

. A young man whose home was destroyed by the latest floods was able to begin the

process of home reconstruction with the help of the cement he received in exchange for

an AK-47 he kept in his home.

. A young university student received a copy of the Oxford English Dictionary in

exchange for his weapon.

. A man who lost both his wife and his child during the war received zinc roofing sheets

and was able to rebuild and secure his home. He has remarried and started a new family.

. The many bicycles that have been exchanged are now being used to deal with the

difficulties encountered in taking care of daily needs such as water and firewood,

transporting produce to the market, and taking people to hospitals and clinics that would

be difficult to reach otherwise.

. A Japanese partner donated a tractor to TAE, which was then offered as a prize in a

competition to see which of two communities could collect and hand over the most

weapons. The winning community collected some 500 weapons and ordnance and took

possession of the tractor.

. The Anglican Church in Maputo initiated a civic education program in which children

were encouraged to follow the example of grown ups, and to turn in toy guns, which

would be destroyed, in exchange for new toys.

Yet, obviously the true impact of the TAE program is hard to measure. It is found in the

people that see the monuments, the pieces of art or the practical objectives and are

reminded of the importance of peace and the necessity to continue to struggle against the

circulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.

Still Much to Do

It has become apparent to those involved in the TAE project that the process of

disarmament, demobilization and reintegration is a long and difficult one. Former

combatants do not simply and easily reintegrate into society, and to develop the necessary

trust, programs must be established from the outset, and time must be allowed for their

success. Even as the adversaries are first discussing the possibilities of peace, attention

must be given to the challenges of the post-conflict period, including the reintegration of

combatants into society, and the collection and destruction of their weapons and the ones

in the hands of civilians.

Ultimately, the success of any disarmament initiative depends not on the number of

weapons collected, but on the number of minds won over to the notion that peace is the

only viable option. By providing a viable incentive to the gun, the TAE project may be stimulating more people to work with them, in the end the most important is to convince them they do not need their weapons anymore.

To quote Bishop Sengulane

"We tell people: We are not disarming you. We are transforming your guns into ploughshares, so you can cultivate your land and get your daily bread. We are transforming them into sewing machines so you can make clothes. We are transforming them into bicycles so you don't have to spend money traveling to work and so you can collect the fruits of your fields to sell. The idea is to transform the instruments of death and destruction into instruments of peace and of production and cooperation with others."

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information and photo gallery)

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22.3   Fruits of War: Homies Unidos in El Salvador

American style youth gangs have emerged as an unwelcome presence in Central America. Crime, inter-gang violence, and drug use are just some of the problems that have accompanied the rise of these gangs. Homies Unidos is a unique initiative, founded by former gang members, with branches in San Salvador and Los Angeles, that brings former gang members together and offers alternatives to the anti-social lifestyle of these gangs. By Beverley Keefe*

Empesando esto fue, como una semilla,1

Trayendo como fruto la formacion de pandillas.

Trataremos este tema con mucha seriedad,

Es also sin sentido pero esto es realidad,

La realidad que se vive, como frutos de una guerra.

(This started as a seed, and

Gangs were its fruits.

Let's deal with this topic with all its seriousness,

It's something that's senseless but it's a reality,

The reality we live, it's the fruit of a war.)

On November 2, 1996, twenty-two members of two of the largest rival gangs in the vicinity of San Salvador, El Salvador – most of them deportees from the US – came together to turn a common vision into a reality: to build a movement to address the level of violence perpetrated both by and against their community. The result was the establishment of an organization called Homies Unidos.

Meeting in the home of Homies Unidos founder and international human rights activist Magdaleno Rose-Avila, it was the first time that many of the youth were in close quarters with one another. Even to this day, many scholars, governmental agents and observers have failed to grasp the sensitivity of the exercise that afternoon. Each gang member present had taken a significant leap of faith by attending the gathering, not knowing for certain whether he or she would walk out of the meeting after it was over. Tension was high. At any moment a miscommunication or misunderstanding could have led to much bloodshed.

American Style Gangs

American style gang violence has, in recent years, spilled over onto the streets of several Central American countries. The spread of gangs from American barrios to Central American cities has attracted the attention of law

enforcement agencies, academics, and the media. It was also the impetus to establish Homies Unidos, an organization which aims to turn young people away from gang-related violence and drugs and offer hope for a better future through alternative education, leadership development, the building of self-esteem, and health education programs. A year after its establishment in El Salvador, an affiliate was launched in Los Angeles.

Homies Unidos, while by no means the only violence prevention organization in Los Angeles or in El Salvador, is the only such local organization which works in both cities to prevent conflict and violence and which also addresses those systemic causes of violence so endemic to Central American immigrant youth and so disruptive to their families in both the US and El Salvador. What also sets the organization apart from other social service or governmental agencies working to prevent violence is its status as the only program of its sort that is run by former gang members from rival gangs.

Homies Unidos adopts a unique approach to conflict and violence prevention. The organization strives to transform the gang culture from within, and to redirect the structures of solidarity and identification with gangs away from violent practices by building consciousness of human rights and human potential.

The Situation

Met opmaak: Lettertype: Vet, Engels (V.S.)

Met opmaak: Engels (V.S.)

The origins of youth violence both in Los Angeles and in El Salvador can be traced back, at least indirectly, to the Salvadoran civil war, which lasted from 1980 until 1992. Salvadoran refugee youth and their families who fled the fighting and settled in the United States, primarily in Los Angeles, often faced a dearth of resources to ease their transition into American society or to help them deal with the psychological effects of conflict and war. Abruptly removed from their homes and social networks, many families were torn apart, by virtue of the move to the United States, or through economic necessity and many immigrant youths, left to take care of themselves, sought out the familial comfort and protection provided by neighborhood gangs.

After the Peace Accords were signed in 1992, the United States began deportations of refugees back to El Salvador. The numbers were small at first, but following the 1995 Oklahoma City Bombing and the passage of the Anti-Terrorist Act of 1996, repatriations of young Salvadorans increased significantly.

El Salvador's poverty rate is about 48 percent, and while its official unemployment rate hovers around 10 percent, unemployment among young males is estimated at about 80 percent. Combined with the accustomedness to violence that exists in Salvadorian society after the end of the civil war – some reports estimate that homicide rates were higher in the first years after

the Peace Accord then during the actual war – has turned El Salvador in one

of the most violent countries of Latin America.

For the young people returning to El Salvador the absence of any type of repatriation

program or support often led them turning to the only network they knew: gangs. The

lack of socio-economic and employment opportunities further drove youth to engage in

criminal activities in order to survive.

Emergence of Alternatives

For some time prior to the founding of Homies Unidos, NGOs and

journalists in Central America had been observing and documenting the gang

problem. Though it was not an altogether new phenomenon, the gangs

proliferated as large numbers of refugees returned from the U.S. Estimates of

the number of gang members have varied widely, from approximately

20,000 to 35,000, in a total population of 6.1 million. Although statistics

indicate that these gangs have been responsible for some 10 percent of El

Salvador's violent crime, the public sees it differently and attributes the

majority of violent crime to gang activity. As a result, 45 percent of all

Salvadorans polled in 1998 supported "social cleansing" of those elements

deemed responsible for the violence — even if that meant a recurrence of

paramilitary death squad activity. 80 percent of the population wanted to see

the military step in to suppress delinquency.

Met opmaak: Lettertype: Vet

Met opmaak: Engels (V.S.)

Several Central American agencies studied the rise of youth gangs, but with neither access to the gangs nor their trust, the accuracy of the findings was questionable, and the safety of the investigators could not be assured. Homies Unidos, however, faced less under such impediments. So the first step they took in addressing the crisis of violence was to conduct their own study. Members of Mara Salvatrucha and 18th Street, the two largest rival gangs in El Salvador (and the United States) designed and executed a survey of gang members. It was the first ever recognized study conducted by, for, and about gang members to examine the root causes and consequences of gang-related violence.2

The study provided the public with a vivid picture of gang culture and served to lay a foundation on which to build the organization. Perhaps most importantly though, the study, entitled Más Allá de la Vida Loca (Beyond the Crazy Life), was effective in building solidarity and eliciting a commitment to pursue calmado (non-violence) among gang members.

The results gave cause for reflection:

. 51 percent of gang members had been hospitalized due to violence

. 69.3 percent had suffered the killing of a loved one

. 48.3 percent said that they had been beaten by a rival gang member (when asked if they had been on the receiving end of physical violence in the past 30 days)

. 26.9 percent had suffered at the hands of the police and rival gangs

. 10.8 percent had been beaten only by police

Their hopes for their future included a job (30.6 percent), stable family (25.5 percent), education (16.7 percent), to be somebody (7.6 percent), calmness (5 percent), self-improvement (4.8 percent) and finding God (2 percent).

Struggling against a Culture of Violence

One of the most critical outcomes of the study was the picture that emerged of the pervasive culture of violence, conflict and poverty from which the gang members came. The new organization took these findings and developed a series of programs based on the most pressing needs of the youth, including workforce re-entry skills, transnational family reunification through dialogue, and community dialogue.

Over the past seven years, the model has evolved and now addresses systemic issues relating to immigration, criminal justice – both in the United States and El Salvador – and most recently oppressive anti-gang laws passed by governments in El Salvador and throughout Central America. As a result of the study, policymakers have been more receptive to view that community violence is a public health issue, and this has led to the acceptance of new

approaches to conflict prevention and intervention based on a public health model rather than punitive and criminal justice models.

