Berghof
Research Center
Forschungszentrum
for Constructive
für konstruktive
Conflict Management
Konfliktbearbeitung

Berghof Handbook Dialogue Series

Peacebuilding at a Crossroads?

Dilemmas and Paths for Another Generation

Edited by Beatrix Schmelzle and Martina Fischer

Berghof
Research Center
Forschungszentrum
for Constructive
für konstruktive
Conflict Management
Konfliktbearbeitung

Berghof Handbook
Dialogue Series

Edited by Beatrix Schmelzle and
Martina Fischer

Peacebuilding at a Crossroads?

Dilemmas and Paths for Another Generation

No. 7

About the Berghof Handbook Dialogue Series:

The Dialogue Series is an offshoot of the Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation. Each topic in the series is chosen because it is particularly relevant to societies in conflict and the practice of conflict transformation, and because it raises important issues at the present time. In each Dialogue, practitioners and scholars critically engage and debate in light of their experience.
Typically, a Dialogue includes one lead article from key experts, and several commentaries from practitioners and others. Rather than presenting a single analysis, these practitioner-scholar Dialogues stimulate debate, integrating different perspectives, challenging prevailing views, comparing research findings with experiences and insights on the ground. Importantly, Dialogues, as works of broad relevance, are distributed in print version as well as online.
We invite readers to respond to the papers (as to all articles). Interesting and original contributions can be added to the web version of the Dialogue.

Up to now, the editors have initiated six Dialogues on **Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA), Security Sector Reform (SSR)**, **Transforming War Economies, New Trends in PCIA, Social Change and Conflict Transformation** and on the **Systemic Approach to Conflict Transformation.**

Translation of parts of Martina Fischer's comment from German into English: **Hillary Crowe**

The Berghof Handbook Dialogue Series is published by the Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management

Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation
Dialogue Series Issue No. 7

© 2009 Berghof Research Center

ISSN 1616-2544
ISBN 978-3-927783-94-2

Order at:
Berghof Research Center
Altensteinstraße 48a
14195 Berlin, Germany

Via Internet:
www.berghof-center.org/
www.berghof-handbook.net
order@berghof-center.org

Berghof
Research Center
Forschungszentrum
for Constructive
für konstruktive
Conflict Management
Konfliktbearbeitung

Contents

Introduction
Martina Fischer and Beatrix Schmelzle 5

Lead Article
Simon Fisher and Lada Zimina
Just Wasting Our Time? Provocative Thoughts for Peacebuilders 11

Responses
Louis Kriesberg
Making Good Use of the Time: Contributions and Dilemmas of Non-governmental Actors in Peacebuilding 37
Diana Chigas and Peter Woodrow
Envisioning and Pursuing Peace Writ Large 47
Martina Weitsch
Mobilizing Public Opinion for Peace: The Next Challenge for the Peacebuilding Communities 59
Goran Bozicevic
Reflections on Peacebuilding from Croatia 69
Ulrike Hopp and Barbara Unger
Time to Learn: Expanding Organisational Capacities in Conflict Settings 77
Martina Fischer
Participatory Evaluation and Critical Peace Research: A Precondition for Peacebuilding 87

Reflection
Simon Fisher and Lada Zimina
Reflections on the Comments: Responses and More Queries 99

About the Authors & Editors 105

Berghof
Research Center
Forschungszentrum
for Constructive
für konstruktive
Conflict Management
Konfliktbearbeitung

Introduction

Martina Fischer & Beatrix Schmelzle

Activities aiming at peacebuilding and conflict transformation need sound analysis, clarity of purpose, flexible strategising, and also long-term commitment and a robust frustration tolerance in the face of adversity and set-backs. Readiness for self-reflection and a critical assessment of strategies are therefore imperative for organisations active in the field. The past 15 years have seen numerous comprehensive efforts to assess what difference peacebuilding can make. For many peace organisations, getting a clear idea of their own outreach, potential and limits, success and failure is crucial. This is not only due to donor agencies' increasing requests for evaluation, but also important for building the identities of teams and individuals active in these organisations. But identifying criteria for success or failure remains a highly complicated and demanding endeavour.

In March 2008, an open letter provocatively titled *Just Wasting our Time?* created quite a stir in the field of peacebuilding.[1] The authors – Simon Fisher (founder of the UK-based organisation Responding to Conflict) and Lada Zimina (currently conflict advisor at Care International UK; but writing in a private capacity) – are activists, trainers and analysts with long-term international experience. They argue that despite the progress made and the achievements to be proud of, many peacebuilding activities are missing the mark and that peacebuilders might be partially responsible for their own failure. They acknowledge that advances have been made, in particular by improving the conceptual and methodological basis and mobilizing a host of actors from the grassroots to the governmental levels. At the same time the authors state that, overall, "the peacebuilding message seems to be too muted, weak and fragmented", while "globalised corporate power exerts ever more undemocratic control over the essential

1 See http://lettertopeacebuilders.ning.com.

components of peace" (in this volume, 12). Fisher and Zimina identify several major obstacles on the road to 'big picture change' (or 'peace writ large') and diagnose a deep gap between the rhetoric and reality of fundamental change. They portray a dichotomy between 'technical peacebuilding', implemented by a so-called peace industry, and 'transformative peacebuilding', carried by a social movement. According to their experience, many actors focus on technical peacebuilding activities rather than transformative ones, neglecting crucial values such as 'social justice'. Some are even developing submissive attitudes to agencies in power and have lost independence due to financial dependency on governmental (or commercially-orientated) donors. Moreover, the authors claim that fragmented relationships within civil society and competition over resources hamper effective networking, cooperation and learning processes. Fisher and Zimina launch a call for a new agenda for peacebuilding, which in their view needs to be accountable to local partners and respond to issues such as economic justice, environmental responsibility and human rights.

Seeing how vivid the initial reactions to the open letter were, we decided to publish an edited version of this text in the Berghof Handbook Dialogue Series and to organise a debate around these ideas and open questions, collecting a set of comments from colleagues and experts from academia, policy advocacy and peacebuilding practice. We asked them to compare and contrast Fisher and Zimina's findings and recommendations with their own experience and research.

Most respondents agree that there is a painful gap between rhetoric and action in peacebuilding. They also acknowledge a tension between activities adhering to the status quo and approaches calling for deep transformation. The contrasting portrayal of 'technical peacebuilding' and 'transformative peacebuilding' proved to be appealing, especially for practitioners. On the other hand, the respondents also called for more terminological clarity and differentiation, for putting planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation into concrete context and for accepting a division of labour and roles between different peacebuilding actors.

Louis Kriesberg, professor emeritus of Syracuse University, USA and veteran analyst of processes of social change and conflict resolution, traces the development of a social movement of peace and conflict resolution (PCR movement) that spread from the US since the 1980s. He also proposes that non-governmental actors should refine their understanding of government actors and recognize that governments may vary greatly. While there are actors who should be eschewed or confronted, it is important to remain open to those who are interested in change. For this purpose, Kriesberg calls upon members of the PCR movement to "consider the ways that relevant research findings, experiences and insights can be effectively communicated to political figures" (in this volume, 41). He also encourages a more energetic and consciously developed division of labour between diverse groups engaged in the peacebuilding field as "they vary in the work they can do at different stages of a conflict and they differ in the skills and the resources they can bring to transforming a conflict, a society or the world" (ibid., 42). With regard to funding and its associated dilemmas (e.g. fundraising that becomes the core of the work, dependency issues), Kriesberg suggests that NGOs should cooperate, partner and network more systematically. Greater interaction and an exchange of ideas should be cultivated, which can happen in some long-established networks as well as new formats. Such interaction and exchange should also examine the vision and values of actors. Academia, finally, should investigate the underlying conditions and causes of conflict including research on the development and effects of the military-industrial-political-media complex in eminent countries such as the US, Russia and China.

Diana Chigas and Peter Woodrow, co-directors of the Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) project run by CDA – Collaborative Learning Projects in Cambridge, USA, check the lead article's findings against the insights gathered by the RPP-project. They share the opinion that peacebuilding efforts are indeed not 'adding up', yet suggest that Fisher and Zimina's critical assessment and recommendations do not go far enough. They remind us that what is still missing in many cases are adequate conflict analyses. Currently, these "too often aim to be *too comprehensive* and produce *long lists* of factors, in fairly general terms" (Chigas/Woodrow in this volume, 48). There is a lack of contextualised and dynamic understanding which prioritises the most important factors and reflects on possible intended and unintended consequences of a given intervention at a given time (and over time). The comment supports Fisher and Zimina's call to re-think current practice in terms of socially just empowerment, accountability structures and responsiveness to local needs. But Chigas and Woodrow advocate a division of labour in which both technical and transformative peacebuilding have their roles to play. They suggest using theories of change as a reflection tool that peacebuilding needs in order to 'add up'. They propose rethinking the nature of peace "in order to test, and challenge where appropriate, the liberal democratic paradigm that comprises the default conception" (ibid., 50). At the same time they are not convinced that a broad and general discussion of peace writ large would improve the transformative quality of peacebuilding practice as "a general rethinking risks producing a generic definition of peace assumed to be applicable in all places" (ibid.). Moreover, they caution against oversimplification, such as assuming that there is *the* community, who determines the agenda, and that certain actors are suspicious *per se* (i.e. governments and corporations).

Martina Weitsch, representative of the Quaker Council for European Affairs with a great deal of experience in lobbying for peacebuilding at the European Union (EU) level, too, points out that there might be certain value in 'technical' peacebuilding approaches as these can serve as a gate-opener to decision-makers. She raises the objection that Fisher and Zimina pay scant attention to the EU as an actor with peacebuilding potential, which non-governmental initiatives need to relate to. She presents experiences from the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), an NGO-platform based in Brussels. She lists a number of achievements, among them an institutionalised dialogue between NGOs and the EU's Council Secretariat and successful discussions with the European Investment Bank on conflict sensitivity in their lending practices. Weitsch criticises how the term 'peacebuilding community' employed by Fisher and Zimina ignores that many different communities exist. She suggests getting rid of stereotypes and 'enemy images' with respect to state actors and the business community, and looking for alliance partners for peacebuilding within administrations and companies. At the same time, she acknowledges difficulties in connecting NGOs' voices to the decision-making process at higher political levels. In order to better mobilize political decision-makers and representatives of the corporate sector it is imperative "to get public opinion galvanised" and forge alliances with the media (Weitsch in this volume, 65). Thus she reinforces a point also made by Kriesberg, who expresses a need to make peacebuilding activities more visible, plausible and attractive to the public at large (in this volume, 43).

Goran Bozicevic, a peace practitioner and teacher from Croatia (most recently founder of the Miramida Center in Grzoznjan/Istria), picks up the question of the underlying concept of 'peace' that peacebuilders are working for. In his view, the tension between 'technical' and 'transformative' peacebuilding becomes most tangible in working with donor organisations that are driven by bureaucratic and short-term outcome orientated mindsets. He confesses that such approaches cause him the greatest frustration and turn out to be counterproductive, as they suffocate processes of change that are driven by local stakeholders. Bozicevic adds experiences from his work as peacebuilding trainer in a UN-funded project and as director of the Volunteer Project Pakrac in Croatia in the 1990s, which illustrate the consequences of incompatibilities concerning flexibility in planning, values of cooperation and funding. In his view, transformative peacebuilding needs to create change that addresses the roots of conflict. Moreover, he questions the concept of there being *one* sole community of peacebuilders. The example of several war veterans' active involvement in processes of conflict transformation in the region of former Yugoslavia shows that peacebuilding is done by many individuals and groups – even though many of them do not call it 'peacebuilding'. But, as Bozicevic underlines, they do contribute to transforming social relations, shifting power distribution, widening the space for dealing with the past, promoting truth and tolerance and challenging authorities.

The comment by Ulrike Hopp and Barbara Unger (Berghof Peace Support, Berlin), focuses in more detail on the issue of learning in conflict. It welcomes the lead article's initial and excitingly provocative stimulus. Accepting Fisher and Zimina's overall critical assessment, Hopp and Unger suggest that we reflect in more depth on the questions "*where* does change need to happen, and *how well* are we – and our organisations – *equipped* to inspire that change?" (Hopp/Unger in this volume, 79). They point to some of the extensive literature on organisational learning and development, which also offers food for reflection for peacebuilding organisations. In order to learn well in conflict settings, organisations need to address conflict-replicating tensions within teams and organisations. They have to create regular strategic learning opportunities, and, at the same time, enable team members' 'spontaneous' learning. And they should design project proposals that allow for adjustment and flexibility in cooperation with donors. Finally, the authors suggest building learning teams that are made up by committed individuals who can take the critical self-reflection of strategies and purposes further. A prerequisite for this is an organisational culture where reflection and learning – not just doing or producing – are regarded as an integral, valued part of the work.

Martina Fischer, deputy director at the Berghof Research Center and vice president of the German Foundation for Peace Research, suggests that the picture of global conflict trends is not as bleak as Fisher and Zimina assume. She argues that some substantial progress has been made which should be fully acknowledged. In determining whether the glass is therefore half full or half empty, she asserts that going for the optimistic version makes it easier to proceed on the long road for peace by constantly improving mechanisms of conflict prevention and transformation on the level of international organisations, state and civil society. Fischer points out that many peacebuilding agencies, in particular civil society organisations, have developed a high degree of critical self-reflection and started discussions on appropriate evaluation tools. However, these debates have also contributed to problematic and often exaggerated expectations with respect to the impacts that can be achieved. Moreover, the debate has raised unrealistic expectations regarding evaluation. Evaluation mechanisms have often come to be misunderstood as a documentation of quantitatively measurable,

short-term results. Fischer is convinced that in order to support transformative peacebuilding, much more participatory evaluation and action research is needed. The different concepts of peace, conflict transformation, reconciliation, justice and security that guide peacebuilding efforts need to be discussed more explicitly. Fischer states that it is also crucial to critically reflect on and question the hypotheses of impact that guide peacebuilding projects. Finally, in order to support transformative peacebuilding, peace research needs to go back to the roots and replace analysis that is merely policy-orientated (and targeted at increasing the effectiveness of peace operations) with normative and critical analysis that looks at the context.

This Dialogue seeks to heighten the awareness that we need to look at successes and failures in a sounder way. The lead article and the comments offer food for further thought rather than final answers. The caveat that we take away from the Dialogue, though, is that contextualisation is indispensable, and learning must be ongoing and better rooted within the daily practice of individuals and organisations. We believe there will be no other way to improve our practice than to continue to discuss visions, motivations, values, potential and limitations and to do what we are trying to do in a well-reflected manner – in each case, over and over again.

We wish to thank all the authors who have contributed to this Berghof Handbook Dialogue. We hope it will serve as an incentive for a wider debate, whether through the Berghof Handbook website (www.berghof-handbook.net; info@berghof-handbook.net), the open letter forum (http://lettertopeacebuilders.ning.com) or via ad hoc groups and direct communication including the authors (authors' contact information can be found at the back of this volume).

Berlin, December 2008
Martina Fischer & Beatrix Schmelzle

Berghof
Research Center
Forschungszentrum
for Constructive
für konstruktive
Conflict Management
Konfliktbearbeitung

Just Wasting our Time?
Provocative Thoughts for Peacebuilders

Simon Fisher & Lada Zimina

1. Introduction*

Although the overall number of violent conflicts in the world is now relatively low,[1] we need look no further than Iraq and Afghanistan, Darfur, Zimbabwe and Israel/Palestine to see the apparently unquestioning faith which the powerful continue to put in weaponry, and its terrible results for people and the planet. Militarised views of the world still dominate its politics. The capacity and the will of global society to solve conflicts and address injustice peacefully is desperately inadequate in the face of today's need, let alone tomorrow's; the risk of intense conflict arising from a nexus of four core issues – climate change and energy constraints; economic injustice and poverty; denial of rights and participation in society; and armed violence – is given scant attention.

International peace practitioners, for their part, and other global civil society players who have peace as part of their remit, remain weak and implicitly focused on a relatively narrow approach to peace, without full recognition of the interconnectedness and flux of the system. As a result, the strategies they offer tend to be inadequate, in the sense that they merely serve to reinforce the circumstances which gave rise to violence and warfare in the first place. Yet as the field itself postulates, peace is not simply about the absence of visible violence, but requires addressing underlying drivers and dynamics.

* This is an edited version of Simon Fisher and Lada Zimina. *Just Wasting our Time? An Open Letter to Peacebuilders*, March 2008, available at http://lettertopeacebuilders.ning.com. We wish to thank those who gave us feedback on earlier drafts, and especially Bridget Walker, Diana Francis, Paul Clifford, Emma Leslie, David Atwood, colleagues at Responding to Conflict as well as Nick Perks and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.

1 There were 32 armed conflicts in 2006, a decline from the average of more than 60 in the immediate post-Cold war years. See Harbom/Wallensteen 2007; Human Security Report 2005 and Human Security Brief 2006.

Granted, there are some international signs of positive change, indicating a window of opportunity. One can point for example to the following:

- *A UN milestone: climate change on the agenda.* In April 2007 the Security Council met to discuss climate change for the first time. It did so, surprisingly, and at the behest of the UK government, in the context of conflict and security and, again surprisingly to many, there was broad agreement that the issue poses a clear threat, perhaps the major threat, to international relations and global stability in the future.
- *Changing international consensus.* Despite the dominance of the neo-conservatives in the US, and their allies in the UK in the early years of this century, governments and civil society alike are developing a consensus over some of the key pillars of peacebuilding, including the salient importance of early warning and prevention of conflict (i.e. violence), international cooperation and agreement, the effectiveness of peacekeeping, security sector and governance reforms.
- *Increasing impact of negotiation in ending wars.* Since the 1990s more wars have ended through negotiated settlements than victory: between 2000 and 2005 negotiated outcomes were four times as numerous as victories.[2] However, it must not be forgotten that the longer-term success of these negotiated outcomes is as yet unknown, and inevitably fragile, as the case of Sudan currently illustrates.
- *Recognition of limits of militarism.* In many locations and at many levels there is evidence that a search is underway for new ways to address conflicts. Increasingly, for example, the military in the UK and US are saying publicly that wars do not work any longer – even for them (Smith 2006). However, there is as yet little sign of more than sporadic, patchy political acceptance of the need for new thinking, let alone systematic planning about how it might be met. Institutional changes at the UN, such as the new Peacebuilding Commission are a start, but they are far from adequate to address the issues we are facing.
- *Openness of government agencies.* There are exceptions to this, notably among Scandinavian governments, and signs that indicate a hunger in other government circles for new insights and models in relation to peace. In the UK, for example, the Department for International Development (DFID) recently organised a consultative process in drawing up its new policy document on conflict.[3] A new All-Party Parliamentary Group on Conflict Issues, dedicated to getting realistic, nonviolent alternatives into the UK policy debate, is beginning to attract attention, if not yet the consequent understanding, in political and military circles.

Underlying this apparent momentum is what has been described as a "huge upsurge in activity in conflict prevention, conflict management, diplomatic peacemaking and post-conflict peacebuilding activity that has occurred over the past fifteen years, with most of this being spearheaded by the UN itself (but with the World Bank, donor states, a number of regional security organisations and literally thousands of NGOs playing significant roles of their own)".[4]

But as yet, the peacebuilding message seems too muted, weak and fragmented to capitalise on these potential advantages. Peacebuilders are failing to make the political waves necessary to convince others, and perhaps even themselves, while globalised corporate power exerts ever more undemocratic control over the essential components of peace. Now that the political window may be opening, and an opportunity knocks, will we be unprepared and divided? What can we do? What have we got to say?

2 Human Security Brief 2006; quoted in Barnes 2007, 11.

3 Preventing Violent Conflict, UK Department for International Development, March 2007. Available at www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/preventing-conflict.pdf.

4 Gareth Evans, Conflict Prevention: Ten Lessons We Have Learned, Toronto, February 2007. Available at www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4653&l=1. Similar findings are portrayed in Human Security Brief 2006.

Peacebuilding and conflict transformation undoubtedly have the potential to offer viable alternatives to costly, ineffective and often highly destructive methods of dealing with conflicts and their causes. A nascent peacebuilding paradigm is beginning to prove itself in practice, little by little, evolving from its foundations in disciplines such as philosophy, political science, social psychology and international relations, and in a variety of religions, providing an invaluable source of insights and innovative approaches, both at policy and practice levels.

But the impact of the peacebuilding community is stunted by a variety of factors, among which are: a lack of clarity – or is it consensus? – about values and goals, the often incoherent, short-term manner in which goals are implemented, excessively deferential attitudes to those holding political power, organisational rivalry, and a shortage of competent practitioners. Peacebuilding and development organisations alike seem to be failing the challenge.

While the evidence suggests that peacebuilders have made some considerable inroads, despite accompanying ambivalences and confusions, this paper argues that the peacebuilding community – all those who see themselves as working for peace, justice and development – needs to start getting its own house in order if it is to match up to the intensifying challenges. It needs to have further conversations about 'peace writ large', a term introduced but not substantially explored by Collaborative for Development Action (CDA).[5] Whose peace are peacebuilders working for? Is such work regarded as 'transforming' – seeking ultimately to challenge the unsustainable, unjust status quo and bring about profound change towards greater justice and wellbeing? Or is it essentially 'technical' peacebuilding, focused on project-bound locations and time-scales and trusting that the bigger picture will look after itself?

These are the core questions we want to invite practitioners and scholars to discuss. In *Section 2* below we give an overview of the main achievements of the field. We do not try to do full justice to what has been achieved in the relatively short space of time since the late 1980s; however, we name some of the key elements which now need to be built on purposefully. *Sections 3* and *4* then set out to ask critical questions and suggest some options for what needs to be done in the impending multiple crises going forward.

2. What has the Peacebuilding Field Achieved?

2.1 A Distinctive Conceptual and Methodological Basis

Methodologies

Distinctive and innovative methods of analysis and intervention have been developed, often inspired by developments in a range of subjects, from social psychology to adult education to management studies. Especially notable perhaps have been graphic, easy to use tools of participatory conflict analysis, many forms and styles of dialogue at different levels, from grassroots to high level, continuous development of mediation processes, including a substantial movement in peer mediation in schools, elaborate schemes for early warning and, though less successfully, early response. At a global level, organisations such as the Mennonite Central Committee in the US and Responding to Conflict in UK, amongst others, have developed practice-focused methodologies for cross-cultural training. Many people, including civil servants and staff of intergovernmental organisations, have participated in these programmes, lasting up to three months.

5 Reflecting on Peace Practice Handbook, CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2004. Available at www.cdainc.com/cdawww/pdf/manual/reflectingonpeacepracticehandbook_Pdf.pdf.

Education and Capacity-building

There has been a huge expansion of intellectual endeavour in peace studies and related areas at universities and colleges across the world, including those undertaking military research and training. A welter of opportunities has emerged for people to undertake peace studies up to PhD level. Initiated by the establishment of the first Peace Studies Department at Bradford University in 1973, this has produced a large number of graduates looking for work in the peace sector, as well as a growth of theoretical contributions, though still largely from Western universities. A huge amount of work has been undertaken in US universities, think-tanks, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and foundations, such as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and US Institute of Peace. Elsewhere many prominent universities have enhanced their reputations with peace studies departments. This essentially intellectual development has been complemented by a variety of academic courses which include a practical dimension, such as the European University Center for Peace Studies, and a new programme entitled Applied Conflict Transformation Studies, which is helping to pioneer the use of action research in peacebuilding. Many civil society organisations (CSOs) have also developed their own training programmes, usually a few days in duration, providing initial skills in conflict analysis and various forms of intervention. Typically these courses are highly participative and experience-based.

Theory and Discourse

An increasingly clear, if still contested, theoretical articulation of different strands of peacebuilding and conflict transformation has thus emerged, putting further flesh on ideas. Creative thinkers such as Johan Galtung, Elise Boulding, Adam Curle, Mary Kaldor, Chris Mitchell, John Burton, John Paul Lederach, Diana Francis and Mary Anderson are among those who have helped provide inspiration and leadership, and there are many others.

In addition, adaptations have helped popularise aspects of peacebuilding, and give it credibility, amongst governments and development/humanitarian agencies. Work on civil society's experience of peacebuilding globally (such as through CDA's Reflecting on Peace Practice project) has been invaluable in helping to crystallise theory of peace work.[6] Likewise, the Berghof Research Center has become a respected resource for developing theory from practice through its Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation.[7] And the *Accord: an international review of peace initiatives* series by Conciliation Resources has built up a record of peacemaking experiences around the world.[8]

Analysis, Commentary and Lobbying

A number of think-tanks now provide reliable analysis of international issues from a conflict transformation perspective, informing and challenging governments and civil society alike, and at their best proposing viable alternatives in current conflicts. Among these, the Crisis Group, Oxford Research Group, Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research, Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, International Center for Transitional Justice, International Alert, Chr. Michelsen Institute, Human Security Center and Center for Humanitarian Dialogue have established a strong international presence and are listened to at government and international levels.

At the same time systematic work has taken place to develop the field of peace journalism, which entails the application of insights from peace and conflict studies to the everyday job of reporting and editing news.[9] Such training on critical analysis of war reporting, and on practical guidelines and options, is increasingly offered to journalists in war-affected areas.

6 For more information, see www.cdainc.com. See also Anderson/Olson 2003.
7 For more information, see www.berghof-handbook.net and www.berghof-center.org.
8 For more information, see www.c-r.org.
9 See, for instance, www.peacejournalism.org.

2.2 A Host of Actors – from Grassroots to Government Level

Civil Society as a Source of Innovation and Social Mediation

As a broad range of organisations and groups which are distinct from government and business, and which exist to promote the interests of their members and the issues they seek to address, civil society includes local, national and international organisations, trade unions, academia, faith groups and non-profit media. These can make a significant contribution to the transformation of conflict and building peace by supporting individual development, cultivating positive norms in communities and tackling those policies, systems and structures which exclude minorities and thus give rise to grievances. They are also sometimes in a position to develop contacts with groups proscribed by governments, yet crucial to peacebuilding.[10]

While civil society is not always a force for peace, varied as it inevitably is in the views and positions its members take, the debates and initiatives cultivated by civil society organisations, and the protected space they provide for diversity and creative thinking, often serve as an impulse for it. "[U]ltimately, a widespread, inclusive and vibrant engagement within civic life can be the incubator for the institutions and habits needed to resolve conflict peacefully and generate more responsive and better governance needed to make peace sustainable" (Barnes 2006, 13).

Civil society has organised itself apace in both North and South since the early 1990s. There are now over 1000 organisations working explicitly on peace and conflict issues worldwide,[11] and many more if one includes those aid and development agencies that have recognized peacebuilding as a key principle of their work. In addition, there are many agencies working in at least implicit alliance, both globally and locally, on aspects of what peacebuilding describes as 'positive peace'[12] – human (including gender) rights, democratic governance, disarmament, poverty reduction and development, education and environment.

Local Peacebuilding Work

In many parts of the world people have demonstrated what it is to be truly human by mobilizing at local level to reduce violence and develop new ways of working on conflict. Coming together in small groups, they have worked with the existing 'traditional' structures such as elders and chiefs, or refashioned them, or created their own organisations. This has enabled the emergence and spread of innumerable self-help grassroots initiatives dedicated to preventing violence and building peace. The range of activity has been remarkable, and includes reconciliation, mediation, nonviolent action and promotion of nonviolence, setting up peace zones and campaigning. Often these have been integrated into work for development and environmental protection. Widely acknowledged is the role played by women's organisations with a peace mandate, ranging from global organisations like the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to local groups such as Mothers for the Disappeared and Black Sash.[13]

These groups and organisations, at their best, have proved uniquely able to work on the core issue of identity, finding ways in which people can come into everyday contact with others across geographic and conflict boundaries, resisting the pull to seek safety in one exclusive group, whether of faith, caste, ethnicity or nation. Many of these community-based organisations are

10 See, for instance, http://conflictsforum.org/.

11 1028 were listed in the European Centre for Conflict Prevention's (ECCP) directory of NGOs working in the field of conflict prevention (as of 9 March 2008). See www.gppac.org/page.php?id=1481.

12 The concept was introduced by Johan Galtung in the 1960s to denote the absence of structural violence as well as personal violence (see, for example, Galtung 1996).

13 See, among others, the Key Findings from the 2006 "Women and Governance" Project Evaluation (www.sfcg.org/sfcg/evaluations/womengovkey.pdf) and Burundi Programme Overview (www.sfcg.org/programmes/burundi/pdf/burundi.pdf).

playing (necessarily) unsung 'frontline' roles in highly volatile dangerous confrontations, building the space necessary for political dialogue. While it is rare for grassroots efforts to transform wider systems of conflict and war, it is now evident that these wider systems cannot be transformed without stimulating changes at the community level.

Box 1 – A First Example from Kenya

For example, during the post-election violence in Kenya in early 2008, an informal group consisting of an ambassador, two former generals and two civil society activists established an open forum in Nairobi where individuals could share experience and initiate actions. Critical information about what was happening, rumours that were circulating, and concerns of the people on the ground were channelled to the mediation team, which was then in a position to take action to pre-empt potentially violent activities in the country and prevent the cycle of violence from spiralling completely out of control. As the situation in the country began to stabilise, the group – which by then had formalised itself as Concerned Citizens for Peace – set out to establish similar groups in other parts of Kenya, in order not only to defuse outbreaks of violence but also to uncover and begin to address the underlying conflict issues.

For more information see www.peaceinkenya.net, also Abdi 2008.

Mass Nonviolent Movements for Regime Change

When conditions are right, popular organisations may develop into coalitions which prove able to challenge and unseat governments. During the 1990s and on into this century an increasing number of movements have achieved differing degrees of regime change with minimal or no violence. The Philippines, Nepal, Serbia and Georgia are among them.[14] Many of these were supported and strengthened by the work of local CSOs, but emerged as a result of popular feeling and mobilization by various groups – not infrequently assisted by outside parties (although it must be noted that sometimes the 'outside help' was pursuing its own ends, e.g. Western governments supporting Western-leaning actors, which may or may not have been in the best interest of the local population). The conditions for success tended to depend on the determination and ruthlessness of those in power – thus, widespread efforts in Burma have succeeded in mobilizing popular support but continue to be brutally repressed. There are questions too about the long-term impact of such seismic changes on the power structures of the countries concerned.

International Civil Society Programmes

As peacebuilding CSOs have expanded, they have spawned international programmes. Relatively few are yet of a substantial size and the sector is characterised by medium-sized and small organisations, many of which tend to be dedicated to specific issues or constituencies, such as arms sales, war children, peace education or trauma healing. But others have been running more comprehensive, multilevel programmes over several years in critical areas such as the Great Lakes, Middle East, the Caucasus, South Asia and Latin America.

In the wider dimension of 'positive', or 'greater', peace, some development-focused organisations have taken on aspects of the peace and conflict agenda. They have done so in different degrees, from a proactive stance on violence prevention and peacebuilding, to a minimalist conflict-sensitive approach. Many rights, gender, environmental and community relations organisations, who are key players from a peacebuilding perspective, would share similar long-term goals but may often use a different vocabulary to express them.

14 For a concise list of civil resistance movements, see Selected Cases of Civil Resistance Since 1945, available at www.sant.ox.ac.uk/esc/civil_resistance/map_and_Timeline.pdf.

Government-level Awareness and Influence

Individual governments have made their own efforts: for example, in Kenya the National Peacebuilding Commission brings together the different parties concerned with peace and security, including CSOs. In the UK, DFID undertook a consultation process during 2006-7 to develop a conflict policy which reflects much mainstream peacebuilding discourse. Another example is the recently established Bolivian Alternative for the Americas, a trade and cooperation organisation in Latin America. In Germany, the Federal Government launched the Action Plan on Civilian Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Peace-Building in 2004.[15] The attempts by Scandinavian countries to develop national policies which integrate peacebuilding ideas into national defence and security have been pioneering.[16]

The establishment of the UN Peacebuilding Commission in 2005 is potentially an important step forward in enabling the expertise of global civil society to access global intergovernmental thinking. It follows on from earlier pioneering work by the UN, including the joint Armed Violence Prevention Programme run by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Health Organization (WHO), the Agenda for Peace, many peacekeeping missions, and the drawing up of the Charter itself, as well as the emergence of the body of international legal instruments.

Global Networking

Various international networks have sprung up, linking individuals and organisations on a regional and global basis. Those of a more general orientation include Action for Conflict Transformation, which comprises regional networks in Asia, Africa (Coalition for Peace in Africa) and Latin America, and networks emanating from organisations such as Transcend and the Mennonite Central Committee.[17]

The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) is a worldwide civil society-led network, with fifteen regional sections, aiming to "build a new international consensus on peacebuilding and the prevention of violent conflict" and working on "strengthening civil society networks for peace and security by linking local, national, regional, and global levels of action and effective engagement with governments, the UN system and regional organizations."[18]

Some networks have characteristics more typical of a movement and have proved very effective. Examples include the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the Combating Conflict Diamonds campaign, which seeks to prevent the diamond industry from being used to fund wars.

