

GOAL 1: **Support people** working at local, national and international levels to develop effective solutions to social, economic and political problems related to violent conflicts

Effectively transforming conflict requires processes that involve many different people, from political leaders and officials to activists and ordinary citizens.

We believe local people should play a vital role in resolving their own conflicts. We offer long-term and flexible support to strengthen partners' skills and efforts to tackle the issues that fuel conflicts. This includes practical help with strategic planning, organizational development, fundraising and financial management.

In 2008 our work included support for an internally displaced people's network in Georgia, with mentoring to encourage their involvement in politics and advocating for change. Work with civil society in Abkhazia included

joint analysis with community activists and young people from the Gali region to help them identify needs and strategies for future work.

An independent evaluation concluded that our work had enabled key civil society members in Uganda to have a voice in the peace process with the Lord's Resistance Army. We also supported efforts by traditional leaders and women activists exploring how gender issues could be integrated into traditional reconciliation processes.

In Sierra Leone our support to the Bo Peace and Reconciliation Movement saw a steady increase in local disputes resolved by its volunteer 'peace monitors', and its move to become a national non-governmental organization.

CASE STUDY: SIERRA LEONE **Resourcing community peacebuilders**

Our 12-year partnership with the Bo Peace and Reconciliation Movement (BPRM) reached an important landmark in 2008 with the completion of its new Peace Resource Centre. Located in Sierra Leone's second largest town, Bo, the centre houses peace and conflict-related materials and acts as a venue for training and exchange visits for BPRM's staff, volunteer peace monitors and local communities.

"This centre is a clear example of the sustainability of our work," says executive director Hassan Feika, a former combatant who co-founded BPRM during the 11-year civil war.

"It's helping young people, men and women to acquire the skills and knowledge that will improve their daily lives – and in doing so this will help preserve peace".

The centre is yet another step in the consolidation of BPRM's impressive work. Its unique approach relies on a dedicated network of peace monitors who use modern and traditional conflict resolution methods to resolve disputes at the community level in southern Sierra Leone.

The creation of local support structures has always been central to BPRM's approach. As part of their intervention



The Peace Resource Centre in Bo, Sierra Leone

the peace monitors identify and train community members as volunteer peace monitors, who then form Chiefdom Peace and Reconciliation Committees. The idea is to leave behind a local group able to deal with any new disputes and improve community unity. So far BPRM has set up 24 committees in three districts.

Now recognized nationally, BPRM has sought non-governmental status with the Sierra Leonean government and in 2009 will become known as the Peace and Reconciliation Movement.

CASE STUDY: UGANDA **Resolving land disputes**

Disputes over land rose sharply as many of northern Uganda's 1.8 million internally displaced people left camps to restart life in their villages and farms despite an uncertain peace between the government and the rebel Lord's Resistance Army.

In some cases newly planted crops and huts have been burned or looted. Violent clashes and evictions have resulted in tensions between communities. Confusion over land boundaries and titles, and misinformation by some clan leaders and politicians fuel the conflicts.

Our partner, the multi-faith Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI), helps resolve such disputes. Perceived as impartial, its members are often asked by local communities, courts and government officials to act as mediators.

Sheltering under a tree with Guru Guru camp's elders in Lamogi sub-county, Mohammed Karoli from ARLPI

explained how it took a year to settle one 'land wrangle' between the Guru Guru and another clan:

"There's no way you can hurry mediation ... cases are usually complex," he said. "Here, for example, we first met with district officials and sub-county chairmen, heard testimonies from both sides and helped identify key issues for resolution and ways forward."

Tensions still ran high at a follow-up meeting, with one man carrying a weapon "to protect his clan" but ARLPI's mediator calmed the situation. They later visited the land and worked with local officials and courts to determine its ownership and boundaries. The case was resolved peacefully in 2008.

"The people complaining about it being their land have left it to those who it belongs to," said local council chairman Denis Rom. "This is what ARLPI helped us do."

"There's no way you can hurry mediation ... cases are usually complex."