Because El Salvador – and the rest of the region – had very little experience addressing violence and conflict stemming from the gangs, the efforts of Homies Unidos were essential in raising the collective awareness of gang violence on an international level. Through the development of a working model, these efforts provided a voice for gang youth and alternatives to gang involvement and violence. The results of the study also demonstrated to the international community that gang violence and related conflict does not occur in a vacuum, but is the result of years of poverty, lack of economic opportunity, and social inequality. Most significantly, the model examines systemic and socialized root causes of violence and civil conflict and seeks to head off violence by developing and targeting effective programs where they are needed most.

Among the most notable and effective have been the following programs:

. Assistance in reconnecting the former gang members with their families, also in the case they have been deported and the family remains in the US;
. Sex-education and health programs, focusing on prevention of HIV/AIDS and addressing drug abuse;
. An International Human Rights Campaign addressing the gang violence in Central America;

. Vocational training workshops;

. An arts and culture program that gives young people a creative outlet as an alternative to

violence;

. Lecture programs that take ex-gang members to schools and youth centers to highlight

the risks associated with gangs and gang violence, and to encourage young people to stay

in school;

In Los Angeles, an alternative life skills program called "the Epiphany project", including

anger-management and conflict resolution;

. A Tattoo Removal Program, which is offered free of charge on the condition the

beneficiaries join The Epiphany Project;

. An educational program to help high school dropouts to earn their High School

Equivalence Diploma and find a job. For former gang members serving prison sentences,

the program provides special assistance on their release from jail.

Most of these programs do not address violence directly, but by providing

opportunities to escape from a dead-end lifestyle permeated by violence,

they offer hope, for the individuals themselves, and for society at large.

Since the first tentative days of Homies Unidos, the most prominent key

actors have been the youth themselves, members of two of the most violent

gangs in the Americas, who risked their own lives and the lives of their

loved ones in pioneering a conflict prevention and violence intervention organization.

Strengthening its Commitment

Entering its seventh year, the reasons for the development of Homies Unidos are as compelling as ever. Recent anti-gang laws in Central America have served only to heighten community violence, and perpetuate civil conflict. In 2002, an update of the 1996 study conducted by the Homies Unidos and the Pan American Health Organization found that gang violence has worsened, and urged a greater commitment to effecting change in social and public policy.

As deportations from the United States continue, and the pattern of "circular migration" continues, fear escalates, and so too does violence and repression on the part of the government, in response to fear and media-fueled social hysteria. Gang youth and deportees have additional reasons to fear for their security. Beyond their own culture of violence, and the recent legislation, there have been death-squad style assassinations of deportees rumored to be gang members carried out by the Sombra Negra (Black Shadow). Under provisions of the anti-mara (gang) laws in El Salvador, more than 7,500 youth have been arrested, detained or imprisoned, most reportedly without cause.

As the situation evolves, so do the efforts of Homies Unidos. Its transnational efforts are focused momentarily on supporting youth caught in the dragnet of anti-gang laws and spotlighting international human rights violations resulting from these laws.

It may be true that, as old problems are effectively addressed, new ones emerge. Still Homies Unidos has at least shown that through dialogue and solidarity, the most marginalized individuals can leave hopelessness behind and begin to create a much more hopeful future for themselves and their community.

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Notes

1 Verses from a song written by Marvin Bullet Novoa Escobar, San Salvador, El Salvador.

2 The survey was done with the support of the Pan-American Health Organization and the Institute of Public Opinion at the Central American University (Instituto Universitario de Opinion Publica, Universidad CentroAmericana), and published through this university.

23. Reconciliation: Challenges, Responses and Roles of Civil Society

Hizkias Assefa*

Reconciliation is a process of restoring relationships between parties that have been deeply alienated from each other due to hurtful and destructive conflicts. Restoring such relationships involves multidimensional, complex and far-reaching processes that aim at dealing not only with the past but also future relationships between the protagonists. Civil society actors have a special role to play as catalysts and facilitators of societal reconciliation work.

Most approaches used to handle conflicts such as force, adjudication, arbitration or bargaining-type negotiation and mediation tend to suppress or superficially treat problems that underlie conflicts. As a result, the same basic conflict tends to recur in different guises over time, sometimes increasing in intensity and destructiveness. Reconciliation, if handled properly, is a mechanism that can address root causes of conflict as well as mend deep emotional wounds and thereby produce more durable solutions and sustainable peace. In that sense it could be said that reconciliation is not only an effective approach for dealing with post-conflict situations but is also a powerful crisis prevention mechanism.

Key elements of the reconciliation process are:

. acknowledgement of harm done by either party to the other;

. genuine expression of remorse;

. asking for or granting pardon;

. remedying the consequences of the harm; and

. defining a new mutually beneficial relationship that addresses the root causes of the past

conflict and guarantees that past mistakes will not be repeated.

Some have categorized these processes as truth telling, administration of justice, healing,

and forging a new basis for future relationships that are different from the hurtful past.

Translating this understanding of reconciliation into practice - particularly where there

has been large-scale social conflict - is not easy, to say the least.

Challenges

Long-term View

Reconciliation is as muchan affective process as it is cognitive and intellectual. It deals

with feelings and emotions as much as reason. While it might be easier for bitter

protagonists to rationally understand the need for reconciliation in their relationships, it is

often more difficult for them to act on those realizations and come to terms with the

conflict emotionally. The reconciliation process cannot be rushed or forced because it

usually takes time for emotions to catch up with the rational mind. Moreover, we do not

have many proven methodologies for ways to heal emotional wounds in large-scale social

conflicts. Even if both sides think that restoring relationship is a good idea, it is hard to

get offenders to overcome feelings of guilt, shame, pride and denial, and adopt an attitude

of acknowledgement, remorse and humility. It is also very difficult to get victims to let

go of their anger, bitterness and fear, and give their oppressors another chance in a new

trusting relationship. Therefore, practitioners must have a long-term view and must be

prepared to find ways to accompany the process over time, even if there may not be much

to show for their efforts in the short term. How to continue to accompany such processes

when resources and commitment are limited is one of the greatest challenges of

reconciliation work.

Combining Justice and Reconciliation

Conflict parties may view the concept of reconciliation differently. In protracted

conflicts, victims often insist on justice while offenders insist on forgiveness and

amnesty. In fact, many victims resist reconciliation initiatives because they think it

glosses over the guilt and responsibility of offenders. They insist on justice for past

misconduct to safeguard them from being victimized again. In most societies working at

reconciliation there is a big debate with human rights activist and victims groups about

the connection between justice and reconciliation and whether reconciliation is too easy

on the perpetrators and therefore puts victims in jeopardy by encouraging impunity.

By the same token, offenders tend to cheapen reconciliation processes by focusing only

on forgiveness, amnesty, and improving future relationships while ignoring

accountability for the injury they have inflicted. They underestimate the long-term effect

of past pain and abuse and how coexistence can stir up such painful memories. In

general, offenders disregard the need for the truth to be told about the past, guilt to be

acknowledged, the consequences of past misdeeds to be faced, and for the need to restore

victims. They shy away from their obligation to convince victims that they have truly

changed and that the past will not be repeated.

From this author's point of view, the apparent dichotomy between justice and

reconciliation, though it appears in many discussions of reconciliation, is a false one. I

believe it is not possible to have meaningful reconciliation without doing and being seen

to do justice. Justice is at the core of reconciliation. The confusion seems to arise because

people generally do not clarify what they mean by justice and how they aim to achieve it.

For many, justice merely means the punishment of offenders. It implies administering

proportionate suffering to those who have made others suffer. However, this is a narrow

understanding of justice.

A broader concept of justice challenges people to look at what led to the unjust

relationships and to undertake reforms in order to rectify the problems and remedy the

victim's injuries. Making the victims as whole as possible is an important aspect of

justice rather than just exchanging pain for pain. Sometimes punishment might be

necessary to avert a culture of impunity or heal some emotional wounds. However, if the

sole emphasis is on punishment, it will only perpetuate animosity, mutual fear, and a

desire for future revenge. Justice should be concerned with the deeper needs of the victim

and with the healing of the victims' past injury. It should leave the door open for the

improvement of future relationships between victim and offender in an atmosphere of

change.

When justice is approached in a more comprehensive sense, the compatibility between justice and reconciliation becomes apparent. On the other hand, when justice is viewed merely as punishment of the offender, it becomes more difficult to work on reconciliation. This is because it can feed the cycle of bitterness and resentment, especially when the punishment is done in the context of political conflict.

In situations such as Rwanda and ex-Yugoslavia where groups fought each other for control of the state and injury is committed not as an individual criminal action but in the name of one group in the struggle against the other, the trials and punishment of the wrongdoers, usually by the victor group, tend to be seen by the "offenders" and their supporters as "legal revenge". This reinforces the loser's desire to retaliate when opportunity arises.

Therefore, reconciliation must combine justice as well as forgiveness. It must deal with the past so that victims can minimize their fears and bitterness. At the same time it must deal with the future so that the protagonists do not foreclose the exploration of new possibilities for more mutually rewarding relationships. Reconciliation must work at the affective dimension to help the parties' attitudes of anger, bitterness and suspicion turn into collaboration and ultimately trust. But at the same time it must also involve the hard intellectual work of creating new commitments through policies, institutions, processes and practices that show that the future will guarantee that past abuses will not be repeated.