Religious networks have flourished, too. Attempts by the ecumenical movement to link justice, peace and environmentally sustainable development go back to the 1970s. In the 1980s and 90s the World Council of Churches took this further by introducing the concept of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC), and more recently proclaimed 2001-2010 the Ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence.[19] A network of Catholic Justice and Peace Commissions forms a web of international relationships and often has a strong impact locally.

15 Available at www.ded.de/cipp/ded/lib/all/lob/return_download,ticket,g_u_e_s_t/bid,139/no_mime_type,0/~/fachheft_zfd_eng.pdf.

16 The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency's (SIDA) Policy on Promoting Peace and Security through Development Cooperation states: "Because of today's broader security concept, development co-operation is increasingly seen to have an important role to play in the areas of peace and security, in tandem with military security policy, diplomacy and trade policy" (www.sida.se/sida/jsp/sida.jsp?d=118&a=3585&language=en_US). According to Raymond Johansen, Norway's State Secretary, "our involvement in [peace] processes and our efforts in the UN and development assistance are gradually being fused with security policy – security policy for the 21st century – security policy for the age of globalisation" (Speech at the 2nd Annual Somali Peace Conference, Oslo, 22 May 2006; available at www.norway-un.org/News/News+Archive/20060523_johansen_somalia.htm).

17 See www.action-global.org/action/, www.transcend.org, and http://mcc.org/ respectively.

18 Source: www.gppac.org.

19 For more information, see www.oikoumene.org.

3. What is Holding us Back?

Looking at what has been achieved, and the potential within the field, some will say that there is real hope: with this array of successes, it may be possible to provide a distinctive and practicable alternative paradigm for civil society, politicians and business to set aside the grossly inadequate models now in use. If only there were more resources and more time, the argument goes, this paradigm could get adopted, with more political access and more coherent and sustained implementation of peacebuilding. Maybe then there would be a real impact beyond specific programmes and projects…

But there are other, more questioning voices: what if there are serious flaws in the whole process and vision, assumptions and values? What if there are contradictions at the heart of peacebuilding?

Such voices speak of the potential of the field being curtailed by a number of factors, all of which have to do with two vital aspects of peacebuilding: vision and politics. This section identifies several of these, all of them major obstacles to the achievement of big picture change: value-based divisions, a lack of in-depth understanding of – and commitment to – 'peace writ large', submissive attitudes to power, fragmented relationships between CSOs – including suspicion, mistrust and competition over resources – and a shortage of in-depth practitioner expertise.

3.1 Vision and Values

The current field of peacebuilding has its origins almost as far back as you wish to go. We especially need to acknowledge those who after World War I sowed the seeds of popular involvement in peace work, the fruits of which included the setting up of the League of Nations and the mobilization of a grassroots movement for peace. Since World War II, many thinkers and activists have built on this foundation, in a variety of disciplines, expanding exponentially from the 1970s onwards through a range of writers and academics.

All of them have put great importance on values. Amongst the landmarks, Adam Curle's *True Justice* was one of the seminal books in the development of Peace Studies in the West. In it he was in no doubt that peacemaking involves radical social and personal transformation, requiring deep personal commitment and a high level of self-awareness (Curle 1981).

Linked to these qualities was the importance of empowerment and nonviolence. Peace work required a major shift from conventional thinking, because it concerned building the fundamentals of a healthy society. It involved struggle: resistance to attempts to remove hard won achievements and rights as well as creative promotion of new strategies and institutions. You cannot do peace without, to paraphrase Gandhi, 'being the peace you want to see in the world'. The implications were potentially revolutionary and many were inspired, as the authors have been, by these writings and by the people themselves (Fisher 2004). As a consequence of these beginnings much effort went into developing a deeper, applied understanding of peace, conflict, violence and their underlying dynamics.

Today, one of the central messages of the peacebuilding community is that peace requires more than behavioural change to reduce and eliminate direct violence. Mission statements and public documents talk about negative and positive peace, about addressing structural violence and working for deep cultural change. They speak of the need to ask whose peace one is working for, and to change the perception of conflict as necessarily violent and harmful. Conflict is inevitable, and potentially a force for constructive change as it signals critical fault-lines in a community or society

and thus presents opportunities for addressing them. Development, in so far as it seeks to change a situation of poverty and injustice, is recognized as inherently conflictual. How that conflict is waged is key to the quality of the development process.

Peacebuilders also point to major world issues such as economic injustice, denial of rights and participation, and environmental destruction as underlying drivers of violence. They talk of systems, and how big changes can be initiated by small strategic interventions. This strategic thinking has embedded within it the idea of multilevel, long-term change. In short, much of the conceptual underpinning looks to far-reaching change. However, there is a real question as to how far these values are actualised when it comes to implementation.

3.2 Transformative and Technical Approaches

One sign of practice contrasting with the proclaimed goals and conceptual bases is the reluctance of many organisations to spell out their core values beyond comfortable generalities: what do they understand by the 'bigger picture', and what are the ensuing implications for their work? A glance at a sample of documentation of peace organisations confirms this.[20] Many are happier to develop strategic plans, funding proposals and risk assessments, than to clarify their ethical stance and draw out rigorously, and realistically, what that means, not only in the long term but in the here and now.

Further, the programmes and the expertise often seem to amount in practice to little more than 'patching' – attempts to create the minimal stability that would allow the current world order, driven by market forces and geopolitical power constellations, to step in. Numerous pieces of peacebuilding research hosted in countries of the North address the causes of war far away from their shores without seriously drawing attention to the unprecedented militarising role played by their own countries as preservers of global economic and political order in their own image. The activities of multinational corporations, arguably the biggest players in 'the way the world works', are often entirely excluded from conflict analyses, and where they are included, any work with them tends to be confined to a bit of conflict sensitivity here, a bit more social responsibility there. And where, for most peacebuilders, do climate change or energy consumption figure, either as factors in conflict dynamics or in the way international organisations travel across the world to conduct their meetings?

There is a global reflection going on as to what peace and wellbeing means for the world, and who should be responsible for it. The mantra of 'the more you have the happier you are', which has been the motor for economic and political development, is increasingly seen as not only unsound in terms of human development but also impracticable and self-defeating on a global scale. But the peacebuilding community does not seem to take much part in these debates. Many continue in the default mode of subscribing to the idea of liberal peace (defined by a democratic system, human rights and free market economy),[21] afraid perhaps of venturing into the areas which might label them as utopians, or socialists. Viable alternatives are of course not straightforward, but by refusing to name or explore these issues, or incorporate them into its work, the peacebuilding community runs a real risk of becoming complicit in the maintenance of the current, unsustainable global system.

20 International Alert describes its vision as "a world in which, when people pursue their human rights and seek chances for betterment for themselves and their communities, conflicts that arise are pursued with honesty, with forthrightness and also with wisdom so that they do not erupt into violence" (International Alert Strategic Perspective 2005-2009, available at www.international-alert.org/publications/245.php). Crisis Group spells out its goal as "prevention – to persuade those capable of altering the course of events to act in ways that reduce tensions and meet grievances, rather than letting them fester and explode into violent conflict" (Crisis Group Annual Report 2007, available at www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/miscellaneous_docs/crisis_group_2007_annual_report_web.pdf). The mission of the Carter Center "is guided by a fundamental commitment to human rights and the alleviation of human suffering; it seeks to prevent and resolve conflicts, enhance freedom and democracy, and improve health" (see www.cartercenter.org/about/index.html).

21 As defined, for example, by the ongoing Liberal Peace and the Ethics of Peacebuilding research project at the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (see www.prio.no/page/Project_detail/d/9244/49241.html).

The provisional typology below between vision and practice highlights some of the contrasting approaches used by those working in the peacebuilding field. It seems that, with an acceptable degree of oversimplification, one can situate much peacebuilding practice in one of two camps. On the one hand there is work aimed at fundamental political and social change – 'transformative' peacebuilding. On the other is incremental activity, which aims to make a practical difference in a specific domain, without necessarily challenging the deeper context. This we can term 'technical' peacebuilding. *Table 1* illustrates some of these distinctions.

It is interesting to note that roughly two thirds of the headings can actually be seen as complementary, not contrasting. In these cases, a technical approach can lead on to, or contain within it, a transformative one. For example, under 'priority' it requires only a shift of emphasis to include a deliberate focus on building relationships as an adjunct to addressing the explicit content or task. This framework, then, demonstrates that we do not necessarily need to be more large scale or global in scope in order to be transformative. The seeds of transformation can be sown in the smallest pieces of technical peace work, if only we are creative and courageous.

Still, some key elements in the table are almost inevitably at odds with each other. These point to choices which may have a major impact on the direction the initiative takes: whose agenda is it, who are we accountable to and whose peace are we working for?

It seems to the authors that most organisations in the peacebuilding community are focused on technical peacebuilding. Development organisations which adopt a peacebuilding perspective tend also to follow the same trend, often limiting their options to conflict sensitivity, which in many ways resonates with the technical approach.

Of course such a typology is oversimplified, but there may be some value in looking at the activity in our organisations and our field in this way if we are concerned with impact and big picture change. It might for example direct us to think about the obstacles to bringing transformative elements more to the fore. This would necessarily involve us in thinking about who is doing what in each of these columns. Are we talking of insiders or outsiders? If it is the latter, there is an argument that outsiders will do less harm if they stick to their technical expertise and do not try to transform situations they do not know from the inside out. If this is so, how can they do this without limiting the initiative of insiders?

Other issues arising from such a discussion might include the roles that bureaucracy plays in stunting the personal commitment of people and teams. Then there are implications for the role of professionalisation and what it is deemed to signify in the context of peace. Is the current view of professionalism consistent with transformative practice?

The technical approach on its own is, however valuable in the immediate situation, unlikely to help change the wider system. In fact, as we suggested above, it may well serve to reinforce the unstable and inherently unjust status quo – all in the name of sustainable peace. More broadly, this approach allied to the reluctance to spell out what is meant by positive or 'greater' peace is potentially disastrous. If we have nothing to say, or more importantly to do, about the way the world is now, what are we really doing? Our projects may simply hang in empty space. And such a position is manifestly self-defeating, because the ever more prosperous way of life apparently on offer as a result of the peace we are building is a chimera, never achievable, as the planet creaks under the combined weight of rampant consumerism for some, and the struggle for survival for – many – others.

TABLE 1 – Technical and Transformative Approaches to Peacebuilding

		Technical Approach	Transformative Approach
GOALS	Overall Purpose	To end a specific situation or open conflict: 'negative' peace	In addition, to influence the underlying structure and culture as an integrated element in building something better: 'positive' peace
	Agenda	Set by funders and project holders, with some limited consultation with community	Set and continually reviewed with community, in consultation with funders and project holders
	Objectives	Achievement of project objectives	Promoting shared vision of/for community, of which project/programme work is part
	Priority	Content of programme	Solidarity; relationships as well as content
STRATEGY	Focus	A specific piece of work	Building elements of wider change into a specific piece of work
	Evaluation	Focus on efficiency, project successes	Efficiency plus bigger picture impact
	Learning	Downplaying failures	Taking failures as starting points; inclusion of self-reflection and action learning
	Issues	Solve present issue	Expand, change, transcend contested issues
	Theory of change	Implicit: change in immediate situation will ripple out	Explicit: developed in relation to analysis and systems thinking
	Scope	One level, one sector	Multilevel, local-global, alliances across sectors
	Time horizon	Duration of project (plus extension)	Medium to long term
VALUES	Accountability	Primarily, in practice, to funders	Primarily to identified partners/community
	Whose peace?	Power relations are unchangeable: need to accommodate	Peace is for whole community, especially the weakest: option to work to change power relations if better future requires it
	Self image	A professional doing a good job	Agent of change, modelling struggle and transformation
ANALYSIS	Context	Project and work-focused, done by project staff	Adds ongoing conflict analysis and future scenario planning, all undertaken with wider community
	Actors	Good working relationship	In addition, works for change of perspective, goals, heart, will, inclusive sense of identity
	View of violence	Prevent and defuse it; ambivalent about its use	Race, gender and class dimensions are integral part of violence; transforming the energy into positive outcomes; active promotion of nonviolent approaches
	View of conflict	A problem in the way of achieving goals	Inevitable, an opportunity for development and change; consider options to intensify

3.3 Attitudes to Power: Deference deters Transformation

There are local grassroots organisations and movements in this field which have no problem with addressing vested interests and structures. Resistance to violence and injustice is often the prime reason they came into being. Struggle and a degree of hardship are part of their life; nonviolent direct action and imprisonment are not unusual.

When they team up with INGOs, they often expect them to take an equally robust attitude to their own governments and other vested interests located in their countries of origin. In this they get frequently disappointed. INGOs behave altogether differently – in what they themselves see as a professional manner. Research, dissemination of information, advocacy and argument are their tools of trade. Letters, meetings and reports are used to press a case. If and when this is refused – as it often is – little more can be done. Resistance and nonviolent action are only used by small, relatively fringe organisations. Partnerships between CSOs engaged in civil disobedience and Northern-based INGOs seem relatively rare.[22]

This disparity between the apparent level of commitment between INGOs and local CSOs is often justified by suggesting that CSOs are 'on the frontline', while INGOs are backing them up. Such a position is hardly justifiable in a world where peacebuilders everywhere are adopting a systemic approach to their analysis of violence. In a globalised world, all of us are on the frontline of major world issues. It may be more obvious if the frontline happens to be a firing line as well, but political decisions which dictate the exclusion of parties from talks, or the tariffs on imported goods, are made on the frontline too, and in the name of the citizens of those countries.

So why do INGOs not take on their governments, or risk their livelihoods, in support of the causes espoused by their local partners? One reason may be that it is simply, and naturally, not sufficiently a matter of life and death to them. Another may be down to what processes guide the internal operation of INGOs and to who makes decisions on these matters. In some agencies there is disagreement on the message for public consumption on the home patch between programme departments, which tend to favour confrontation and protest, and policy departments, which take a 'softer' stance.

A further reason may be the increasing interchangeability and inter-relationship of government and INGO staff in some countries. In Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban, a quarter of the cabinet were from civil society.[23] At least one has gone on to become an ambassador. In many other countries civil society provides a natural rung on the ladder into politics. In the UK, Oxfam workers have been seconded to DFID and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, or moved over into government. The former head of policy at Oxfam is to become ambassador to Cuba. Is this creative thinking on the part of government, or a sell out from the agency side?

Above all, perhaps, there is the issue of power. With few exceptions, INGOs defer as a matter of course to their governments: they normally do not oppose them, especially in public, or risk disagreements over anything significant. After all, these governments are supposed to be democratic. Even when the invasion of Iraq loomed in 2003, and huge numbers of UK citizens marched against it in the streets, UK-based INGOs did not come together and take a public position against it. They have not been at the forefront of any subsequent moves to hold the political leaders publicly responsible.

These contrasting roles in relation to government and other powerful groups in their own societies are intriguing, and arguably a source of major weakness, especially when seen within the concept of 'equal partnership' so often espoused. Indeed it raises questions about the nature of

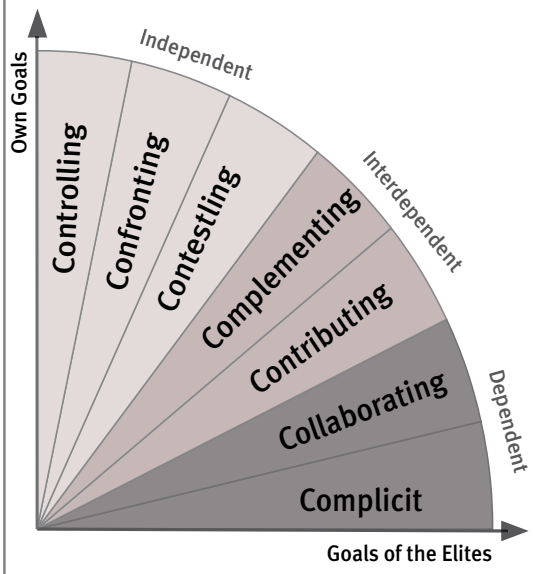
22 Exceptions that come to mind are cases when Northern-based INGOs have covertly supported resistance, and protected partners when their lives were at risk. For example, throughout the appalling violence in Central America in the 1980s, Oxfam kept no paper documentation that could be dangerous if it fell into the wrong hands. Reports were made orally to central committee meetings. Only when change came was the whole experience written up (Bridget Walker, comments on the draft of this paper, December 2007).

23 From private conversations with cabinet members, 2003.

partnership itself, which is so often taken for granted and yet frequently serves merely as a veneer on highly asymmetrical relationships, whether between international and local civil society, or between governments and INGOs. It might help in part to explain the weakness of joined-up (grassroots to top) peacebuilding work, and the tensions evident in many North-South partnerships.

The diagram below[24] identifies a range of relationships which civil society can have with the controlling power elites in their societies. These reflect the salience of the goals of each party in the context of their perceived relative power.

DIAGRAM 1 – Civil Society Relations with Power Elites: A Spectrum of Options



Complicit: when civil society is a silent party to decisions made by government, and is seen to be such by outsiders. Unless, that is, it makes strenuous efforts to disassociate itself.

Collaborating: when civil society implements political or economic policies and programmes, often through legally binding contracts, in which the funding is entirely provided by government or business.

Contributing: when civil society participates in policy dialogues and recommendations for appropriate responses to situations and issues.

Complementing (mid-point in spectrum): when civil society works in parallel as separate entities within the same system or situation, neither supporting nor opposing.

Contesting: when civil society challenges government actions, priorities and behaviour, probably in private, perhaps by lobbying alternative models and processes.

Confronting: when civil society challenges government openly and assertively on policy and behaviour, using evidence of the consequences of current policies (e.g. demonstrations, public campaigns).

Controlling: when civil society mobilizes and asserts its power to the maximum to radically change both policy and practice. This can in its ultimate form include attempts to change governments and regimes.

24 Adapted and developed from Barnes 2005. The original version of this framework was developed by participants in a workshop in 2003, in which Andy Carl (Conciliation Resources) and Simon Fisher took active roles.

It can be helpful to use this framework to map civil society relationships with either or both government and business in a particular situation. These will of course depend on factors such as the nature and policy of the government in question and the values and vision of civil society actors. Where there is a substantial degree of independence and a wide spread of values, one could expect to see a significant number of relationships which fall into all categories, except perhaps the last: controlling. In relation to the different roles and relationships of local and international organisations, we suggest that while both overlap in the interdependent category, peacebuilding and related CSOs tend to fall in the independent/interdependent categories vis-à-vis their governments, while INGOs largely tend to be dependent.

3.4 The Role of Funding

The unnamed 'elephant in the room' so far has been funding. This issue arguably affects INGOs differently, but remains powerful in determining policy and deterring transformative approaches. Most INGOs working specifically in the peacebuilding sector do not generate their own financial resources to any significant extent. When one looks at the huge increase in their size and activity since the early 1990s, it comes as no surprise that this has been engineered largely through funding made available by Western governments, who have come to see the success of this sector as critical to their own foreign policy objectives. INGOs and CSOs alike may have their own views about cause and effect, but when faced with large amounts of money to undertake work which implies acceptance of the current structures of a conflict (such as in the Middle East at the moment, where UK government policy explicitly excludes working with some of the key players in the conflict, labelled as terrorists[25]) the temptation is too high for many. Further, the UK and EU guidelines currently being developed for preventing terrorist abuse of CSOs are likely to further undermine this work by aligning it with the political agendas of the 'war on terrorism', creating excessive bureaucracy and reducing the scope of programmes and partnerships (Hearson 2008).

In this situation of largely monopoly funding, accountability is increasingly directed to the funder, despite the rhetoric, not to those whom peacebuilders purport to support in their struggle. This in turn induces a culture of caution: only successes are reported in any detail, though failures are inevitably frequent and are often the most fertile arena for learning.

The dependence on the ubiquitous logframe also means that implementers are often unable to respond to unfolding events, as they did not predict them at the outset. Certainly, logframe analysis at its best can enable planners and activists to sketch out a framework in which everything clearly hangs together. However, the way it is often used in relation to funding leads to compartmentalisation of precisely those factors that in the peace field need to be observed in interaction with one another. Thus a useful planning tool gets turned into a mechanism whereby each issue is treated separately, and risks losing its meaning in the evolving picture of a conflict.

With the rise of both government and private spending on peacebuilding and related issues such as rights and development, civil society's relationship with the elites has tended to fall progressively into the dependent category. This is hardly surprising, perhaps, but it does highlight the trade-off between resourcing and the realisation of the full spread of peacebuilding vision and values. If the outcome is that truly transformative approaches by INGOs are rare, at least partially because governments in particular are unlikely to favour deep-seated change, then the moral cost of funding to the peacebuilding field as a whole is high indeed. At the same time, for many smaller peacebuilding CSOs with less access to a range of income sources, civil society-based peace work

25 The list of proscribed terrorist groups currently includes 44 organisations (14 of which are in Northern Ireland). It can be accessed at http://security.homeoffice.gov.uk/legislation/current-legislation/terrorism-act-2000/proscribed-terrorist-groups.

often becomes dominated or skewed by their relations with funders, and therefore risks being undermined both in reality and in public perception.[26]

3.5 Jealous Autonomy: Organisational Rivalry Restricts Joined-up Strategies

An additional main factor which seems to be holding the peacebuilding community back from achieving its potential is a lack of cooperation, both horizontally and vertically. Peacebuilders teach about working together and the virtues of cooperative problem-solving in the delivery of their programmes, but the reality is often markedly different. While the key issues of violence and war, economic injustice and poverty, denial of rights/participation and environmental degradation are analytically distinct, the way they manifest themselves in the world is interconnected. They are not separate problems, each requiring their own pressure groups and discrete interventions; on the contrary, they are inextricably intertwined. Major areas of intractable violence all over the world are self-evidently a mix of these factors, be that Sudan (Darfur), Israel/Palestine, Burma, Colombia or others. If environmental or peace issues are pursued in isolation from the others, the action risks being at best ineffective, and at worst exacerbating the entire situation. Yet much of the world, and civil society, persists in seeing and treating each as distinct.

That is not to say there are no significant joint efforts (Atwood 2006). Of course there are, but they are almost always around a specific piece of work, and usually rooted in joint funding of some kind – which, as discussed above, often substantially limits the scope of cooperation. Coalitions of INGOs across these issues which are seriously intent on developing and implementing common strategies are still a rarity. In-depth cooperation has been missing both globally and in-country.

On a country level, one can find a plethora of cases where local and international peacebuilding organisations and governments are working on a specific approach to a 'hot' conflict but do not check who else is active, let alone coordinate their activities. This risks an overlap, which can become damaging and be used by the protagonists to their advantage. (For example, in the experience of one of the authors, at one point in the Northern Uganda peace negotiations there were at least eight institutional players engaged in mediation, most of whom had no knowledge of the others.) In these cases the interest or intention to network with other interveners may often be there, but is simply not followed through due to pressure of events and perhaps organisational agendas.

Even in cases where INGOs are based in the same home country or region with easy access to each other, they often do not find the time to explore learning and synergies between them on an ongoing basis. This is changing in some areas as work on influencing government policy develops, but the culture of secrecy which exists about most activities where there are problems severely limits the extent of the learning.

A similar absence of cooperation can often be observed in regions where conflict is endemic and of low intensity, when both local and international organisations with different areas of expertise do not take the time to check out who is doing what and how their respective activities might reinforce each other to reduce the drivers of violence. There is a particular gap between peace and environmental groups, neither of whom seem as yet to fully realise how their respective work is mutually dependent.

This narrow field of vision is often combined with a 'programme' view of peace, which assumes a connection between the success of a particular programme and the advancement of a bigger vision for peace and wellbeing in the area, without further assessment. Many organisations also lack an explicit theory of change – an understanding of the way in which their work contributes to change in the broader context. When they do have this, it is still rarer that the vision comes from the people of the area.

26 An account of some associated dilemmas can be found in Vukosavljevic 2007.

Looking at many peacebuilding organisations' self-descriptions, it is often difficult to see why and how their programmes emerged and were prioritized, how various activities were linked or coordinated, what their content was, what links and alliances have been made with other organisations, and ultimately, what difference they made. Without more joined-up work, and joint vision, there is a risk that peacebuilding will not be able to move beyond isolated programmes, successful or not in their own terms, and thus ultimately will not affect the overall situation.

3.6 Depth of Expertise: Lack of Imaginative Investment in a Competent Cadre

A final factor holding back the development of the peacebuilding field is, we believe, a critical shortage (compared for example to the development field) of experienced people, both inside a conflict and outside it, with the level of skills necessary to deal creatively and successfully with complex conflict issues. The lack of a sufficient number of such people can often, in our experience, militate against genuinely transformative work being carried through. There are of course leaders who emerge within every crisis with courage and commitment. They, however, often lack the necessary support, and get bypassed after the initial stages.

This may seem an odd statement given that over the past 20 years there has been a huge expansion of both NGO-based training programmes and academic courses in peace studies and related subjects. NGOs offer a plethora of opportunities for basic training in conflict skills, from 2-3 days to several weeks in duration. The best offer a mix of experience-based, practical methods which draw on the state-of-the-art of current adult education practice to introduce people to basic elements of peacebuilding and give them a chance to contribute their own expertise as they learn from others.

However, if we look at the needs of those working on intractable conflicts in many parts of the world, at all levels, insiders and outsiders, it is clear that peacebuilders and change-makers need a range of skills and knowledge which are not met through the current opportunities for training and support. Most of these courses are inevitably superficial, with little follow-through or tangible impact. Often they take their place alongside other introductory courses fitted into a heavy schedule, without being integrated into the strategies and plans of their organisations' work.

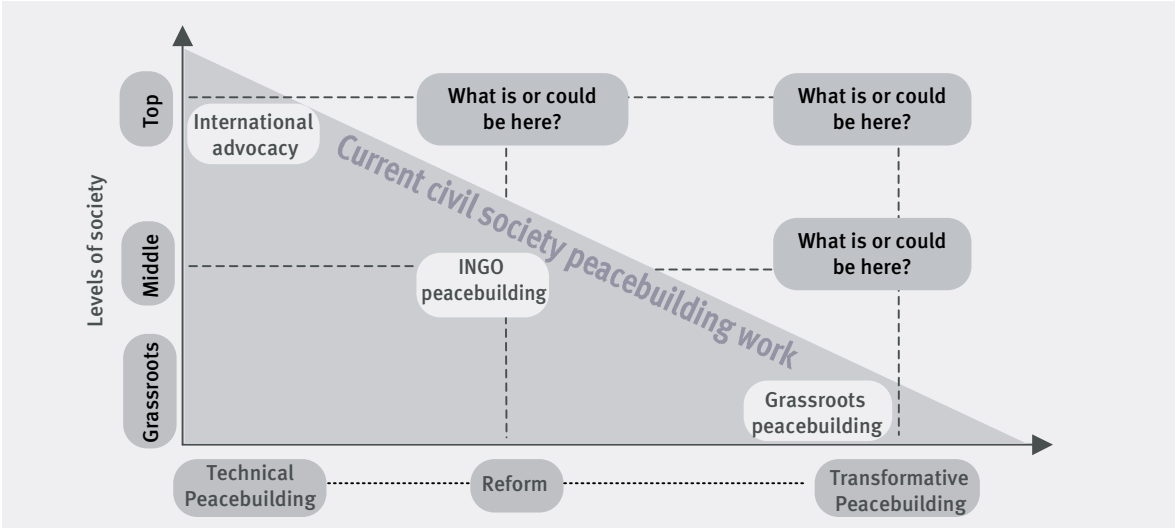
But when people want to develop their skills beyond this basic level to greater specialisation and sophistication, the options shrink. Training for trainers is sometimes seen to fulfil this need, but it rarely goes beyond the same introductory level. The only route for most is through university courses in peace studies, conflict resolution and related subjects. These are of course invaluable for many people who are looking for deeper knowledge and awareness of aspects of the peace and conflict field. They are an important element in the growth of the field as a whole, but are not necessarily suited for change agents, for whom the 'how' is as crucial as the 'what'.

The exploration of change, and the process of bringing that about, is rarely undertaken in university courses, and when it is, it tends to be from an abstract point of view, largely unconnected to students' life and work. This often has unfortunate effects for activist peacebuilders. Having accepted the path of taking a course in higher education (because it was the only option available, and perhaps having been given a scholarship), they find that their aspirations are not responded to and sometimes undermined. Not infrequently, having come back from a distant university course, they find themselves unable to re-establish the relationships and trust they once enjoyed, and end up switching to research or bureaucratic work. This process not only deprives their communities of leadership, but also reinforces the notion that the only valid researchers are those based in universities, usually far from the conflict they are writing or theorising about. Thus the pioneering work of hands-on peace workers – who, in seeking more effective ways to address violence in all its aspects, inevitably undertake research too – is for the most part lost to the field.

3.7 Mind the Gap?

The sum of the factors described above inevitably curtails real change, both in policy and in practice. Where our values and analysis suggest the need for transformative action, we often fall back on technical approaches. The result is a lack of transformative work – work that would reach below the surface issues and seek to affect the underlying dynamics which brought about the manifestations of violence in the first place – at crucial levels, including that of political decision-making. The diagram below indicates where the technical approaches tend to predominate, and where transformative work seems most lacking.

DIAGRAM 2 – Civil Society and Transformative Peacebuilding: Gaps and Options



When INGOs aspire to extend their work 'upwards' in a society, the tendency is to become less radical, more conventional, due perhaps to a natural deference or the assumption that such a tactic is necessary in order to be heard. If we accept that for peace to be sustainable we need to incorporate some radical changes in the current world order into our work and vision, then we have to address the apparent lack of significant interventions, especially at middle and higher levels, in favour of far-reaching change. In particular, this lack may mean that, as peacebuilders work to establish different policies at higher political level, they will not be able to adequately resource their adoption.

In summary, a discomforting conclusion looms: INGOs seem to be palpably weak and ineffective as peacebuilders, and poor partners for their local colleagues who face the heat of often violent and protracted oppression and conflict. In the face of the unjust world order, their banners of 'sustainable peace' may amount to little more than a delusion. Those 'on the frontline' might even consider them fraudulent.

Why should this be so, when at the same time the peacebuilding community is full of well-motivated, committed people? One possibility is that many do see these contradictions but do not act on them, for pragmatic reasons.

4. What Can We Do? An Agenda for Transformative Peacebuilding

There is a long way to go to realise the full potential of the field, from grassroots to high politics. There are tantalising signs of what could be, if peacebuilders can mobilize imagination and their own power, and reach out to their natural allies. The shifts that civil society needs to make will almost certainly require more research, linked to clearer articulation of the emerging alternative(s), skilful engagement with the wider public, and determined lobbying, especially perhaps in political and business circles. The following areas, we suggest, need to be addressed simultaneously.

4.1 Accountability

Looking closely at who INGOs are accountable to in reality, it is often much more to funders and governments than to the people they work with and the communities they serve. Project proposals are, due to understandable practical constraints, often made with minimal consultation between local CSOs and INGOs; instead, a wealth of discussion between an INGO and a funding body, governmental or private, culminates in a logframe. This does not sit easily alongside a commitment to positive peace, justice and wellbeing of people and their communities.

How would practice change if these were to become the unambiguous central priorities? What would it look like if INGOs became more accountable to their partners than to their donors? What would it look like, for example, if INGOs encouraged local partners to set and monitor their own change agendas, and accompanied them as needed?

In addition, peacebuilders could also see themselves as being more accountable across time:

- *connecting to the past* – to those who have struggled for peace and justice, often paying with their lives, as well as those who laid the intellectual and practical basis for the field and the very concept of peace;
- *connecting to the future* – to those who will build on what will have been achieved, hopefully with increasing success.

4.2 Global Issues

Peace, as we have seen, cannot be separated from economic justice, or environmental issues, or human rights, including the right to participate in public affairs. In order to have a transformative, not simply technical impact on policies, a new kind of politics needs to evolve at all levels, one which is built on the values of respect, care and cooperation (Francis 2007), and which challenges the current power disparities that distort and divide societies, including those associated with wealth, gender and race. Economic analysis will need to play a much larger role in conflict analysis. If so much of the way the world works is driven by the global market and the corporations that dominate it, these must clearly feature more in our understanding of why things are as they are, and in our theories of change. This may in turn necessitate an increasing willingness to challenge the behaviour of market capitalism, well beyond corporate social responsibility, where this bears down on the communities by whom, and for whom, the struggle for peace is being carried out. It may mean being more willing to build alliances with those who are creating social and political alternatives, whether through popular movements or more local initiatives and structures.

At national and international levels this will certainly mean that INGOs will have to start serious conversations with others working on different issues. Exploratory steps on linkages between conflict on the one hand, and climate change or business practice on the other, have recently been

made by organisations like International Alert and Crisis Group.[27] Yet these are only initial steps. In building upon them, peacebuilding organisations will inevitably need to rethink and restate what they mean by positive/greater/sustainable peace. And they will need to start taking their potential for shaping the future more seriously.