Mohammed Karoli (centre) from ARLPI's sub-county peace committee in Amuru district with local council chairman Denis Rom (centre left) and Guru Guru camp's elders

GOAL 2: **Provide opportunities for dialogue** and improved relationships within communities and across conflict divides at all social and political levels

Building or repairing relationships through dialogue is an essential part of resolving violent conflict. It can lead to a shared understanding of difficult problems and help restore trust or open up communication between people bitterly divided by war.

In 2008 we created opportunities for dialogue and exchange in all the places where we work. A meeting in Istanbul in June with the Heinrich Boell Foundation and University of California (Irvine) enabled frank discussions among 18 Georgians and Abkhaz on some of the most pressing and sensitive issues of their conflict at a time of extreme tensions between their leaderships. Despite the war that erupted soon after, partners remained in contact.

In Southern Sudan and Uganda we supported traditional leaders to hold the first in a series of problem-solving workshops dealing with violence and other common challenges faced by border communities. Our partner's peace clubs in northern Ugandan schools continued to offer young people, including ex-child soldiers and abductees, a safe space to learn how to resolve their differences through dialogue rather than violence.

An independent evaluation concluded our Strengthening Citizens' Security project in Sierra Leone had improved relations between civilians and security forces and made people living in Kenema and Kailahun districts more confident about their safety.

CASE STUDY: WEST AFRICA

Building bridges between civilians and security forces

"Ten years ago it would have been impossible to have civil society and security sector representatives discussing security issues openly," said Ishmael Tarawali, director for provincial and border security at the Office of National Security (ONS) in Sierra Leone. "This conference has achieved that."

His remarks came after spending two days with 40 other participants from Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia, sharing experiences and insights into regional security challenges.

Historically, relations between civilians and security officials in the Mano River Union region have been beset by mistrust and repression. In Sierra Leone, post-war reforms aspire to establish effective civilian oversight of the new security agencies. Building these bridges however remains a real challenge.

This unprecedented conference in May 2008 was an attempt to improve cooperation. It formed part of our pilot project Strengthening Citizens' Security, which aimed to make the security sector more accessible and accountable to ordinary people.



Sallay Bayoh from the Mano River Women's Peace Network, one of the partners involved in the conference

Participants told us they had gained better understanding of the different security structures in the region. Their final public statement called for more civil society involvement in security matters, especially by women. They also demanded better information on regional protocols and border tariffs, plus stronger official commitment to stamp out corruption and abuses.

Local print media and radio covered these appeals widely. A Sierra Leonean official raised issues from the conference at the Mano River Union summit in Liberia two weeks later.

CASE STUDY: THE GEORGIAN-ABKHAZ CONFLICT

Picking up the pieces

Just four months after the August war, we brought together 14 young Georgians and Abkhaz in London. Opportunities for such contact are very rare – most young people have never met their peers from across the conflict divide.

Emotions ran high as the group shared their personal experiences. Some of the Georgians had been called up as reservists and saw military action in South Ossetia at first hand. Several Abkhaz had signed up as volunteers, fearing the fighting would spread to Abkhazia.

The realization they had come close to facing each other down the barrel of a gun gave depth, urgency and honesty to the discussions.

"Some of us were about to take arms and fight each other," said one. "Instead, we have met here and fought our conflict using words."

Our youth dialogue process offers opportunities to understand life on 'the other side', talk together about what can be done about the conflict, and also to be self-critical.

Over five days the group debated issues passionately, took part in a roundtable with the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, attended lectures and film showings and socialized together.

"I'm now convinced that dialogue is necessary. Stereotypes were shattered here, and we talked as equals," said one. "I went home wanting to change my own society," said another.

These young people and others will continue to meet and work together in 2009 to take their experience beyond their immediate circles.

"I'm now convinced that dialogue is necessary. Stereotypes were shattered here, and we talked as equals."

Participants in a youth dialogue meeting in London discussing the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict



GOAL 3: **Influence governments** and other decision makers to employ conflict transformation policies that promote alternatives to violence

Our practical experiences of peacebuilding around the world help us raise important lessons with policymakers.