Definition of the Victim and the Offender

Rigid definitions of the victim and the offender can detract from reconciliation. In many

protracted conflicts one finds situations where victim groups have in the past been

offenders, and offenders have been victims. Who is a victim and who is an offender

might therefore depend on where one begins to analyze the relationship between the

protagonists. Depending on how far back one looks at history, it is possible that it may

not be only one side that has to ask for forgiveness and another to grant it; instead there

might be a need for mutual acknowledgement of responsibility and mutual forgiveness.

The more one encourages mutual acknowledgement, even if the wrong doing of one side

is proportionately smaller than the other, the easier it is to work at reconciliation. On the

other hand, the more one side is presented as the sole offender and the other as the total

victim, the more difficult it becomes to encourage the protagonists to engage in a

reconciliation process. Of course this is not to deny the existence of cases where the guilt

is totally one sided and which call for unilateral acknowledgement and responsibility.

<Box>

Peace process in Nigeria

Two recent examples from the Middle Belt Region of Nigeria, where this author has been

working for the past five years, illustrate the concepts and processes of reconciliation

discussed in this article. In this region there have been a number of intertwined conflicts,

some dating back to the early 1900s. In 2001, after a year and half of careful grassroots

peacebuilding work, a preliminary peace agreement was signed between three ethnic

groups in the Takum Local Government Area to settle numerous issues of contention and

outline actions for reconciliation. However, six months into the implementation of the agreement a new wave of ethnic violence erupted in a neighboring local government area that spread like wild fire in the region. The three ethnic groups in Takum stood firm and resisted being pulled into the violence despite it affecting their various ethnic groups. According to one observer, "Takum became a safe haven for fleeing people during the recent war in Wukari, and the fighting was stopped at the borders, savings millions of dollars in damage, and thousands of people from displacement." Not only was Takum an island of calm in an ocean of violence, it also became an inspiration for the protagonists in the neighboring region to emulate the Takum peace process.

By August 2003, after an intensive process that was characterized by mutual contrition and forgiveness involving people from the grassroots all the way to the top leadership, an even more far-reaching agreement was signed in Wukari. At a reconciliation ceremony organized a year after the signing of the peace agreement, one observer remarked:

"The peace process was amazing. In spite of the painful moments when participants from the various communities took a hard look at what were the causes of these conflicts from their own and other group's perspectives, the negotiations were very constructive. It was heart-warming to see people who often had seen each other only through the barrel of the gun come together to find solutions together for issues that have been sources of conflicts and violence for decades. The extent to which participants went in order to accommodate each other was most remarkable. At the end a 12-point agreement was reached which the parties signed. Those of us who witnessed what happened at the peace process rejoiced greatly."

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Favorable Conditions

The approach societies take to deal with post-conflict situations is influenced by the relative power position of the protagonists at the time that open conflict was brought to an end. For example, in Rwanda the conflict ended by the military victory of the minority group that experienced the genocide. Therefore, the predominant approach to dealing with the post-conflict situation in the country emphasized punishment of offenders more than forgiveness. On the other hand, in places like El Salvador where the groups who were accused of perpetrating the human right violations still had the upper hand, the prevailing idea for how to handle the post-conflict situation has tended to emphasize forgiveness and focus on the future. However, in situations like South Africa where the conflict ended with a stalemate, the protagonists had to negotiate a balance between punishment and forgiveness. Out of this was born the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which could grant amnesty to offenders if they told the truth and met some conditions.

In countries where one side has clearly won over the other, it is more difficult to influence the reconciliation process to incorporate either forgiveness or accountability as the situation might require. However, it must be recognized that reconciliation will not be effective if it is handled as an exercise in power politics. In order to work, reconciliation must be a genuine engagement where past mistakes and wrongdoings are named, regardless of who has the superior power. It must be an exercise of sincere soul searching

with a genuine desire to take responsibility, to change, and to address the grievances of

victims. Forced forgiveness or forgiveness by proxy on behalf of the victims will not

create the necessary healing and trust to create new positive relationships. On the other

hand, pursuing revenge in the name of administration of justice will only succeed in

fueling hatred and violence. So, one of the challenges of reconciliation work in large-

scale conflicts is to make the reconciliation exercise as genuine as possible regardless of

the power position of the protagonists in the society.

Here civil society can play a crucial role as a balancer. In societies where the emphasis is

on punishment, civil society can, through awareness building programs, introduce

different ways of doing justice in the society, and expand the options for handling past

wrongdoings. In societies where the sole emphasis is on forgiveness and the future, civil

society can work with perpetrators in order to encourage and support them to address the

past. Many societies have been experimenting with adapting traditional conflict handling

mechanisms to bring about reconciliation between offenders and victims at the

community and neighborhood levels. Most of these mechanisms have less cumbersome

and fairly effective methods of encouraging acknowledgement and repentance, handling

punishment, and rehabilitating victims, particularly where the wrongdoings committed

are not heinous.

Political support and leadership are factors that can enhance societal reconciliation

processes. The existence of prominent politicians or social leaders who demonstrate the

values of reconciliatio n by their life and example can create a conducive climate for

societal reconciliation. They can provide powerful inspiration for the rest of society to

emulate their behavior. People who have the courage to admit past mistakes, who are willing to acknowle dge responsibility and make necessary changes; or people who are willing to take courageous steps towards forgiveness and show that they are not chained to the past can set a tone for how the post-conflict situation in a given society is to be handled. The role of Nelson Mandela and Bishop Desmond Tutu in setting the tone for reconciliation in South Africa cannot be overstated.

Aside from lobbying for political support for reconciliation, civil society can play the role of inspirational leadership as a collectivity in situations where such prominent leaders may not be very noticeable in the community. I have worked with civil society in Sierra Leone where this leadership role was exercised in various ways. One was by creating and promoting a vision for societal reconciliation. The civil society leaders first gathered together and developed their own strategy for how to work at reconciliation among themselves and then how to facilitate the development of a national reconciliation vision. They gradually proceeded step by step to involve all sectors of society (such as the military, business, victim groups, women's groups, students, traditional leaders, executive, legislative and judiciary branches of government, etc), in defining a collective vision of reconciliation and in agreeing on modalities for how to move towards that vision. The vision focused on dealing with the past but also envisaged a positive future that gave incentive for the protagonists in the society to temper their attitude of recrimination and revenge and be forward looking.

In circumstances where reconciliation is not taking place at the higher echelons of leadership, civil society actors can create momentum for societal reconciliation by

starting to work at the grassroots. There are many examples where civil society groups have facilitated trauma healing and reconciliation through psycho-social, relief, or development work between victims and offenders who have been forced by circumstances to live together in the same communities. Progress made at the community level can then be used to encourage reconciliation at the higher political levels.

Of course, this is not to claim that it is easy for civil society to take on these roles. Civil society is a microcosm of the overall society and mirrors all the divisions and fault-lines in the community. Therefore, it is inevitable that civil society actors have their own biases and loyalties. They may lack the objectivity and distance to undertake the reconciler roles indicated above in ways that can be acceptable to all the protagonists. Civil society actors themselves might need a reconciliation process before they can play reconciler roles. However, the fact that the role is a difficulty one does not mean that it is impossible. I have worked in many conflict situations such as Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and to some extent Guatemala where civil society have been catalysts and facilitators of societal reconciliation work and have exercised the objectivity and discipline needed to become effective players.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that societal reconciliation is not only the product of what transpires within that society. External influences (such as big-power interests, economic and cultural globalization forces, etc.) that are at times beyond the control of the protagonists could frustrate reconciliation efforts at home. Those that work on societal reconciliation therefore need to be aware of how their efforts could be frustrated by such external influences and should develop strategies to resist or mitigate those

influences which undermine what their process is trying to accomplish. Sometimes such

strategies for common action can even strengthen the bonds that reconciliation is trying

to build.

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many countries including Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and

Guatemala.

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Assefa. *New Routes: A Journal of Peace Research and Action*, Vol. 8, No 3-4, 2003.

Resources

Lead organizations

Life and Peace Institute – Sweden

info@life-peace.org

http://www.life-peace.org

Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation – South Africa

info@csvr.org.za

http://www.csvr.org.za/

Initiatives of Change – Switzerland

Agenda for Reconciliation

afr@iofc.org

http://www.afr-iofc.org

International Center for Transitional Justice – New York

info@ictj.org

http://www.ictj.org/

Coventry University – United Kingdom

Centre for the Study of Forgiveness and Reconciliation

a.rigby@coventry.ac.uk

http://legacywww.coventry.ac.uk/legacy/acad/isl/forgive

International Fellowship of Reconciliation – The Netherlands

office@ifor.org

http://www.ifor.org

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23.1 From Saying Sorry to a Journey of Healing: National Sorry Day in Australia

Every nation has cruelties in its history that it would rather forget. But these cruelties leave victims, who do not forget. When the federal government of Australia refused to apologise for the policies under which thousands of Aboriginal children were forcibly removed from their families, a million Australians apologised instead. By John Bond*

In Australia, for 150 years until the 1970s, many thousands of Aboriginal children were removed from their families to be raised in institutions, or fostered or adopted by non-indigenous families. The aim was to assimilate Aboriginal Australians into the dominant culture. The outcome was tragic.