The UK government's geo-strategic forecasters recently produced a review of strategic trends in the next 30 years, which depicted the global future as fraught with dangers and risks, arising from issues such as population and resources, identity and interest, governance and order, knowledge and innovation.[28] The recommended responses are largely along the lines of 'getting there first': if only 'we' keep ahead of the game, 'we' will stay safe. But doing so will inevitably involve restricting the rights of citizens, in the interests of national security, and risks further exacerbating those same dangers it tries to address.

The absence of imaginative, future-oriented policy-making, found in many places at governmental levels, is ultimately self-defeating. The challenge is out there now. The crucial question is: How can peacebuilders resist pessimism about the future and respond to the need for a better way to manage difference and disagreement that is evident both in politics and elsewhere? For example, could there be a cooperative effort to research and publish a formal response to the above-mentioned review?

4.3 Empowerment

The need for local empowerment as the centrepiece of analysis and practical work has been long recognized in the development field. Peacebuilding organisations have adopted the same rhetoric, but often fail to honour this at local level. In a world characterised by huge power disparities, changing power relations needs to move to the heart of peace work, at the local as well as global level, encompassing both political and economic structures. Yet it is not possible to be serious about such change and stay out of politics.

Perhaps this points to a need to develop new and varied forms of power, more cooperative and persuasive, at the same time highly political and hard-nosed, which would be based on an integrated analysis of global issues. Could this mean a greater willingness to support civil resistance movements – whose record of mobilizing political change is much stronger than that of CSOs? Could it mean a renewed interest in, and commitment to, active nonviolence? There are huge possibilities for expanding this dimension of peacebuilding, including working intensively alongside disaffected groups and those showing civil courage by resisting oppression, defending the rights of nonviolent resisters, and promoting fair and accurate media coverage of nonviolent initiatives and movements. More broadly there is great potential for developing a stronger discourse of nonviolent struggle and to promote this through educational and wider information programmes.[29]

It is as well to remember that civil society is already far from powerless in the face of its own governments. How would, for example, the UK and US government have responded to a unanimous and well-publicised position taken by peace, relief and development organisations before the Iraq invasion in 2003 that they would boycott all 'post-conflict' work in that country on the grounds that the invasion was illegal? Many democratic governments have come to need civil society to deliver key aspects of their domestic and foreign policies. Other, more authoritarian regimes can be vulnerable to assertive civil society movements and organisations, who have access to external media and may be in a position to challenge the regime itself. There is no *a priori* reason why peacebuilders should adopt the apparently cooptive, 'me-too' attitude to government so

27 For more information, see www.crisisgroup.org, www.international-alert.org and www.voluntaryprinciples.org.
28 The DCDC Global Strategic Trends Programme 2007-2036 is available at www.dcdc-strategictrends.org.uk/.
29 Similar ideas are developed in Merriman/DuVall 2007 and Francis 2002.

uncontroversially prevalent at the moment. In this context, it could be beneficial if peacebuilders came together to look at their relations with government, to explore ways of maximising their collective power and thus developing more symmetrical relationships with the state and other places of influence. In so doing they might also want to consider:

- to what extent government funding shapes programming and the organisations that deliver them;
- what work they want to do which is not acceptable or fundable by government or business;
- how it might be possible to become less dependent on government funding;
- what the advantages and pitfalls are of alternative models of resourcing, including corporate funding.

4.4 Improving Networks and Linkages

Much peacebuilding work, whether local, national or international, consists of separate projects by independent organisations. There is a wealth of successful projects at the local level. However, all too often they remain unconnected to the wider context at the regional and national levels, upon which local peace ultimately depends.

There is a range of existing networks and coalitions, of varying quality and effectiveness. How can these be reinvigorated in order to connect work for change at different levels and across the different issues and locations? For genuine peacebuilding to take place, we need to challenge the idea that each organisation is an island seeking its own independent wellbeing and begin to share information and resources systematically. Building such alliances requires substantial time, effort, determination and trust, but pays off by creating a new source of legitimacy and power. Process – policies, techniques and methods – may often provide the most acceptable entry point to other constituencies.

Networks can also be subversive, in the best sense. There is a significant number of people in government and business institutions who would like to see their organisations adopt a more creative, values-based approach to peace and conflict and who are in a position to influence policies on these issues if they have the arguments and relevant knowledge to hand. They can be seen as ‘insiders’: people who are looking for alternatives, can see the advantages of systematic, well-resourced peacebuilding work and recognize the failures of the dominant control-oriented, militarised paradigm. They are interested to learn how to do things differently, but do not want to buy into a significantly different values system. Nor could they while retaining their jobs. Is this a possible space where informal approaches, either explicit in intent or perhaps based initially on common identities or interests, can lead towards cross-fertilisation of ideas and a gradual change in attitudes and practice? Would this perhaps call for a single forum, real or virtual, where the different actors and viewpoints in the field can share experience and seek synthesis?

4.5 Delivering Change

Evaluation and needs assessment have been areas of major progress in recent years. There is now a greater tendency to focus on delivering ‘outcomes’ of a particular project, and to gain more reliable knowledge on whether they are achieved. But, with the focus on projects, the bigger picture often remains unaffected. Reporting, honest or not, still largely overlooks the effect on the wider context. There is a need to broaden horizons, and to value process as well as significant outcomes. Peacebuilding is not only about programmes that have impact in their own terms, but also about delivering real transformative change. It is about making sure that programmes connect with,

and affect the 'peace writ large'. In doing so, they need to be influencing policies of others, local, national or international, political or economic. What real difference is made? How does one know? What are our criteria of change? Who cares?

Sometimes the impact sought will be not so much about new initiatives as about building resilience and resistance, by not allowing political expediency to interfere in a particular situation, by challenging short-term solutions that have negative long-term implications or by defending the gains won in previous years. It is also important to keep in mind that the seeds of transformation can be present in any single piece of work, as *Table 1* above demonstrated.

Box 2 – A Second Example from Kenya

The now well-publicised initiative in the Northern Kenyan district of Wajir during the 1990s to end inter-clan fighting was in its origin just one piece of work, comprising many technical aspects to ensure that the objective of ending violence was achieved. But it had transformative elements which ensured that its impact went further, both geographically and in time. These elements included the fact that the initiative was led by women, who themselves were members of wider networks; it aimed to include, influence and empower every person who encountered it, including government figures and intelligence services; it built a cumulative, multilevel infrastructure of peace embodied in the Wajir Peace and Development Committee (WPDC); and, crucially perhaps, in the initial stages it refused external funding and raised the necessary resources from those involved and from local sympathisers and businesses.

For a detailed description of WPDC's work see, for example, Jenner/Abdi 2000.

Thus, delivering change is often less about scale than about a careful integration of creatively subversive elements into everyday activity. It involves joined-up thinking and conscious linking, both within peacebuilding work and with other sectors, at different levels. It means thinking and planning long-term, and thus moving beyond the project mentality.

4.6 Action Learning

It is not surprising that peace work produces many unintended outcomes, from positive ones to outright failures. We do not live in a world of linear causes and consequences, yet we often plan as if we did. A systems framework would offer more useful insights into how change happens, but it also requires a high degree of reflexive learning and adaptability, at personal and institutional levels. This calls for a willingness to learn from the work of peacebuilding and other sectors, and bring those insights back into practice. For most organisations this will mean a change of culture towards a more proactive and open sharing of successes and failures, and a greater willingness to plan future work with others. In addition, there is a need to invest in specially designed education for peacebuilders and change-makers, which would put action learning at its heart. An instructive example in the development field is the participatory rural appraisal (PRA) methodology and its many offshoots. In the peacebuilding field, one such initiative uses action research methodology as the cornerstone for Applied Conflict Transformation Studies (ACTS), a 2-year graduate degree for practitioners, currently offered in Asia and the Balkans.[30] How might peacebuilding organisations innovate, still more vigorously, with the conscious aim of taking this constituency to a new level?

30 For more information, see www.globalacts.org.

5. Conclusion and Outlook: Generating Change

Peacebuilding insights and frameworks continue to be selectively appreciated yet largely ignored in political decision-making, and investment by governments in generating and implementing nonviolent solutions remains limited. A practical step towards more effective engagement could be to work on an integrated policy platform that would seek to articulate policies founded on cooperation, not domination (Eisler 1990; Francis 2004). Such a move could initially bring together a range of civil society organisations, with the aim of sharing and deepening an analysis that recognizes the interconnectedness of the four domains of peace, economic justice, respect for the environment and human rights/political participation.

Such a process could begin in any country and should commit to:

- researching the interconnections of these issues at different levels;
- incorporating the resulting insights into the work and planning of participating organisations;
- formulating political policies with attention to all four areas;
- lobbying for the adoption of these policies, within government where possible, and at the same time looking for new ways to advance them outside and beyond government, including the UN, global civil society and platforms such as the World Social Forum;
- helping to publicise the understanding behind this approach as widely as possible.

If we are to make bigger waves, we need to clarify our theories of how political change happens. This is a topic now frequently covered in peacebuilding programmes, but is less often practically addressed at strategic level, especially perhaps by INGOs. Whatever conclusions we reach, it will be vital to work from grassroots up as well as at middle and top levels. One of the possibilities is to initiate a time-limited process to synthesize and articulate, more effectively than has been done to date, the core experience of practitioners in bringing about joined-up, multilevel change. The outcomes might take a range of forms: a resource for lobbying and campaigning for coherent policy alternatives at governmental and intergovernmental levels; a video or pocket book aimed at the wider public: short, sharp, with clear policy-making options backed up by evidence and rationale. A principal aim could be to show how adopting these approaches and principles would make life easier for those in decision-making and influencing positions, both domestically and in foreign policy – if such a distinction can be maintained any longer.

Such a process would impel peacebuilders to come together and identify the distinctive insights and alternatives they can realistically provide and advocate for from their knowledge and experience on various areas of policy including, for example, counter-terrorism, climate and the environment, community relations and education. There would be distinctive opportunities and entry points in different countries.

Yet this is not enough. The UN offers opportunities for engagement, especially perhaps through the Peacebuilding Commission where, so far, local civil society has had limited opportunities to influence policy. Another current process is The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, signed in June 2006 and by now endorsed by more than 70 states. It commits its signatories to supporting "initiatives to measure the human, social and economic costs of armed violence, to assess risks and vulnerabilities, to evaluate the effectiveness of armed violence reduction programmes, and to disseminate knowledge of best practices."[31] There is huge scope for

31 Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, June 2006, 2. Available at www.genevadeclaration.org/pdfs/Geneva_Declaration_English.pdf.

the engagement of civil society in turning such laudable sentiments into action, though governments are not universally keen. The Quaker UN Office in Geneva is providing the formal link for civil society to engage with the implementation of the declaration. A similar focal role could be played by regional and global networks with regard to other policy initiatives.

Much of this may sound random, but policy change is more an art than a science. Insiders often say it is a chancy process, in which critical moments of genuine receptivity and openness to change come unpredictably, but when they do, policy-makers will look seriously at whatever is on offer which comes from a credible source and provides answers to their predicament. Milton Friedman, the economics guru whose disciples have wrought far-reaching and highly contentious change in many societies, wrote: "Only a crisis – actual or perceived – produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around. That, I believe, is our basic function: to develop alternatives to existing policies, and to keep them alive and available until the politically impossible becomes politically inevitable."[32]

However, political will must also be mobilized. What is known about political influence suggests that the role of experts in the field who have ample information, experience and good argument at their fingertips is vital, but far from enough. There is also a need for at least two other kinds of inputs, rather as Malcolm Gladwell (2002) suggests: (1) We need *people who know people* – networkers who can spread the word to 'insiders' and those with influence through their range of contacts in the political world; and (2) we need *charismatic people who know how to persuade* – champions who can promote these ideas and values so that they become an accepted currency.

With networkers, champions and practitioners coming together in a concerted manner across global civil society, this could bring the main elements essential for generating political will for a different approach and for developing new structures and processes where current forms of governance resist or fall short. The relationship between civil society and state-level policy-makers is, and should be, inherently a difficult one. But it will at least become less characterised by dependency as and when policy-makers begin to recognize that there is useful, applicable, cost-saving knowledge coming from the community of peacebuilders. Power, in this case, would come from more research and better promotion of insights backed by international cooperation and solidarity.

Overall then, those concerned about peacebuilding will need to stop (yes, stop) and think together about how what they do contributes to the world they want to see. Such a process will need to be creative in itself and require people involved to think outside the box. It will involve working both at governmental levels, to resist or develop policy, and within society, to create alternatives and build movements.

The peacebuilding community, and those who see themselves as part of it, cannot shirk the challenge. In turning away from its core transformative values and rejecting a wholehearted engagement with power and politics, it has found the resources necessary to develop institutionally, and gained a measure of official acceptance, but, perhaps, lost much of the raison d'être which brought it into existence. If the future of peacebuilding is to provide technical expertise to help powerful states and corporations assert their dominance over the global system more amicably and cheaply, in the short term this is an easier choice to make. But in the long run it will not stand up to scrutiny, as the resources of the world become ever more contested, and rapid deterioration of the environment alters hopes and assumptions about a sustainable future for all.

32 Quoted in Klein 2007, 6.

6. References

Abdi, Dekha Ibrahim 2008. Working for Peace in Conflict Systems in Kenya: Addressing the Post-Election Crisis 2008, in: Daniela Körppen, Beatrix Schmelzle and Oliver Wils (eds.). *A Systemic Approach to Conflict Transformation. Exploring Strengths and Limitations.* (Berghof Handbook Dialogue No. 6.) Berlin: Berghof Research Center, 71-81. Available online at www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/dialogue6_dekha_comm.pdf.

Anderson, Mary B. and Lara Olson 2003. *Confronting War. Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners.* Cambridge: Collaborative for Development Action (CDA). Available at www.cdainc.com/cdawww/pdf/book/confrontingwar_Pdf1.pdf.

Atwood, David 2006. NGOs and Multilateral Disarmament Diplomacy: Limits and Possibilities, in: John Borrie and Vanessa Martin Randin (eds.). *Thinking Outside the Box in Multilateral Disarmament and Arms Control Negotiations*. UNIDIR, 33-54. Available at www.unidir.org/pdf/articles/pdf-art2580.pdf.

Barnes, Catherine 2007. *Bridging the Gap – Improving UK Support for Peace Processes.* Conciliation Resources, June 2007. Available at www.c-r.org/our-work/practice-policy/CR_Bridging_the_Gap_Working_Paper.pdf.

Barnes, Catherine 2006. *Agents for Change: Civil Society Roles in Preventing War & Building Peace.* GPPAC Issue Paper 2, September 2006. Available at www.gppac.net/documents/GPPAC/Research/Rapport2_2.pdf.

Barnes, Catherine 2005. Weaving the Web: Civil Society Roles in Working with Conflict and Building Peace, in: Paul van Tongeren et al. (eds.). *People Building Peace II: Successful Stories of Civil Society*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 7-24.

Curle, Adam 1981. *True Justice: Quaker Peacemakers and Peace Making* (Swarthmore Lecture). London: Quaker Books.

Eisler, Riane 1990. *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future.* London: Unwin Paperbacks.

Fisher, Simon 2004. *Spirited Living: Waging Conflict, Building Peace* (Swarthmore Lecture). London: Quaker Books.

Francis, Diana 2007. "A project to transform policy, starting in the UK", in: CCTS Review 35, November 2007, 5-8. Available at www.c-r.org/ccts/ccts35/review35.pdf.

Francis, Diana 2004. *Rethinking War and Peace.* London: Pluto Press.

Francis, Diana 2002. *People, Peace and Power: Conflict Transformation in Action.* London: Pluto Press.

Galtung, Johan 1996. *Peace by Peaceful Means.* London: Sage.

Gladwell, Malcolm 2002. *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference.* London: Abacus.

Harbom, Lotta and Peter Wallensteen 2007. Armed Conflicts 1989-2006, in: *Journal of Peace Research*, 44, 5, 623-634.

Hearson, Martin 2008. "Collateral damage: NGO beneficiaries could be the next casualties of the war on terror", in: *The Networker*, BOND, February 2008, 5-6. Available at www.bond.org.uk/resources.php/229/collateral-damage.

Human Security Brief 2006. Human Security Centre, University of British Columbia, Canada. Available at www.humansecuritybrief.info/2006/index.html.

Human Security Report 2005: War and Peace in the 21st Century. Human Security Centre, University of British Columbia, Canada. Available at www.humansecurityreport.info.

Jenner, Janice and Dekha Ibrahim Abdi 2000. "Voices of Local Peace Initiatives", CDA Reflecting on Peace Practice Project Case Study, October 2000. Available at www.cdainc.com/cdawww/pdf/casestudy/rpp_kenya_case_study_set_1_Pdf.pdf.

Klein, Naomi 2007. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism.* London: Penguin Books/Allen Lane.

Merriman, Hardy and Jack DuVall 2007. Dissolving Terrorism at its Roots, in: Senthil Ram and Ralph Summy (eds.). *Nonviolence: An Alternative for Countering Global Terrorism*. Hauppauge: Nova Science Publishers, 221-234.

Smith, Rupert 2006. *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World.* London: Penguin Books.

Vukosavljevic, Nenad 2007. Training for Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation. Experiences of the "Centre for Nonviolent Action" in the Western Balkans, in: *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation,* Online Version. Berlin: Berghof Research Center. Available at www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/vukosavljevic_handbook.pdf.

[All weblinks accessed 8 January 2009.]

Berghof
Research Center
Forschungszentrum
for Constructive
für konstruktive
Conflict Management
Konfliktbearbeitung

Making Good Use of the Time:
Contributions and Dilemmas of Non-governmental Actors in Peacebuilding

A Response by Louis Kriesberg

1. Introduction

Simon Fisher and Lada Zimina have written an exciting article, rich in ideas and observations, each of which is worth extended discussion.[1] They quite properly begin by citing many recent changes in the global situation that mark enhancements in peaceful circumstances, as well as grave global crises. The elements of progress toward increased peace, and the reasons for them, deserve attention; this can help assess the contributions that non-governmental peacebuilders have made to peace in the world and guide efforts to play a greater role in the future.

Since the end of the Cold War, the incidence and severity of international and civil wars (with and without a government being a party to the war) have somewhat declined (Human Security Centre 2005; Human Security Report Project 2008). Increasingly, wars have been settled by negotiations rather than by unilateral impositions. Certainly the end of the Cold War has contributed to these changes. Stopping the support that the Soviet Union and the United States governments had given to antagonistic sides in Central American countries and many parts of Africa resulted in settling many seemingly intractable wars. The transformation and then dissolution of the Soviet Union enabled the UN and other international governmental organisations to more effectively intervene in many countries and avert or stop deadly conflicts.

1 In preparing to write my response, I shared the lead article (Fisher/Zimina 2009) with several colleagues working in a wide variety of settings and invited their comments. Those who responded uniformly thought the issues raised were important and conveyed various reactions that have helped inform my contribution. The persons with whom I communicated include John Burdick, Bruce W. Dayton, Victoria Fontan, Susan Allen Nan, Joyce Neu, Marie Pace, Richard E. Rubenstein, Robert A. Rubinstein and Carolyn M. Stephenson.

This also opened up more opportunities for non-governmental peacebuilders. Significantly, the Soviet transformation itself owes much to the work of non-governmental peace and conflict organisations and to governmental applications of contemporary conflict resolution ideas (Evangelista 1999).

The Soviet transformation was largely the result of many internal characteristics and developments, but global trends also aided it and those trends continue to manifest themselves, which helps account for declines in mass violence since the Cold War ended. These global trends include growing economic interdependence, intensifying channels of communication, growing consensus about norms relating to human rights and multiplying transnational governmental and non-governmental organisations.

In the 1980s a burgeoning peace and conflict resolution (PCR) social movement had emerged in the US, which soon became global. This movement includes many social movement organisations, widespread public support, education, training and practice conducted in private and public institutions, and in some arenas legally sanctioned conflict resolution procedures. Like the women's movement, with which it overlaps to some degree, the PCR movement, broadly understood, is diffusing widely, even as counter movements demonstrate resistance. The PCR movement is consistent with the earlier identified global trends, which is why it is flourishing. It also reinforces the peacebuilding implications of those global trends.

The rapid growth of the PCR movement can be attributed to internal as well as contextual developments (Kriesberg 2008). Relevant early work goes back to the period following World War I and many of the basic ideas in the field were generated after World War II, in the 1950s and 1960s; but they had limited visibility, support and application. Then, in the 1970s and 1980s, the practice of conflict resolution and the explosion of alternative dispute resolution, initially in the United States, spurred widespread growth of the PCR movement. Colleges and universities established new graduate programmes in conflict resolution and their graduates began to be employed in local, national and international organisations. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation provided funding for theory-building centres at universities, for applied projects and for building professional associations (Hewlett Foundation 2005). It appears that what Fisher and Zimina identify as technical practices played a vital role in the rapid growth of the PCR movement. Their adoption helped provide the visible alternative to adversarial and coercive methods of conflict, which was helpful in the field of peace and conflict research and in peace movement mobilizations.

For all the progress that has been made, the world is still beset by many destructive conflicts and injustices, rightfully noted by Fisher and Zimina. Since September 11, 2001, the salience of violent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq and of attacks on civilians in the Middle East and elsewhere has spiked. The actions of al Qaeda and associated organisations and of the US government have been affected and in some ways assisted by the global trends noted above. But at a more fundamental level, they have been out of synchronisation with those trends. I believe that the failures of al Qaeda and of President George W. Bush's administration are due to acting inconsistently with many of the profound changes underway in the world (Kriesberg 2007). The evident failures should provide new opportunities for the PCR movement and the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in it. In *Section 3* of my comments, I discuss obstacles to seizing those opportunities and ways to overcome them. In *Section 2*, I want to take a closer look at some of the concepts that Fisher and Zimina use in their analysis.

2. The Concepts of Peacebuilders and of Transformation

Two key concepts central to this discussion – peacebuilders and transformation – require clarification. The word 'peacebuilders' can have several meanings.[2] Fisher and Zimina at the outset define peacebuilders as "all those who see themselves as working for peace, justice and development" (in this volume, 13). Later, they write that a host of actors are peacebuilders, including government officials as well as civil society organisations. However, in their article, they generally refer to local and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) that typically engage in intermediary and other non-partisan actions, particularly in settings beset by violent conflicts or where people are recovering from them. Furthermore, Fisher and Zimina focus their discussion upon INGOs which adhere to the ideas and practices of contemporary conflict resolution. This usage is perfectly fine, but problems arise when that is not made explicit and not applied consistently.

Many governmental and non-governmental actors engage in mediation, negotiation, dialogue and other practices that are wholly consistent with contemporary conflict resolution. They often do so without identifying themselves as 'peacebuilders' or as self-conscious implementers of problem-solving conflict resolution ideas and practices (even if they have been unwarily influenced by them). Indeed, many of the ideas in the field of conflict resolution derive from analysing actual practices of effective diplomats, political leaders and traditional chiefs. Outside peace workers may do their best work by helping elicit the traditional folk ways of settling conflicts in particular localities.[3] Finally, many officials and other persons with authority carry out conventionally recognized negotiations and even mediation in a manner that is highly coercive and with little regard to the concerns of other parties in the conflict. They may claim to be peacebuilders and peacemakers, but many practitioners in the field of peace and conflict resolution would not regard such designations as correct.

In the field of conflict analysis and resolution, the concept of transformation has usually referred to the change of a conflict from one characterized by intractability and by destructive interactions to one that is resolved or, if continued, is waged without violence and by more constructive means (Crocker et al. 2005; Kriesberg et al. 1989). Fisher and Zimina use a broader meaning of the term, to include a societal or even global change from a system of domination and violence to one in which that is largely absent and where the relations among adversaries are peaceful and just. There is great value in considering such macro settings since they affect the course of the many particular fights that are waged within those systems. Agreements that settle large-scale civil wars, but do not change the conditions that generated the war, often are short-lived (Paris 2004).

If peacebuilders, however they are defined, try to specify what a new transformed society or world should be they are likely to seem presumptuous. Fisher and Zimina usually refer to general conditions that need to be transformed, such as economic injustice, denial of rights and of participation, and environmental destruction. How that is to come about and what a transformed system would look like, however, are likely to be matters of contention. Even persons in the PCR movement probably differ about the effects of different economic market systems on standards of living.

In any case, certainly much more research can and should be done to analyse what sustains societal and global systems that are characterized by high levels of domination, injustice and inequalities. In addition, peacebuilding efforts can and should be undertaken to strengthen the forces that would reduce those conditions. Such efforts often involve joining or allying with partisans on

2 In UN terminology, for example, peacebuilding refers to particular stages of conflicts and is distinguished from peacemaking and peacekeeping.

3 This is discussed most notably in Lederach 1995.

one side in a conflict. This goes against the grain for many people in the conflict resolution field who emphasize improving the process of reaching decisions and agreements rather than the substance of the decision or agreement. Attention to the equity of conflict outcomes and to positive peace has been of higher concern in the fields of peace studies and peace research (Cortright 2008; Stephenson 2008). For example, during the 1950s and 1960s many studies were made of the military-industrial complex and how it functioned to sustain militarised international relations. In addition, the social movement campaign for civil rights effectively used nonviolent methods in the American South. Its prominent leader, Martin Luther King Jr., drew from Mohandas Ghandi's practices and ideas in leading the Indian independence movement. Furthermore, in 1973, Gene Sharp published his influential work providing a theoretical basis for the power of nonviolent action and extensive documentation of its effectiveness (Sharp 1973; for an overview see Dudouet 2008).

Fisher and Zimina make a valuable contribution to fostering peace by examining the differences between what they call technical and transformative peacebuilding approaches. That is an important analytic distinction, but as they stress, many activities actually embody both approaches to some degree. I agree that greater attention to long-term transformational consequences of peace and conflict resolution practices is desirable. I also think it is useful to be clear about what kind of transformation is being considered, whether it refers to a conflict, a society, or the world. The magnitude of transformations also can vary greatly from minor reforms to radical re-structuring; while reforms can be trivial, striving for extreme transformational objectives can have counterproductive consequences.

The PCR movement includes a variety of advocacy organisations, often a necessary component in transformations at the societal and global levels. They have long existed and produced many of the fundamental gains in social justice in the last two centuries relating to working conditions, voting rights and reducing inequalities for women or subordinated ethnic groups. In recent decades, these and related issues have been contested by new social movement organisations. This is evident in the advancement of norms and practices to protect human rights and in grassroots organisations struggling for political rights, autonomy and in some cases political independence. The successful struggle to end Apartheid in South Africa, waged by the African National Congress and its allies around the world, exemplifies how conflicts can be waged relatively constructively, even in terrible circumstances.

3. Specific Obstacles

In this section, I discuss specific problems relating to the work of NGOs, which apply conflict analysis and resolution ideas and methods to prevent, stop, limit, de-escalate, settle and recover from destructive conflicts. I give particular attention to the ways their actions relate to the transformation of destructive conflicts and also to societal and global transformations that entail higher levels of wellbeing.

3.1 Relations with Governments and Other Powerful Actors

Fisher and Zimina write of the deference to power by members of INGOs that deters transformation.[4] This does exist to some degree, but the relations that INGOs and other non-governmental groups in the PCR movement have with governments and other powerful actors are highly complex and highly varied. Under certain conditions some deference may be appropriate,

4 INGOs here refers to NGOs that function internationally; in earlier years it usually referred to NGOs that were structured internationally. Social movement organisations (SMOs) refer to NGOs that are elements of social movements. Civil society organisations (CSOs) are NGOs through which citizens are engaged in social-political matters.

although often it creates dilemmas. Thus, INGOs often require at least the permission of governments to pursue their work, but governmental constraints can significantly impede their activities, which sometimes require them to choose among not so good alternatives.

It is important to recognize that governments vary greatly: some are run by tyrants and others are headed by leaders who are responsive to their constituents and have considerable legitimacy. Some governments have relatively large resources of coercive and non-coercive kinds, while others have few such resources that can be applied domestically or internationally. How an INGO should engage with a government to advance peace therefore depends on the kind of government involved and on a host of other conditions, including their own characteristics and goals.

A particular set of problems arises when the governmental leaders of an extremely powerful country are pursuing policies that certain INGOs regard as antithetical to their values and work. This occurs for some Northern-based INGOs in relations with the US government. At times, US-based organisations have acted in solidarity with groups opposed by the US government; for example, this was the case in Ronald Reagan's presidency for groups countering his administration's actions relating to Cuba, Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador.[5]

An important new problem arises from the great expansion of governmental funding of INGOs that assist in humanitarian relief, economic development and particularly in conflict resolution endeavours (Fischer 2006). To some degree, in particular circumstances, the INGOs become agents of governments that provide the funding. Dilemmas certainly arise insofar as the policies of a government appear to be incompatible with the values or priorities of members of peacebuilding NGOs.

The recent US policies pursued in the Global War on Terror and the war and occupation in Iraq have aroused deep concerns among many US-based NGOs. US government funds have increased for peacebuilding efforts in Afghanistan, Iraq and many other areas. Members of the PCR movement differ greatly in the degree and form of resistance they undertake against US policies and also in the degree of cooperation they are willing to carry out with different US agencies in various settings.[6] Intense disagreements have been voiced among psychologists and anthropologists at professional meetings about the ethical and the practical consequences of different kinds of engagement with the US government (American Anthropological Association 2007; Gusterson 2007). This was also the case during the US engagement in the war in Vietnam. Considerable consensus developed that at a minimum, covert connections and work were inappropriate for universities.

On the other hand, societal and global transformation must entail changes in the way government officials think and act. NGOs and other members of the PCR movement need to consider the ways that relevant research findings, experiences and insights can be effectively communicated to political figures. Direct contacts in various settings can be important in this regard. The United States Institute of Peace, funded by the US Congress, was established in 1984 and has become a significant bridge between government officials and members of the conflict resolution field.

A peculiar set of problems arise when some governments or other powerful actors adopt particular conflict resolution words or techniques but apply them in ways that many in the PCR movement regard as inappropriate or even harmful to advancing positive peace. This seems to be an issue with claims by George W. Bush's administration that its efforts to promote change in certain countries will help protect the rights of women and that its support of nonviolent revolutions will bring democracy to countries ruled by authoritarian leaders. Groups within the PCR movement are generally wary of these actions, but differ about how to relate to them in particular times and places.

5 In addition to the sanctuary movement, which protected refugees from Central America in the United States, Pastors for Peace and Witness for Peace were founded and continue to function (Smith et al. 1997).

6 The Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR) at George Mason University in the United States has held several workshops on these matters in the last few years; see Rubenstein 2008.

An unfortunate consequence of this situation is that on occasion independent INGOs and persons working for women's rights or for nonviolent efforts to bring about democratic change are wrongly charged as doing the work of the CIA or other US government agencies.[7]

I believe that differences among the diverse groups in the PCR movement and among the NGOs within it are inevitable and in many ways useful for the transformation of conflicts, societies and the world. A kind of division of labour among the many entities in the PCR movement has evolved. It should be more consciously and energetically developed. The diverse entities have different effectiveness in working with people at each level within adversary groups and the societal context. They vary in the work they can do at different stages of a conflict and they differ in the skills and the resources they can bring to transforming a conflict, a society or the world.

3.2 Funding

The purpose of most NGOs is to serve the interests of their members, as is the case for business and professional associations, trade unions, ethnic advocacy groups and churches. Funding for such organisations generally comes from their own members. Many NGOs, however, work to do good for non-members, they are advocacy organisations trying to change patterns of conduct deemed to be morally wrong, or service organisations helping people injured by conflict and injustice. The source of funding then is not so obvious or certain. Another major source of funding, the primary one for profit-making organisations, is payment for services or products they provide. Additionally, NGOs in the PCR movement generally receive funds from individuals and foundations that share the concerns of the NGOs' missions. However, the major foundation benefactor to conflict resolution work, the Hewlett Foundation, has ended the grants it made for many years (Hewlett Foundation 2005). On the other hand, as noted earlier, governments and international governmental organisations have become increasingly important funders.

In these circumstances, the search for funding poses several severe problems. Raising money and applying for grants consumes considerable resources of NGOs in the PCR movement. Dependence on external sources such as governments and major contributors tends to influence the direction that the NGOs work in ways that are not always desirable. Sometimes financial support from a particular primary source can hamper working with certain other groups and so interfere with effective conflict transformation.

These various problems may be alleviated by NGOs developing multiple sources of funding. Larger NGOs are able to do this more effectively and are larger because they do so.[8] One path to becoming larger and performing a wider range of tasks is for a few NGOs to combine, by cooperating, merging, partnering or becoming closely networked. Official organisations and foundations might more often form cooperative alliances in making contributions and grants, spreading risks and sharing opportunities. This might also enhance the perceived and actual autonomy of NGOs in their work.