In 2008 we published our latest thematic Accord, *Powers of persuasion: incentives, sanctions and conditionality in peacemaking*. Policy seminars and briefings in London, New York, and Europe emphasized the importance of using these levers of influence in ways that underpin rather than undermine peace processes. We also worked with United Nations (UN) Department of Political Affairs staff on how sanctions could be used more effectively as part of an overall peace support strategy.

We lobbied the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents and international mediators for greater civil society input into the negotiations over Nagorny Karabakh, one of the

world's most closed and confidential peace processes.

In Fiji we supported the Citizens' Constitutional Forum's international advocacy work with the UN, European Union and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

We supported Ugandan civil society, religious and traditional leaders in their repeated efforts to persuade Western donors and governments to 'give peace a chance' as the two-year peace process between the Lord's Resistance Army and Ugandan government faltered.

We also actively participated in various networks, including the Peace and Security Liaison Group, Committee for Conflict Transformation Support, Mediation Support Network and the Alliance for Peacebuilding.

CASE STUDY: UNITED KINGDOM **Influencing the British government**

In 2008 the British government increased its focus on conflict as a key priority for foreign, security and development policy. At the same time, there was growing recognition of the limits of outside intervention to respond effectively to challenges posed by conflict and weak governance.

As our arguments on the importance of peace processes gained traction, officials increasingly turned to us for guidance. Some of our recommendations began to be put in place as part of their new approach to conflict.

For example, the Department for International Development (DFID) invited us to help deliver its first training course on peace processes for conflict advisers. Our executive director Andy Carl was invited to be part of an external review team assessing the government's ability to deliver its Public Service Agreement on Conflict, with many of the team's recommendations later carried out.

We were asked for advice on how to respond to peacemaking challenges in Cyprus, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Somalia and the regions where we regularly work. DFID also commissioned us to develop a paper on the



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A participant reads the Accord policy brief on incentives, sanctions and conditionality in peace processes at our London seminar

connection between peace processes and statebuilding.

"There seems to be greater awareness of the need to support those in conflict to resolve their differences through peaceful processes," says Andy Carl.

"Yet greater awareness has not yet translated into consistent policy and practice. We plan to continue advocating ways that the UK can be more strategic in supporting effective peacemaking."

CASE STUDY: THE CAUCASUS **Responding to crisis**

The outbreak of war in August was the result of years of missed opportunities to resolve the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict. Geopolitics trumped attempts to promote dialogue, while Russia's unilateral recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia's independence dramatically changed the landscape for conflict resolution.

With over 10 years' experience supporting local peacebuilding initiatives in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict we were well placed to influence policymakers' responses to the crisis.

We fed recommendations into the negotiations process in Geneva and shared analysis with the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary General for Georgia, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union, the UK and other governments, and the international media.

Among other things, we called for more inclusive approaches to the Georgian-Abkhaz and Georgian-South Ossetian peace processes, attention to addressing human rights violations and dealing with the past, and more sensitivity and accountability in how donor money is spent in conflict situations.

"When the geopolitical stakes are high, international policymakers tend to overlook the local conflict dynamics that are key to transforming the situation," notes Rachel Clogg, our Caucasus programme director.

"This recent experience of war makes it even more important to understand how, and why, past peacemaking efforts have failed."

Our policy work continues to engage with key local and international actors to ensure that appropriate lessons are learned from the 2008 war.

"When the geopolitical stakes are high, international policymakers tend to overlook the local conflict dynamics that are key to transforming the situation."

Russian military during the August 2008 crisis
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GOAL 4: **Improving peacemaking practice** and policies by promoting learning from peace processes around the world

Though every conflict and peace process is different, the lessons learned along the way can be useful for people involved in peacemaking worldwide. Shared experiences can shed light on common pitfalls or spark new ideas and approaches for even seemingly intractable conflicts.