For many years, Aboriginal people agitated for an inquiry into this practice. In 1995 the federal government agreed. To chair the inquiry they chose a former high court judge, Sir Ronald Wilson.

By the time the inquiry reported in 1997, an election had brought in the new federal government of John Howard. Their view was that Aboriginal interests had won too many concessions thanks to an undue sense of guilt among white Australians, and they took steps to "swing the pendulum back". Then Wilson's report, *Bringing Them Home*, landed on their desk. Its 680 pages told in heart-rending detail of the agony endured by Aboriginals as a result of the forced removal policies.

Stolen Generations

Australians had grown up believing that these children were altruistically taken out of
wretched conditions to be offered the immense benefits of white society. Now a national
inquiry described the immense harm caused by the policies. For eight months the
government made no official response except to say that there would be no apology, and
no compensation would be paid. Several government ministers attempted to discredit the
report. And when two of the "stolen generations" – as they have become known – went to
court, the government spent over 10 million dollar to defeat them, and won on a
technicality.

Many in the Australian community responded differently, and *Bringing Them Home* sold
in far greater numbers than any comparable report. This polarization of views was a gift
to the media, and the stolen generations became a frequent media topic. In 1997, no other
Australian story received more coverage in the world's press.

Sir Ronald Wilson spoke freely to the media. He had been profoundly affected by the
inquiry.

"It was like no other I have undertaken. Other inquiries were intellectual exercises, a

matter of collating information and making recommendations. But for these people to

reveal what had happened to them took immense courage and every emotional stimulus

they could muster.

At each session, the tape would be turned on and we would wait... I would look into the

face of the person who was to speak to us. I would see the muscles straining to hold back

the tears. But tears would stream down, still no words being spoken. And then, hesitantly,

words would come.

We sat there as long as it took. We heard the story, told with that person's whole being,

reliving experiences which had been buried deep, sometimes for decades. They weren't

speaking with their minds; they were speaking with their hearts. And my heart had to

open if I was to understand them."

This was no easy challenge.

"I was a leader of the Presbyterian Church in Western Australia at the time we ran Sister

Kate's home, where removed children grew up. I was proud of the home, with its system

of cottage families. Imagine my pain when I discovered, during this inquiry, that children

were sexually abused in those cottages.

He and the Presbyterian Church apologized wholeheartedly to the Aboriginal people. But

neither the church nor the government has taken steps to help the victims of abuse. As a

result Sir Ronald became a crusader, stumping the country at the age of 75 and drawing

crowds in their hundreds.

"Children were removed because the Aboriginal race was seen as an embarrassment to

white Australia,' *he told an audience in Canberra, the national capital.* 'The aim was to

strip the children of their Aboriginality and accustom them to live in a white Australia.

The tragedy was compounded when the children, as they grew up, encountered the

racism which shaped the policy, and found themselves rejected by the very society for

which they were being prepared."

Saying Sorry

His words reached a responsive audience. Most of Australia's state parliaments and

churches held formal ceremonies to hear from representatives of their Aboriginal

communities and to ask forgiveness.

Eventually the federal government announced that it would make available 63 million

Australian dollars over four years for counseling and family reunion services – a sum that

is grossly inadequate to meet the need. They ignored most of the report's

recommendations, including one that a Sorry Day be held.

Sorry is a potent word. It indicates understanding, a willingness to enter into the

suffering, and implies a commitment to do more. In Aboriginal English it has a further

meaning: "sorry business" denotes a time when Aboriginal people come together to

grieve. So a Sorry Day would be deeply meaningful to both Aboriginal and non-

Aboriginal Australians.

But the federal government was not interested. Could a Sorry Day be held on a

community basis? Sir Ronald Wilson consulted spokespeople for the stolen generations,

and they jointly invited thirty of us, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, to meet and consider

this question. At that meeting, in January 1998, we decided to try. We chose 26 May as

the day, since the report had been tabled in parliament on May 26, 1997, and elected

Carol Kendall, a widely-respected member of the stolen generations, as co-chair of our

informal committee.

Heartfelt Response

First we developed a statement explaining the Day. We described it as

"a day when all Australians can express their sorrow for the whole tragic episode, and

celebrate the beginning of a new understanding…. Indigenous people will participate in a

Day dedicated to the memory of loved ones who never came home, or who are still

finding their way home…. Sorry Day can help restore the dignity stripped from those

affected by removal; and it offers those who carried out the policy - and their successors -

a chance to move beyond denial and guilt. It could shape a far more creative partnership

between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, with immense benefit to both."

A former governor-general of Australia, Sir Zelman Cowen, accepted our invitation to be

a patron. Then in March we launched the idea to the nation through the media.

The response amazed us. The Sorry Day Committee, so-called, was merely a group of

people with almost no money, and no ability to organize events across the nation. But

that didn't matter, because people organized their own events. Aboriginal and non-

Aboriginal Australians met to plan. Artists painted, musicians composed, writers and

playwrights wrote. A well-known actor created *Sorry Books* – manuscript books in which

people could express their apology. More and more books were produced as demand

grew from schools, public libraries, and town councils. Soon several thousand books were in circulation, and a million people wrote messages, many of them telling of personal experiences which prompted them to contribute to a Sorry Book.

When the day arrived, it was commemorated by thousands of events. There were theatrical presentations, cultural displays, and town barbecues. Universities, government departments, local councils, churches held gatherings to hear from stolen generations people. In many of them, the Sorry Books were ceremoniously handed to local Aboriginal elders. Over half of the 30-minute national TV news that evening was devoted to Sorry Day events, and to the heartfelt response of Australia's best-known Aboriginal leaders.

Accepting the Blame

Why did Sorry Day touch such a chord? One person told me why he got involved.

"I thought back to my primary school classroom." he said. *"I can name every person in that class except the four Aboriginal boys who sat at the back of the class, never asked a question, stuck with each other in the playground, never played with the rest of us. I looked on them as incredibly dull. When I read Bringing Them Home, I began to understand what they had probably endured, and why they acted as they did. And I felt ashamed."*

Many Australians, like him, have encountered removed Aboriginal children, but few asked why they had been removed. One of the deepest human pains is that of a mother who loses her child, or a child its mother. Yet the gulf between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians was simply too immense for even this pain to flow across it. *Bringing Them Home* exposed this gulf, and many Australians were shocked. Sorry Day was a chance to accept blame, and to do something about it.

The federal government was taken aback by the strength of the Day. They had no idea how to respond to a campaign which included many people active on their side of politics. So they stayed silent and aloof.

Towards Healing

But the stolen generations were deeply moved. For the first time, they felt that the Australian community understood what they had gone through. Now the way was open towards healing. From across the country they met together. Out of their discussions came a decision to launch a Journey of Healing. A prominent "stolen generations" woman, Lowitja O'Donoghue, became its patron.

The Journey of Healing's underlying concept is that, if the wounds are to be healed, both government and the community, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, have a vital role. It offers every Australian the chance to be part of healing. And many have responded.

Hundreds of events are arranged each year, bringing together Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, at which members of the stolen generations speak. When their local community understand the problems they face, some of these problems can be

overcome. People who have felt alienated for years are experiencing the welcome of their

communities. People who were hopeless, angry, despairing, now feel life is worth living.

One of them is a Sydney woman, Val Linow. In the year 2000, the Council for

Aboriginal Reconciliation arranged a walk across the Sydney Harbour Bridge, for all who

wanted to show their support for reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal

Australians. Many of the stolen generations walked behind a banner proclaiming the

Journey of Healing. But Val phoned me to say that after all she had been through, there

was no possibility of healing for her, and she would only walk with us if we got rid of the

banner.

She told me her story. She had been removed from her family at the age of two, and had

been cruelly treated and abused. So I understood how she felt. But I urged her to walk,

even if she could not come with us.

A quarter of a million people walked. It was the largest demonstration that had taken

place in Australian history. As at Sorry Day, people made their views known in their own

way. Some paid for a skywriting plane, which wrote "Sorry" in the sky above the Bridge.

That night Val phoned me.

"I went on the walk." she said. *"I looked at the thousands of people who had come. I

looked up at the word 'Sorry' in the sky. Suddenly, tears began to pour down my cheeks. I

have found healing."*

Today she is active in the Journey of Healing in Sydney.

Memorial

Walks took place in all cities that year, and a total of a million people walked for reconciliation. The federal government could not ignore such a demonstration. Prime Minister John Howard announced that a central area in Canberra would be set aside "to perpetuate in the minds of the Australian public the importance of reconciliation, and will include a memorial and depiction of the removal of children from their families."

But the federal government still wanted control, as they made clear when they refused to include those who had been removed in developing the memorial's design. This provoked demonstrations, and criticism even from party colleagues such as former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser. The project ground to a halt.

We went to see the minister in charge of the project. "This memorial could be immensely healing," we told him, "if it comes out of genuine consultation. We are prepared to consult the stolen generations, former staff of the institutions to which they were taken, and those who fostered or adopted children, with the aim of reaching consensus on the design of the memorial."

Some months later the minister accepted our proposal. Quickly we organized consultation teams throughout the country, who met with several hundred people, bursting with ideas. These ideas were brought together in three days of passionate meetings in Sydney. Through the heartache, people listened to each other, and shifted from hard-held points of view. By the end, we had agreement on a provisional text. Further consultation refined the text, and we presented it to the government.

