

Violent conflict fuels stereotypes and myths about the 'other side'. This can deepen mistrust and provoke further confrontation. It can also stop vulnerable groups from speaking out about how the conflict affects them. Conciliation Resources works with journalists and other groups to challenge misconceptions and give excluded people a voice.

Challenging stereotypes and increasing awareness

In 2007 we publicized personal reflections and analytical material on the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict through community radio productions, print media, film and theatre. We also promoted research, debates and discussions on multiculturalism and nationalism and their impact on the peace process.

Local radio in Sierra Leone covered our work on improving young people's understanding of election issues and partners organized local radio discussions about how they mediate conflicts. We also secured radio coverage of exchange visits between war-affected northern Ugandans and southern Sudanese and supported Ugandan partners to publish a monthly newsletter on community and conflict-related issues.

CASE STUDY: NAGORNY KARABAKH

Breaking down barriers through film

In the early 1990s Armenians and Azerbaijanis fought a bitter war over the disputed region of Nagorny Karabakh. More than 25,000 people were killed and up to a million displaced from their homes. Since the war ended, ordinary people on both sides have had virtually no contact. A whole generation has grown up knowing little about each other.

Two years ago we launched a unique project to bring together young people from Azerbaijan and Karabakh to try to build some bridges by making documentaries across the conflict divide.

Twenty young people have so far received filmmaking training under the guidance of Internews Armenia, Internews Azerbaijan, and the Stepanakert Press Club. Altogether, they have made more than 20 short films charting the hopes, fears, sadness and humour of people living with the consequences of conflict.

In September 2007 the team visited London for a screening of their work at the Institute of Contemporary Arts. The audience included many Azerbaijani and Armenian expatriates, for whom the chance to glimpse life 'on the other side' proved unsettling, prompting some tough, thought-provoking questions. A workshop for the

filmmakers also offered an important chance to exchange ideas, critique each other's work and brainstorm their next joint films.

"Before, I thought Azerbaijanis were our enemies," says 20-year-old Suzanna Seyranyan. "I never thought I'd be able to sit down with them, have a cup of tea and a chat, but during this project I met Azerbaijanis for the first time and they've become my friends. I didn't feel any barriers between us."



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"There's a feeling of hopelessness in our films but it's very important that it's there," explains Ayaz Salayev from Internews Azerbaijan. "Because if we continue to live the way we do now, then for centuries to come we're going to be existing side-by-side as enemies..."

CASE STUDY: UGANDA

Listening to people displaced by war

Since 1996 at least 1.7 million northern Ugandans displaced by the war between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Ugandan government have endured life in makeshift camps, far from their homes and farms. With peace talks ongoing since July 2006, a government resettlement programme started moving them to new camps closer to their original homes.

Working with our partner the Social Communications Department of Gulu Archdiocese, we co-produced a video that gave these internally displaced people (IDPs) a chance to express their views to policymakers about this process.

The video highlighted how government policies and decisions affecting IDPs' lives are made without their input and that most people had no credible information about the new camps.

Discussions reflected people's diverse needs and their worries about the outcome of the slow-moving peace talks in Juba, Sudan. Many people felt that despite harsh living conditions in the old camps, these were safer than the new ones or returning home. They were reluctant to leave until a peace agreement was signed and the combatants had handed in their weapons.

"I think there is no need to go home as long as Kony [the rebel commander] is not out of the bush," said one woman. "If we go home when Kony is still in the bush, the LRA will find it easy to abduct all our children."

The video was screened for diplomats, politicians and non-governmental organizations working in northern Uganda. It was also shown to the displaced communities themselves, followed by a facilitated discussion with local government officials.



People in northern Uganda's IDP camps have few opportunities to give their views on the government's resettlement programme. This mother, Akot Santa, talked to our partner and filmmaker Simon Olweny about life in the new Jengari resettlement camp.