In 2008 we continued to document and analyse peacemaking initiatives and lessons learned through our online and print Accord publication series. One edition covered the Indonesia-Aceh peace process, while a thematic edition on the use of incentives and sanctions drew from experiences in Darfur, northern Uganda, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Georgia-Abkhazia and Bougainville-Papua New Guinea.

In Sierra Leone we launched and distributed a booklet detailing over a decade of community peacebuilding by the Bo Peace and Reconciliation Movement, and made this available on our website.

Work also began with Georgian partners to produce a lessons learned paper drawing on the experience and analysis of a network of internally displaced people's organizations, and aimed at sharing its key messages with a wider audience.

We recruited an Adviser on Peace Processes to lead our work in promoting comparative learning to partners and policymakers. This new post reflects the priority we give to improving peacemaking practice globally.

CASE STUDY: UGANDA AND SIERRA LEONE

Exchanging experiences of life after war

In a sweltering community hall in the southern Sierra Leonean town of Bo, nine young Ugandans listened as the local paramount chief's spokesman recalled how his people had chosen peace over revenge after an 11-year civil war.

"Somebody who came to amputate your arm, burn your house, kill your children – saying forgive me for doing all those things?" he said. "It was very bitter. For the sake of peace we decided to swallow that bitter pill. And today we are none the worse."

They had come to see how Sierra Leone's peace process had fared since war ended in 2002. With their own country grappling to conclude 23 years of war against the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), they hoped to gain valuable insights.

Mostly from Uganda's war-affected north, they included a government official, ex-LRA abducted child soldiers, student leaders and several of our partners' staff.

Our week-long exchange visit brought them into contact with diverse views. How to balance peace with justice was a recurring theme. In particular, various Sierra Leoneans described the importance of their Truth and Reconciliation Commission in helping national healing. Activists and officials stressed the need however to "plan well" for the future, especially in compensating war victims. Others cautioned them to look hard at the legacy of any war crimes tribunal and to not think there is just one model.

At the local level the Ugandans met with the Bo Peace and Reconciliation Movement and some volunteer peace monitors it has trained to resolve disputes in Koribondo.

"There we heard testimonies of real access to justice in their community, made possible by this humble institution," said Charles Tolit. "We were all impressed. Since returning to northern Uganda we've been discussing with colleagues how we might try something similar."

"...we heard testimonies of real access to justice in their community, made possible by this humble institution, the Bo Peace and Reconciliation Movement."

Innocent Aloyo and Grace Arach from Uganda in discussion with peace studies students Samuel Allen and Richard Mansaray at Fourah Bay College in Freetown, Sierra Leone

CASE STUDY: INDONESIA-ACEH

Sharing peacemaking success

"The peace agreement was a great achievement," reflects Irwandi Yusuf, Governor of Aceh and former rebel. "But people sometimes can't feel the peace, or they forget to feel it – like a man looking for a lost horse while he is riding on it."

In August 2005, the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to end over 30 years of armed conflict in Aceh. Three years on from that historic agreement, we worked with the people involved to document the process in our Accord publication, *Reconfiguring politics: the Indonesia-Aceh peace process*.

The negotiators in their articles describe the peace talks and analyse what contributed to success. "The format of the peace process – direct and informal talks – played an important role," says Hamid Awaluddin, the Indonesian government's chief negotiator. "Direct talks meant both sides could see each other and talk directly, heart to heart. Both sides could see into each other's eyes."

GAM negotiators offer further perspectives, highlighting difficulties encountered during the talks and explaining how breakthroughs were reached. Other



Accord Series editor Aaron Griffiths and issue editor Aguswandi interviewing Aceh's Governor Irwandi Yusuf

Acehnese and international experts describe progress during the transition, pinpointing weaknesses in the negotiations and analysing the challenges for peacebuilding.

We worked with the editors and authors to launch the publication at events in Banda Aceh, Jakarta and Singapore. Translated into Bahasa Indonesia, it is being used to help increase public understanding of the peace deal. An accompanying policy brief also summarizes key lessons for peacemakers worldwide.