3.3 Competition and Dissensus

Collaboration and cooperation among NGOs and others within the PCR movement is crucial to transformation at the level of a particular conflict, a society or the world. The inevitable competition and differences in approaches among these organisations can hamper cooperation, but this is not necessarily so. Some values and interests are shared by most participants in the

7 This has been most egregiously the case with malicious allegations against Gene Sharp and Stephen Zunes. See www.aeinstein.org and www.stephenzunes.com.

8 Organisations that have made progress in this regard include the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Search for Common Ground. See www.iucn.org and www.sfcg.org.

movement, such as believing in the importance of respecting all humans and of minimizing violence. Furthermore, they can engage in ways that foster mutual understanding and joint as well as complementary actions.

As more and more intervening governmental and non-governmental organisations appear at the scene of major conflicts, the relations among them and the impact of their relations expand and would benefit from coordination (Kriesberg 1996; Nan 2008). The engagement of many organisations allows for specialized and complementary programmes, but can also produce unwanted rivalry, redundancy and confusion. Adversaries may try to co-opt some intervening organisations or exploit differences among them. To enhance the possible benefits and minimize the difficulties, various coordinating steps may be taken, including informal ad hoc exchanges of information, regular meetings among organisations in the field and having one organisation serve as 'lead' agency.

Overall, as Fisher and Zimina discuss, there is a need for greater interaction and exchange of ideas among members of INGOs and other organisations engaged in building peace. The infrastructure for such relations began to be built many years ago – for example, the International Peace Research Association (IPRA) was established in 1964. National associations of practitioners, researchers and teachers in the field of peace and conflict resolution have been established in many countries and regions.[9] In addition, numerous workshops, conferences and other gatherings focus on particular topics in this field.

Many institutions foster transnational work, bringing people from many countries to work together for extended periods. For example, the UN's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, which was created in 2001, works toward preventing violent conflict and natural disasters and supports recovery efforts from conflicts and disasters geared towards establishing the foundations for sustainable peace and gender equality. The UN for many years has sponsored international conferences pertaining to particular problems which have also generated forums for INGO gatherings. These activities need to be more visible to the public at large; that visibility would make the use of the peace and conflict resolution approach seem more plausible and attractive.[10]

3.4 Vision and Values

This Dialogue and related discussions reflect important developments in the PCR movement and particularly within the field of peace and conflict research. There is greater attention to conflict prevention and to establishing new systems of participatory governance to minimize unproductive and destructive conflict. These developments are related to the elements of a shared vision and common values that are emerging and to the growing view that conflict transformation is central to the field of CR (Botes 2003; Kriesberg 2006; Lederach 1997).

As Fisher and Zimina point out, however, peacebuilders' research in the North tends to look at the sources of wars in distant countries, ignoring the role of multinational corporations and the militarised policies of the Northern governments. I certainly concur that much more research needs to be done on the military-industrial-political-media complex in the United States and in other major countries, including China and Russia. I think the research should also examine efforts to counter the policies favouring the dominance of leading circles in those countries.

The peacebuilding work of INGOs based in the North has not been well linked with what NGOs and others in the North try to do in order to change the structures that support policies that are conducive to violence and injustice at home and internationally. For transformation to occur at the societal and global levels, NGOs and other organisations in the PCR movement should be more

9 In the US, there is for example the Association for Conflict Resolution; see www.acrnet.org.
10 *Editors' note:* For the European Union context, see also Martina Weitsch's contribution to this Dialogue (59-67).

closely connected. They should also reach out to organisations that do not regard themselves as being in the PCR movement but that have interests and values which make them possible allies. The civil society includes traditional NGOs, such as trade unions, farmers' organisations, churches and other voluntary associations that need to be part of transformations. The role of governments and of armed national and transnational organisations cannot be wished away in dealing with large-scale conflicts. Differences within and among them deserve attention and relations with them should not be ignored.

Finally, I want to make some comments about the possible role of academia in the transformation process. Faculty members of colleges and universities can expand the roles that they play in that process. They may not produce the major visionaries in this movement, but they can educate the future generations so that they know alternative ways of meeting the crises that confront them. They can play the indispensable bridging roles between the various groups in the PCR movement and those adhering to traditional thinking and practices. They can undertake the much-needed research about societal and global transformation and how resistance to the transformation is overcome. This will be aided by close connections with the rapidly evolving practices within the PCR movement. One way that this may be facilitated is by helping to provide the advanced training and experience that Fisher and Zimina identify as being needed by NGO peacebuilders. Mid-career programmes and advanced fellowship opportunities for practitioners may be useful instruments in this regard.

4. Conclusion

As must be evident, I believe that great progress has been made and continues to be made by INGOs and other NGOs in the work of building peace. I think there are reasons to believe that progress will continue, perhaps even more rapidly, and I have suggested some ways that progress might be enhanced. It is true that we humans face great challenges and threatening crises, even if people in the world disagree about the nature and priority to be assigned to them. What is distressing at present is that many of the huge threats have been generated by humans, but that means they can be overcome by humans. There are better ways to meet the challenges than are generally being applied. The evident failure of extremism and reliance on violence in the last few years should provide an impetus to turn away from the policies that have proved to be so disastrous and begin to adopt the approach pursued by the PCR movement.

5. References

American Anthropological Association 2007. *Final Report, AAA Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the US Security and Intelligence Communities.* Arlington: American Anthropological Association. Available at www.aaanet.org/_cs_upload/pdf/4092_1.pdf.

Botes, Johannes 2003. Conflict Transformation: A Debate Over Semantics or a Crucial Shift in the Theory and Practice of Peace and Conflict Studies?, in: *International Journal of Peace Studies* 8 (2), 1-27.

Cortright, David 2008. *Peace: A History of Movements and Ideas*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Crocker, Chester A., Fen Osler Hampson and Pamela Aall (eds.) 2005. *Grasping the Nettle: Analyzing Cases of Intractable Conflict*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Dudouet, Véronique 2008. Nonviolent Resistance and Conflict Transformation in Power Asymmetries, in: *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation*, Online Version. Berlin: Berghof Research Center. Available at www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/dudouet_handbook.pdf.

Evangelista, Matthew 1999. *Unarmed Forces: The Transnational Movement to End the Cold War*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Fischer, Martina 2006. Civil Society in Conflict Transformation: Ambivalence, Potentials and Challenges, in: *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation*, Online Version. Berlin: Berghof Research Center. Available at www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/fischer_cso_handbook.pdf.

Fisher, Simon and Lada Zimina 2009. Just Wasting Our Time? Provocative Thoughts for Peacebuilders, in: Beatrix Schmelzle and Martina Fischer (eds.). *Peacebuilding at a Crossroads? Dilemmas and Paths for Another Generation.* (Berghof Handbook Dialogue No. 7.) Berlin: Berghof Research Center, 11-35. Also available at www.berghof-handbook.net/std_page.php?LANG=e&id=5. [A longer version was published in March 2008 as *Just Wasting Our Time? An Open Letter to Peacebuilders*, available online at http://lettertopeacebuilders.ning.com.]

Gusterson, Hugh 2007. Anthropologists and War: A Response to David Kilcullen, in: *Anthropology Today* 23 (4), 23.

Hewlett Foundation 2005. *The Hewlett Foundation's Conflict Resolution Program. Twenty Years of Field-Building 1984-2004.* Report by David Kovick. Menlo Park: William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Available at www.hewlett.org/Publications/confictresolutionbrief.htm.

Human Security Centre 2005. *Human Security Report 2005*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Human Security Report Project 2008. *Human Security Brief 2007.* Edited by Andrew Mack. Vancouver: Simon Fraser University.

Kriesberg, Louis 1996. Coordinating Intermediary Peace Efforts, in: *Negotiation Journal* 12 (4), 341-352.

Kriesberg, Louis 2006. Assessing Past Strategies for Countering Terrorism in Lebanon and by Libya, in: *Peace and Conflict Studies* 13 (1), 1-20.

Kriesberg, Louis 2007. Long Peace or Long War: A Conflict Resolution Perspective, in: *Negotiation Journal* 23 (2), 97-116.

Kriesberg, Louis 2008. The Evolution of Conflict Resolution, in: Victor Kremenyuk, I. William Zartman and Jacob Bercovitch (eds.). *Sage Handbook of Conflict Resolution*. London: Sage, 15-32.

Kriesberg, Louis, Terrell A. Northrup and Stuart J. Thorson (eds.) 1989. *Intractable Conflicts and Their Transformation*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

Lederach, John Paul 1995. *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

Lederach, John Paul 1997. *Building Peace. Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Nan, Susan Allen 2008. Conflict Resolution in a Network Society, in: *International Negotiation* 13, 111-131.

Paris, Roland 2004. *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Rubenstein, Richard E. 2008. Conflict Resolution in an Age of Empire: New Challenges to an Emerging Field, in: Dennis Sandole, Sean Byrne, Ingrid Staroste and Jessica Senehi (eds.). *A Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution*. London: Sage, 495-507.

Sharp, Gene 1973. *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*. Boston: Porter Sargent.

Smith, Jackie, Charles Chatfield and Ron Pagnucco (eds.) 1997. *Transnational Social Movements and Global Politics: Solidarity Beyond the State*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

Stephenson, Carolyn M. 2008. Peace Studies, Overview, in: Lester Kurtz (ed.). *Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace, and Conflict*, 2nd Edition. Oxford: Elsevier, 1534-1548.

[All weblinks accessed 8 January 2009.]

Berghof
Research Center
Forschungszentrum
for Constructive
für konstruktive
Conflict Management
Konfliktbearbeitung

Envisioning and Pursuing Peace Writ Large

A Response by Diana Chigas & Peter Woodrow

1. Introduction

Peace Writ Large, as Simon Fisher and Lada Zimina note, is a term introduced by CDA Collaborative Learning Projects because of the absence of vocabulary to describe this idea of societal-level peace. Five years since the publication of *Confronting War* – the conclusions of the first phase of the Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) project, an experience-based collaborative learning effort to understand what is effective and not in peacebuilding, and how we can improve our impacts on Peace Writ Large – the notion is widely discussed. But as Fisher and Zimina also note, the results are still meagre. They issue a needed call to the peacebuilding community to think hard about *why* peacebuilding is not living up to the transformative goals it professes, and to do something about it.

The lead article talks extensively about the need for and potential elements of a less 'narrow' and more robust agenda for Peace Writ Large connected to economic justice, environmental and human rights agendas, as well as about agencies joining together to promote it. The question is *how* to develop a vision and conception of Peace Writ Large that will help shape action in ways that improve the impacts. Similarly, how can the reality of very diverse practice, goals and methods combine, or 'add up', to generate momentum? In this response article, we would like to share experience on these questions gathered through the RPP project, which has been running since 1999.

2. Promoting a Broader and Integrative Vision of Peacebuilding

The lead authors lament the lack of interconnectedness and integration amongst issues, actors and efforts. RPP's findings mirror Fisher and Zimina's; peacebuilding efforts are indeed not 'adding up', due in part to a lack of linkages and synergies amongst efforts, and a failure on the part of programmers and donors to see how the efforts fit into the 'bigger picture'. Their explanations of *why* and their prescriptions for *what* to do, however, do not go far enough in helping us reflect on *how* to do it.

2.1 Encouraging an Integrative Understanding of Conflict

Fisher and Zimina accuse the peacebuilding field of being too narrowly "focused on war and the drivers of war" (Open Letter, Chapter 1, 6; see Fisher/Zimina 2009) and call for integration of peacebuilding efforts with those addressing other major threats to survival and security.

RPP is finding that peacebuilding work is not having transformative effects on Peace Writ Large, but not because, as the authors suggest, people are too narrowly focused on the drivers of conflict. On the contrary, it is because programme strategies are not sufficiently linked to the key driving factors of conflict.

The interconnectedness of economic justice, environment, human rights, governance and peace has been recognized since the *Agenda for Peace*, and has led to a dramatic expansion of the notion of peacebuilding in the last 15 years. In the context of the influential Development Assistance Committee within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-DAC), the most recent articulation of what peacebuilding is refers to "interrelated areas of intervention that are required to promote sustainable peace" (OECD-DAC 2007, 17). That includes poverty reduction, equitable access to services, sustainable and equitable access to natural resources, protection of human rights, participation in governance and justice, among others.

Fisher and Zimina are correct that this broader understanding of peacebuilding has not led to serious rethinking of what is required for sustainable peace and how peacebuilders can affect the bigger picture. Why is this so? Ironically, an unintended consequence of the very broadening of the concept and practice of peacebuilding has been a loss of strategic rigour in practice. People assume that because they are doing work on these issues, they are contributing to peace. For instance, if they are working on poverty, they are building peace. Youth work is building peace, because 'youth are critical to peace'. People assume that, because all these issues are linked, their work contributes *ipso facto* to peace. Consequently, they think that they do not need to do anything differently, or to think rigorously about what Peace Writ Large means in their context. Programmes often therefore miss the mark; they may be good programmes, but they are not automatically good *peacebuilding* programmes.

One of the reasons programmes are missing the mark is that conflict analyses – where they are done at all – are inadequate. Despite the proliferation of conflict analysis frameworks, RPP has found that agencies perform only enough conflict analysis to justify their proposals, to affirm that what they know how to do best is needed. Or they pursue programmes based on their generalized theories of change about how to achieve peace, rather than really analysing the situation. The frameworks for analysis themselves are often elaborate and comprehensive, and integrate, as Fisher and Zimina recommend, analysis of economic, environmental and other factors. But such analyses had not led to more effective peacebuilding strategies. The analyses too often aim to be *too comprehensive* and produce *long lists* of factors, in fairly general terms (such as 'corruption',

'lack of rule of law', 'discrimination'), without showing the *interactions and dynamics* among the various factors, without identifying the *most important* factors in that particular context and without reflecting on the influence of the interventions themselves on the conflict (Woodrow 2006). As a result, every peacebuilding programme assumes equal validity and importance, because it can be justified by an analysis that does not differentiate among the myriad of conflict factors. Programme strategies remain disconnected from analysis and are often 'off-the-shelf' approaches, with some variations to adjust to the particular conflict context in which agencies are working.

These findings do not contradict the authors' argument that a more integrated and broader conception of conflict – beyond war – is needed. However, they do suggest that peace practitioners need to consider how other threats related to security and survival relate to the conflict and how they play out in a particular context. Specifically, peacebuilders need to identify key driving factors of conflict (not just triggers of violence), understand the dynamics amongst the various factors as a conflict system, including the effects of their (and others') interventions on that system, and identify priorities and points of leverage for shifting it. Analysis must move beyond generalities and provide specifics about what is happening in *this* conflict, at *this* time (and over time) and why.

2.2 Technical vs. Transformative Peacebuilding: Defining the 'Peace we are working for'

Fisher and Zimina situate most peacebuilding work in the dichotomy between 'technical' and 'transformative' approaches to peacebuilding. They suggest that "programmes […] often seem to amount […] to little more than 'patching' – attempts to create the minimal stability that would allow the current world order, driven by market forces and geopolitical power constellations, to step in" (in this volume, 19).

Their constructively provocative contention echoes what CDA's newest project, the Listening Project, is hearing. This project has been listening to people in countries that have received or are receiving international assistance about their experience, over time, of all kinds of aid (not just concerning peacebuilding). People have noted that aid provision – whether from governmental donors or international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) – has evolved into an 'industry', 'a business, not a commitment'. Agencies are spending less time in communities, listening less to people, and are increasingly described as 'inflexible', offering 'pre-packaged' aid. This has resulted in an increasing emphasis on improving efficiency, on producing 'results' quickly and on measuring those results (Brown 2007). Recipients see no means of holding agencies accountable for badly done or even harmful work.

However, we have some concerns that what Fisher and Zimina suggest to broaden and refocus the vision for peacebuilding will not necessarily fill the gap that they correctly observe. Several questions need further exploration:

Whose Agenda?

The authors suggest that peacebuilders should be responsive to the needs of the least powerful and to 'the community'. The description of the transformative approach (*Table 1*, in this volume, 21) contains repeated references to the community as the focus and partner in peacebuilding work.

The crucial question is: who is 'the community'? What does the wellbeing of communities mean, and how is that determined? We all face choices regarding whom we include, whom we choose as partners, to whom we are accountable, whom to involve in setting priorities or programme directions and so forth. In many cases, we are selective about the community we relate to; 'the community' is often taken to mean those elements of the society who happen to agree

with our agenda for change and who are comfortable with the methods that we are likely to use. Conservative religious leaders, arguably key elements of civil society, are not necessarily sought as allies for change. Those who employ militant means to effect change – even the same changes we might espouse – are avoided, unless they are engaged as 'spoilers' to a peace process. Government agencies of all stripes are viewed with suspicion. These groups and individuals are all part of the host society in the conflict zones in which we work, but somehow we are not accountable to these members of the community; we are only willing to submit to the will of the 'right' members of the community – meaning the 'left' members.

Many organisations extol the virtues of the grassroots and identify people at that level as those to whom we should be most responsive and accountable. But at the grassroots level, the picture is complex. Entrenched traditional, paternalistic local power structures hold decision-making authority – in the African context this is usually a local chief and a group of male elders. Village members must adhere to norms and rules of behaviour, defer to authority and submit to arbitrary decisions about allocation of resources, such as land. Again, this begs the question who, concretely, are the grassroots? Only those members of the community who are resisting the local micro-power elites? Compared to the rich man in the city, the local chief may be desperately poor and relatively powerless, but in his own sphere he is a minor despot. And to add another layer of complexity: in many West African villages, discrimination/exclusion is often exercised against the richest person in the community – the money lender, who is usually from a different ethnic group that engages in trade throughout the region.

In sum, there are deep divisions at the grassroots, and simply referring to the 'grassroots' or 'community' as the group whose 'peace' we should be working towards and to whom we should be accountable glosses over complex situations that require careful study and differentiation by outsiders seeking to help. We need to acknowledge that none of us enters a conflict zone with a blank slate. We bring values, philosophical views and favourite methodologies. We also look for partners who will 'fit' our profile. This is natural. But we should not suffer the illusion that we have entered as empty vessels waiting to be filled with the will of the people (whoever they are!). Fisher and Zimina implicitly recognize this in their suggestion that we *should* adopt an *explicit* agenda for change. This agenda may be more valid and more effective than the 'liberal peace' agenda, but again we must not discount local people who may see it as just as alien and externally imposed as liberal democracy, human rights and free market economies. We need to ensure that we remain open to other information and views and the realities on the ground.

How Big an Agenda? An Ethical Stance or a Theory of Change?

Fisher and Zimina exhort us to join peacebuilding with addressing the key, linked global issues of economic injustice, environmental destruction and oppression, i.e. the denial of rights and participation (in this volume, 25), in part because they see a need for rethinking and restating what is meant by positive peace.

We would caution, however, against relying on a broad rethinking of the notion of Peace Writ Large to improve the transformative quality of peacebuilding practice. We do need to rethink the nature of sustainable peace – in order to test, and challenge where appropriate, the liberal democratic paradigm that comprises the default conception. But a general rethinking risks producing a generic definition of peace assumed to be applicable in all places. The determination of what we mean by Peace Writ Large must be done *in context*, with people *in context* and with reference to the drivers and dynamics of conflict *in context*. In fact, in its earlier phase, RPP attempted to identify a more precise general definition, but participants concluded decisively that Peace Writ Large must be generated in context.

This is why we would place greater importance on theories of change than do the authors, who refer to them in passing. The theory of change is the conceptual link between peacebuilders' understanding of the conflict, their activities and Peace Writ Large – and the basis for most practitioners' planning (see also Shapiro 2006). As the authors mention and our project has also found, these theories are most often implicit, unclear or incomplete, and unexamined and untested. Practitioners must become clearer, more explicit and more rigorous about their theories of change and incorporate processes (and joint conversations) for testing those theories. Over time, these steps will lead to increased effectiveness. Greater clarity about theories of change will promote greater honesty, rigour and clarity about overarching goals, as the authors correctly call for, and would help practitioners become more strategic in connecting their work to these goals. Perhaps even more importantly, testing these theories of change can help us learn from our own experience about what works and what does not in promoting the kind of transformations required, in each context, to make peace sustainable.

Organisations' Roles and Relations to Peacebuilding: Unity or Diversity?

Fisher and Zimina correctly urge organisations in the peacebuilding field to reflect on "the obstacles to bringing transformative elements more to the fore" (in this volume, 20). An underlying question is whether we in the field need to or can agree on the parameters of Peace Writ Large, and whether we collectively *should* take a stand on issues, confront government and business and link more explicitly to "emerging alternative(s)" (in this volume, 28). Does a transformative approach require that we do?

There are different conceptions within the peacebuilding field of the work we do and differences of views about useful roles that organisations can play. Some of these differences are the result of the eclectic and interdisciplinary nature of the field itself. For example, some came to peacebuilding from the 'peace movement' or 'social change movement' arena, while others entered the field from professional training in negotiation, mediation and other conflict resolution skills.[1] Still others, including the big INGOs (Oxfam, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Save the Children, etc.), come from a humanitarian or development mandate. Those coming from peace movements have learned the skills of the negotiation and mediation field as well, but harbour leanings towards social transformation. Negotiation and mediation professionals have, in many cases, come to appreciate that deeper resolution of the conflicts we are working with will require structural changes. Development and humanitarian agencies have come to accept that their aid has political impacts, intended or not; they have come to appreciate the need for social transformation, dialogue and cooperative processes and try to incorporate elements of peacebuilding into their programming. Each has come to appreciate, and in some cases practice, the perspective and skills of the other. We are not that far apart, in the end, but our orientation and work often revert to our origins as activists, facilitators and mediators or development/humanitarian workers. For the latter, who now manage much of the funding given for peacebuilding, it is a major stretch to do *any* sort of peacebuilding, even in the form of conflict sensitivity, much less peacebuilding that is explicitly political and explicitly works for fundamental changes in power structures.

Is this a bad thing? Does it undermine the impact of peacebuilding? Perhaps it merely reflects a healthy division of labour. In many situations there is a need for someone to take on the role of intermediary: an impartial, bridging facilitator to bring contending groups together for dialogue and negotiation. Groups that have wholeheartedly plunged into overt advocacy for

1 The two of us writing this response represent those two backgrounds, in fact. Peter was a nonviolent social change activist who 'converted' to work as a mediator and conflict resolution trainer. Diana encountered the negotiation field in law school and joined Conflict Management Group, an NGO founded by Roger Fisher, co-author of the negotiation classic *Getting to Yes* (1981).

fundamental change will be seen by some parties as biased, untrustworthy and unacceptable as a third party. Some groups in the peacebuilding field have deliberately set themselves up as specialists in providing support for Track I or Track II negotiations – as conveners, facilitators or mediators. Such groups carefully and deliberately avoid any (public) contact with their more ideological brethren who are actively promoting change. Fisher and Zimina make an important point in urging resistance to oppressive governments and greater advocacy in relation to INGOs' own governments. These are forms of peacebuilding that need to be practiced more widely and supported more fully. However, we should not so easily dismiss the value of the 'professional' activities of INGOs (in this volume, 22ff.). We would argue that there is a need for the professional impartials – not all of us need to be strong advocates for change.

Diversity of roles, goals and agendas may be as important to Peace Writ Large as commonality of vision and understanding. RPP is finding that cumulative impacts of peacebuilding occur when there is progress in several domains simultaneously, including changes in policies, in structural issues, in the social fabric and with regard to political dynamics. Early evidence also suggests that progress in the different domains needs to remain in relative balance with each other, i.e. one domain should not get far ahead of the others (CDA 2008a). Transformation in each of these domains requires different approaches and different roles for peacebuilding organisations. Similarly, convergence of *different* agendas appears to propel cumulative impacts; the convergence might involve one agency building on what others have done previously. There is thus room – and a need – for role differentiation.

There is also room – and a need – for differentiated relationships with government and corporations. The authors raise an important point about the dangers of a too cooperative (even complicit?) relationship with governments and corporations. But are civil resistance movements always more effective than more cooperative engagement by civil society or non-governmental organisations with these actors? The evidence gathered through our project suggests not; sustainable peace often requires the involvement, not exclusion, of those people who hold power as they are the ones who must either agree to changes required for peace, or support (or not oppose) the systems to sustain peace and justice (Anderson/Olson 2003, 57/58 and 69).

A good analysis, and good strategic planning, should consider the various paths to transformation, who will resist change and how to deal with them – including, but not limited to, civil resistance. As we have seen in Nepal, Cyprus, Ukraine and elsewhere, pressure, advocacy and civil resistance vis-à-vis governments and corporations can be very effective in achieving significant political change. Citizens' movements have shown repeatedly that they can shut down corporate operations through even the most disorganised of nonviolent actions, and lead them to recognize that they need a 'social license to operate' in the societies where they are exploiting resources. In this sense, Fisher and Zimina's call to INGOs to reflect on their relation to these civil movements is important, lest they overlook possibilities for having real impact (see also Dudouet 2008).

But there are other ways of engaging with government and corporations in furtherance of Peace Writ Large that should not be dismissed out of hand. Where there is overlap between a government or corporate agenda and civil society's, collaboration can enhance impact. Civil society can also identify and strengthen pro-peace elements of governments or corporations.

Box 1: Civil Society Work with Governments and Corporations

In many circumstances, ways of engaging with government or corporations other than civil resistance can enhance civil society's capacity to influence Peace Writ Large. For example, in Sri Lanka a parliamentarian who was committed to vocal and practical engagement in peace issues, even when the political parties were promoting war, became involved with a civil society organisation to raise key issues relating to peace that he could not raise in Parliament (Abeygunawardana/Haniffa 2008, forthcoming). Civil society provided a useful forum for silenced voices within government to be heard.

Civil society can also strengthen pro-peace elements of governments or business by working cooperatively with them. International conflict resolution NGOs provided negotiation training and support for government ministries in apartheid South Africa at the request of pro-negotiation elements of the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs. This enhanced their credibility and helped them overcome the opposition of more reluctant parties within government. A programme in Burundi reviewed existing human rights promotion institutions, provided computers and office equipment for the government's human rights agency, and placed a project officer to work with the governmental and NGO human rights institutions to develop local human rights materials. This provided attention and support that the ministry might not otherwise have received (Wohlgemuth 2001).

Finally, where agendas overlap with business or government, alliances can enhance the influence of civil society on Peace Writ Large. In Northern Cyprus, it was not until public service (including peace) NGOs formed a coalition with the Chamber of Commerce that significant progress was made toward peace. The coalition, allying itself also with the main political party in opposition to government, mobilized society-wide demonstrations in favour of the UN proposal for reunification of Cyprus, ultimately achieving the election of the pro-peace opposition and removing one of the major obstacles to a negotiated settlement (Hadjipavlou/Kanol 2008). In El Salvador, the business community's decision to support the peace process and to pressure government to engage seriously in it was critical to the achievement of an agreement; civil society organisations identified this potential role early on and played their part in quietly working with business people to persuade them to support negotiations actively.

Limiting ourselves to one strategy and one kind of relationship with government and corporations – an adversarial one – can undermine our own effectiveness. The pressure of human rights organisations on corporations has led them to reconsider their roles, responsibilities and impacts in the societies in which they work. The more cooperative work of 'professionals' has helped corporations, and those within corporations who want to be good corporate citizens, to reflect on and implement needed changes. These roles are complementary; if peacebuilders were to be forced into just one mode or another, their cumulative impact would be reduced.

In each particular situation, we therefore need to be able to assess exactly what different governments (or corporations) are about – both those in the countries in conflict, which are mostly in the global South, and those in the North, which get a lot of criticism from Fisher and Zimina, much of it deserved. Not all Northern governments are pushing the same agenda, and within governments one will find quite different attitudes and policy interpretations in the defence ministry,

the ministry of foreign affairs and the development ministry. Governments are not monolithic, as the authors themselves recognize, and the development ministries in particular are full of former NGO staff. The fact that they operate under real constraints of sovereignty does not mean that many in those governments and United Nations agencies do not acknowledge the need for the kinds of basic change that the authors advocate, and cannot engage cooperatively to further a transformative agenda within the limits of their mandates and capacities.

3. Promoting Synergies among Activities: 'Joined-up' Efforts or Linkages?

How can this diversity of roles, goals and agendas lead to synergistic and transformative efforts? Fisher and Zimina blame the "lack of cooperation, both horizontally and vertically" for preventing the peacebuilding community from achieving its potential (in this volume, 25). The assumption appears to be that more "joined-up work with others" will lead to more transformative impacts, in part through challenging the vision of peace of the world's power elites (in this volume, 17). These are significant assumptions. Are they supported by evidence?

Based on the evidence gathered by RPP to date, our answer is: "partly". Lack of coordination and outright competition do often weaken the potential effects from multiple efforts; they spawn useless duplication of efforts and, worse, can increase tensions within communities. But the evidence on the need for coordination for effective peacebuilding is mixed at best, and in practice raises a number of difficult questions. We have seen coordination and coherence – not just within government – lead to negative impacts. Whose coordination and coherence is being assessed? The Listening Project has heard from people in communities around the world that coordination amongst INGOs has at times led to their own disempowerment, as they feel they have no choice regarding who works in their community and what is provided. Division of territory, a common form of 'coordination', has limited the types and quantities of assistance available to communities (CDA 2008b). And what if efforts are aligned in the wrong direction?

More importantly, cooperation and coordination may not be required at all for cumulative impact. There is evidence that uncoordinated and unconnected activities can 'add up', as they have in Northern Ireland and South Africa, where significant progress toward (although clearly not achievement of) Peace Writ Large has been made (CDA 2008a). There is a need to think more broadly than coordination, cooperation and joint efforts. We recommend thinking in terms of *linkages*, which would include coordination and joint efforts, but also much more, such as:

- Promotion of balanced and synchronous progress in different arenas;
- Identification and linkage (explicit, through coalitions, or not) of convergent agendas;
- Funding mechanisms and processes that broaden participation and offer mechanisms for people to see themselves as 'actors' in the peace process (such as a Peace Fund in Northern Ireland offering grants to small projects, the Peace Committees in South Africa, televised proceedings of reconciliation processes, etc.);
- Linkage of efforts promoting individual/personal-level change (attitudes, skills, behaviours) to activities and efforts at the socio-political level (policies, structures, processes, collective action), either within programmes, through cooperation or by building on work done by others;
- Conceptual linkage, promoting greater understanding of the complementarity of roles and activities;

- Linkage of ‘more people’ to ‘key people’. Civil society peacebuilding efforts often work with ‘more people’ – the grassroots, local communities, citizens, civil society. Some also work with ‘key people’ – people or groups who are key to the continuation or transformation of a conflict. These may include government officials or agencies, corporations, militias, religious leaders, youth or others, depending on the context. RPP has found that the failure to link efforts and processes with more and key people, and failure to link Track II and Track I efforts are major contributors to the failure of peacebuilding to ‘add up’. These linkages can take a variety of forms – from parallel efforts at the political and community levels, to ‘peace committees’ such as those in South Africa involving citizens with government and other actors in dealing with violence, to ‘peace funds’ such as those implemented in Northern Ireland, in which European Union money was made available (through government) for peace related activities while the negotiations were taking place and afterwards (Fitzduff/Williams 2007).

4. Conclusion

It is clear that the consensus that RPP found about what Peace Writ Large is – encompassing both stopping violence and promoting just and sustainable peace through social change – is too broad and vague to drive effectiveness. In this article, we have tried to emphasize the importance of the way practitioners engage with these questions for turning these reflections into action, given the reality that peacebuilding practice is ‘all over the map’ both literally, in terms of places, types of conflict, levels and sectors of action, methodologies and activities, and figuratively, in terms of the motivations and goals of programmes. It is important to engage deeply in reflection and discussion about the peacebuilding agenda. But we also need to be much more specific and much more focused on the context. We need to talk not only about *what* the agenda is, but also *how* the agenda is developed. Have we done an adequate analysis of the conflict and are we working on things that will really make a difference? Have we thought through difficult questions of who the ‘community’ is and who is being served (and not) by the agenda? Have we fully utilised the resources available to peace practitioners? Have we developed synergies between diverse roles of different actors? Have we explored linkages, and thought about where joint action would be appropriate and useful?

These are the types of questions that need to be thought through in practice. There is no one right answer. There is still much to learn – both about what kinds of changes bring about true transformation, and about how the myriad and diverse peace efforts of peacebuilders can ‘add up’ to Peace Writ Large.

5. References

Anderson, Mary and Lara Olson 2003. *Confronting War. Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners.* Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects.

Abeygunawardana, Kanaka and Farzana Haniffa 2008 (forthcoming). "Cumulative Impact of Peace Work in Sri Lanka: Conceptualizing Peace beyond Parties to the War." RPP Case Study. Cambridge, MA: CDA.

Anderson, Mary, Diana Chigas and Peter Woodrow 2007. "Encouraging Effective Evaluation of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities: Towards DAC Guidance." Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC). Available at www.oecd.org/dataoecd/52/3/39660852.pdf.