For five months the government did nothing. So we let them know that Malcolm Fraser

had accepted our invitation to give the 2003 Sorry Day address in the Great Hall of

parliament. Immediately we were invited to discuss our text. Our discussions enhanced

the wording. But since we had reached consensus, we were able to resist attempts to

remove words which the government found awkward.

Eventually, a proposal went to the prime minister. His response reached us two hours

before Malcolm Fraser gave his address. Our wording had been accepted.

Today the memorial stands between the High Court and the National Library, where

hundreds of thousands of people each year stop and see it. The text begins:

"This place honors the people who have suffered under the removal policies and

practices. It also honors those Indigenous and non-Indigenous people whose genuine care

softened the tragic impact of what are now recognized as cruel and misguided policies."

At the dedication ceremony in May 2004, our Committee released a media statement.

"As South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission has shown," *we said*, "a public

acknowledgement of shameful past practices is a crucial first step in healing the wounds

caused by those practices. This memorial will inform Australians from all over the

country and, we hope, will inspire a new determination to overcome the continuing

harmful effects of the removal policies."

This is desperately needed. Today thousands of Aboriginal people struggle because their removal left them vulnerable to despair within themselves and abuse by others. Perhaps this is why Sorry Day has become a fixture on the national calendar, despite the federal government's lack of support. The Sorry Day gatherings which take place each year help the healing process. It takes immense courage and determination to break out of the despair in which many stolen generations people exist. In many cases, an expression of empathy from their local community has helped them find that courage.

But there is a further step which we, as a nation, still need to take. Our government must sit down with representatives of the stolen generations, and reach agreement on what needs to be done to end their grievance.

Until this happens, many Australians will feel the need for Sorry Day. Our sorrow means little unless it results in a serious determination to heal the wounds and address the continuing injustices. Sorry is not just a word, it is an attitude. When that attitude is felt widely enough across the Australian community, it will take hold of our government too. Then Sorry Day will probably fade away, or find another name. Sorry will have been said, in word and in deed.

* John Bond is secretary of the National Sorry Day Committee and the campaign which it

launched, the Journey of Healing. Patrons of the Committee are former Prime Minister

Malcolm Fraser and Doris Pilkington Garimara, author of the book and feature film,

Rabbit-Proof Fence.

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23.2 Listen to Understand: The Listening Project - Croatia

Berak, in Croatia, is a tiny village with extremely traumatic war experiences. In 1999, in order to open a space for dialogue and communication between the people, the Center for Peace Osijek entered the community with the Listening Project. Five years later, the village has changed and one of its inhabitants may be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005. By Corinne Bloch*

"I shall never forget that day when they rang the bell for the first time. It was in autumn 1999, shortly after the tragic murder of a Serb in Berak. About one year after I came back to my village. I opened. Behind the door stood two people, they looked rather nice and smiley. Different. They introduced themselves as members of a Peace Team working for the Center for Peace, Non-violence and Human Rights in Osijek. They said they just wanted to help. They were interested in my war-experience, in my opinion about Berak today, in my ideas to improve life in that sad village. They just wanted to listen to me and let me tell what I had to say. Of course, I let them come in and I started to talk and talk, to cry and cry… I could not stop anymore to get rid of all the pain and questions I had inside myself for so long. They paid attention, taking notes. To understand what the presence of these people meant to us – even if we did not think about any peace or reconciliation as far - you have to know what Berak was at that time. You have to know how terrible the lack of communication between people was. You have to know how dark our future seemed."

Recounting the day she met the people working in the Peace Team still incites strong

emotions in Dragica Aleksa.

"They really brought something to me and to the community. They opened a way for

communication and their commitment gave to some of us the motivation to get involved

in the community. They made us feel responsible for our life and future".

Dragica (51) has become one of the most committed people working for peace and

reconciliation in Berak. Her work has been acknowledged as being of invaluable support

to individual people in Berak, as well as to the empowerment of the community. Her

story is illustrative for the big change and new spirit that the Listening Project, conducted

by the Center for Peace - Osijek, has brought about, step by step, in several local

communities in the Eastern Croatian region of Slavonia.

In an atmosphere of great inter-ethnic tension and negative attitudes of the public towards

the idea of cohabitation, the Center's Peace Teams were the first examples of ethnically

mixed groups working to promote peace and to offer alternatives to violence. "Listen to

understand" was the Project's slogan. Its approach of giving people ample opportunity to

tell their stories was based on a specific method, which was developed by the American

organization Rural Voices of the South for Peace. One of the major characteristics of the

program in Eastern Croatia was that it had been tailored to the specific needs of each

community in the region. As a result, there are today a lot of "Dragicas" working for

peace in Slavonia. Free from ethnic prejudice, they work to build a new society based on

civil participation and sustainable peace.

Berak, September 1999

Situated on one of the few hills of predominantly flat Slavonia, Berak is a tiny village of

some 350 inhabitants. Two small shops, two churches and a little wood bench on the

main street essentially compose its public life. Since the region has been reintegrated into

the Republic of Croatia, an operation conducted between 1996-98 under the control of the

United Nations, displaced people, mainly Croats, have slowly come back to Berak.

Dragica is one of them. After several years in a refugee camp, she and her fellow

returnees have been in a hurry to go back to normal life. Those who lost their sons or

husbands came back with the expectation that Serbs who stayed in the village during the

years it was under Serbian control, would tell them where the bodies of their loved ones

were. In Berak, fifty-six people - or 10 percent of its population - were killed during the

fights or in the village's concentration camp between 1991 and 1995. Dead bodies were

thrown in wells or buried in unknown places; thirty of them are still missing.

The reality, the returnees found, did not meet their expectations. The village has changed.

Many of the Croatian returnees are confronted with the silence of the Serbs, who claim

that all those Serbs who might have information about missing people have left. The

returnees hardly recognize their village. Dragica remembers:

"I was looking at all the neighbor's houses, everywhere people were missing. Nothing

was like before anymore".

She was unable to imagine any form of reconciliation, not even with her former best

friend, a Serb woman.

"When she came to me, asking why I still didn't visit her, I was just able to answer:

Because you didn't come with us either when we had to leave."

Post-war tension in Berak was extremely high, because in this small community

practically every family could be individually linked to the dramatic, violent events of the

war. Most of the older Serbs living in the village are said to be parents of war criminals.

Unlike bigger cities, such as Osijek, where neighbors maybe associated with traumatic

events on a more anonymous level, as members of a specific ethnic group, in Berak the

traumatic incidents are linked to individuals whose names are known to all villagers.

Victims and perpetrators, or perpetrators' parents, are trying to live together.

Sometimes the horrors of the past incited new confrontations. Hate and tension suddenly

flared up, at one time culminating in the murder of a Serb. The situation seemed out of

control. In a move to stem violence, the OSCE stepped in and called on the Center for

Peace, Non-violence and Human Rights - Osijek to help.

The center was founded in 1992 by a small group of intellectuals. It sought to explore and implement creative methods of problem solving and conflict resolution. The project's Peace Building Model involved the identification and training of local men and women, who themselves had been victims of war. Along with outsiders, recruited internationally, these locals were to become members of multi-ethnic and multinational Peace Teams throughout Eastern Croatia. The teams' diversity was a powerful message to Serbs and Croats that they could work together on peace and community building. This turned out to be a courageous choice but did not make the work easier. Especially not in a traumatized community such as Berak.

Open-Ended Interviews

The initiators of the project in Osijek took inspiration and used practical examples from Rural Southern Voice for Peace, an American organization working on the improvement of inter-racial relations in the U.S. This organization developed what it called "Active Listening", a method based on conducting interviews consisting of open-ended questions. The approach provides space for people to openly express their feelings and concerns; to promote common beliefs and hopes; to encourage people to define their community problems, and to perceive these problems from the point of view of the person who is part of the solution.

In Eastern Croatia, the method was first used in Osijek whose citizens were still fighting in 1993, although the war had ended. Citizens who had left the city during the period of intense shelling, but had come back after the war, were despised by those who had

stayed. They were marked as non-patriotic and could neither get their job back nor return

to their apartments. In Osijek, ninety people were interviewed and the Center for Peace

published an article in the local paper, describing the motives of people who had left the

city, the difficulties they encountered while being refugees and what had made them

come back. The tone of the article contrasted sharply with the usual tone of voice with

which this group of inhabitants was described in. The publication turned out to be a first

step towards a better understanding of this particular group among Osijek's inhabitants.

Sonja Stanic, the main coordinator of the project, explained:

"We realize how a well-prepared listener could open up space, through the questions in a

good structured questionnaire, for discussing war traumas. Moreover, by asking

additional questions, the listeners helped the interviewed persons to articulate the

problems in their private life and community".

Nevertheless, the people running the project judged that the situation in Berak required a

slightly different approach. They changed the questionnaire, which resulted in a list of

twenty-one questions about five themes: experience of trauma; communication between

Serbs and Croats; the problem of missing persons and recent murder of a Serb; guilt and

war crimes; and perspectives for the future. Contrary to what had been standard practice

in other communities, direct questions about the prospects of peaceful co-existence or

reconciliation were avoided, since it was deemed too early for them. In addition, as some

members of the Peace Teams feared that the interviews might give rise to incidents,

complementary training for peace team members was organized in dealing with conflict.