GOAL 5: **Challenge stereotypes** and increase public awareness of human rights, conflict and peace issues in divided societies

Challenging stereotypes and increasing awareness of deeply contested issues can help improve understanding and dispel myths about 'the other side'. Giving a voice to those most affected by violent conflict is also an important part of our work.

In 2008 in deeply divided Fiji our partner broadcast TV advertisements calling for religious and ethnic tolerance and ran workshops to raise human rights awareness among indigenous Fijian communities.

In Sierra Leone we published newsletters to promote debate and analysis on peace and security issues in the Mano River region and produced a paper about our experiences of civil society involvement with Sierra

Leone's security sector. Work began on a public information campaign to increase awareness of security issues in the border areas.

A partner's film screened on national TV allowed northern Ugandans displaced by the war to speak out about challenges they faced resettling in their villages. In Southern Sudan we supported radio programmes to help build understanding between LRA-affected communities.

Our Caucasus work included community radio, films and publications to challenge assumptions and provoke debate between communities and across the conflict divide. Outreach work in regional Georgian towns also provided opportunities for people to discuss how the recent war would affect their futures.

CASE STUDY: SUDAN-UGANDA

Living along a perilous border

The impact of the 23-year conflict against the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) upon Uganda's neighbours is often overlooked and under-researched. To improve understanding we commissioned in 2008 the first study into how this conflict and Sudan's own civil war have affected Sudanese people living along the Uganda border.

Their views revealed profound challenges for peacebuilding and statebuilding in the region, and growing frustration with both Sudan and Uganda's fragile peace processes.

"Peace is not like we expected," said a man in Aru-Kubi, a Southern Sudanese village previously known for many years as Kony Village after the LRA's leader Joseph Kony. "I cannot say there is peace – there's no infrastructure to make the community feel comfortable."

Sudan's border communities face a bleak future amid widespread insecurity and underdevelopment. Deep-rooted mistrust among different ethnic groups and

a pervasive bewilderment about being caught up in a 'Ugandan conflict' compounds this situation.

"Most people feel negatively about the Acholi," explained one Sudanese interviewee, referring to the ethnic group from which Kony originates and has abducted tens of thousands of children to use as fighters, porters and sex slaves.

Our study and recommendations have attracted interest from local practitioners, donors and government officials in the capitals of Kampala and Juba.

We are also working with traditional leaders in border communities to hold problem-solving workshops dealing with some of the issues raised, such as harassment from cattle raiders, army and immigration officials; unfair border taxes; and the challenges of reintegration and resettlement.

Our study revealed profound challenges for peacebuilding and statebuilding in the region...



People have formed self-defence groups to protect themselves against LRA attacks in Southern Sudan
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CASE STUDY: THE NAGORNY KARABAKH CONFLICT

Building relationships through film

Artists, fashion designers, hostage negotiators and prisoners of war are just some of the people who have appeared in the latest stage of our filmmaking project on the conflict between Armenians and Azerbaijanis over Nagorny Karabakh.

Dialogue Through Film builds links between young people from Azerbaijan and Karabakh by training them how to make short documentary films.

This unique project started three years ago and is run by partners from local organizations Internews Armenia, Internews Azerbaijan, and the Stepanakert Press Club in Nagorny Karabakh.

After producing more than 20 individual films on wide-ranging subjects from donkey races and computer games to de-mining and returning to civilian life after war, the teams have moved on to make joint films.

For people divided by closed borders, this has proved a huge challenge. After a brainstorming session in Georgia in April, producers and camera crews from each side spent the summer filming. Their material has now been edited together into our first set of joint films made by Azerbaijanis and Karabakh Armenians.



Young people working in Nagorny Karabakh on a joint film about fashion

Planning the storyline for each film, coordinating filming and working on final edits have all been done via the internet, with producers from both sides in daily contact by email. There has been debate, arguments, but many laughs too.

"These young filmmakers have proved that it is possible to work together," says our programme associate Jenny Norton. "And as we start showing the films to audiences across the region, that's the message we'll be trying to share."