Brown, Dayna 2007. *L'ecoute, premier gage de qualite de tout projet humanitaire,* in: Newsletter of Le Groupe Urgence - Rehabilitation - Developpement (Groupe URD), April 2007.

CDA 2008a. "Consultation Report: Understanding Cumulative Impacts." Report of the first Consultation of a Collaborative Learning Effort on Understanding Cumulative Impacts. Cambridge, MA: CDA.

CDA 2008b. "Relationships in the Aid System." Listening Project Issue Paper. Cambridge, MA: CDA (Unpublished).

Chigas, Diana 1997. Unofficial Interventions with Official Actors: Parallel Negotiation Training in Violent Intra-state Conflicts, in: *International Negotiation* 2, 409-436.

Dudouet, Véronique 2008. Nonviolent Resistance and Conflict Transformation in Power Asymmetries, in: *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation,* Online Version. Berlin: Berghof Research Center. Available at www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/dudouet_handbook.pdf.

Fisher, Roger and William Ury 1981. *Getting to Yes. Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In.* New York: Penguin Books.

Fisher, Simon and Lada Zimina 2009. Just Wasting Our Time? Provocative Thoughts for Peacebuilders, in: Beatrix Schmelzle and Martina Fischer (eds.). *Peacebuilding at a Crossroads? Dilemmas and Paths for Another Generation.* (Berghof Handbook Dialogue No. 7.) Berlin: Berghof Research Center, 11-35. Also available at www.berghof-handbook.net/std_page.php?LANG=e&id=5. [A longer version was published in March 2008 as *Just Wasting Our Time? An Open Letter to Peacebuilders,* available online at http://lettertopeacebuilders.ning.com.]

Fitzduff, Niall and Sue Williams 2007. "How Did Northern Ireland Move Toward Peace?" RPP Case Study. Cambridge, MA: CDA.

Ghali, Boutros Boutros 1995. *An Agenda for Peace.* New York: United Nations Department of Public Information. Available at www.un.org/Docs/SG/agpeace.html and www.un.org/Docs/SG/agsupp.html.

Hadjipavlou, Maria and Bulent Kanol 2008. "The Impacts of Peacebuilding Work on the Cyprus Conflict." RPP Case Study. Nicosia and Cambridge, MA: CDA.

OECD-DAC 2007. *Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities*. Paris: OECD-DAC. Available at www.oecd.org/secure/pdfDocument/0,2834,en_21571361_34047972_39774574_1_1_1_1,00.pdf.

Shaprio, Ilana 2006. Extending the Framework of Inquiry: Theories of Change in Conflict Interventions, in: David Bloomfield, Martina Fischer and Beatrix Schmelzle (eds.). *Social Change and Conflict Transformation.* (Berghof Handbook Dialogue No. 5.) Berlin: Berghof Research Center, 61-68. Available online at www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/dialogue5_sochange_complete.pdf.

Wohlgemuth, Lennart 2001. "NGO Participation in Conflict Prevention in Burundi." RPP Case Study. Cambridge, MA: CDA.

Woodrow, Peter 2006. "Advancing Practice in Conflict Analysis and Strategy Development." Cambridge, MA: CDA. Available at www.cdainc.com/cdawww/pdf/article/RPP%20Article%20Conflict%20Analysis%2020060101.pdf.

All CDA material is available at www.cdainc.com.

[All weblinks accessed 8 January 2009.]

Berghof
Research Center
Forschungszentrum
for Constructive
für konstruktive
Conflict Management
Konfliktbearbeitung

Mobilizing Public Opinion for Peace:
The Next Challenge for the Peacebuilding Communities

A Response by Martina Weitsch

1. Introduction

Simon Fisher and Lada Zimina raise a lot of important and timely questions. Their paper is a helpful stimulus for peacebuilders and it has certainly set off discussions. My response aims to contribute to these and if it appears, at least in part, controversial and even hard-edged, this is in the spirit of the provocation of the paper.

While heartily welcoming the arrival of this provocative text, I see two major shortcomings in the authors' argument which I want to address in my comment. First, I want to unpack the conceptualisation of peacebuilding, especially Fisher and Zimina's use of terms like 'peacebuilding community', 'global society' or 'change agents' (*Section 2*). The second deficit I detect is with respect to important actors and dimensions of action. In particular the European Union, which has set up a variety of peacebuilding activities in the past two decades, is completely absent from the analysis. The same applies for activities of civil society actors at the EU level. There is scant reference to the role of NGOs working in this regional setting, nor is there any reference to the EU as a distinct and important actor for them to relate to. I argue that the experiences of these actors have to be analysed more carefully, and present some of them in *Section 3*. In the final section, I will address what I see as a crucial next step in building peace and achieving greater social justice: how to galvanise public opinion, take personal responsibility and thus help to generate political will.

2. Clarifying Terms: Success or Failure of 'Peacebuilding Communities'

I want to question, first, the conceptualisation of peacebuilding that is suggested by Fisher and Zimina. At a first glance the distinction between a technical and a transformative approach seems helpful. But on closer inspection, it appears too short-sighted. There are many other categories according to which the peacebuilding communities might be distinguished: along a spectrum from peace movement to peace industry, from grassroots to international focus or origin, from a personal to a political approach and from a local to an external intervention concept. Each of these 'peacebuilding communit*ies*' will define their concepts differently.

Clarification is also needed when it comes to the term 'change agents'. Fisher and Zimina use it in a way that implies that change agents are always a force for good. I think this is too simplistic. In many conflict settings we can observe strong actors that strive for social change, but in a way that serves their own particular interests and does not respond to social needs. We need to be clear whenever we use such a term that we specify change agents *for what*.

I see a need to clarify what different peacebuilding communities there are and where the concrete fault lines may lie which impede our success.[1] I have said above that I see peacebuilding communities as a highly differentiated range of groups and organisations with different origins and focal areas – which needs to be taken into account to aid analysis of successes or failures. A full description of all the different facets of the peacebuilding communities is beyond the scope of this short response, so I will only talk about one of the key distinctions that could be made. It is what I will call the division between the 'peace industry' and the 'peace movement'.[2]

2.1 Peace Industry and Peace Movement

The difference in the definitions of success and failure between these two communities relates first to the time frame: the peace industry plans within a shorter term framework; the peace movement uses a longer term one. Second, they use different types of measures: in the peace industry they are related to project cycles and project output; in the peace movement they are related to changes in social paradigms.

The peace industry, in its extreme form, characterises the groups and organisations which are criticised by Fisher and Zimina as taking a too technical approach. The focus is on projects, on donors and on achieving the objectives of contracts. It can attract people who see peacebuilding 'out there' as a bit of an adventure, as a better lifestyle than could be achieved elsewhere. This attitude is not limited to international (for which read: Northern) NGOs, but there are a lot of such NGOs among this section of the peacebuilding communities. They are as likely as anyone else to have good intentions and good ideas; but the constraints of the funding proposals and contracts, and the fact that a lot of the money that is available comes in huge amounts which require elaborate management and administration, all militate against implementing organisations being anchored in local communities affected by violence.[3]

1 By talking about 'our' success, I am clearly aligning myself with these peacebuilding communities and am looking at them from the inside. That has risks – one of which is that one is too critical; the other that one is not critical enough. I recognize this and have attempted to minimize both faults.

2 I recognize that some will feel offended by this division. It is one which I use to make a point. It is not intended to denigrate anyone's effort. It is, in some ways, a caricature and therefore prone to the potential failure of caricatures.

3 *Editors' note*: See also the contribution of Goran Bozicevic to this Dialogue (69-76).

These organisations are also more likely to be seen as being co-opted by the powers that be. For example, there is much effort in some quarters to buy them into high-tech security and surveillance equipment for their own safety, which would in turn give the security technology industry (an industry heavily based in the arms industry) a 'good guy' image.[4] It has to be said that this attempt has met with only limited success among the NGOs concerned; but even a limited buy-in to the thinking that comes from this sector involves serious risks.

There is the question of how engaged and connected with local societies such organisations are or can be on the ground. Again, experience varies and there are peacebuilders in this type of NGO who are working on a small scale at local level, living with local people and experiencing the privations of life in areas of actual violent conflict or the immediate aftermath of such conflict. But there are also those who live comfortably in ex-pat enclaves.[5] This, too, is a risk for this part of the peacebuilding communities, because the knowledge of those who are working in conflict or post-conflict situations is invaluable to those who are working on advocacy or more technical aspects. Isolating oneself from the experience of conflict can seriously undermine both valuable knowledge and credibility.

The peace movement, on the other hand, has lost its momentum, thus affecting the outreach and impact of peacebuilding activities. We had a sense of direction in the anti-nuclear marches, the marches protesting against the Vietnam War – it seemed so easy back then. But the nuclear arsenals are still there, even if they are smaller. Where have the drive and the energy gone? Today there is a sense of fragmentation. The anti-war protests in 2002 and 2003 did not have enough of a unifying impact (even though they were impressive), because there were too many different groups focusing on their issues. Despite the fact that they were essentially about saying 'no' to an illegal war about to be started by 'our' governments, I remember being uncomfortable about the range of slogans represented on the march in Brussels – there were many different voices demanding many different things. The message that this was first and foremost about peace and not about being 'anti-UK' or 'anti-US' got drowned out. (This was also one of the ways in which the media were able to sideline the focal message.)

That fragmentation has also meant that it has been difficult to keep the momentum of these marches going in other ways; of keeping up the pressure on our governments so that it would result in action. Marches are not the only way that the peace movement can be effective; but in order to be effective as a long-term factor in changing the political landscape, it has to have some common focus. A commitment to nonviolence, for example, could serve as a common focus and foster the credibility of peacebuilding activities.

2.2 Peacebuilding and the Corporate Sector

Apart from the need to join in social movements, linkages with the corporate sector will be essential for long-term strategies.

In a globalised world, the corporate sector, often but not always in the form of multinational companies, wields power in a way that is quite alien to old-style political engagement. Getting a message across to a member of a national or the European parliament has little tangible effect in that context. Industrial and commercial lobbies, connections between political and economic power bases all mean that even governments have less power than we might think. The ability of business to move capital and production from one part of the world to another implies that a different relationship with business is necessary.

4 For example, at a conference in Brussels in 2005 called "Faster and More United – The Debate about Europe's Crisis Management Capacity" the high-tech industry was out in force, getting excited about all manner of hardware and software which would guarantee the safety of actors in the field – with some passing reference to the spin-off into open source intelligence thus available to decision-makers.

5 One young man I spoke to, who recently returned from an assignment in the field, stated that, "Europeans just wouldn't be able to cope with living with the deprivations of local people" – this with reference to certain countries in Africa…

The peace movement has not had a good track record of engaging here. Business, even more than governments, is seen as 'the enemy' and engaging with it is seen as quite close to selling out. So we need to develop ways of engaging with business that do not involve selling out. Fisher and Zimina's point about the role of business going well beyond a bit of Corporate Social Responsibility (CRS) is well made – but we have to start somewhere. If engaging with business at the CSR level gets us and our ideas in through the door, then that may be worth it. Just as in government, in business there can be insiders who are looking for alternatives; it is important to find them and to network with them.

In this context, the peace industry might have a better starting point, as the actors in such organisations are more likely to come across as 'professional'. But there is a risk that the peace industry, too, has too narrow a view of the private sector. They might see private sector actors primarily as potential donors and therefore only important as sources of money. Or they might see them primarily as competitors: if the private sector engages in peacebuilding directly, working with local populations (who may well be their employees) then where does that leave the NGOs? In some cases, the private sector also operates as a contractor on major reconstruction projects where government money is flowing (potentially away from NGOs).

Clearly, this is an area where peacebuilding communities need to proceed with caution and with good analysis; where we need to avoid getting involved with those corporate actors who want to maintain the status quo which guarantees them maximum profit. But some engagement is important and unavoidable.

At the end of the day, despite the differences, there also are synergies: the different communities need each other and we should build on differences as being a strength.

3. NGO-Cooperation at the European Regional Level

In this section, I want to fill a blind spot in Fisher and Zimina's analysis and present some experiences of NGO-networking at the European Union level. For the last 8 years, peacebuilding NGOs focusing some or all of their work on advocacy within the EU decision-making structures have developed a platform within which they cooperate and collaborate. The platform, formally established in 2001, is called the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO). It has, in July 2008, some 25 member organisations ranging widely across the peacebuilding communities.[6]

EPLO was founded as a result of the initiative of a number of NGOs, the history of which goes back to 1997. 17 organisations were listed as founding members in the founding document. The express purpose of the organisation was and is twofold: to provide advocacy towards EU institutions on issues relating to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and to ensure that member organisations have the necessary information about conflict prevention and security policy approaches of the EU to enable them to engage effectively at that level.

Starting with a secretariat of one person, the organisation has grown to a small office of 6 staff. It works predominantly through a number of thematic working groups and continues to make its decisions in a democratic and transparent way. It produces policy papers and reports, advocates at all levels in the European institutions, and has, in the last few years, participated in EU- and Member State-funded projects on conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Why is this relevant to the discussion? The most important reason is because EPLO is, at least in part, a response to Fisher and Zimina's comments on the issue of 'jealous autonomy'.

6 Further information on the current membership of EPLO and its organs can be found at www.eplo.org.

EPLO is a platform which for the first four years of its existence survived entirely on contributions from member organisations. Its members have made a commitment (reinforced again and again in decisions of the General Assembly) to retain sufficient financial independence to survive without external funding. It has worked successfully on joint projects with funding from governments and from the EU and has thus overcome the implicit jealousies regarding funding and political visibility. It is, in short, a model which shows that 'jealous autonomy' is not inevitable.

It is also important to say that EPLO is a significant part of the inter-platform dialogues at the European regional level, where NGOs from different sectors (development, environment, peacebuilding, human rights, etc.) come together to develop joint positions and joint approaches on relevant issues. So there is a degree of developing connections between people thinking about the drivers of conflict from different angles, also a point urged by Fisher and Zimina.

Of course, EPLO is not the only network or platform of peacebuilding NGOs. For example, the European Centre for Conflict Prevention (ECCP)[7] and the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)[8] both seek to connect peacebuilding organisations and help them to work together more effectively. The reason EPLO is highlighted here is because it is the one and only network which focuses exclusively on the European Union (EU) and thus brings into focus the important role the EU itself plays in the area of peacebuilding.

3.1 The Significant Role of the EU in Peacebuilding

The EU undertakes a significant amount of external action and some foreign policy on behalf of the Member States.[9] It acts for the Member States in international fora, for example the World Trade Organization (WTO). As trade is an important factor in terms of economic justice, and as such can be a conflict driver as well as a force for good, the EU's action can have a clear impact on issues of social justice. Furthermore, the EU's much criticised Common Agricultural Policy, its fisheries policy, its emerging energy and more developed environmental policies all have a bearing on the question of how to build sustainable peace globally.

The EU has also developed policy approaches which could be a model in being change agents for peace. The EU is, after all, in itself a peace project and as such exceptionally successful, in the sense that it has contributed to reconciling countries that confronted each other as enemies in the Second World War. For those of us old enough to remember this war itself or, as in my case, the immediate aftermath, this is a point which cannot be made too often.

But even more recently, the Cotonou Agreement (on cooperation with African, Caribbean and Pacific states) agreed in 2000, the Göteborg Programme (on conflict prevention) agreed in 2001 and the establishment of the Peacebuilding Partnership under the Stability Instrument (in 2007) are all steps towards a more conflict-sensitive approach on the part of the EU. This does not mean that the EU has already successfully mainstreamed its policies according to peacebuilding necessities. It has to be said that EU policies in themselves are very often contradictory. But there are signs that the political discourse at the EU level is more conflict-sensitive than the discourse in some of the European capitals. This is also where points of entry can be found for NGOs and their networks in mobilizing for peace.

7 For more information see: www.conflict-prevention.net/page.php?id=76.
8 For more information see: www.gppac.net/page.php?id=1.
9 This comment is too short to go into detail about the role of the EU in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. For a detailed analysis of this see QCEA 2007, available at www.quaker.org/qcea/archive/index.html#download or www.eplo.org/index.php?id=225.

3.2 Achievements and Limits of NGO-Cooperation and Lobbying at EU Level

In many ways the peacebuilding communities are relatively new in the EU environment. Development and humanitarian NGOs are much more firmly established in the minds of decision-makers. That said, the peacebuilding community as represented by EPLO (and a number of other NGOs who work in project partnerships with EPLO) has made some significant steps in the right direction. Some examples are:

- the successful negotiations surrounding the establishment of the Peacebuilding Partnership[10] in the context of the Stability Instrument;[11]
- the development of an ongoing dialogue with the Council Secretariat of the EU and with actors responsible for crisis management;
- the establishment of EPLO as a partner in dialogue about the development/security nexus and issues of conflict sensitivity;
- the successful discussion with the European Investment Bank on their approach to conflict sensitivity in their lending decisions.

More specifically, in a process pursued by EPLO over the last four or so years, dialogue with the EU on civilian crisis management has also evolved from a position where NGOs were not even considered as being part of the picture to a position where we have built enough trust with decision-makers to have ongoing dialogue.[12] This process is an important part of working with people within the policy and decision-making frameworks who might be looking for alternatives; though in this case the people concerned (the Member States' representatives within the relevant decision-making structures) might not have realised from the start that they were looking for this. But in the medium term, it has been acknowledged both by them and in an unpublished independent external assessment of EPLO's work that minds are being changed.

What works in this context is persistence (we are dealing with busy people and we are not usually at the top of their list of priorities), a professional approach (if we say we will deliver something, then we do), engagement at the right level (we inform ourselves well before we engage about the issues which are important to the people we talk to, we understand where they fit into the big picture and we respond to this), and an attitude of partnership (we all want to make a positive impact and there is no 'us and them' attitude). In other words, we try to act in a peaceful and nonviolent way.

Nevertheless it has to be admitted that more must be done in order to enhance effective networking among CSOs and between those actors and the EU agencies. And as so often, the very aspects that work also present some of the difficulties:

- sometimes the demands made on us make delivery very difficult – short time-scales, lack of funding and difficulties with the bureaucracy of visa requirements, for example, make it difficult to bring local actors from the field into the discussions, and we have to deal with the credibility dilemma which this presents;
- those of us, like me, who sometimes want to be more radical than is helpful in discussions with policy makers have to accept that we have to curb those instincts, and we have to accept that this can leave us with questions of integrity;
- the ongoing failure to reach the highest levels of decision-makers also means that we may not quite be getting our message to where it is most needed. Talking to the people we talk to

10 For more information about the Peacebuilding Partnership see: http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/ifs/pbp_en.htm.
11 For more information about the Stability Instrument see: http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/ifs/index_en.htm.
12 This process has been documented by QCEA and EPLO in the joint paper *People are Party to Building Peace*. Accessible at: www.quaker.org/qcea/archive/index.html#download or www.eplo.org/index.php?id=224.

can sometimes feel like preaching to the choir. They are already convinced. We might have to comfort ourselves with the sense that we provide them with the information and analysis they need to influence policy at higher levels.

4. Mobilizing Public Opinion and Generating Political Will

As has been outlined in the previous sections, mobilizing representatives of the corporate sector and political decision-makers is essential for peacebuilding. But this in itself is not enough, although without it nothing else will have lasting effect. We live in a globalised world where powerful interests are at work guarding the status quo for themselves and for their profits – those powerful interests include us, but equally importantly also the corporate sector, political elites, groups and individuals everywhere who benefit directly from violence and war. In order to change the status quo, it is therefore imperative to get public opinion galvanised.

What I mean by public opinion in this context is the response of the general public in the global North to the issues which the peacebuilding communities are trying to address. My own – maybe slightly caricatured – view of public opinion is that people are affected to a certain extent by what they see in the media about conflict in other countries (the nearer to home the more affected they are likely to be), but they tend to forget the issues when they have faded from the headlines. They are not very likely to see the connections between their relatively privileged lifestyle and the conflicts they hear about. They are not willing to change their own lifestyles to contribute to changing the glaring inequalities in the world. And they would not readily vote for politicians who focus on peacebuilding mainly because elections tend to be focused on domestic issues.

The media have a role to play here, but they, too, cater for what they perceive to be the things that the public is interested in. So the peacebuilding communities need to focus on how to get their message into the media *and* how to make it resound with the general public. One can imagine several ways to tackle this: not just by focusing on documentaries and news programmes, but for example by getting our message into the story lines of soap operas. Maybe we should develop some sort of reality TV competition which picks up on our issues. Some of the organisations in the peacebuilding communities have extensive experience in working with and through the media;[13] we need to encourage them to also look at how to shift the thinking in the global North. Furthermore, there are some political allies in political parties who might give us a platform; we should use those. If we can identify a common product which many people buy regularly which is connected to fuelling specific conflicts, then a mass campaign for their boycott might contribute to a shift in thinking (South African grapes, Barclays Bank – both during the Apartheid years – are good examples). Finally, another way of shifting public opinion can be to engage young people: getting peace education into schools can help to sensitise children to the *local* issues of bullying and how to deal with them; such steps can then also develop awareness of more global concerns.

In short, politicians and the corporate sector listen to public opinion if it affects the ballot box or the bottom line. That has been demonstrated if nowhere else then in South Africa (in terms of the bottom line).[14] To effect real change, public opinion has to be part of the equation so that there is an intrinsic wish on the part of politicians and corporate interests to change their behaviour and thus change the world. That is the greatest challenge the peacebuilding communities face in the global North. It is the next task the peacebuilding communities must tackle jointly, by developing approaches which build on all of our strengths. We all have something to bring to that task; we all

13 One example is Search for Common Ground; see: www.sfcg.org.
14 The boycotting of South African imports and companies during the Apartheid years at least contributed to the end of Apartheid.

need to share our dreams, our technical and political knowledge, our networks, our influence and our financial resources. If we can do that, not only will we no longer be wasting our time, we will be the change we want to bring about.

In addition, we have to take personal responsibility in our daily lives and improve our private capacities for peace. Peacebuilding should be based on the firm foundation of seeking to achieve appropriate nonviolent, political systems for conflict resolution everywhere. But a lot of conflict is driven by global inequalities; in order to gain credibility in peacebuilding, those who benefit from that inequality (in particular in the global North) first of all have to focus on political change of their own policies. The feminist movement of the 1970s postulated that the personal is political. It is. But that also implies that the political is the personal. We cannot hide our own affluence behind either political or technical activism. Are we prepared to do that?

It means that we – who consider ourselves part of the peacebuilding communities – accept that we are part of the problem. We have to shift our view and accept that 'us' going off to help 'them' is unlikely to be the complete or even necessarily an appropriate answer. We need to see ourselves less as the 'decision-makers' in terms of what is 'good for them' but rather as listeners to the solutions which are developed by those people who are suffering under the current political status quo. And, as a consequence, we have to be prepared to give up our enormous privileges. We need to consume less (energy, water, food, other resources). We also have to ask ourselves where our own complicity is. Are our pension funds invested in companies that are complicit in holding up a globally or locally unjust system? Do we hold shares in these companies directly? How are our organisation's funds invested? Do we bank with the financiers of companies who work directly against the interests of peace?

As long as we think of 'global society' as 'the powerful', we are still a long way from recognizing that we are all part of global society. We – as groups and individuals – have some room to manoeuvre and a certain responsibility to act for a secure and just global society. Security is indivisible. As long as there is anyone in the world who suffers injustice and insecurity, none of us has security and justice. I believe that only the incorporation of this radical recognition will allow us to adopt an approach that will lead to significant (global) change.

5. References

Fisher, Simon and Lada Zimina 2009. Just Wasting Our Time? Provocative Thoughts for Peacebuilders, in: Beatrix Schmelzle and Martina Fischer (eds.). *Peacebuilding at a Crossroads? Dilemmas and Paths for Another Generation.* (Berghof Handbook Dialogue No. 7.) Berlin: Berghof Research Center, 11-35. Also available at www.berghof-handbook.net/std_page.php?LANG=e&id=5. [A longer version was published in March 2008 as *Just Wasting Our Time? An Open Letter to Peacebuilders*, available online at http://lettertopeacebuilders.ning.com.]

Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) 2007. *Peace and Peacebuilding. Some European Perspectives.* Papers from the QCEA/QPSW/QUNO Conference in October 2006. Brussels: QCEA. Available at www.quaker.org/qcea/archive/Peace%20and%20Peacebuilding%20-%20Some%20European%20Perspectives.pdf.

Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) and European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) 2008. *People are Party to Building Peace. What Role Can and Do Non-governmental Organisations Play in Relation to the EU in the Context of Conflict Prevention?* Brussels: QCEA & EPLO. Available at www.eplo.org/documents/QCEA_EPLO_paper.pdf.

[All weblinks accessed 8 January 2009.]

Berghof
Research Center
Forschungszentrum
for Constructive
für konstruktive
Conflict Management
Konfliktbearbeitung

Reflections on Peacebuilding from Croatia

A Response by Goran Bozicevic

1. Introduction

Writing a comment to Simon Fisher and Lada Zimina's article is both an honour and a challenge. Fifteen years after the term was introduced in the *Agenda for Peace*, the 'peacebuilding' community is being tested. "Whose peace are peacebuilders working for?" is for me the most important question raised by Fisher and Zimina.

I loved the text immediately.[1] "This is real food for thought", I thought, "the most important contribution to this field after Lewer/Ramsbotham's *"Something must be done"* from 1993 and Lederach's *Building Peace* in 1997". I know that I am not doing justice to many other important books and texts, but I am just naming my personal cornerstones. This text unexpectedly joined them this year.

Why, you may wonder, did I so much welcome its arrival? Probably because the authors clearly articulated many concerns and sources of headaches which I have had in my own peacebuilding work during the past decades. The distinction between 'technical' and 'transformative' peacebuilding, in particular, resonated with my own experiences.

1 When I read the longer version of this text, first published as an 'Open Letter to Peacebuilders' on the web (available at http://lettertopeacebuilders.ning.com), I signed up to the forum right away and I decided that we should translate the text into Croatian.

2. ‘Technical’ vs. ‘Transformative’ Peacebuilding: From Personal Experience

Five years ago, one participant on the Peace Studies programme in Zagreb asked me what had been most difficult in my work at the Volunteer Project Pakrac, in the destroyed and divided town of Pakrac, Croatia between 1993 and 1995.[2] My answer then was: “peace activists/workers coming from the West and telling me/us what we should do and what local people need. Coming with brilliant instant solutions and ideas, ready to be recorded with their cameras.”

Fisher and Zimina are not exactly talking about this bunch of people – naive idealists who are sometimes a danger with their lack of cultural sensitivity, but mostly lack the resources or influence to do real harm. Still, these people were able to suck away energy while visiting others like us, who were living and working on the ceasefire line, fixing ruins while actually using that as an entry point to a wounded community and for trust-building.

But to tell the truth, my most difficult conflicts were not with these visiting idealists. Surprisingly, they were not even with political extremists, radicals, aggressive war veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or anyone else who expressed hate towards me/us – people working across the line of separation, working on peace with former enemies, helping the other side who had hurt them most. The relationship with them, my value-system opponents, was not always smooth or caring, but I always looked at ‘them’ as one of the main reasons for my peacebuilding work.

No, the deepest wounds were inflicted by conflicts with colleagues subscribing to a ‘technical peacebuilding’ approach. I will give you two examples describing the tensions that may result from different and incompatible approaches.

2.1 Flexibility and Planning

In spring 1999, the peacebuilding organisation I worked for was contracted by a big United Nations (UN) agency to conduct a series of peacebuilding trainings for municipality leaders in Bosnia. Problems (with the UN agency) started during the first three-day training. Half an hour before the start of the training, we (i.e. the trainer team) were warned by UN staff (i.e. the organisers) that when the participants from the two towns had arrived, something bad had happened: “they didn’t greet each other at all in the hotel lobby (even though they know each other). It was a bad idea to organise this seminar…” After a day and a half of training, the participants themselves asked us: “is it okay if we *all* go to visit town B today after lunch? We’ve realised that many people haven’t been there since the war. They are still afraid, but we invited them to show it is safe for them to come. If we are late for the afternoon session, we could always finish later this evening…” (The topic of the session was ‘Nonviolent Conflict Resolution’!)

We – all participants and trainers, some 23 people in five cars – made the visit to the nearby town. In my opinion, it was the best part of the whole training. People were entering shops and cafes, we all had a drink together on the terrace of one cafe. It was an important visit, not only to break down

2 The Volunteer Project Pakrac (VPP) was the largest project of the Antiwar Campaign Croatia. It started in July 1993 and finished in February 1996. In that period, over 400 volunteers from over 20 countries came to Pakrac, mostly for three-week shifts, to work on social reconstruction projects. Pakrac at that time was a town of 2000 to 3000 inhabitants, located in the UN Protected Area – Sector West in Croatia, divided into a ‘Croatian’ and a ‘Krajina’ side by the UN ceasefire line. 75% of it had been destroyed in the war in 1991. VPP worked in cooperation with the UN Office Vienna (UNOV) and, on the ‘Krajina’ side, the Centre for Antiwar Action, Belgrade, Serbia – at the time perhaps the only cooperation between Croatian and Serbian organisations. The founders and first coordinators of the project were Wam Kat from the Netherlands, Vanja Nikolic and myself from Croatia. Philip Peirce, in cooperation with UNOV and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), later transferred VPP experiences to the Bosnian towns of Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje and Travnik.

fear, but to put the hosts in the active role of prejudice- and fear-breakers. We all felt excited, fulfilled and proud. We returned to the hotel and continued the training with a new group spirit.

The 'punishment' came after dinner: a senior UN official confronted us trainers for changing the agenda and schedule of the training. We were not supposed to go for that trip and just have a good time there. Our common task, as he put it, was to work on agreed workshop topics. We argued with him: "don't you see the value of this single trip to the whole group? What is the point of having a session on conflict transformation in the hotel, while avoiding any group initiative and a real test of trust?"

He was not prepared to accept our arguments. In the end, participants from the group got involved, defending the trainers' decision passionately. "Don't you see the training is a big success already?" participants asked. But he could not. This UN official had been under great pressure for months, and now he could not cope with the fact that not all was going exactly as planned.

This example of cooperation between a local/Croatian NGO and international/UN agency shows a heavy clash between the two approaches Fisher and Zimina contrast in their article: a strictly 'technical' and a flexibly 'transformative' one. Most issues were resolved after a common meeting, but the question remains: what is the relationship between technical and transformative approaches in peacebuilding? If it is coexistence, what kind of coexistence can it be – peaceful or with latent aggression? Competitive? And if it is competitive, what are we competing for – money or glory?

I see a very profound dilemma here: how can someone with limited resources but infinite commitment trust others with limited commitment and infinite resources?

2.2 Cooperation and Funding

Let me share another personal story, one of my first experiences with this form of conflicting approaches. It could be labelled 'form' vs. 'content' or 'bureaucracy' vs. 'field work', but in light of this Dialogue I see it as 'technical' vs. 'transformative'. The Volunteer Project Pakrac employed shifts of volunteers, who worked on physical and social reconstruction. They stayed for three weeks per shift. There were always between 15 and 25 people working in the project (a lot for a town with 2000 to 3000 inhabitants). We had been told that we were a pioneering peacebuilding project and that the UN was very proud of us. That was flattering to hear, but still most of the money for project needs (food, accommodation, utilities, travel, project coordinator's fee, etc.) was coming from the volunteers themselves, who were engaged predominantly through Service Civil International[3] and paid 200 German marks[4] for food and accommodation.

Many representatives of INGOs visited – and admired – us: "what a great job you do, amazing, working in a divided town, across the line, re-establishing broken communications, wonderful. Bravo! Why don't you send us a project proposal, we can fund you." To which we would reply: "why would we write and send a project proposal to you when you can see, here on the spot, what we do, what we need the money for, how we spend it, how we manage our work? On paper we can write anything, but here – an hour and a half's drive from the capital, Zagreb – you can always come and check directly, on the spot, our work and the way we use the money."

I know many of you will laugh now, reading about naive peace activists who are ready to get up at 6 am to work on building sites, cleaning bricks from destroyed houses along with local people. This also includes many 'pausa' – coffee pausa, cigarette pausa, rakija pausa, lunch pausa… But what it means in reality is also that you bring the breeze of normal life to a devastated post-war community. In the afternoons, there were children's activities, women's groups and a lot of listening and talking to each other. Looking back, I have to say: we were really good at field work, but bad at bureaucracy.

3 Service Civil International (SCI) is a peace organisation that coordinates international voluntary projects for people of all ages, cultures, religious and economic backgrounds. For more information, see www.sciint.org.
4 At that time, in 1993, a teacher in Croatia would have earned half of that (100-150 German marks) in monthly salary.

Later this did change, and a skilled manager and fundraiser turned up from one volunteer group. However, the story about the two paradigms which never meet remains: "if you want us involved, you need to follow *our* procedures" was actually the message coming from both sides.