Eight teams, of two persons each, started to interview citizens of Berak. At least one

member of each family in the village was represented among the sixteen interviewers.

Vesna, a member of a Peace Team, admits:

"*At the beginning, active listening seemed very unrealistic. Then I realized how important*

it was to investigate real needs of people. By listening to them, we made them feel

respected because they had a chance to express their own needs. Listening helped us to

build a relationship of trust with the inhabitants. They would stop us in the street and talk

to us. At first, approximately 90 percent of the people let us enter their home; the others

did it after we had an informal talk. In Berak, we were particularly afraid, but people

welcomed us, delighted that there were someone was ready to listen to them."

In Berak, no one turned down an invitation to be interviewed. Most interviews lasted two

hours and there were no incidents. An important feature of the Listening Program is

analyzing and writing a detailed report on the stories heard, and giving feedback to the

community. That is the first step that enables people to hear each other. The reports are

impersonal and therefore can be easily accepted by both ethnic groups.

Additional Activities

Typically, the Listening Project is followed by activities aimed at solving the problems

that have been identified during interviews. These activities are an essential part of the

project.

It was clear from the interviews in Berak that mutual mistrust among neighbors of

different ethnic origin was a major issue. Returnees resent the alleged role of those who

stayed in the village during the war and the apparent inability to find the missing victims.

The Serb inhabitants feel their fellow citizens have imposed a collective guilt on them,

resulting in social isolation, discrimination at work or loss of jobs. People also mentioned

the difficult economic situation and the problem of unemployment, which created a sense

of apathy and despair. There was consensus across all groups that there was a need for

economic revitalization and improvement of the village's cultural and social

infrastructure. Moreover, the peace teams noticed that several persons showed signs of

post-traumatic stress disorder and that several families needed humanitarian or legal aid.

The Center for Social Care, Caritas and UNHCR were informed about the humanitarian

needs.

In order to build mutual trust, the Peace Teams tried to motivate inhabitants of Berak to

participate in community activities. Dragica accepted to join a workshop for the

empowerment of women.

"I had no idea what a workshop was; but I went. As I introduced myself, saying: I'm

from Berak, a woman commented: The village where a Croat killed a Serb two months

ago. I immediately reacted aggressively: And what about the fifty Croats who have been

killed during the war? Today, this woman is one of my best friends and we fight together

for peace."

Like others in her community, Dragica started slowly to feel that she could do more. First

she started visiting people, opening a dialogue. Then she started to build bridges between

the different ethnic groups. It took her almost a year, before she had built sufficient trust

to be allowed back into the house of Baba Savka, her old Serb neighbor. Today Dragica

is one of these people who say "hello" to everybody, breaking the invisible wall between

the groups.

"I slowly understood to make a difference between 'the Serbs' and some particular

'Serbs'. You can start to forgive someone who burned your house if this person is an

individual, with a name and a face. But you cannot enter such a process for a whole

collectivity."

Step by step, more people got involved and more activities took place supported by Peace

Teams. Almost all primary school children participated in workshops for peacebuilding.

A Youth Club was opened. Local people took part in constructing a house that would

serve as a community center for the village.

After having worked for months to rebuild mutual trust, the project team decided that the

time had come to start a dialogue about one of the most painful remaining problems in

the village: the issue of missing persons and post-war justice. Most peace workers agreed that the healing process could hardly be successful as long as the bodies of people killed during the war were still unaccounted for. An ethnically mixed delegation from the village visited the president of Croatia to ask him to put more effort in finding their missing relatives. Serbs participated in the mission because they wanted the bodies to be found, realizing that there was not going to be any improvement in their position in the community until this issue has been resolved. The meeting was unsuccessful, but it opened a discussion in the community. This led to additional efforts aimed at finding missing persons.

Two years after the Listening Project began, independent evaluators and researchers have assessed that the peace activities empowered both the peace teams and the people who were listened to. Prejudices and fears with regard to the "other" ethnic group have decreased. More communication with members of different ethnic backgrounds has been taking place. Several villagers have become engaged in peace activities. Peace Team members said they learned a lot about themselves; about their fears and prejudices, but also about their inner ability to empathize and see somebody else's truth. However, the evaluators recommended putting in place additional education about debriefing techniques and self-protection against emotionally charged interactions for the Peace Teams as some of them had burnout symptoms.

Berak, Summer 2004

According to the OSCE, the project was a breakthrough in the communication between
divided populations. Even while graves were discovered , giving rise to deep emotions,
the situation stayed calm. Since then, more bodies of missing war victims have been
found. Although strong feelings of bitterness persist among many people, there are
examples of cross-cultural communication at the individual level. In 2003, five members
of the Youth Club chose for the first time to participate in an ethnically mixed summer
camp; this summer ten members joined the group. In 2003, Dragica and Mile, a Croat and
a Serb, succeeded in opening a milk processing plant called Milk Association, operated
as an NGO, which is being used by farmers of both ethnic backgrounds.

Dragica, today organizes workshops herself: poetry workshops to enter a process of
dealing with the past through literature, and courses to train her neighbors to become
peace workers. Asked what she considers to be her biggest achievement, Dragica
answers: "My biggest success is not the work I did for the community but the work I did
on myself." The time has gone when Dragica looked at her fields without seeing any
future on the horizon. Her association, which was officially registered as an NGO this
year, is called *Luc* ("Small light"). A small light, but a big spark for the tiny village of
Berak. A spark that is maybe going to get a prize. Dragica is nominated to be part of a
group of 1,000 women from all over the world that will be nominated for the Nobel
Peace Prize 2005.

* Corinne Bloch is a Swiss journalist who worked for various daily and weekly

newspapers and magazines. After her studies at the Graduate Institute of Development

Studies in Geneva, she came to Croatia in order to broaden her experience in

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The Center for Peace has published a wide variety of documentation and books related to

its activities. Many of these publications can be downloaded from the Center's website.

Many resources are also available at the International Listening Project Training and

Resource Center. A new publication on various Listening Project's experiences is being

prepared. It includes further information and results about the Listening Project

conducted by the Center for Peace – Osijek in different communities in Slavonia, Croatia.

The book will be available through RSVP's web site.

23.3 The Spirit of Caux: Moral Re-Armament/Initiatives of Change - Switzerland

In 1946, a group of Swiss bought the rundown Caux Palace Hotel above Montreux to serve as a place where the combatant nations of World War II could meet. It was the fulfillment of an idea that had come to a Swiss diplomat named Philippe Mottu three years earlier: if Switzerland were spared by the war, its task would be to make available a place where Europeans, torn apart by hatred, suffering and resentment, could come together. Mottu and the other Swiss were associated with a worldwide movement to promote reconciliation called Moral Re-Armament - known since 2001 as Initiatives of Change. By Michael Henderson*

Moral Re-Armament had been launched in 1938 by an American, Frank Buchman, who believed that selfish human nature lay at the root of national and international divisions. At a moment when the emphasis was on nations rearming militarily, he proclaimed the need for individuals and nations also to "rearm morally". He spoke of a "return to those simple truths which many of us have forgotten - honesty, purity, unselfishness and love." Peacemakers had to begin the process of peacemaking by looking within themselves; apologies were central to the process of reconciliation. "Peace is people becoming different," he said. He stressed the importance of those from opposite sides of a political divide meeting in the right atmosphere.

The distinctively turreted hotel purchased by the Swiss, which was renamed Mountain House, is set in the midst of restful grounds with a panoramic view of Lake Geneva and

the peaks of the Dents du Midi. In the years since Mountain House received its first guests, it has been host to several hundred thousand people from all over the world, many of whom met across contentious divides—whether they be Turks and Greeks from the two sides of the green line in Cyprus; Muslims, Christians, and Jews from the Middle East, or Cambodians attempting to move beyond the killing fields. In the early 1950s the reconciliation work taking place at Mountain House, particularly in helping to forge better relations between France and Germany, led to Buchman's nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Mottu recalls the start.

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"On the day he arrived in Caux in July 1946, Buchman confronted us with a challenge. After meeting all those who had worked so devotedly to get Mountain House ready, he suddenly asked: Where are the Germans? And he added: Some of you think that Germany has got to change; and that is true. But you will never be able to rebuild Europe without Germany."

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His compassion for the countries which had suffered at the hands of Nazi Germany, and his understanding of Germany's own suffering in defeat, were matched by his realism. The material and moral ruins of six years of war formed the background to the first conference; national hatreds, class war and personal vendettas were poisoning the

atmosphere of Europe. "Neither international conferences nor grudging concessions

could heal these wounds," says Mottu. "The peace for which Europe had so ardently

longed was tragically incomplete, for there was no peace in people's hearts." In

Germany, there was a vacuum which would be flooded by forces of anarchy and

materialism unless the Germans were offered something more than just the end of war.

Approaches were made to the occupation authorities to permit a group of Germans to

visit Caux the following year. A list of 150 possible participants was drawn up and, with

the cooperation of the Swiss authorities, the Germans arrived in Caux in the summer of

1947. The group included survivors from Nazi concentration camps, widows of officers

executed after the 1944 attempt on Hitler's life, and German personalities who were

working with the Allies in the administration of Germany. Among them were prime

ministers from West German states and two future chancellors of the Federal German

Republic. Hans Ehard, Prime Minister of Bavaria, told the international audience,

"It is a unique experience for Germans to find themselves received into a circle of so

many different nations on a level of complete equality and in atmosphere where they have

every freedom to speak without previously set limitations on what they shall say and on

what they shall remain silent, and where one can be sure that one will not be met by that

hatred which is so strong in the world today."

