

Organizational development in 2008

Our ambition is to make a real difference to people everywhere we work – from Nagorny Karabakh to Southern Sudan and from Sierra Leone to the Philippines – and to our goal of helping end these violent conflicts.

What makes CR distinctive is that we approach peacebuilding as a complex challenge requiring complex strategies. We do practical work emphasizing the importance of local people in resolving their own conflicts; we engage in dialogue and advocacy to influence international policy responses to conflict; and we promote new thinking on conflict transformation.

Strengthening the organization's competence

As a mid-sized organization we take pride in having staff with deep experience and high standards, as well as internal systems that enable them to work effectively and flexibly.

However our capacities limit our ambitions and so in 2008 we sought to strengthen these. We improved organizational support through a process of strengthening staff skills and management; improving office systems; updating and developing organizational policies for example on employing consultants; and paying more attention to internal communications and organizational learning.

We also decided to create a new position of Director of Programmes. Jonathan Cohen, formerly Co-Director of our Caucasus programme was appointed. This move enables us to build upon the quality of our practical and policy work as well as develop new programme areas.

Planning for the future

CR pays great attention to its annual programme planning processes. Plans go through extensive consultation on design and strategy, a rigorous peer review and drafts are then presented to the Board. In 2008 we benefitted from outside input and facilitation by Diana Chigas and Peter Woodrow from CDA Collaborative Learning Projects to help us strengthen our methodology.

To set our direction for 2009-12 we went through a facilitated strategic planning process with all staff and board. This involved reflecting on the global challenges and those affecting where we work. We concluded that despite the apparent post cold-war decrease in organized armed conflicts worldwide, responding constructively to unresolved conflicts, their consequences and emerging unrest remains one of the greatest global challenges of our time.

Our new three-year strategic plan sets out our renewed commitment to confronting this challenge, including our intention to deepen and widen our impact in current and new conflict regions. This includes new work in India and Pakistan to support peacebuilding activists in the disputed territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and renewed work supporting peacemaking efforts in Fiji, Colombia and the Philippines. We also intend to influence national and international policymakers to adopt effective strategies to support peace processes, including better learning from comparative peacebuilding experience.

We enter this new and economically uncertain period impatient to see real change, determined to find resources and committed to building up our organizational ability to deliver our mission.



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CR staff at a strategic planning day in London (top) in Sierra Leone (middle) and with participants at a peacebuilding workshop on Kashmir