3. Who Belongs to the Peacebuilding Community – and Why?

There are many people who do not see their actions as peacebuilding, yet they are peacebuilders, because they change existing relationships. I have met dozens of people in Bosnia-Herzegovina who were naturally born peacebuilders. Some were returning hundreds of displaced persons/refugees to villages with no resources, no phone at home, no office, no NGOs, no cars. They made up for it with a lot of personal determination: "when you need a phone, you will find it and use it." I heard from a woman in Derventa, Bosnia-Herzegovina, in 1999, whispering to me in order not to be heard by the leaders of returnee-NGOs: "if you want to prevent displaced persons from returning – create an NGO." It was meant as a joke, but at the same time it was not just a joke.

Peacebuilding nowadays requires a shift from *what* towards *how*. It is about changing unjust relationships, recognizing hidden oppression, empowering and enabling people to start getting at the roots of conflict. Transformative peacebuilding, in my opinion, deals with the roots of conflict; technical peacebuilding (too often) deals only with consequences.

I agree with Fisher and Zimina that there is a peacebuilding community – one whose purpose is to be open, open to everyone "who can make a change".[5] Open to include all parties involved in conflict: they are not 'clients' or 'beneficiaries' – they are all potential partners/allies. I know that often there is a huge amount of traumatisation, simplification and political extremism among victim groups, war veterans, returnees, local authorities and youth. But if we look at these obstacles as a heavy mist, interfering with our communication and cooperation – perhaps soon we could start seeing human beings eager to learn how to deal with violence constructively. We can start seeing our future colleagues in the peacebuilding field.

3.1 Professionalisation: 'Peacebuilders International'?

These days, we encounter many more 'peacebuilding professionals' than we used to… Many of them enter the field with great dedication and willingness to learn. At the same time, we hear the term 'peacebuilding industry' referring to those for whom it is 'just a job'. I am asking myself why it is so attractive for 'internationals' (meaning: those who do not come from post-war areas, but usually from developed countries) to work in the peacebuilding field. I have come up with a list of potential features:

a) Peacebuilding is a new field, not many people are even aware of its existence – so activists can consider themselves as pioneers, even as making history.
b) Peacebuilders are supposed to bring about change, or at least manage it, which gives a powerful feeling.
c) We can earn quite a good income from working 'in peacebuilding'. Plus, if we count more than money, we earn huge benefits: experience, exposure to different cultures, contacts…
d) Peace work takes place in situations at the edge of danger, which means that it is emotionally demanding (so we have the rewarding feeling that we are doing a hard job).

5 I am quoting Brian Phillips, Joseph Rowntree Trust Fellow in 2002. The qualities he names in the internal paper *Five Defining Qualities of Quaker Global Witness in the 21st Century* are: 1) Identifying those who can make a change; 2) A ministry of presence; 3) Continuity of commitment; 4) Acts of faith; 5) Pragmatic approaches to reconciliation.

e) We have the privilege of being part of big, powerful, dominant structures, but we are also distant from them. What I mean is that our passport is – often – protecting us; established, functioning, efficient health and social care systems are backing us up. If the situation should worsen, evacuation will be organised for us. Our kids have access to all the resources 'those kids in the field' do not have. We are/feel like 'normal' people – but in the 'field' reality, we are not.

f) We consider ourselves as 'good guys', even though we never say so. As we are fixing what 'bad guys' have done, we must be the good ones. This feeling creates individual and collective 'identity'.

g) Wherever you work, whatever conflict you are managing (they are *'all the same'* or – well – *'similar'*) you always find someone you know from some other crisis – an old friend. The more you work and travel, the more people you know. In the end, we are one (relatively small) community.

3.2 The Unusual Suspects: Working with War Veterans

This year's *Miramidani*, the Peacebuilding Days in Groznjan, Istria (Croatia) dealt with the potential of former combatants for peacebuilding. The title of the gathering, held from 11 to 14 September 2008, was: "The role of war veterans in peacebuilding: inclusion, linking and dialogue inside civil society".[6] This topic is still unusual for great parts of the peacebuilding community. Most of the work that has been done with war veterans is about DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration). But here, in the post-Yugoslav countries, we have actually moved some steps ahead. War veterans are active in peacebuilding, at least in Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Some readers may ask: what do war veterans have to do with peacebuilding? Are they not the ones carrying the main responsibility for violence in the conflict, the use of weapons, the killing? But the role of war veterans can also be looked at from quite a different angle: many of the war veterans joined the army due to their strong interest in peace. Their motivation was usually about confronting some other (enemy) army, about defending a home country or at least a village, a home, family and friends. If they have been lucky and survived, their PTSD is allowing them to function no worse than the majority of the population. Most of them did not commit war crimes. After losing their illusions about the noble causes they fought for (few fight for bad causes), most have started thinking about what sense their course of action made.

If 'the peacebuilding community' is not automatically excluding them, these war veterans may become curious. If the doors of peacebuilding are open, war veterans may want to come and join in. And sometimes, they turn very unexpectedly into most motivated peacebuilders. Here are three examples:

The first example is that of a war veteran and participant in a 1998 peacebuilding training in Travnik, Bosnia-Herzegovina, who said: "I came on the first day to destroy your training. What, [I thought], can people from Croatia tell me about peace? Then I realised that you [the team of trainers] are enabling us [the participants] to talk about our war experiences and peace dilemmas and that mostly you are staying aside. Now I get up one hour earlier, so I can finish my work and come on time to our workshops."

The second example concerns one of the strangest presentations I have ever given of my peacebuilding work. It took place on the ceasefire line in Pakrac, in spring 1994. At the time the Volunteer Project Pakrac was renting a house in an isolated street on the line of separation between

6 Themes addressed during *Miramidani* included: "What is peace work nowadays?", "The relationship of dealing with the past and peacebuilding", "Visibility of peacebuilding and struggle against elitism: Peacebuilding which includes all of us", "Working on war trauma as enabling potentials in peacebuilding", "War veterans and peace workers: similarities and differences".

the communities, near the forest. We and a dozen Croatian policemen were the only residents of that street. As those men had no other job besides watching the mined forest and deterring intruders, they became curious about our peace project. As they were bored and obviously missing information, there was also increasing tension between us. One day I decided to approach them and present our work, ideas, beliefs and values. I was talking for about one hour – about nonviolence, conflict transformation, pacifism, peacebuilding, who knows what – to a group of fully equipped, armed men in uniforms who were on two-week, 24/7 shifts, far away from their homes and families. When I finished, there was silence. I immediately regretted my stupid naivety – why was I talking to them about these things? After all, they were armed soldiers. Their response took me by complete surprise: "what you were telling us is amazing. Thanks a lot. We guess that we can't fully follow what you were saying now – our reality is very different. But we see the value in what you are doing for our children, for building a peaceful future. Go ahead. Don't give up." That was perhaps the first encouragement I personally had from men in uniform.

Finally, in April 2005 in the Croatian coastal town of Selce, Gordan Bodog and myself, supported by Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) and a few other colleagues, organised a gathering called "The Role of Croatian War Veterans/ Defenders in Peacebuilding in Croatia and its Neighbourhood". The Selce meeting attracted some 35 people, from the left to extreme right, across the whole spectrum of political opinions, war experiences and roles. These included many true leaders, some of them heading influential NGOs and associations, some of them public figures, highly ranked in military terms or award-winning in the peacebuilding field – all of them were capable of ensuring that the impulse of the meeting in Selce would be carried on into other organisations and levels of society. For about two days we were on the brink of a physical incident. Tensions were extremely high. It remains the most difficult meeting I ever attended (and even facilitated). Some people were shocked to realise that there were participants from Serbia among us. Others were astonished at the intensity of hatred stated by some individuals. But on the third and last day we all realised that only two people had left the group (who had not been active in discussions anyway); all the others were still sitting and talking.

Immediately after the Selce meeting came an invitation from the war veterans' side: "could you please teach us how to do this?" "To do what exactly?" was our response. "To communicate with other people who don't share our values. This was happening in Selce, wasn't it? It was amazing. Such a diverse group and we were listening to each other." This is the beginning of the story of IZMIR – Initiative for Peacebuilding and Cooperation. One of the participants in Selce was Bruno Cavic. He remembers: "we were curious to see who was talking about Croatian war veterans and about peacebuilding – after noticing the announcement on the Internet. So we sat in a car and went to Selce, ready to return that very same day. Instead we stayed. After Selce, I was asked by the fellows from my own war veteran organisation: 'so, how was it there, among our 'enemies', the peace activists and Serbs?' I responded simply: 'guys, we've got a lot to learn from peace/ civil initiatives'." Bruno, who is a retired Croatian Army Brigade Commander, has since finished a programme in Peace Studies in Zagreb. Now he is president of IZMIR, an NGO gathering together Croatian war veterans and peace activists. He keeps repeating: "this is exercising democracy. This is what we do. This is what we have to do. There is no other way."

At the end of the day, peacebuilding is done by many individuals and groups. Most of them would not call it 'peacebuilding', most of them are not even familiar with any concepts of peacebuilding. But they do transform social relations, they do contribute to shifting the power distribution, they do widen the space for dealing with the past, for truth and tolerance, and they challenge authorities. If we think deeper, the 'peacebuilding doors' have only one purpose – to be

open. Because peacebuilding must be open for everyone. Otherwise it is not peacebuilding.[7]

4. How Do we Deal with the Dilemmas?

I like Fisher and Zimina's article because it is so provocative. At the same time, I think that the authors are still not critical enough towards technical peacebuilding. Writing this comment I realised what is missing in the field of peacebuilding: a minimum of accepted standards. Some kind of base: "from here you start. But you don't start before here, okay?!"

Peacebuilding has to be guided by the 'Do No Harm' principle, the ethics of n+1 party intervention and a clear commitment to nonviolence. It should include the courage to resist and challenge power structures, no matter whether these are based on economic, cultural or gender differences. And peace work needs to build on individual conflict transformation skills.

I remember very vividly the messages from Lewer/Ramsbotham's book *"Something must be done"*. I was lucky to be given one page from it only a few weeks after the book was published in 1993 ("Some Questions Non Official Intervenors Should Be Asking Themselves"). It has been my 'Holy Page' ever since.[8] Let me share some of the questions with you:

- Have I the right to intervene (i) without being asked, [and] (ii) without being 'wanted'?
- Is my methodology appropriate to cultural traditions?
- What are my motivations, e.g. religious, political, humanitarian? What difference does that make? […]
- Have I considered the broader implications of my intervention?
- Have I long-term commitment?
- For interventions such as 'active mediation' can I guarantee confidentiality, e.g. pressure from funding/academic institutions?
- How covert/manipulative can I be?
- To whom am I accountable for my actions, e.g. need for support/advisory/evaluation group?
- How closely should I become involved with the 'official' level?
- Is there any point at which I should withdraw from the conflict? […]
- What are motives of protagonists in inviting external intervention?
- Is my intervention 'content' or 'process' based?
- Do I consider myself truly impartial or have I sympathy with one side? […]
- Why have I chosen this particular conflict, at this time?

Source: "Something must be done". Nick Lewer and Oliver Ramsbotham, Peace Research Report No. 13, Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford, August 1993, page 72.

These questions are amazing, but they are still – questions. One may hope that peacebuilders will continue to strive to find innovative, creative, transformative and constructive answers to them. Yet let us be real: a readiness to constantly raise questions and at the same time being a good active listener is more than a good start.

7 Here, a clarification is necessary: I am not saying that mere will for peacebuilding is enough. It is welcome, but far from enough. I am saying that anyone who wants to be involved in peacebuilding has to have an opportunity to do so.
8 Oliver Ramsbotham, one of the authors, responded half-jokingly after I told him how often I use that page: "well, this is bad feedback – you use only one page out of the whole book."

Goran Bozicevic

5. References & Further Reading

Anderson, Mary B. 1999. *Do No Harm. How Aid Can Support Peace – or War.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Bozicevic, Goran 2007. Is Dealing with the Past Slow and Difficult in Our Regions?, in: Helena Rill, Tamara Smidling and Ana Bitoljanu (eds.). *20 Pieces of Encouragement for Awakening and Change. Peacebuilding in the Region of Former Yugoslavia.* Belgrade/Sarajevo: Centre for Nonviolent Action, 127-136.

Fisher, Simon and Lada Zimina 2009. Just Wasting Our Time? Provocative Thoughts for Peacebuilders, in: Beatrix Schmelzle and Martina Fischer (eds.). *Peacebuilding at a Crossroads? Dilemmas and Paths for Another Generation.* (Berghof Handbook Dialogue No. 7.) Berlin: Berghof Research Center, 11-35. Also available at www.berghof-handbook.net/std_page.php?LANG=e&id=5. [A longer version was published in March 2008 as *Just Wasting Our Time? An Open Letter to Peacebuilders,* available online at http://lettertopeacebuilders.ning.com.]

Ghali, Boutros Boutros 1995. *An Agenda for Peace.* New York: United Nations Department of Public Information. Available at www.un.org/Docs/SG/agpeace.html and www.un.org/Docs/SG/agsupp.html.

Lederach, John Paul 1997. *Building Peace. Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies.* Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Lewer, Nick and Oliver Ramsbotham 1993. *"Something must be done": Towards an Ethical Framework for Humanitarian Intervention in International Social Conflict.* (Peace Research Report No. 13.) Bradford: Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford.

[All weblinks accessed 8 January 2009.]

Berghof
Research Center
Forschungszentrum
for Constructive
für konstruktive
Conflict Management
Konfliktbearbeitung

Time to Learn:
Expanding Organisational Capacities in Conflict Settings

A Response by Ulrike Hopp & Barbara Unger

1. Stop – and then what?

When Simon Fisher and Lada Zimina's initial *Open Letter to Peacebuilders*[1] reached us, we were excited: finally somebody had raised the questions we have been struggling with, expressed doubts which we have experienced ourselves, and called upon us to do things differently! We were inspired by the questions and concerns and immediately agreed that we would like to contribute to the debate. We were glad that our colleagues from the Berghof Handbook Dialogue Series had offered this opportunity. But something strange seemed to happen: whenever we went through the refreshing article, we felt that something was missing. At first, each of us thought that maybe we had not read thoroughly enough, or that our reaction to the painfully accurate diagnosis was led by self-criticism, guilt and withdrawal. Then again, another explanation could simply be that the path from where we are to where we would like to be has still to be traced, and maybe in more detail than one single article can do.

We take Fisher and Zimina's ideas for an "agenda for transformative peacebuilding" (in this volume, 28-31) as being one of many necessary contributions to a discussion which is far from finished. We will not attempt (despite being tempted) to go into all the inspiring and sometimes provocative thoughts, but rather focus on one aspect in which we have become increasingly interested in our work

1 *Editors' note:* the lead article in this volume is based on *Just Wasting Our Time? An Open Letter to Peacebuilders* which Simon Fisher and Lada Zimina circulated widely in March 2008.

as practitioners: the observation that, as Fisher and Zimina put it, creating change requires "a high degree of reflexive learning and adaptability, at personal and institutional levels [which] calls for a willingness to learn from the work of peacebuilding and other sectors, and bring those insights back into practice" (ibid., 31).

Fisher and Zimina ask us to stop and think together about what change we would like to see. They go on to outline an agenda for transformative peacebuilding with six intertwined areas. We would like to refer to three of them here: their ideas for improving networks and linkages, delivering change and action learning. Fisher and Zimina offer suggestions on how to connect isolated project approaches to the wider context through building alliances and networks; they ask how to craft truly transformative interventions that require creativity, finesse, long-term engagement and collaboration with others; and, lastly, they suggest investing in specialized education and engaging in action learning in order to take peacebuilding work to a new and innovative level.

We will use the opportunity of the rhetorical pause which they call for to reflect specifically on how to improve our learning, i.e. the *way* in which we are learning.

2. Why We are Interested in Learning

Both of us joined Berghof Peace Support (BPS)[2] after roughly 10 years of practice in development, human rights and peacebuilding, working in different – also governmental – organisations (and thus, incidentally, we have difficulties with Fisher and Zimina's dichotomy of practitioners working in peacebuilding vs. those employed by government). In Berghof, we found an organisation with a unique appetite for learning from research and practice and were excited to be, among other things, part of the development of a systemic approach to conflict transformation – something we consider more an attitude than a tool or a new school (Wils et al. 2006; Koerppen et al. 2008).

At the heart of this systemic approach lies learning – by individuals and organisations, as part of the system – since the learning process will enable actors to become peaceful agents for change, or the "critical yeast" as John Paul Lederach would call them (Lederach 2005, 91). However, both of us have come to realise in our work with civil society organisations and stakeholders in different conflict settings that we do not know enough about how these learning processes really work. How can we, in fact, best support civil society organisations in reflecting on their work? How about our own learning?

We do not agree with Fisher and Zimina's assessment that values are generally missing in peacebuilding work today, but we do agree that we do not sufficiently reflect on our explicit and implicit theories of change. According to Susanna Campbell, "organizational learning determines the degree to which an organization is able to identify and assess the relevance of its theory of change. Regular assessment of the relationship between theory of change (intention) and the impact of the resulting programs on the conflict (outcome) is […] essential for successful peacebuilding" (Campbell 2007, 6).

2 Berghof Peace Support (also: Berghof Foundation for Peace Support) was established in 2004 with the aim of making a practical, hands-on contribution to transforming violent conflict. Its mission is described as threefold: (1) advocating and applying a systemic approach to conflict transformation; (2) supporting peace processes by enhancing networks of internal and external organisations in both politics and civil society; and (3) fostering creative, effective and durable peace initiatives. BPS was set up with the vision of being a complementary sister organisation to the Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management (as of November 2008 Berghof Conflict Research), which was established by the Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies in 1993. For more information on BPS, see www.berghof-peacesupport.org. For more information on the Research Center, which also publishes the Berghof Handbook and its Dialogue Series, see www.berghof-center.org. Both organisations are located in Berlin, Germany.

Yet there seems to be something in the growing 'project mentality' and the ever-urgent work in the context of crisis and violence that hinders us from moving beyond technicalities and makes us stop short of transformation. To break this invisible barrier we will have to look more closely at how individuals work and learn, how change and learning happen within organisations and how this can lead to change in large systems. Considering these links, we believe that our field should look closer at two questions: *where* does change need to happen, and *how well* are we – and our organisations – *equipped* to inspire that change?

We have found that planned, built-in learning loops have enriched our own thinking and development, our organisation(s) and our work. For example, during the engagement of the Berghof Foundation in Sri Lanka,[3] we had the opportunity for repeated self-reflection processes which we linked to our evaluation and planning cycles. These facilitated spaces for reflection, and – not to be neglected – the glass of wine or cup of tea with colleagues in the evening, to revisit our personal and the organisation's commitment and to check those against the quagmire of practical every-day decisions, proved indispensable. And we wonder: is this something that can be developed further, as an on-going learning process and as a recommendation for other organisations?

3. Learning about Learning

Thinking outside the box of daily routines is one of the main challenges for anyone who has a busy schedule – but peacebuilding requires exactly that. Lederach captured the challenge well in his call for peacebuilders to continuously "have one foot in what is and one foot beyond what exists" (Lederach 2005, x). This challenge goes far beyond effective time management; it is not only about finding time and resources for reflection. It is more about getting the process right so that reflection is followed by action – this is when learning really happens. In the tradition of Gregory Bateson (an anthropologist and linguist, among other things, and co-creator of the science of cybernetics), as well as Chris Argyris and Donald A. Schoen (who have written extensively on organisational learning and 'the learning organisation') we define learning as adaptation to external change. Learning in organisations is thus not only about acquiring knowledge, but about changed practice. New insights have to bring about changed action and new routines.

There is a vast body of expertise and literature on organisational learning, the learning organisation, change management and organisational development. Some of it resembles 'how to …' management bestsellers. Some of it also seems too narrowly focused on private-sector experiences to be instructive here, as many authors and practitioners have found that learning in non-profit organisations differs from that in business: it is more value-driven, has other accountability references and works in highly complex contexts (Roper et al. 2003, 8ff.).

However, many of the insights are based on concepts and theories that seem closely aligned with peacebuilding values and can be very useful. A summary of the underlying thinking guiding Peter Senge's *Fifth Discipline Fieldbook* (Senge et al. 1994), for example, characterizes the findings so far: "Organizations are products of the ways that people in them think and interact. To change organizations for the better, you must give people the opportunity to change the ways they think and interact. No one person, including a highly charismatic teacher or CEO, can train or command someone else to alter their attitudes, beliefs, skills, capabilities, perceptions, or level of commitment. Instead, the practice of organizational learning involves developing and taking part in tangible activities that will change the way people conduct their work. Through these new governing

3 The project Resource Network for Conflict Studies and Transformation (RNCST) was established in 2001. Co-funded by the Swiss and German governments, it ran until the end 2008. For more information, see *Space for Peace* (2008).

ideas, innovations in infrastructure, and new management methods and tools people will develop an enduring capability for change. The process will pay back the organization with a far greater diversity and intensity of commitment, innovation, and talent."[4]

In this context, it is useful to make the distinction between first-, second- and third-order learning. First-order learning, the most widely known, refers to learning from the 'gap' between expectation and outcome. It is also called 'incremental learning' which happens, for example, when an organisation changes its programme agenda. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) often bring about first-order learning.

Second-order learning (or 'double loop' learning) introduces another level, namely reflection on the rules and values that guide our action. In peacebuilding, this would refer to the reflection of theories of change that are guiding our work. Our M&E can bring about reflection on that level, as long as it is well conceived.

The third-order (or 'triple loop') learning refers to learning how to learn. Also called 'transformational learning', it aims at changing underlying patterns and designing new learning processes.

Within this framework, our interest centres less on what our field still has to learn with regards to 'content' – the *what* to do – but on *how we learn to learn* and adjust our action accordingly, specifically in the field of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. In our experience, this learning about learning is crucial, since even our best efforts in transformative peace work might be ineffective if we fail to learn lessons offered to us.

While neither the learning theories and nor the discourse about learning organisations are particularly new in the peacebuilding world, it seems to us that they have not been fully used. A recent research project of the Global Public Policy Institute looks into learning within the UN and appears to arrive at similar conclusions (Benner/Rotmann 2008, 44). Therefore, we are asking ourselves: firstly, whether we have sufficiently valued the insights from all the volumes written on organisational development and learning; but secondly, and more importantly maybe, whether there might be specific challenges for organisational learning and learning organisations in the context of conflict transformation that we need to consider in order to improve our effectiveness?

4. Challenges of Learning

During the last few years, we have seen the development and testing of various planning, assessment and evaluation tools and guidelines. Many of them are very useful and inspiring for our work and they are based on a growing body of practical experience. Ministries and multilateral agencies have been engaged in learning within their organisations, deploying personnel and creating new structures. The extent to which 'mainstreaming' efforts of peace and conflict related work have taken root in the development world is illustrated, for example, by the recent debate on aid effectiveness in fragile states and conflict situations on the occasion of the high level forum on aid effectiveness in Accra/Ghana, however 'technical' these discussions may seem.

Also, in the conflict transformation and peacebuilding field, collaborative learning exercises have provided us with stimuli and results. The Reflecting on Peace Practice project of the US-based organisation CDA – Collaborative Learning Projects and other processes have broadened our understanding and have called for more focus on peace writ large, beyond the project horizon.[5]

4 Source: www.fieldbook.com [accessed 3 November 2008].
5 *Editors' note*: see also the contribution of Chigas/Woodrow to this Dialogue (47-57).

However, many of us find it difficult to integrate the knowledge provided by these collaborative learning efforts into our own day-to-day work and to accompany it with internal learning.

In our own work, we have repeatedly confronted a number of challenges and questions, and we wonder how other practitioners have experienced the following six interrelated aspects:

1) What is specific about learning in conflict?

Since any organisation in a conflict situation is part of the conflict system, intra-organisational dynamics are shaped by the conflict context and thus affect learning. How teams communicate and work together, how they deal with problems and how they react in order to adapt their action is informed by the team members' individual and collective experiences in the conflict. We therefore propose that learning and change in organisations in conflict need to consider the team dynamics and individual background of team members much more than this is done in current practice. This, of course, begs the question: what does this imply for the guidelines and toolboxes in use, which often are modelled on organisations in peaceful environments? We believe that we need to invest more into tailor-made approaches to team-building and learning within our organisations in conflict.

Most peacebuilding organisations unite individuals with different political, gender, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Some of the colleagues are nationals, others not. We find that in conflict, there is much more insecurity around what issues can be raised, how criticism can be expressed or how personal opinion is influenced by group affiliation and loyalty. How can this diversity and sensitivity be used constructively for peacebuilding, and what pitfalls have to be avoided? Team-building, we suggest, is becoming much more important in order to enable and empower the team for joint learning and for advocating peace and reconciliation in the society. This consumes considerable time and energy, yet "efforts to deal with internal dynamics *is* the work as it prepares a multicultural group to address the deep social divisions in their society" (Woodrow et al. 2008, xi). It thus, in fact, enables them to carry out their peacebuilding work.

2) How to integrate learning into the project cycle…

When trying to inspire change in organisations, we face a dilemma. We have learned that peacebuilding has to be as well planned as any other activity, and this requires analysis and strategic planning exercises bound to timeframes – however flexible these might be. Often, we therefore tend to slot in 'reflection' around specific dates: the monitoring midpoint, the board meeting, an external evaluation – which allows us to integrate what we have discussed directly into new planning. Many of us organise workshops and retreats with the assistance of external resource persons, or serve in this way as external facilitators ourselves, thus again scheduling reflection to a fixed time slot.

While scheduling time for reflection is important, such cordoned-off periods should not be seen as sufficient nor should they restrict other, rather ad-hoc forms of reflection and learning. Have we not all heard it said, or said ourselves: "too bad, this good insight should have informed our work plan or change process design; but we just finished it two weeks ago…"? We must not only allow for learning every couple of months or years, at the end of a project or programme cycle – we have to find ways to adjust our technical frameworks, logframes, etc. so that seeds of insight can be nurtured and can inspire our action all the time.

In practice, this means systematically allocating specific times for learning, for example regular debriefings after each activity, team retreats, participation in learning projects and exchange within the peacebuilding community, but also leaving room for 'the spark of the moment'.

3) … and how to foster an understanding of learning as 'the work'?

Often, we face constraints in allocating the extra time for learning and feel a stronger urge to return to our peacebuilding activities instead. It seems that there is a fundamental misunderstanding regarding what opportunities for learning in our organisations are about. They are not a distraction from work – we believe they are 'the work'.

This misperception does not only occur in peacebuilding organisations, but an environment of violence and conflict creates even greater pressure on individuals and teams to make a difference in daily life and not 'waste their time in reflection workshops'. Partly, this notion of unnecessary 'navel-gazing' might stem from workshop design that does not tackle the 'real' issues. However, we believe that there is more to this phenomenon. It might also be related to our way of dealing with cognitive dissonances: when insights from workshops and discussions are contrasted with our routine activities, we may notice rather painful gaps and tensions, and instead of dealing with them, we just push those dissonances aside. The same phenomenon might be another reason for something that has occurred time and again in meetings and discussions with colleagues: an interesting thought emerges, but we move on according to schedule and the momentum is lost.

It seems that a bit of free time, or a little-longer-than-usual chat 'at the watering hole' with a like-minded colleague, is all it takes for a spark of insight to fly. We need to be flexible enough to allow for this – something that probably cannot be captured by rules but in effect reflects an attitude.

4) How to translate external stimuli into internal practice?

Often, a stimulus from outside the organisation is needed to start reflecting on our own peacebuilding practice. As peacebuilders we read reports, we participate in learning projects and we invite external support to help improve our work. Bringing resource persons to a workshop or conducting seminars with trainers from abroad is also a task which many peacebuilding organisations undertake for local partners in conflict regions. Often, the live experiences from other conflict contexts and the fresh views add value to the topical contribution in question. However, this 'parachuting' of resource persons also has its shortcomings, since the stimulus provided often seems short-lived and translating it into 'real life' and changed routines proves difficult.

Change depends on sustained action within the organisations themselves. Only sufficient resources, motivation and energy can make change happen, and for that, more commitment is required than for the initial consumption of provided input. An effective learning opportunity will prepare its participants and their organisations for these requirements and help the transition. In the same way that we include reflection and transfer modules when training individuals (Schmelzle 2006), we can also help to support learning in our organisations. Although this insight, again, is not new, in practice we still find a lot of capacity-building focusing on content only. Yet in our experience – and to use the Sri Lanka example again – supporting effective institutional capacity-building in peacebuilding organisations is often more about helping them to design their own learning and change process, rather than about assisting the content-related learning.

5) Can the donors be blamed for everything?

Fisher and Zimina argue that our field's actions and development are determined to a significant extent by the fact that our work is funded by few and mostly government donors. And, clearly, this situation also affects how we learn – or that we often do not allow ourselves to learn, i.e. interrupt and change our ongoing action as agreed in the funding proposal. This poses a great challenge, especially in a situation where our field seems to have to prove its value added and potential for impact in a world of turmoil and destabilization. However, in our work in Sri Lanka

we found that donors could be engaged not only in more flexible planning but also in joint learning processes. This was made possible through extensive reporting and documentation, relatively frequent and regular meetings on both the embassy and the headquarter levels, participation of the donors in all evaluation missions and generally open and trustful communication. Such cooperation required clarity of roles and expectations, and an understanding that peacebuilding is a young field of work in progress.

Often, profound learning happens out of the experience of crisis. We found that openness in dealing with difficulties and 'failure' both in ourselves, within the team and with our donors was key. When the Sri Lanka project was attacked in the local media, it was exactly the joint reflection and learning from that tense situation that helped us to adjust our strategies and adopt joint responses with the donors. Conceptual learning – for example on systemic approaches to conflict transformation – was also inspired by difficulties experienced in our actual work, and facilitated by sponsors and donors also wanting to learn and therefore allowing an open, explorative approach.

We are encouraged to see that this thinking has already developed strong roots during the last few years, both among private and governmental donors. As the Berghof Foundation expressed it recently: "support for peacebuilding work must span generations. There is no quick fix, no certain formula for success, when it comes to making peace. But people can and do learn. Through this, they change. And learn to make more change" (McGuinness/Zundel 2008, 66).

However, we also see it as our responsibility to engage with our donors and to draw new funders, e.g. philanthropic entrepreneurs, to the field who understand that peacebuilding work has to be based on learning. This will include long-term engagement to identify the 'champions' among and within the donors who are ready to explore, for example, more learning-orientated funding arrangements. In this area, too, the task is to inspire change and to operationalise our requirements so that donors can relate to them.

6) How to operationalise learning as a collective process?

An African proverb says, "none of us knows as much as all of us know": reflection and learning among and between organisations is often most successful in the company of others and when facilitated in a systematic manner. However, Fisher and Zimina draw our attention to the fact that we indeed operate in a competitive environment and that rivalry often hinders joined-up work. While we personally are lucky to have experienced open exchange and collective learning, be it with local partners, other INGOs or donors, we also know of situations where the actors have failed to collaborate and learn together.

Particularly in conflict environments, mistrust and rivalry seem to stand in the way of a lot of collaboration that, from the outsider's perspective, would appear so easy. The experience of the Berghof Foundation in Sri Lanka shows that, sometimes, an outsider perspective and role can help to overcome this obstacle and bring local peacebuilders to one table. While much of our facilitation work obviously focused on joint problem-solving and dialogue, it could also be used to offer learning opportunities for actors that otherwise did not communicate or share their experiences. It seems that in that situation we were seen as an honest broker who could enable and inspire collaborative processes.

Sometimes, these moments of sharing just happen by surprise, for example when a workshop is 'hijacked' by the participants who want to discuss their theories of change much more extensively than planned. If there is, then, maybe much more appetite for sharing than expected, how can we use this to inspire more collective learning?

We suggest that trust and confidence for joint efforts can be built more easily when starting an exchange among staff on topics of mutual interest, without much institutional involvement. Avoiding the institutional politics of engaging the heads of organisations until a later stage can help to make the initial and crucial first steps, as we learned when supporting a civil society network for information sharing in Sri Lanka. In this case, a few staff members of some organisations went ahead with the networking and others joined later, when they saw the benefits of the collective. In our own professional experience, small informal groups of trusted individuals, sometimes friends, across organisations (governmental and non-governmental, on the donor and on the receiving side) have been able to openly discuss dilemmas and to further individual thinking as well as inspire organisational changes.

5. Outlook

Facing the challenges outlined above, learning to learn more effectively seems an overwhelming task for us as individuals and our organisations. Fisher and Zimina suggest that in order to learn for improving our practice, one important requirement is "a change of culture towards a more proactive and open sharing of successes and failures" (in this volume, 31).

To foster a 'triple loop' learning community that addresses specific challenges in peacebuilding organisations and in the wider field, we would like to encourage other practitioners to join us in learning about our learning – the third-order learning – starting with our own individual and organisational experiences and thus reflecting on the peacebuilding community in general. This group – or possibly various sub-groups according to interests, trust and backgrounds – could build on today's experiences and challenges in a very practical way and look for answers that enrich our efforts in capacity-building and empowerment as much as in creating momentum for peaceful change. This Berghof Handbook Dialogue or the web-platform that Fisher and Zimina have created for discussion of the *Open Letter to Peacebuilders*[6] provide possible forums for virtually meeting interested colleagues and thus form stepping stones for such an endeavour.