Democracy at Work

In his autobiography, *Against Two Evils 1931-45*, Hans von Herwarth, West Germany's

first Ambassador to Britain, writes that most of the German personalities who played a

role in the reconstruction of Western Germany took part in Caux or its outreach.

"At Caux we found democracy at work, and in the light of what we saw, we faced

ourselves and our nation. It was personal and national repentance. Many of us Germans

who were anti-Nazi made the mistake of putting the whole blame on Hitler. We learned at

Caux that we, too, were responsible."

For the first time, wrote Hamburg's *Freie Presse*,

"the question of the collective guilt of the past has been replaced by the more decisive

question of collective responsibility for the future. Here in Caux, for the first time,

Germany has been given a platform from which she can speak to the world as an equal."

Between 1948 and 1952 more than 3,000 Germans attended Caux conference sessions,

including most of the leading figures in Germany public life — future prime ministers,

industrialists, educators, and opinion-makers from all levels and occupations. The

personal trust that developed among these men and women gave a decisive impetus to

European unity at a crucial time.

At Caux, the Germans, like everyone, else had the chance to meet those from their own country and from other countries not only during plenary sessions and at meals but in walks together and in attending to everyday household chores. Scholar Edward Luttwak describes how, often, the German participants

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"would give vent to expressions of self-pity upon their first arrival at Caux, recounting their own sufferings and those of their families as if they were unique, and with no apparent recognition that others had suffered far more at German hands. Later, having absorbed the 'spirit of Caux', the tone and content of the declarations would change drastically, combining expressions of intense gratitude for being received as equals and even as friends by the other participants, avowals of guilt and repentance, repudiations of past belief in Hitler and his ideology, and promises that Germans would never again be guilty of aggression."

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The "spirit of Caux" was helped immeasurably by the willingness of some 2000 French participants, including cabinet ministers, members of parliament, industrialists and representatives of industrial workers, teachers, clergy, and journalists, to take account of their own country's part in the European tragedy. The French paper, *L'Aube*, reported that in Caux, Franco-German relations were dealt with "frankly and courageously". The

Alsatian wartime resistance leader and French Deputy Joseph Wasmer, for instance,

asked forgiveness for his hatred of the German people.

"I hated the Germans with everything in my power for what they did to my friends and

my country," he acknowledged. *"I rejoiced to see Berlin in flames. At Caux this hatred*

has left my heart. I ask forgiveness from the Germans. I want to make restitution to

them."

The heart of the philosophy of Caux was the notion that if you wanted to bring a change

in the world, the most practical way to start was with change in yourself and your

country. Caux fostered the practice of spending time in silence, alone or in community,

helping each individual find for himself or herself the right course of action. Even as

sessions dealt with tough world issues, the concept of wanting the best for the other

person took precedence over the desire to book political, social, or economic advantage.

Extending the Spirit

The work over the years at Caux was extended by international teams which crisscrossed

Germany at the invitation of Germans who had been at the conference. These teams

helped to lay the foundation for the re-establishment of democracy and to heal the

wartime hatreds. They included men and women who had survived the concentration

camps, as well as veterans of Allied forces and the resistance movements.

In 1949 George Villiers, president of the French Employers Federation visited Caux as a representative of French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman. There he got to know one of the architects of the new Germany, Hans Boeckler, who was president of the German Trades Union Congress. Boeckler said to Villiers, "We ought to be enemies on two counts. I am a German, you are French; you are the head of the employers, I am a trade union leader." "Yes," Villiers replied, "and there's a third count: your countrymen condemned me to death, I was in a political concentration camp, and I saw most of my comrades die around me. But that is all past. We must forget it." With personal reconciliation came political reconciliation as well; Villiers announced that he would throw his weight behind the "moral and economic union" of France and Germany.

Six weeks after the essentials of the Schuman plan — the framework leading to the creation of the European Common Market — had been agreed by France and Germany, Buchman was decorated with France's Legion of Honor for his "contribution to better understanding between France and Germany". Subsequently, he was also honored by the German government. Two months after the treaty creating the European Coal and Steel Community was signed in 1951, German Chancellor Adenauer stated,

"The nations of the world will only have stable relations with one another when they have been inwardly prepared for them. During these last months we have witnessed the success of difficult negotiations and the signing of important international agreements. Moral Re-Armament has played an unseen but effective role in reducing the differences

of opinion between the negotiating parties and has guided them toward a peaceful

agreement by helping them to seek the common good."

"MRA did not invent the Schuman Plan but it facilitated its realization from the start,"

concludes Edward Luttwak. "That is no small achievement given the vast importance of

every delay - and every acceleration - of the process of Franco-German reconciliation

during those crucial, formative years."

The Continuation

In the more than fifty years that have elapsed since the arrival of the first Germans in

Caux, Mountain House has continued to work on the principles learned and applied at

that time – an emphasis on how to build the future rather than on apportion responsibility

for the past and a belief that caring for the individual's well-being and spiritual growth is

as important as any diplomatic or political result. Historian Scott Appleby, writing on the

role of Mountain House in *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, observes that it embodies

MRA's conviction that

"*peaceful and productive change in hostile relations between nations or ethno-religious*

groups depends on change in the individuals prosecuting the war; that process, in turn,

requires individuals representing each side to listen, carefully and at length, to their

counterparts."

As an NGO, Caux is today providing a forum for debate on a range of vexing issues, bringing together people from all corners of the world. A French Member of Parliament, Georges Mesmin, says that political figures find there a respect for all opinions, an openness, both to others and to the principle of forgiveness – even when one thinks another is wrong – and an atmosphere of friendship. Supplementing the work of individuals, which has always been the backbone of Caux, distinctive programs have been developed.

Agenda for Reconciliation, for instance, assists efforts in preventive diplomac y and nation-building, and in recent years, has drawn to Caux men and women on opposite sides of conflicts in Somalia, Sierra Leone, and the Great Lakes region of Africa, as well as participants from Lebanon, Israel and Palestine. In addition, encouraged by the Dalai Lama, who has twice been to Caux, sessions have brought together religious leaders in dialogue including, significantly, dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims in 2002.

Foundations for Freedom is fostering moral and spiritual values in newly democratic countries which had been undermined by decades of totalitarianism.

The *Caux Round Table* has promulgated Caux Principles which have been described as the most widely distributed statement of business ethics in the world.

The *Caux Scholars Programme* has, over more than a dozen years, graduated students from 61 countries from courses addressing practical aspects of conflict resolution.

The *International Communications Forum* encompasses a network of hundreds of men and women in the media who are committed to restoring public confidence in their work.

Hope in the Cities works to create partnerships of reconciliation and trains dialogue

facilitators in inter-racial community initiatives. In language that would have been as

appropriate in 1946 as it is today, and which truly embodies "the spirit of Caux", it calls

for honest conversation that

"includes everyone and excludes no one, focuses on working together towards a solution,

not on identifying enemies, affirms the best and does not confirm the worst, looks for

what is right rather than who is right, and moves beyond blame and personal pain to

constructive action."

* Michael Henderson is a freelance journalist and the author of nine books. He has been a

TV presenter, a broadcaster and for more tha n fifty years worked for peace and

understanding in some thirty countries.

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23.4 Dialogue Spices Peace: Baku Bae – Maluku in Indonesia

The Baku Bae movement in Indonesia brought Christian and Muslim communities together by adopting bold conflict resolution and reconciliation methods. The initiators see these as a way of rebuilding social capital and restoring trust through dialogue and community focus.

In 2000, as fighting between Muslims and Christians in Maluku, Indonesia, spiraled out of control, peace activist Ichsan Malik began knocking on militants' doors. Neither side showed desire for reconciliation. "I was *Si Buta Dari Goa Hantu*," he admits, referring to a heroic figure from Indonesian fiction (The Blind Hero of Devil Cave). "They said I was a lunatic. It was, perhaps, my naivety that saved us."

Malik traveled first to Saparua island, the Christian stronghold, to meet a group of priests. Then he visited Ja'far Umar Thalib, commander in chief of Laskar Jihad, the Muslim militia, in Yogyakarta Special Region. These approaches were met, initially, with suspicion.

The militants were used to military and government functionaries making such overtures and had doubts about Malik's motives. He pressed ahead nonetheless, and even arranged opinion polls among people from the two communities to convince their leaders that a sentiment existed in both camps for Christians and Muslims to engage in dialogue.

Malik was confident his bottom-up approach would work, that the key was to strengthen desire for peace at the grassroots (people actually involved in, and affected by, the

conflict) before getting the authorities invo lved. That is the core idea of Baku Bae

(Reconciliation), a movement formed in 2000 that became one of the most visible civil

society responses to the mass violence that broke out in Maluku a year earlier.

Peace Deal

The movement showcased an interesting alternative to normal conflict resolution

methods. Its principles and methods were based on *baku bae*, which in Moluccan culture

describes the peaceful spirit used in children's games to restore friendships after a

quarrel.