We are not envisioning to start with a fixed and stable group that necessarily has to mirror other networks and include all the relevant organisations. What we actually have in mind is a 'seedling' group that would begin exploring the issue, believing that individuals can then take strength and inspiration back to their organisations, to help them in learning and reflecting.

Such a group, or groups, would ideally emerge from informal communication, and then decide together on what process and structure would best fit their aspirations and resources. Possible options include interdisciplinary and intercultural workshops, web-based peer discussions, and – not to be neglected – the seizing of informal and ad-hoc moments of sharing and exchange. Thus, this form of learning would be inspired by scholarly teaching and literature as well as by good and not-so-good practice from the field and the headquarters of peacebuilding organisations in many parts of the world. It would produce concrete suggestions on how to improve learning and help participants with their own learning. It would help create inspiration for a difficult job in a daunting environment.

6 See http://lettertopeacebuilders.ning.com.

6. References & Further Reading

Argyris, Chris and Donald A. Schoen 1978. *Organizational Learning: A Theory of Action Perspective.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Bateson, Gregory 1979. *Mind and Nature. A Necessary Unity.* New York: Dutton.

Benner, Thorsten and Philipp Rotmann 2008. Learning to Learn? UN Peacebuilding and the Challenge of Building a Learning Organization, in: *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding,* 2 (1), 43-62.

Campbell, Susanna 2007. "Organizational Learning: The Gateway to Peacebuilding Success?" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association 48th Annual Convention, Feb 28, 2007. Available online at www.allacademic.com/meta/p180913_index.html.

Fisher, Simon and Lada Zimina 2009. Just Wasting Our Time? Provocative Thoughts for Peacebuilders, in: Beatrix Schmelzle and Martina Fischer (eds.). *Peacebuilding at a Crossroads? Dilemmas and Paths for Another Generation.* (Berghof Handbook Dialogue No. 7.) Berlin: Berghof Research Center, 11-35. Also available at www.berghof-handbook.net/std_page.php?LANG=e&id=5. [A longer version was published in March 2008 as *Just Wasting Our Time? Open Letter to Peacebuilders* online at http://lettertopeacebuilders.ning.com.]

Koerppen, Daniela, Beatrix Schmelzle and Oliver Wils (eds.) 2008. *A Systemic Approach to Conflict Transformation. Exploring Strengths and Limitations.* (Berghof Handbook Dialogue No. 6.) Berlin: Berghof Research Center. Available online at www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/dialogue6_systapp.complete.pdf.

Lederach, John Paul 2005. *The Moral Imagination. The Art and Soul of Building Peace.* New York: Oxford University Press.

McGuinness, Kate and Johannes Zundel 2008. Peace-enabling Philanthropy, in: UBS Philanthropy Services. *Viewpoints 2008: Building Change Communities.* Zurich: UBS, 62-67. Available at www.ubs.com/1/e/ubs_ch/wealth_management_switzerland/exclusive_services/philanthropy_services/downloads.html.

Roper, Laura, Jethro Pettit and Deborah Eade (eds.) 2003. *Development and the Learning Organisation.* Oxford: Oxfam GB.

Scharmer, C. Otto 2007. *Theory U: Leading from the Future as it Emerges.* Cambridge, MA: The Society for Organizational Learning.

Schmelzle, Beatrix 2006. Training for Conflict Transformation – An Overview of Approaches and Resources, in: *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation,* Online Version. Berlin: Berghof Research Center. Available at www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/schmelzle_handbook.pdf.

Senge, Peter 1990. *The Fifth Discipline. The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization.* New York: Doubleday/Currency.

Senge, Peter, Art Kleiner, Charlotte Roberts, Richard B. Boss and Bryan J. Smith 1994. *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook. Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization.* New York: Doubleday/Currency.

Space for Peace. The Work of the Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies in Sri Lanka, 2001-2008. Colombo: Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies – Sri Lanka Office, 2008. Available online at www.berghof-peacesupport.org/publications/Space_for_Peace.pdf.

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) 2007. *SIDA Evaluation 07/11. Collaborative Learning Projects, Final Report.* Stockholm: SIDA. Available online at www.sida.se/sida/jsp/sida.jsp?d=118&a=32852&language=en_US.

Wils, Oliver, Ulrike Hopp, Norbert Ropers, Luxshi Vimalarajah and Wolfram Zunzer 2006. *The Systemic Approach to Conflict Transformation – Concept and Fields of Application.* Berlin: Berghof Peace Support. Available online at www.berghof-peacesupport.org/publications/systemic_conflict_transformation_complete.pdf.

Woodrow, Peter, Christopher W. Moore, Ines Reinhard and Peter Aeberhard 2008. "The Berghof Foundation in Sri Lanka: Resource Network for Conflict Studies and Transformation. Lessons Learned Evaluation Report." Unpublished document.

[All weblinks accessed 8 January 2009.]

Berghof
Research Center
Forschungszentrum
for Constructive
für konstruktive
Conflict Management
Konfliktbearbeitung

Participatory Evaluation and Critical Peace Research: A Precondition for Peacebuilding

A Response by Martina Fischer

1. Introduction

Simon Fisher and Lada Zimina start their overview on the state-of-the-art in peacebuilding with a fairly pessimistic statement. They argue that the capacity and the will of global society to solve conflicts and address injustice peacefully "is desperately inadequate in the face of today's need, let alone tomorrow's", that international peace practitioners remain "weak and implicitly focused on a relatively narrow approach […] without full recognition of the interconnectedness and flux of the system", and that the strategies they offer "tend to be inadequate, in the sense that they merely serve to reinforce the circumstances which gave rise to violence and warfare in the first place" (Fisher/Zimina in this volume, 11).

More than fifty armed conflicts that are currently being waged around the globe might well give reason to draw such a sad picture.[1] But one should keep in mind the full scope of the recent findings of the Canadian Human Security Center (based at the University of British Columbia) and of the Human Security Report Project (based at Fraser University).[2] Researchers have outlined that the past 15 years have witnessed a general and substantial *decline in armed conflicts*, including the number of armed conflicts, battle-related deaths, genocides and democides. The data base shows that both state and non-state (intra-state) wars have decreased in number during the 1990s, and in particular between 2002-2005

1 Andrew Mack and his team at Fraser University have identified 32 state-based armed conflicts and 24 non-state armed conflicts in their latest edition of Human Security Brief (Mack et al. 2007, 30; 34).
2 See Mack et al. 2005, 2006, 2007 and Mack 2008.

(from 66 in 2002 to 56 in 2005).[3] Andrew Mack, director of this project, argues that the most compelling explanation for this decline is found in the upsurge of peacemaking and peacebuilding activities that started in the early 1990s, spearheaded by the UN, but also supported by many other international agencies, donors, governments and NGOs (Mack 2008, 75). The Human Security Brief 2007 even concludes that all forms of political violence – including violence emerging from international terrorism in the Middle East and South Asia – have declined. Moreover, the data reveal that the wars that are still being fought are far less deadly on average than those of the Cold War era. This is why Mack et al. (2007, 7) conclude that there is good reason at least for modest optimism, "not least because the evidence clearly indicates that efforts to stop violent conflicts and to prevent them from starting again can be remarkably effective". At the same time they admit that "few of the root cause drivers for warfare and deadly assaults against civilians – from poverty to group inequality – have improved", which means that there are certainly no grounds for complacency (ibid.).

As Fisher and Zimina have outlined, there is a risk "arising from a nexus of [...] climate change and energy constraints; economic injustice and poverty; denial of rights and participation in society" (in this volume, 11). Definitely, the world is still far from having effective institutions and instruments that guarantee stable peace. Researchers, politicians and practitioners agree that the UN system needs to be reformed in a variety of respects,[4] redefining policy agendas such as the responsibility of states to protect their citizens, and fostering human security. Global governance mechanisms have to be improved, in order to reduce the risk of accumulative global crises emerging from crashes of the international finance system, nutrition crises and climate change. Moreover there is an urgent need for further improvement of international law and increasing peacebuilding capacities on different levels, top down and bottom up, and from the middle out (Lederach 1997).

But the data collected by the Human Security Report Project illustrate that the picture is not as bleak as Fisher and Zimina assume. The progress that has been made should be fully acknowledged. Of course, interpretation of such data depends very much on perspectives and definitions – the question is whether we consider the glass to be half full or half empty. Going for the more optimistic version makes it easier to proceed on the long road and struggle for peace, by constantly improving mechanisms of conflict prevention and transformation on the level of international organisations, state and civil society. There is an urgent need to strengthen civilian approaches as a 'must' and first priority. It is important to oppose the current trend of just 'adding' civilian capacities to existing (extensive and much more expensive) military crisis intervention capacities. There is a challenge to constantly improve process-targeted mechanisms for immediate and coherent action that can effectively address organised violence and social breakdown. There is also an urgent need to carefully design long-term policies that aim to address the structural causes of conflict and violence.

In order to improve, peacebuilding and conflict transformation activities require profound context analysis, realistic definition of purpose and strategies, and long-term commitment. Readiness for critical assessment of strategies and systematic self-reflection are imperative for organisations ploughing through this field.

3 Sub-Saharan Africa was the only region to experience a substantial decline in armed conflicts, while in four other regions conflicts increased in number.

4 See Mack (2008, 96), who argues that the UN remains critically under-resourced when it comes to preventive diplomacy and peacemaking capacity, while the organisation is also confronting growing risks of overstretch in its peace operations.

2. Developing Tools for Evaluation and Self-Reflection

The past 15 years have seen numerous comprehensive efforts to assess what difference peacebuilding can make. Among these are the War-torn Societies Project that was co-initiated by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development in the 1990s (www.unrisd.org); 'lessons learned workshops' initiated by the European Centre for Conflict Prevention (Galama/van Tongeren 2002), and studies by Church and Shouldice (2002/2003) and Paffenholz and Reychler (2005 and 2007). The Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) project that was initiated by the US-based organisation Collaborative for Development Action has contributed a set of case studies, context analysis and comparative research on third-party intervention by civil society organisations using participatory approaches and close cooperation with local partners all over the world. The project has contributed to developing criteria for success and failure (see Anderson/Olson 2003, CDA 2008 and Chigas/Woodrow in this volume).[5] The findings of the RPP process have not only influenced debates at civil society level, but also policies drawn up by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD 2007). The Joint Utstein Study has investigated peacebuilding activities launched by several state agencies, in order to mainstream and harmonize national peacebuilding strategies (Smith 2003). In addition to this, institutional guidelines have been developed by state administrations and international organisations.[6]

Meanwhile, many peacebuilding organisations have developed a high degree of critical self-reflection. The intention has been to avoid negative side effects, create best practices, and increase transparency towards donor agencies. Civil society organisations in particular have started some comprehensive efforts to delineate and improve the state-of-the-art in peacebuilding by improving evaluation practice. Peace organisations have developed evaluation mechanisms according to the tools set up by development agencies, assessing the relevance of activities, implementation of project goals, appropriateness of strategies, efficiency of resources, transparency and management capacities of the organisation, output and outcome, impact for the target groups and impact on the political context, coordination and coherence of planning and sustainability (a category that Fisher and Zimina also mention repeatedly).

The need for evaluation has also been emphasised by donor organisations. Many of these fixed guidelines for the evaluation of peacebuilding activities. American donors were particularly interested in this. One of the leading agencies, the Hewlett Foundation, pushed academic institutes and NGOs to systematically assess the results of conflict transformation and peacebuilding projects (Kovick 2005). Hewlett had started a Conflict Resolution Program in the US and expanded its funding strategy to different international crisis areas in the 1990s. In 2004 the Foundation decided to stop this kind of funding; among other reasons cited, it was argued that organisations lacked the will and capacity for proper evaluation (ibid., 17).

Next to evaluation, the term 'peace and conflict impact assessment' (PCIA) emerged and became very fashionable among practitioners, researchers and donors. It was used to emphasize the need to reflect the likely peace and conflict impacts of policies or interventions, including aid programmes. Some interesting discussions were generated around this concept,[7] which was a positive consequence. However, at the same time this debate produced negative side effects, contributing to a situation in which both practitioners and donor organisations tended to develop

5 For CDA's follow-on projects see CDA 2008 and Collaborative Learning Projects at www.cdainc.com.
6 See OECD/DAC 2008; Friedrich Ebert Foundation 2007; GTZ 2007; Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen/zivik 2007.
7 Several articles and dialogues on peace and conflict impact assessment have been published by the Berghof Research Center (for example Austin et al. 2003; Bloomfield et al. 2005), also available online at www.berghof-handbook.net.

higher and higher (and often exaggerated) expectations towards evaluation. There is a clear danger now that evaluations are mainly targeted at 'measuring' short-term results of peace activities and thus tend to ignore longer-term processes, changes in the political context and consequently the need for the change of strategies. It is obvious that evaluation practice and assessment tools have been designed more and more along the lines of what Fisher and Zimina call 'technical peacebuilding', which turns out to be highly problematic.

It seems that two coinciding trends make life difficult for peacebuilders: first there is a strong demand for more performance-based grant management, often derived from politicians, that leads public funders to "focus on demonstrating quantifiable and easily understood results to demonstrate good use of tax payer's money" (Wright 2008, 1). Second, there is also a demand by private donors for fast and quantifiable, measurable results (Marten/Witte 2008, 21). As observed in a study published by the Global Public Policy Institute (ibid.), many foundations apply a business-like approach in the development sector and they increasingly focus on impact evaluation (at least at the rhetoric level, even if their funding practice does not fully reflect this ideal).[8] One leader of a consulting firm for philanthropic organisations is quoted as saying: "the generation we are dealing with today has an unending thirst and desire for sudden impact, they want results […] they acquired their wealth overnight and so they want to see their philanthropic dollars making a difference overnight. Organizations need to take a step back and educate donors about how difficult it is to measure results" (ibid.).

A crucial experience that is shared by most peacebuilders all over the world is that measuring impact – in particular positive results – and defining success is extremely difficult and challenging.

3. The Difficulty of Developing Criteria for Success

Getting a clear idea of their own outreach, potential and limits, success and failure is crucial for many peace organisations. But identifying criteria for success or failure remains a highly complicated and demanding endeavour.

The RPP process has suggested five criteria of effectiveness by which to assess whether a programme is having meaningful impact at the level of 'peace writ large':

1. the effort contributes to stopping a key driving factor of the war or conflict, or
2. the effort contributes to a momentum for peace by causing participants and communities to develop their own peace initiatives, or
3. the effort results in the creation or reform of political institutions for handling grievances, or
4. the effort prompts people to increasingly resist violence and provocations to violence, or
5. the effort results in an increase in people's security and in their sense of security.[9]

8 It is reported that at least some critical voices are raised within the private philanthropy scene, arguing that "by focusing on measuring impact results to determine grant-giving, foundations are undermining one of their core comparative advantages, the ability to take risks" (ibid.).

9 Issue Paper on Criteria of Effectiveness, RPP, online at www.cdainc.com.

RPP's analysis and proposals are helpful in that they offer an incentive for self-reflection and review of the goals and strategies we set ourselves. In essence, though, the search for criteria to determine the effectiveness of programmes and evaluate their impacts has only just begun with the RPP process. Ultimately, stakeholders involved in peace projects must develop their own criteria by which to define the success of their activities and document this transparently. To that end, they must agree not only on general and overarching objectives but also on short- and medium-term project goals.

However, the quest for criteria and indicators should not be misconstrued as a kind of 'monitoring mania'. Determining how individual projects, measures, activities or events impact directly on social action and therefore on peace processes as a whole continues to pose problems (Paffenholz 2005, 25). Some studies conclude that impacts are almost impossible to quantify at the macro level (Church/Shouldice 2002/2003; Heinrich 2005; Paffenholz 2005; Smith 2003), which suggests that energies might better be used elsewhere. We must certainly ask ourselves, in all seriousness, whether improvements in peace practice can genuinely be achieved by donors and implementing organisations expending more and more energy on defining increasingly detailed and sophisticated criteria and indicators to measure impacts on 'peace writ large'.

Evaluations which combine quantitative and qualitative procedures for data collection can offer important entry points, but generally only identify impacts achieved in the immediate project context. The expectation that beyond this evaluations can draw well-founded conclusions about the benefits and impact of individual measures on the bigger picture, i.e. *peace writ large*, in a crisis region is not just overly ambitious (given that evaluations are usually limited in resources and timeframes): it is also questionable from a (funding) policy perspective. Peace actors engaging in overzealous debate about this issue should be clear that they are thus raising excessive and unrealistic expectations among donors about the demonstrability of impacts – expectations which can never be fulfilled, at least not within the framework of the short-term evaluations that the donors usually fund. As a consequence, new benchmarks to measure success are continually being established – benchmarks which the civil society actors involved in peace work will ultimately find almost impossible to live up to.[10] Smaller, community-based projects in particular are finding that their work capacities are increasingly being absorbed and overstretched by these activities.[11]

It is surely enough, instead, for evaluations to focus on the impacts on the selected target group or on a clearly defined local or regional context. These impacts can generally be monitored with at least some degree of reliability, provided that the requisite resources are made available for these monitoring activities. Furthermore, 'sustainability' should be dropped from the list of criteria for the evaluation of peacebuilding activities. The sustainability of 'peace' as a process or as a consequence of social action is not as simple to quantify as the sustainability of natural resources. Many peace processes are marred by setbacks before discernible progress is made or longer-term agreements can be put in place. Only in the rarest of cases are peace processes linear; on the contrary, they are almost invariably stop-start processes, characterised by progress and setbacks. However, this does not necessarily cast doubt on the quality of the individual measures involved.

10 On this point, see the comments made by Simon (2006, 87) on the structure of grassroots organisations.
11 One example is the 'project mania' and the reality experienced by local actors in Bosnia-Herzegovina; cf. Fischer 2006, 168.

4. Evaluation as a Planning Tool and Chance for Institutional Learning

If, on the other hand, evaluations are integrated into the planning process they can provide an impetus for self-reflection by the stakeholders concerned, act as a tool to help them improve the planning and implementation of peace activities, and, if appropriate, encourage them to change their strategies. Careful project planning is generally regarded as a prerequisite for good practice, and there have rightly been calls for donor organisations to provide their implementing agencies with training opportunities in this area (Paffenholz 2005). Only if evaluations are part of the planning process and all stakeholders are clear about the project objectives can any meaningful evaluation of their implementation take place. The same applies to the theoretical assumptions about social transformation which underlie almost all practical projects, but are rarely defined in explicit terms. Here too, an accompanying evaluation can help to achieve some measure of clarification.

Evaluations should not focus primarily on measuring the impacts of peacebuilding activities but should empower stakeholders to reflect on what they are doing and to carry out their activities mindfully. Angelika Spelten (2006) summed this up neatly in the title of an article: *Schon das Nachdenken über Wirkungsnachweis zeigt Wirkung* – "just thinking about demonstrating effectiveness has an effect". Project participants should be supported through joint learning processes, especially to develop a shared understanding of their own objectives within the team, to challenge the strategies selected, to set priorities under difficult conditions, to guarantee the coherence of and weigh up individual project elements, and to balance these against their financial and human resources. External evaluators can play a very constructive role here. Many projects find themselves in crisis because the participants lack the tools necessary for a self-reflection process; they may also lack a facilitator with the skills to cast an outsider's eye over the project activities and lead team discussions with the requisite objectivity and goal orientation.

5. Participatory Evaluation and Action Research

Nowadays, almost every study on the issue highlights the need to make evaluation processes participatory and, if possible, ensure that the process is accompanied by research. The question, though, is to what extent this aspiration is being fulfilled in current evaluation practice. Donor organisations, at least, must be made more aware that it is not enough to reward – with continued funding – projects whose progress is linear and which can demonstrate what are probably short-term measurable successes; it is especially important to fund projects which can justify why they felt compelled to review their methods and strategies and set different priorities. Here, there is close linkage with action research, which is also based on a participatory approach.

Designed for a longer-time frame, action research can provide valuable information about the opportunities for, and limits to, peacebuilding strategies. However, this is almost impossible for stakeholders to achieve 'by the by' in project implementation. Rather, action research projects must be organised as additional accompanying academic research.[12] The purpose of action research is to undertake comparative studies into the conditions and impacts of various forms of social action. It also aspires to influence social action; in other words, it is normative in focus. Its agenda concentrates

12 Various articles in the anthology edited by Reason and Bradbury (2006) provide a good overview of action research; cf. also Reason 1994; Folger 1999; Kraus 1991; Ross 2000; Newman 2000 and the website of the Action Evaluation Research Institute (www.aepro.org). For information about Kurt Lewin's original concept, see www.stangl-taller.at/TESTEXPERIMENT and www.stangl-taller.at/ARBEITSBLAETTER/FORSCHUNG.

on specific social grievances. The main objective of the research is not to test theoretical hypotheses but to bring about practical change in the problematic situation which is the subject of study. This is viewed as a holistic social process: individual variables are not isolated and collected as 'objective data'; instead, data collection itself is interpreted as part of the social process.

Action research projects evolved in the 1970s, mainly in the university sector and in work with marginalised groups and urban districts, but also in community projects in Latin America, generally led by social psychologists. It involves the use of qualitative approaches based on empirical social research, including the evaluation of project reports, participatory monitoring, individual or group interviews with project participants and members of the target groups and surveys. The methods aim to exert direct influence on events within society. The researcher temporarily abandons his or her distance to the research object and is intensively involved, during certain phases, in the process being studied. The subjects being observed and studied are not cast in a passive role but participate actively in the debate about objectives, and in data collection and evaluation. For the researchers, a precise definition of roles and ongoing self-reflection are essential. Their distance to the subject of research must constantly be re-established in order to avoid any risk of over-identification.[13] Action research therefore not only attempts to accumulate knowledge and enhance understanding of the functioning of social interactions; it intervenes in a direct and practical way, and involves the actors being studied in the process on an ongoing basis through feedback of results. Academic findings are thus translated into practice, and research concepts and theoretical constructs are subjected to practical testing at the same time.

Not every peacebuilding measure can be accompanied by a comprehensive research project. Nonetheless, evaluation measures can and should be more than just an audit report to be filed away by donors and audit authorities. In terms of its timeframe and personnel resources, any evaluation of peacebuilding activities that is geared towards social learning should be located in the space between short-term evaluation and an ambitious multi-annual research project, should always accompany the process and be participatory in design (cf. Lederach et al. 2007). The continuous feedback of results to project participants, through feedback workshops and discussion of interim and final reports, is essential.

In order to improve peace practice, it is helpful – especially where complex interventions are concerned – if actors also address the motives and potential of conflicting groups and the power asymmetries existing in society, and do so through an empirically and theoretically based conflict analysis. The opportunities for, and limits to, external intervention and the capacities of local peace coalitions must also be realistically appraised. Only on this basis can a decision be taken not to implement a measure, if necessary, in cases of doubt. And finally, it is important to remember that it is not conducive, and not necessarily helpful for the peace process, to incorporate well-intentioned projects into ill-conceived international state-building strategies.

A highly important point that Fisher and Zimina made in their lead article is to very critically question the motivation of those engaging in peacebuilding and to analyse the values that are underlying their action. The different concepts of peace, conflict transformation, reconciliation, justice and security that guide peacebuilding efforts need to be made explicit and discussed. It is also crucial to critically reflect on and question the hypotheses of impact and social change that are underlying such projects.

13 This takes place, as appropriate, through supervision and discussions with non-involved colleagues who critically appraise the project.

Martina Fischer

6. Back to the Roots – Reviving Critical Peace Research

Beyond action and evaluation research, however, there is a need for further fundamental research into peace missions which does more than focus on the practical issue of improving their effectiveness. Roland Paris has rightly and repeatedly pointed out that an overemphasis or exclusive emphasis on policy ("cult of policy relevance") can greatly narrow the perspective (Paris 2001, 44). Instead, theoretically based analyses are needed to reveal and in some cases challenge the ideological premises underlying international missions (which are generally based on Western concepts of governance, democratisation and economic liberalisation). Furthermore, the global governance structures which emerge in the context of these missions should be explored in more detail with reference to the theoretical approaches available in international relations and peace research.

Chances for improvement of global governance mechanisms are important issues for analysis. The outreach of different actors on distinct levels and the impact of their actions both on structures and processes also need to be investigated more deeply. More research is needed on the sequencing and timing of activities, on the quality of linkages between insiders and outsiders and how to harmonize their respective expectations. Contributions to the prevention of armed conflict and peacebuilding can only be effective if they are based on profound knowledge and scientific analysis of the causes and dynamics of violence, as has been mentioned by several comments in this volume. At the same time, preconditions for the success and failure of peace processes have to be studied.

Normative and critical peace research needs to replace analysis that is merely practice and policy oriented in terms of technical improvement of peace operations. Colleagues at the Tampere Peace Research Institute (Finland) have conducted a review of peace research by analysing the work published in the field's two main international journals, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* and *Journal of Peace Research*. They show how the "initial critical and creative spirit […] has turned into a 'normal' science that does not reflect on its basic categories or its role in society", and they state a need to "resuscitate Peace Research (PR) and revitalise it as Critical Peace Research (CPR)" (Jutila et al. 2008, 623). According to these authors, *criticality* and *reflexivity* are at the core of CPR. As a third cornerstone, *dialogue* is emphasized, which calls for a willingness to engage in inter-disciplinary exchange and to go beyond merely academic exercises, striving to stay in touch with society and to create dialogue "in a continuous search for a common idea of, for example, peaceful change" (ibid., 639). Critical peace research is a precondition for 'transformative peacebuilding'. If peacebuilders neglect or ignore dealing with these questions and instead focus on developing more and more detailed and sophisticated evaluation tools and criteria for impact assessment, they might fall into the trap of shifting further and further into technical peacebuilding. By following this track, they run the risk that critical self-reflection may also backfire and present an image of peacebuilders as those who are unable to achieve the standards that they have actively discussed and proposed.

7. References

Anderson, Mary B. and Lara Olson 2003. *Confronting War. Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners.* Cambridge, Mass.: CDA/Reflecting on Peace Practice Project.

Austin, Alex, Martina Fischer and Oliver Wils (eds.) 2003. *Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment. Critical Views on Theory and Practice.* (Berghof Handbook Dialogue No. 1.) Berlin: Berghof Research Center. Available online at www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/dialogue1_pcia_complete.pdf.

Bloomfield, David, Martina Fischer and Beatrix Schmelzle (eds.) 2005. *New Trends in Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment.* (Berghof Handbook Dialogue No. 4.) Berlin: Berghof Research Center. Available online at www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/dialogue4_pcianew_complete.pdf.

CDA – Collaborative Learning Projects 2008. *Reflecting on Peace Practice Consultation Report: Understanding Cumulative Impacts.* 9-10 January 2008. Boston, Mass.: CDA. Available at www.cdainc.com/cdawww/pdf/other/rpp_consultation_cumulative_cases_consultation_report_final_20080401_Pdf.pdf.

Chigas, Diana and Peter Woodrow 2009. Envisioning and Pursuing Peace Writ Large, in: Beatrix Schmelzle and Martina Fischer (eds.). *Peacebuilding at a Crossroads? Dilemmas and Paths for Another Generation.* (Berghof Handbook Dialogue No. 7.) Berlin: Berghof Research Center, 47-57. Also available at www.berghof-handbook.net/std_page.php?LANG=e&id=5.

Church, Cheyanne and Julie Shouldice 2002/2003. *The Evaluation of Conflict Resolution Interventions. Part I and II.* Londonderry: INCORE.

Fischer, Martina 2006. Friedensarbeit zwischen Kurzzeit-Evaluierung, Prozessbegleitung und Aktionsforschung, in: Jörg Calließ (ed.). *Tun wir das, was wir tun, richtig? Tun wir das Richtige? Evaluation in der zivilen Konfliktbearbeitung.* (Loccumer Protokolle 14/05.) Rehburg Loccum: Ev. Akademie Loccum, 159-171.

Fisher, Simon and Lada Zimina 2009. Just Wasting Our Time? Provocative Thoughts for Peacebuilders, in: Beatrix Schmelzle and Martina Fischer (eds.). *Peacebuilding at a Crossroads? Dilemmas and Paths for Another Generation.* (Berghof Handbook Dialogue No. 7.) Berlin: Berghof Research Center, 11-35. Also available at www.berghof-handbook.net/std_page.php?LANG=e&id=5. [A longer version was published in March 2008 as *Just Wasting Our Time? Open Letter to Peacebuilders* online at http://lettertopeacebuilders.ning.com.]

Folger, Joseph 1999. Evaluating Evaluation in Ethnic Conflict Resolution: Themes from, and Commentary on, the Haverford-Bryn Mawr Conference, in: Marc Howard Ross and Jay Rothman (eds.). *Theory and Practice in Ethnic Conflict Management. Theorizing Success and Failure.* New York: St. Martin's Press/London: Macmillan Press.

Friedrich Ebert Foundation 2007. *Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment. Methodical Guidelines.* Berlin: FES. Available at http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/05594-guiedelines.pdf.

Galama, Anneke and Paul van Tongeren (eds.) 2002. *Towards Better Peacebuilding Practice. On Lessons Learned, Evaluation Practices and Aid & Conflict.* Utrecht: European Centre for Conflict Prevention.

GTZ 2007. *Peace and Conflict Assessment (PCA). Ein methodischer Rahmen zur konflikt- und friedensbezogenen Ausrichtung von EZ-Maßnahmen.* Eschborn: GTZ.

Heinrich, Wolfgang 2005. Evaluierung und Wirkungsbeobachtung. Einsichten aus dem "Reflecting on Peace Practice"-Projekt, in: Jörg Calließ (ed.). *Tun wir das, was wir tun, richtig? Tun wir das Richtige? Evaluation in der zivilen Konfliktbearbeitung.* (Loccumer Protokolle 14/05.) Rehburg Loccum: Ev. Akademie Loccum, 91-106.

Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen/zivik 2007. *Monitoring von Wirkungen (movie). Ein Manual zur wirkungsorientierten Planung und Durchführung von Friedensprojekten.* Written by Dirk Sprenger. Berlin: Auswärtiges Amt/ifa. Available at www.ifa.de/fileadmin/content/foerderungsprogramme/zivik/downloads/movie.pdf.

Jutila, Matti, Samu Pehkonen and Tarja Väyrynen 2008. Resuscitating a Discipline: An Agenda for Critical Peace Research, in *Millenium: Journal of International Studies*, 36, 3, 623-640.

Kovick, David 2005. *The Hewlett Foundation's Conflict Resolution Program. Twenty Years of Field-Building 1984-2004.* Menlo Park, CA: William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Available at www.hewlett.org/Publications/confictresolutionbrief.htm.

Kraus, Wolfgang 1991. Qualitative Evaluationsforschung, in: Uwe Flick, Ernst von Kardorff, Heiner Keupp, Lutz von Rosenstiel and Stephan Wolff (eds.). *Handbuch für Qualitative Sozialforschung.* München: Psychologie Verlags Union, 412-415.

Lederach, John P. 1997. *Building Peace. Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington DC: US Institute of Peace Press.

Lederach, John P., Reina C. Neufeldt and Hal Culbertson 2007. *Reflective Peacebuilding. A Planning, Monitoring and Learning Toolkit.* Notre Dame, USA: Joan B. Kroc Institute/Catholic Relief Service.

Mack, Andrew et al. (eds.), *Human Security Report 2005. War and Peace in the 21st Century.* Published for the Human Security Centre/University of British Columbia, Canada. New York: Oxford University Press. Available online at www.humansecurityreport.info.

Mack, Andrew et al. (eds.), *Human Security Brief 2006.* Human Security Centre, University of British Columbia, Canada. Available online at www.humansecuritybrief.info.

Mack, Andrew et al. (eds.), *Human Security Brief 2007.* Simon Fraser University, Canada. Available online at www.humansecuritybrief.info.

Mack, Andrew 2008. Global Political Violence: Explaining the Post-Cold War Decline, in: Volker Rittberger and Martina Fischer (eds.). *Strategies for Peace. Contributions of International Organisations, States, and Non-State Actors.* Opladen & Farmington Hills: Barbara Budrich Verlag, 75-107.

Marten, Robert and Jan Martin Witte 2008. *Transforming Development? The Role of Philanthropic Foundations in International Development Cooperation*. (GPPi Research Paper No. 10.) Berlin: Global Public Policy Institute. Available online at www.gppi.net/publications/research_paper_series.

Newman, Judith M. 2000. Action Research, A Brief Overview, in: *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum Qualitative Social Research* (Online Journal), 1, 1. Available at www.qualitative-research.org/fqs-texte/1-00/1-00newman-e.htm.

OECD 2007. *Encouraging Effective Evaluation of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities. Towards DAC Guidance.* Off-print of the OECD Journal on Development 2007, 8, 3. Available at www.oecd.org/dataoecd/52/3/39660852.pdf.