Formally known as Institut Titian Perdamaian, the movement was started by civil society

actors from Maluku supported by a disparate group including activists from Jakarta, the

Indonesian capital, traditional and religious leaders, people from the women's movement,

youth groups, intellectuals and educators, lawyers and journalists. Malik, a former

activist for non-governmental organizations working to protect natural resources, was one

of its founders.

The activities of this body helped reduce violence on Maluku and paved the way for the

signing of a peace deal brokered by the central government, the Malino Declaration of

2002 signed by more than twenty Christian and Muslim leaders.

This accord pledged to stop violence, support socio -economic development, and

undertake an independent investigation into what originally sparked the conflict. It urged

unauthorized militia to surrender their weapons and called on groups from outside

Maluku province to leave – this, a clear reference to the main armed Islamic group,

which eventually returned its fighters to Java.

Physical divisions remained between the Muslim and Christian communities after this

agreement, but the mass violence largely ceased and some of the armed groups

disbanded. The army reduced its presence and Maluku settled into a period of uneasy

calm, even if the traumatic memory of the bloodletting may never be fully erased.

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Deep-rooted fears and years of mistrust

Although they appear like dots on the map, the islands of Maluku province in Indonesia,

were once at the center of global commerce. Five hundred years ago, the spices they

produced - nutmeg and cloves – cost more than gold. It was the quest for these riches that

made European explorers sail around southern Africa to India for the first time.

Over the centuries, the islands changed hands between Dutch, Portuguese and English

traders, leaving an immensely diverse cultural and religions stamp. Muslim, Catholic and

Protestant religions blended into strong local customs.

During Dutch colonial rule, which lasted up to the late 1940's, Christians on Ambon –

the main island - were recruited as soldiers to pacify the rest of Indonesia. In return, they

received special benefits. Many Moluccans converted to Christianity as a result. President

Soeharto used social engineering to change this imbalance by selecting Muslims to fill

vacancies.

Soeharto's removal from office, in May 1998, after ruling for thirty years, also marked

the disappearance of a strong hand. The loosening of centralized rule brought many deep-

rooted fears and mistrust to the forefront.

Violence between Christians and Muslims began on Ambon island on January 19, 1999.

It spread quickly to the southeast and central Maluku. Entire villages were razed. At least

5,000 people were killed. Several hundred thousand – out of a population of 2.1 million –

became refugees.

The nature of the conflict changed in the middle of 2000 when a Java-based

fundamentalist Islamic militia, Laskar Jihad, sent several thousand fighters to Ambon.

With Christian militias on the defensive, and suffering heavy casualties, the government

imposed a state of civil emergency in the two Maluku provinces. By 2001, the mass

violence eased. The population was divided into Christian and Muslim zones.

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A Five-Stage Approach

In the beginning, Malik and other initiators of Baku Bae carried out their work largely in

secret. Tensions were running high and those within the warring factions interested in

talking peace, feared negative reaction within their communities to any disclosure of

contact with opponents.

The efforts divided into five main stages. In the first, the initiators invited leaders of

parties directly involved in the conflict to meet. Twelve prominent members of the

Maluku community in Jakarta, from both sides, attended. Owing to the security situation

at the time, and disclosure fears, a neutral venue was chosen away from Maluku

province.

Nonetheless the tensions were evident inside the meeting. Each side blamed the other for

the conflict. The mediators encouraged more general exchanges about common

experiences, and tried to bring discussions around to the true nature of the conflict.

A follow-up session was held in Bali. Some forty people turned up. Twice that number

attended the third meeting, in December 2000, in Yogyakarta, including representatives

of religious, *adat* (customary), youth, NGOs and militant organizations. In a joint

statement, the participants promised to continue using local traditions as a means of

accommodating the interests of all the different parties. They proposed that

"all local traditional leaders, or Bapa Radja, once again take the lead… but at the same

time support state law and guarantee the acceptance of all migrants living in the

province."

This desire was tested at follow-up workshops involving various representatives of the

Moluccan people.

During the third stage, entire communities – people from all walks of life, and different

religions - were invited to general assemblies. The fourth step involved the setting up of

neutral zones on the borders between communities where Muslims and Christians felt

secure enough to undertake inter-group activities, including trade, sharing common health

services, and the like.

Inside these zones, meetings were organized between professionals from both sides, including Christian and Muslim lawyers, and journalists, who created a Media Centre in one of these neutral zones. The involvement of security forces in the dialogue ensured security protection.

The last step in this stage-by-stage process saw the results of discussions and activities disseminated to people from the Christian and Muslim communities through workshops which encouraged the public at large, to translate conflict urges into thoughts of peace. This stage was initiated when all the fundamental social structures aimed at stopping the violence were established, when people no longer wanted to be called "warring factions". In the Baku Bae philosophy, this final stage also involves carrying out activities to pave the way for legal action to redress grievances suffered by victims, and reinforce the rule of law – including, where necessary, independent investigation into the nature and roots of the conflict.

While the process evolved on Ambon, parallel activities were undertaken by civil society groups like Ikrapati, to promote dialogue between people from neighboring villages whose Christian members had fled during the violence. These dialogues were designed to get Muslims and Christians talking frankly about whether they wanted to live together again. Mediation skills were also taught. People from divided communities were encouraged to take the first steps at reunification.

Restoring old Relations and forging Alliances

Civil society groups were not alone in pursuing peace. In the immediate aftermath of the outbreak of violence in January 1999, the Maluku provincial government secured pledges from community leaders to end the fighting. When mass violence continued, the minister of Religion organized a meeting of Muslim and Christian leaders that produced a document outlining steps to stop the conflict and focus on rehabilitation. This did not go very far. Neither did an attempt, in early 2000, by a fact-finding team set up by the National Commission on Human Rights, to foster mediation by bringing Muslims and Christians together at a course in Bali.

Baku Bae had its own difficulties, especially in removing the desire for revenge among people who had lost family or friends, and who were among the many forced to abandon their homes. Some of the problems were of a practical nature: with a state of emergency in place, movement was difficult and tensions remained high. There were also internal differences within the movement over approaches.

What made it successful, in the end, was the benefits that people actually felt when they tried dialogue instead of fighting. Both the Christian and Muslim communities saw that embracing the simple method of Baku Bae – dialogue, cooperation, finding common ground in neutral centers – reduced the polarized atmosphere.

Old relations were restored and new alliances forged. Many partnerships achieved during reconciliation talks, were carried over into sustained peace-building projects. This was evident when the baku bae dialogue encouraged between the regions of Lehitu (Muslim) and Baguala (Christian) and the Indonesian security forces, spawned other local

initiatives like the establishment of joint community watches at neutral points along the road that runs through the two areas.

Individual contacts made during early activities, later became partnerships between the organizations to which these people belonged. This was evident in collaborations forged between Muslim and Christian NGOs in various parts of Maluku.

Dialogue helped to construct other bridges: within the Muslim community itself previously fractious groups buried differences and united.

The creation of neutral spaces in which Christians and Muslims shared health, education and other basic services together without fear of attack, was of major importance. This enabled the Masohi hospital in central Maluku, for example, to resume its function as the main critical-care facility. Before that, patients were too afraid to spend the night there. Workers from different NGOs, some former classmates and neighbors torn apart by the conflict, discovered that meeting in these spaces gave them the confidence to travel to each other's offices on either side. Soon, more and more citizens saw visits to the neutral space as their right; this was the place in which they felt safe after sunset.

By late 2000, Christians and Muslims were meeting openly at these locations without fear of reprisal and crossing into each other's neighborhoods. As more of these spaces were created, people began thinking of returning home to their villages. The conduct of economic activity - both Christians and Muslims set up sidewalk markets and opened stalls where they served customers from both communities – gave these spaces added importance.

The Alternative to War is Negotiation

Ichsan Malik believes it was because of the Baku Bae movement that some of the vital issues eventually discussed by the parties at Malino, were even on the agenda. He accepts that the presence of the army was important in reducing the violence, but says civil institutions are vital in ensuring a permanent solution, including socio-economic development, law enforcement and so on.

Baku Bae's activities, and especially the innovate thinking behind its methods, showed that people themselves need to build an agenda to reconstruct and rearrange their own future. Syas Malik:

"We had to overcome enormous handicaps. We quarreled and swallowed many bitter pills, because our movement is a loose one. But we re-established institutions… created an intellectual forum… and things like legal aid."

The initiators of Baku Bae see its methods as an alternative to traditional conflict resolution and reconciliation approaches: a way of rebuilding social capital and restoring trust through dialogue and community focus. Malik:

"Of course we promote forgiveness. But by no means is what happened in the past, forgotten. The alternative to war is negotiation."

In the Baku Bae approach, the need for credibility is central: establishing that you have a mandate, that people support what is being done. Establishing trust and solidarity between conflict parties is also vital, as well as ensuring that negotiation is carried out in a way that balances power among the parties. Patience, Malik stresses, is not just a virtue – it is vitally necessary.

In a background paper – written jointly with Hamdi Muluk, lecturer in social psychology at the University of Indonesia – Malik notes:

"The success of the Balu Bae movement suggests the benefit of bottom-up approach and the role of civil society in strengthening and empowering survivors to make their own reconciliation processes."

For negotiation to be successful, everything must be put on the table, including issues like multi-culturalism and pluralism. And ordinary folk must be at the center, not the elite.

"There is no way to resolve the conflict in Maluku… without building a people's agenda and allowing them to reconstruct and rearrange their own future."

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