OECD/DAC 2008. *Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities.* Paris: OECD. Available at www.oecd.org/secure/pdfDocument/0,2834,en_21571361_34047972_39774574_1_1_1_1,00.pdf.

Paffenholz, Thania 2005. Evaluation von Interventionen ziviler Friedensförderung, in: Laurent Goetschel and Albrecht Schnabel (eds.). *Stärkung der Zivilgesellschaft als Mittel der Friedensförderung.* (Swisspeace-Conference Paper 1/2005.) Bern: swisspeace, 18-26.

Paffenholz, Thania and Luc Reychler 2007. *Aid for Peace. A Guide to Planning, Assessment and Evaluation for Conflict Zones.* Baden Baden: Nomos Verlag.

Paris, Roland 2001. Broadening the Study of Peace Operations, in: *International Studies Review*, 2, 3, 27-44.

Reason, Peter 1994. Three Approaches to Participative Inquiry, in: Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* London: Thousand Oaks/New Delhi: Sage Publications, 324-339.

Reason, Peter and Hilary Bradbury (eds.) 2006. *Handbook of Action Research.* London: Thousand Oaks/New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Ross, Marc Howard 2000. *Action Evaluation in the Theory and Practice of Conflict Resolution.* Bryn Mawr, PA: Bryn Mawr College.

Simon, Heide 2006. Evaluation als integraler Bestandteil des Projektzyklus, in: Jörg Calließ (ed.). *Tun wir das, was wir tun, richtig? Tun wir das Richtige? Evaluation in der zivilen Konfliktbearbeitung.* (Loccumer Protokolle 14/05.) Rehburg Loccum: Ev. Akademie Loccum, 81-90.

Smith, Dan 2003. *Getting their Act Together: Towards a Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding.* Executive Summary of the Synthesis Report of the Joint Utstein Study of Peacebuilding. Oslo: PRIO. Available at www.oecd.org/secure/pdfDocument/0,2834,en_21571361_34047972_31677177_1_1_1_1,00.pdf.

Spelten, Angelika 2006. Schon das Nachdenken über Wirkungsnachweis zeigt Wirkung, in: Jörg Calließ (ed.). *Tun wir das, was wir tun, richtig? Tun wir das Richtige? Evaluation in der zivilen Konfliktbearbeitung.* (Loccumer Protokolle 14/05.) Rehburg Loccum: Ev. Akademie Loccum, 147-154.

Wright, Katie 2008. *What Role for Evaluation in the Context of Performance-based Management?* (INTRAC-Policy Briefing Paper 22.) Oxford, UK: International NGO Training and Research Centre. Available at www.intrac.org/resources_database.php?id=361.

[All weblinks accessed 6 January 2009.]

Martina Fischer

Berghof
Research Center
Forschungszentrum
for Constructive
für konstruktive
Conflict Management
Konfliktbearbeitung

Reflections on the Comments:
Responses and More Queries

Simon Fisher & Lada Zimina

It was enormously affirming to read the responses to the lead article. We realised we were not alone: the issues we raised resonated even more widely than we had dared to hope. In addition to the articles in this Dialogue, we have received feedback through the website;[1] we have also heard from a good number of organisations which have held, or plan to hold, formal or informal conversations about the article, and we have helped with some of them. In this feedback, some were saying that the article was too critical – that we have portrayed the yet emerging peacebuilding field in too harsh a light. Some were saying that the article was in fact not critical enough in that it pointed to successes where the results have been mixed at best. For a minority, engagement with government was anathema; others have called for a more refined understanding of how states and global institutions work, and what the ways and consequences of engagement with governments and other actors are. Some gave us priceless quotes, such as calling for people "to stand up and speak out in a silent nonviolent revolution".[2]

But overall, people have often talked about how this has given them an acceptable, non-confrontational opportunity to raise crucial matters in their organisation about values, strategy and goals. In the space of this short reflection paper, we cannot do justice to the many points raised. We propose therefore to note some of those which struck us most forcibly, draw attention to elements which were, surprisingly to us, absent and offer some additional thoughts.

1 http://lettertopeacebuilders.ning.com. [All weblinks in this article accessed 13 January 2009.]
2 In an email to the authors on 30 March 2008.

1. Key Points and Commonalities

Several issues resonated across articles, discussions and email responses. In fact, many are recognized as pertinent issues in the peacebuilding field and have been previously taken up by various Berghof Handbook articles.[3] Many of these issues have prompted more interesting questions in our minds.

Definitions and Descriptions

A number of responses contributed to an effort to define what peacebuilding is and who is engaged in building peace. Alternative names have been offered, such as the Peace and Conflict Resolution Movement (Kriesberg); Peace Movement, as opposed to Peace Industry (Weitsch). There has been recognition that the field of peace work is much wider than it is often described as being. There are many actors beyond the usual peacebuilding 'suspects', be that ex-combatants or military, business people or radical political groups, who can become an important force for peace. Do these attempts at defining the boundary between those who are peacebuilders and those who are not mirror identity struggles that the community seems to experience within itself?

A number of responses touched upon definitions of peace, affirming that it is impossible to find one that is not contextually bound. But is it possible to find one that *is* contextually bound? Forging a joint definition of peace is arguably a key pillar of peacebuilding work, but is there a need for criteria for any such definition? An attempt to produce a 'generic' definition has recently been made by International Alert in its Programming Framework where they write: "peace is when people are anticipating and managing conflicts without violence, and are engaging in inclusive social change processes that improve the quality of life. They are doing so without compromising the possibility of continuing to do so in the future, or compromising the possibility of others to do so."[4] Are there any other parameters and characteristics of peace that should underlie a context-driven definition?

Analysis and Context

A need to better understand the context has been highlighted in many of the responses. In the article by Chigas and Woodrow, this was linked to a finer understanding of communities – as a basic but often controversial building block of peacebuilding. In his response on the website, Michael Hammer highlighted the need for a more discerning understanding of elites, or power-holders, away from treating them as "monolithic, generally problematic, and manipulative".[5]

Important as it is to understand the dynamics and drivers of each conflict, the acute influence of the wider global context has been highlighted by the economic crisis that has unfolded in the months since the original article was published. The crisis clearly has the potential to undermine much peacebuilding and other relevant work. How do we respond to this now, and plan for it in the future?

Funding

We have been offered examples of how excellent things have been done without any money, or on very limited or intermittent support. We have witnessed the perils of too much money skewing priorities, ownership and work ethic. We have seen how shifting funding priorities have undermined consistent 'adding-up' of peace work. Some of the difficulties around this have been reflected in

3 For a full list of contents see www.berghof-handbook.net.
4 Programming Framework for International Alert: Design, Monitoring and Evaluation, December 2007. For more information, please contact general@international-alert.org.
5 http://lettertopeacebuilders.ning.com/forum/topics/2036517:Topic:341.

Bozicevic's article: "how can someone with limited resources but infinite commitment trust others with limited commitment and infinite resources?" (in this volume, 71). To us, it seems there is a need for some urgent creative thinking on what good peacebuilding funding should look like.

Importance of Diversity

Both Kriesberg and Chigas and Woodrow made the crucial point that one of civil society's strongest assets is its diversity. In seeking greater impact and effectiveness we should not assume that coordination, or even uniformity of approach, is the best way: "diversity of roles, goals and agendas may be as important to Peace Writ Large as commonality of vision and understanding" (Chigas/Woodrow in this volume, 52). Their idea of focusing on linkages, suggesting awareness plus a variable level of inter-communication, seems a useful concept.

Learning

The emphasis on learning, and the distinctions between the different orders of learning, put forward by Hopp and Unger, are helpful. Yes, learning is central to our work – not an add-on, which can be dispensed with when time is short. Learning how we learn – the third order – remains, in our view also, relatively underemphasised in organisations working in and on conflict. And the need of such organisations to be aware of, and responsive to, the dynamics of external conflicts being played out in their own teams and processes is critical in relation to their own continued effectiveness, as well as the specific need for learning.

Technical vs. Transformative?

We have been challenged from several angles about the distinction between transformative and technical peacebuilding. Some found it disempowering – does 'technical' mean less worthwhile? Some insisted that even the technical in 'civil society' terms is infinitely bolder than the solutions favoured by (inter)governmental actors. Finally, some claimed that categorisations along similar lines have already been made. We keep searching for examples of transformative peacebuilding, especially where it is successfully scaled up, and its delicate relationship with the technical, and would be grateful for any further thoughts.

2. What We Found Missing in the Comments

In our opinion, in the wealth of comments and discussions two themes have been underemphasised: the dynamics of power and the potential of action research.

2.1 Dynamics of Power

Perhaps we should not have been surprised that the issues of power that we raised in the article have received a limited, if controversial response. For us, the questions relating to power were one of the key motivators to write the article. What power do peacebuilders and other actors have, and what are its sources? How does one use power legitimately and accountably in situations of considerable inequality and imbalance, in a way that would increase prospects for positive peace?

Some of the contributions and discussions we have had have suggested that it is difficult or even unhelpful to distinguish between peacebuilding and nonviolent movements for change. After all, commitment to nonviolence lies at the heart of peacebuilding for many. Nonviolent social movements (often referred to as civil resistance movements) however, apart from not using

violence, are also characterised by taking sides in a situation of significant power imbalance. Neutrality is therefore not the universal precondition of a peacebuilding engagement: it can mean complicity, making peace a 'dirty' word when those who work in the name of peace are perceived to be promoting a contested or dominant agenda. Or, alternatively, it can in other circumstances be interpreted as subversive. This does not mean that peacebuilders should all become partisan, activist and engage in explicit advocacy. But it does point to the need to better understand different types of power, where power lies and how it is used, and, for many of us, to be much more aware of – and willing to use – our own power, institutional and personal. In some situations this will indeed mean expanding our capacity to be more confrontational.

2.2 Action Research

Similarly, we were surprised, perhaps even a little disappointed, that the huge potential of action research, undertaken by practitioners at all levels in the course of their work, which we drew attention to in the article, did not evoke more substantial comment. Martina Fischer proposes it as a methodology for evaluations. It is also a form of inquiry that has proved successful both in making theories of change explicit, the need for which is underlined by Chigas and Woodrow, and in facilitating the three orders of learning, as described by Hopp and Unger.

However, in our view action research has a great deal more potential than this. Based as it is on two core principles: "to learn in the process of carrying out [one's] practice and to do so in cooperation with others, testing and expanding [one's] knowledge and experience, challenged and affirmed by others",[6] the potential of this form of research to build the all-round inner and outer capacity of practitioners as well as to generate new knowledge has been a revelation to us over the past few years.[7] By putting the researcher at the centre of the research (as opposed to being eliminated as far as possible from it) it promotes and embodies self-awareness and reflexivity as core qualities essential to any work on conflict and change.

At its best, action research has huge advantages for many practitioners over more conventional peace studies courses and the quantitative research they tend to espouse, but there are very few places as yet where it can be done. Apart from the Applied Conflict Transformation Studies (ACTS) programme, currently operating in the Asia region and based at Pannasastra University in Cambodia, we are not aware of any other peace-related programmes of this nature, though the fields of education, public health and social work appear to be more fortunate in this regard.[8]

3. Open Questions and Challenges

There are two additional issues which we would like to introduce in concluding this response: one was omitted largely for reasons of space from the original article and the other was only mentioned in passing. The first one calls for a fundamental shift in public attitudes (as also proposed in Weitsch's article), whereas the second brings us back to ourselves, and the relevance of what we will call inner work. We are hoping that the former will stimulate creative thinking on the message that peacebuilders can offer to other actors and the public at large. As for the latter, we believe this to be an essential component of any peacebuilding engagement.

6 Action Research: Core Topic Paper. Responding To Conflict, 2005, 27. Please contact enquiries@respond.org for availability.
7 See, for example, activities and publications by the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice (CARPP) at the University of Bath (www.bath.ac.uk/carpp/index.html).
8 Some examples can be found in the *Educational Action Research Journal* published by the Collaborative Action Research Network (www.did.stu.mmu.ac.uk/carnnew/index.php), and Richard Winter and Carol Munn-Giddings (2001). *A Handbook for Action Research in Health and Social Care*. London: Routledge.

3.1 Changing the Frame of Mind: Taking Violence Prevention Seriously

Are we right to continue our public focus on peace and conflict, both difficult concepts to explain and mobilize around, rather than focusing on the prevention of violence? Would it not help to break through the fog of incomprehension about much that we do if we started to pathologise violence as we do, for example, disease? What difference would it make if our societies began to search as vigorously for ways to prevent violence in all its forms as they do now to prevent disease?[9]

We see many parallels between the two: both are human malfunctions leading to loss of wellbeing and life itself; both are treatable, and can be mitigated, up to a point; both are critical issues for the survival of humanity globally. There are many differences, too, but they are remediable. Disease is recognized everywhere as a problem and a priority, while violence is recognized as a problem only within some societies. Disease is recognized as a defeatable enemy; violence is mostly seen as inevitable, or even desirable. There is a massive global industry looking for cures for all manner of diseases, yet the equally massive industry relating to violence is mainly dedicated to finding more effective ways to promote it. In all this, the cost of ill health is calibrated and carefully examined while the real cost of violence tends to be ignored or downplayed – except by those who suffer from it.

It is important to remember that public views on health have changed massively over the past century. From being an individual issue with little or no state provision it has become a public issue. It has become clear that much disease can be eliminated and people as a result can live longer and more fulfilled lives. Massive investment has revolutionised the health and life-expectancy of much of the world's population as disease has been tackled in a concerted manner across the world. Public views on violence can change also, nudged on by the lives and work of many. As yet, though, most people do not think that much can be done about it, except increase one's own protection. Internally, societies fear violence and try to eliminate it, most often by repression – which only leads to its re-emergence. Externally, it is seen as largely inevitable and used widely as the ultimate weapon to achieve political goals. The means of violence are still a powerful sign of virility at the international conference table.

What could a new focus on open, direct violence entail? The enemy would no longer be 'them', but violence itself. Problems between people and nations would be addressed following the basic principle that violence only makes things worse. (How much evidence do we need to show that this is the case in the modern world?) If violence is learned – as scientific research tells us it is – then it can be unlearned, starting at home and in schools. Such a perspective also could not ignore the structures of violence. If we began to treat violence like we do disease, we would start to focus on its underlying dynamics. We would invest much more in research into the causes of violence and into methods of reducing and preventing it. We would use the internet and all high-tech approaches for violence prevention and reduction as we are doing now for health. As people looked into the causes of violence they would see that these lie in the wider political, social and economic context, as they do with disease. So they would be drawn into violence prevention by working on deeper structural issues such as rights, justice, environment, militarisation and prejudice. We would rigorously evaluate all methods of reducing violence, for cost and for their effect on the deeper structural causes. Conflict resolution methods would be seen as mainstream ways to avoid violence. Education would become crucial.

9 Violence is here taken to mean open, direct violent behaviour (both war and physical violence) on the one hand, and threat, intimidation and repression on the other.

3.2 Addressing Both Sides of the Coin: Inner Work

The original Open Letter, and therefore also our lead article to this Dialogue, focused on visible, external aspects of peacebuilding. With hindsight, we could have drawn more attention to the way in which the recent developments in our field have tended to ignore the inner in favour of the outer. It seems to the authors that we cannot do this work well, cannot respond creatively to our changing context if we do not make time to also be in touch with ourselves and our own sources of hope. The same need has been emphasised in this volume by both Weitsch and Bozicevic. Peace has always been as much about internal change as about an external one. When Gandhi urged us to "be the change you want to see" he was pointing to the fact that if we do not do this inner work, much of what we are trying to do risks being negated by the way we are ourselves.

So what is this inner work? For us it is about maximising our inner resources. It means recognizing our deep interconnectedness – with the planet and all its people, including of course those responsible for the violence and harm we are trying to address. It entails a continuing struggle to put oneself in the situation of the other, to transform ourselves as we try to help others transform themselves and their situations. We build our own inner peace, as we build theirs, or we are doing neither. Without it, we risk being simply a clock face, without any mechanism inside. Working on this inner dimension helps us become more emotionally literate. We become more conscious of our own egos and the dangers the ego brings if unchecked. We are willing to ask ourselves whose needs we are meeting in this work, and tolerate the honest answer. If we remain a battle ground inside, we will not only be unable to be effective peacebuilders, we will probably carry on that fight with others in our working lives. Growing self-awareness and depth tend to lead to greater curiosity, so a person may read more, including the literature of our field, and write more too. It might become irresistible to learn from what we do and to help our colleagues do so too.

What we are all trying to do was neatly expressed by Bozicevic: bringing "the breeze of normal life" to countries and communities who have lost that sense of ongoing wellbeing and normality and want it again, now. As this Dialogue has underlined, that takes at least two things: critical and politically-aware analysis of our strategies in context, and invigorating our capacities. The responses have dealt more firmly with the analytical side of the coin, but we would like to end with the equally crucial individual, more spiritual dimension. This story comes from the Sufi mystic Bayazid. It is related here by Hizkias Assefa, a wise, highly experienced mediator and peacebuilder:

> From a young age I was a revolutionary and my prayer consisted of saying to God: "Lord, give me strength to change the world." When I matured into an adult and realised that I had passed through half of my life without having changed even one soul, I altered my prayer and began to say: "Lord, give me grace to transform those who come into contact with me, even if this may only be my family and friends. With this I will be satisfied." Now that I am old and my days are numbered, I have started to understand how stupid I have been. My only prayer now is: "Lord, give me grace to change myself." If I had prayed this way from the beginning I would not have wasted my life. Everyone attempts to change humanity. Almost no one thinks about changing oneself.[10]

10 From an article by Hizkias Assefa which elaborates on this theme, see *Wajibu: Journal of Social and Ethical Concern*, 22 (1), April-May 2007. Published by Dr. Gerald J. Wanjohi, Nairobi, Kenya; please email wakurayag@yahoo.com for a copy.

About the Authors

Simon Fisher is a facilitator, trainer, activist and writer. He has first-hand experience of conflict, development and change in many countries, working with local and international agencies, governments and at the UN. In 1991 he co-founded and became the first director of Responding to Conflict, UK. Since then his priority has been to help develop and sustain active networks of peace workers at global and regional levels, as well as to support specific initiatives for resistance and transformation. He is now working in Zimbabwe. Among his publications are *Working with Conflict: Skills and Strategies for Action* (co-author, RTC/Zed Books 2000); and *Spirited Living: Waging Conflict, Building Peace* (Quaker Books 2004). He is a former honorary research fellow at the Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford, and is currently an associate of the Centre for Development and Emergency Practice (CENDEP) at Oxford Brookes University, both in the UK. He is also a member of the Advisory Committee of the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on Conflict Issues. Contact: lettertopeacebuilders@gmail.com.

Lada Zimina is currently conflict advisor at Care International UK, and has previously worked in Skillshare International and International Alert, UK, although she has co-authored this article in a personal capacity. She is a practitioner from Kazakhstan, with experience of working regionally in Central Asia and the Caucasus, and on a wider international scale. She has focused on critical issues in peacebuilding such as security and small arms control, contested histories, business interests and resource management policies, and peace and conflict education. She is especially interested in building the capacity of civil society to deal with conflict, and in exploring the linkages between development and conflict transformation. Lada Zimina is a former Chevening scholar. Contact: lettertopeacebuilders@gmail.com.

Louis Kriesberg is Professor Emeritus of Sociology, Maxwell Professor Emeritus of Social Conflict Studies and founding director of the Program on the Analysis and Resolution of Conflicts (1986-1994), all at Syracuse University, USA. In addition to over 125 book chapters and articles, his published books include: *Constructive Conflicts* (1998, 2003, 2007), *International Conflict Resolution* (1992), *Timing the De-Escalation of International Conflicts* (co-ed., 1991), *Intractable Conflicts and Their Transformation* (co-ed., 1989), *Social Conflicts* (1973, 1982), *Social Processes in International Relations* (ed., 1968) and *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change* (ed., Vols. 1-14, 1978-1992). Most recently, he co-edited *Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding: Moving from Violence to Sustainable Peace* (2009). He lectures, consults and provides training regarding conflict resolution, security issues and peace studies. His current research focuses on alternative contemporary American foreign policies, the transformation of violent conflicts and trends in the fields of peace and conflict resolution studies. More information can be found at http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/lkriesbe.

Diana Chigas is co-director (with Peter Woodrow) of the Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) project at CDA Collaborative Learning Projects and professor of the practice of negotiation and conflict resolution at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, USA. At CDA she has been concentrating on RPP's engagement with the Balkans, especially Kosovo, and led an assessment of the impact of peacebuilding policies and activities on the violence that occurred in 2004 in Kosovo. Prior to joining CDA, Diana Chigas worked as a facilitator, trainer and consultant in negotiation, dialogue and conflict resolution, including on preventive diplomacy in the OSCE, on conflict management in Cyprus, on Track II discussions in El Salvador, in South Africa, Ecuador and Peru and in the Georgia/South Ossetia peace process. Contact: DChigas@cdainc.com; more information: www.cdainc.com.

Peter Woodrow is co-director (with Diana Chigas) of the Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) project at CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA. In this position, he has been concentrating on engagement with governments and NGOs in the Great Lakes Region of Africa, particularly Burundi, Rwanda and the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. He is an experienced mediator, facilitator, trainer and consultant, skilled in negotiation, collaborative problem-solving and dispute resolution systems design. He has also developed and implemented international programmes in consensus-building, problem-solving, decision-making and inter-ethnic conflict resolution in Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe. Contact: pwoodrow@cdainc.com; more information: www.cdainc.com.

Martina Weitsch is a representative and head of office at the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA), a Quaker NGO based in Brussels. She has held this position since 2002. She has been a Quaker all her life and her current role at QCEA allows her to bring her lifelong experience to her political advocacy on peace issues. Martina Weitsch holds a diploma in Management Studies from Huddersfield Polytechnic, UK (1989) and has worked in the UK within the social housing field for many years before moving to Brussels to take up her current role. Publications include *Peace and Peacebuilding – Some European Perspectives* (QCEA 2007) and *People are Party to Building Peace* (QCEA/EPLO 2008). Contact: mweitsch@qcea.org.

Goran Bozicevic is co-founder and current director of Miramida Centar – Regional Peacebuilding Exchange in Groznjan-Grisignana (Istria, Croatia). A natural-science teacher by vocation, he has been active in peacebuilding since 1993, working all across the post-Yugoslav region since 1996. As a trainer in nonviolent conflict transformation, he works in divided communities and with people with different values, beginning with the Volunteer Project Pakrac, which he co-founded and coordinated (1993-1995). In 1996, he co-founded the Centre for Peace Studies in Zagreb, of which he also was the founding director (1996-1999) and where he continues to teach. He has been actively involved in dealing with the past issues since 2002, when he started serving as the representative in the post-Yugoslav countries of Quaker Peace & Social Witness's Dealing with the Past Programme (2002-2006). Contact: miramida@zamir.net.

Ulrike Hopp has been the deputy director of the Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies' Sri Lanka office since 2005. For her position at Berghof, Ulrike is currently on leave from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), where she has worked since 1997. There she served as desk officer for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, from 2002 onwards, and authored the ministry's strategy for peacebuilding (*Übersektorales Konzept zur Krisenprävention, Konfliktbearbeitung und Friedensförderung in der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, 2005*). As an economist, Ulrike Hopp integrates both her educational background in management and her professional experience in development assistance. She looks at her work from the angle of organisational learning and takes great interest in building capacities for institutional and social change processes. Contact: ulrike.hopp@berghof-peacesupport.org.

Barbara Unger is senior coordinator and deputy director of Berghof Peace Support. She coordinates the consulting services of BPS and is responsible for programme activities in Latin America. Her recent activities include, among others, providing training, consultancy services and backstopping for German technical cooperation (GTZ) programmes, as well as lessons learned and practitioners' guidelines. Barbara Unger joined BPS in 2006; prior to that she coordinated zivik, a funding mechanism for conflict resolution activities set up by the German Federal Foreign Office, and was part of the editorial team of the Federal Government's Action Plan *Civilian Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Peace-Buildin*g. She has previously worked as an independent trainer and consultant, as well as a programme officer in several development and consulting institutions. A political scientist focusing on development and gender issues with a specialization from the German Development Institute, her current practice and research interests comprise systemic approaches, peace support structures and dealing with the past. Contact: barbara.unger@berghof-peacesupport.org.

Martina Fischer – see next page

About the Editors

Beatrix Schmelzle is coordinator and co-editor of the *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation* and works for the Berghof Research Center. Her research and practice focus on conflict transformation and reconciliation in the Western Balkans and the Middle East, on inter-ethnic and cross-cultural dialogue, and processes of organisational learning. She has previously worked with various NGOs in the field of conflict resolution in research, facilitation and organisational development capacities, including: Search for Common Ground, Washington DC, USA; Seeds of Peace, Connecticut, USA; Public Conversations Project, Watertown, USA; International Alert, London, UK and, most recently, Vienna Conflict Management Partners, Austria, of which she is a founding member. She has an M.P.A. from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, Cambridge, USA. She also has an M.A. degree in Political Science/International Relations from the Free University Berlin, Germany.

Martina Fischer is the deputy director at the Berghof Research Center in Berlin, Germany, and co-editor of the *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation.* She is also vice chair of the board of the German Peace Research Foundation (DSF). She has a PhD in Political Science from the Free University in Berlin, Germany and has published widely on peacebuilding in South Eastern Europe, European peace and security policy, civil-military relations, the role of civil society in peacebuilding, the potential of youth in conflict transformation and linkages between peacebuilding and development strategies. She frequently advises peace and development agencies – civil society initiatives as well as public sector organisations, such as the German Development Agency GTZ – on conflict issues. She also has worked as an advisor and consultant for members of the German Parliament, the European Parliament, political parties and ministries, i.e. as a member of the Working Group on Peace and Conflict Studies and the Advisory Council on Civil Conflict Prevention established by the German Foreign Ministry. Among her most recent publications are the edited volume *Peacebuilding and Civil Society in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ten Years after Dayton* (Lit Verlag, 2nd Edition 2007) and *Strategies for Peace* (co-edited with Volker Rittberger, Barbara Budrich Verlag 2008).

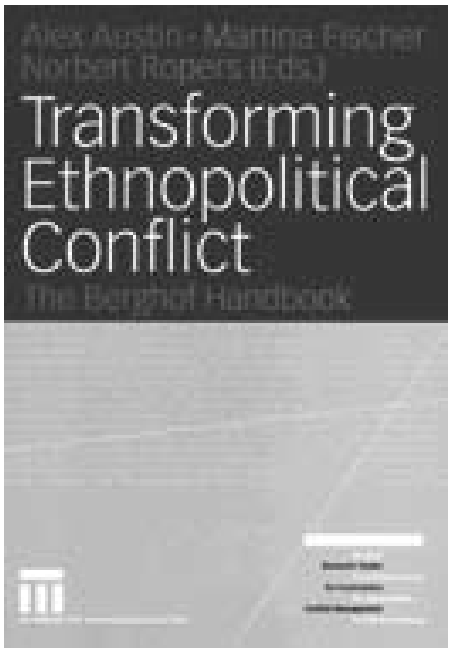
For more information, see

Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation: www.berghof-handbook.net
Berghof Research Center/Berghof Conflict Research: www.berghof-center.org
Berghof Peace Support: www.berghof-peacesupport.org

Or contact us at: info@berghof-handbook.net

Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation

The **Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation** offers both practitioners and scholars a systematic overview of the state-of-the-art of conflict transformation. In response to the contemporary challenges of violent conflict and recent developments in the field of conflict transformation, the Handbook summarises, and promotes dialogue about, the state-of-the-art in the theory and practice of crisis prevention and nonviolence, peace consolidation and the civil management of inter-group conflicts. The Berghof Handbook is designed primarily for practitioners seeking ideas and information for their own work and wishing to draw on the wealth of experience amassed by their colleagues in a range of regions and contexts. It is also intended for experts in politics, research and journalism. Homepage: **www.berghof-handbook.net**.



Print Edition

Alex Austin, Martina Fischer, Norbert Ropers (Eds.)
The Berghof Handbook 2004.

473 pp.
39,90 €
ISBN 3-8 100-39 40-3

Order at:

VS Verlag
Abraham-Lincoln-Straße 46
65189 Wiesbaden, Germany
Fax +49(0) 611-7878-420
www.vs-verlag.de

VS VERLAG

Dialogue Series	Title	Author	Published
No. 6	A Systemic Approach to Conflict Transformation. Exploring Strengths and Limitations	D. Körppen, B. Schmelzle, O. Wils (Eds.)	2008
No. 5	Social Change and Conflict Transformation	D. Bloomfield, M. Fischer, B. Schmelzle (Eds.)	2006
No. 4	New Trends in PCIA	D. Bloomfield, M. Fischer, B. Schmelzle (Eds.)	2005
No. 3	Transforming War Economies – Dilemmas and Strategies	M. Fischer, B. Schmelzle (Eds.)	2005
No. 2	Security Sector Reform	C. McCartney, M Fischer, O. Wils (Eds.)	2004
No. 1	Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment – Critical Views on Theory and Practice	A. Austin, M. Fischer, O. Wils (Eds.)	2003

Articles: Title	Author	Published
On Hybrid Political Orders and and Emerging States: State Formation in the Context of “Fragility”	Volker Böge, Anne Brown, Kevin Clements, Anna Nolan	2008
Nonviolent Resistance and Conflict Transformation in Power Asymmetries	Véronique Dudouet	2008
“Frameworkers” and “Circlers” – Exploring Assumptions in Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment	Reina Neufeldt	2007
Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation in the Arab World: The Work of Civil Society Organisations in Lebanon and Morocco	Oussama Safa	2007
Training for Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation. Experiences of the “Centre for Nonviolent Action” in the Western Balkans	Nenad Vukosavljevic	2007
Training for Conflict Transformation: An Overview of Approaches and Resources	Beatrix Schmelzle	2006
Civil Society in Conflict Transformation: Ambivalence, Potentials and Challenges	Martina Fischer	2006
Traditional Approaches to Conflict Transformation – Potentials and Limits	Volker Böge	2006
Social Change and Conflict Transformation	Christopher Mitchell	2005
Opportunities for Synergy – Conflict Transformation and the Corporate Agenda	Luc Zandvliet	2005
The Role of Local Business in Peacebuilding	N. Killick, VS Srikantha, C. Gündüz	2005
The Training Process: Achieving Social Impact by Training Individuals?	Dirk Sprenger	2005
The Civilisation of Conflict: Constructive Pacifism as a Guiding Notion for Conflict Transformation	Dieter Senghaas	2004
Assessing the State-of-the-Art in Conflict Transformation	Cordula Reimann	2004
Conflict Transformation: A Multi-Dimensional Task	Hugh Miall	2004
Culture, Power Asymmetries and Gender in Conflict Transformation	Diana Francis	2004
Trends and Causes of Armed Conflict	Dan Smith	2004
Early Warning and The Field: A Cargo Cult Science?	Alex Austin	2004
Designing Transformation and Intervention Processes	Thania Paffenholz	2004
Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment Methodology	Mark Hoffman	2004

Articles: Title	Author	Published
Experiences with Impact Assessment: Can we know what Good we do?	Mary B. Anderson	2004
Facilitation Skills for Interpersonal Transformation	Ron Kraybill	2004
Team and Organisational Development as a Means for Conflict Prevention and Resolution	Friedrich Glasl, Rudi Ballreich	2004
From Resolution to Transformation: The Role of Dialogue Projects	Norbert Ropers	2004
Conflict Transformation through State Reform	Günther Baechler	2004
Hawks and Doves: Peace Keeping and Conflict Resolution	Wibke Hansen, Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse	2004
The News Media and the Transformation of Ethnopolitical Conflicts	Dusan Reljic	2004
The Role of Development Aid in Conflict Transformation: Facilitating Empowerment Processes and Community Building	Christine Bigdon, Benedikt Korf	2004
Recovering from Violent Conflict: Regeneration and (Re-) Integration as Elements of Peacebuilding	Martina Fischer	2004
Dealing with the Consequences of Organised Violence in Trauma Work	David Becker	2004
Supporting Justice, Co-existence and Reconciliation after Armed Conflict: Strategies for Dealing with the Past	Gunnar Theissen	2004
Towards Conflict Transformation and a Just Peace	Kevin Clements	2004
Participatory Action Research in Post Conflict Situations: The Example of the War-torn Societies Project	Agneta Johannsen	2001
Transforming Cultural Conflict in an Age of Complexity	Michelle LeBaron	2001
Concepts and Strategies of Third-Party Intervention	Ron Fisher	2001
Conflict Transformation through Education and Youth Programmes	Stephanie Schell-Faucon	2001
Using the Media for Conflict Transformation: The Common Ground Experience	Sandra Melone, Georgios Terzis, Ozsel Beleli	2001

All Articles and Dialogue Issues are available for download free of charge at

www.berghof-handbook.net