

With many conflicts spanning several decades, people working for peace can feel they have tried everything. Conciliation Resources believes that taking time to reflect on past peacemaking efforts, or learning from experiences elsewhere, can bring new insights and inject fresh energy into conflict resolution processes.

Learning from peacemaking experience

Our Accord online and print publication series describes and analyses peace processes around the world. In 2007 we launched our publication on the Sudan peace process in London, Khartoum and Juba and began a project to document the Aceh peace process in Indonesia.

We also published a booklet about the pioneering community peace monitoring work done by our partners in the Bo Peace and Reconciliation Movement in Sierra Leone, bringing it to the attention of West African audiences and the wider international community of peacebuilders.

CASE STUDY: COLOMBIA

Sharing lessons learned from peacemaking

"The exercise of 'reframing' – which involves rethinking your analysis of the issues in dispute – can be a crucial element in helping conflict parties prepare for constructive engagement in peace negotiations," comments our Programme Associate Clem McCartney, who has more than 20 years' experience working on conflicts around the world.

Clem and fellow practitioner Palinasamy Ramasamy spent 10 days in Colombia in February 2007 to share reflections on the potential for 'reframing substantive agendas in peace negotiations'. Working with peacemakers in Colombia, they described their experiences of the challenges of reframing in Northern Ireland, Aceh and Sri Lanka. Our partners at the Institute for Peace and Development Studies (INDEPAZ) produced a publication of case studies drawn from our Accord series and different experiences in Latin America. They also organized seminars and meetings in Bogota, Cali, Popayan and Medellin involving over 400 people.

"Only when the authorities and the leaders of the insurgencies consider possible solutions and the potential



Our resource team Clem McCartney and Palinasamy Ramasamy talk about their experiences of peacemaking around the world, and the challenges and possibilities for peace in Colombia, with journalist Adriana Espinel Rubio of El Liberal newspaper.

content of political and economic agreements will it be possible to envisage a political settlement," says Camilo Gonzalez Posso, president of INDEPAZ.

Building on a similar initiative in the Philippines in 2006, insights on this topic are outlined in a short publication, **Reframing: a strategy for conflict transformation**. Identifying policy and practice points for peacemakers, it was produced as part of a two-year pilot project that aimed to improve peace strategies in both countries.

In December, partners met in London to discuss lessons learned from the pilot project and options for future work together, including exchange visits between those involved in the peace processes in Colombia and the Philippines.

CASE STUDY: SIERRA LEONE

Peacebuilding lessons from Sierra Leone's communities

"For peace to last, it is essential to involve marginalized groups such as women, youth and those who committed atrocities, in the processes of resolving conflicts," says Hassan Feika, coordinator of the Bo Peace and Reconciliation Movement (BPRM), a community peacebuilding organization in southern Sierra Leone.

This important lesson from our partner BPRM's work has helped underpin its extraordinary success in preventing and resolving over 1000 cases of armed violence and community disputes since 1995. Not surprisingly, its highly respected and trained 'peace monitors' include young people, women and ex-combatants involved in Sierra Leone's brutal decade-long war.

Acting as sensitive and neutral mediators in community,

district and chieftaincy conflicts, BPRM's mostly voluntary peace monitors use both traditional and modern peacebuilding methods. Lessons learned and stories published in a booklet by CR point to how their deep understanding of the cultures and social norms have allowed them to navigate and carefully challenge the very traditions often at the root of a conflict.

Keeping the peace within local communities can also help maintain greater national stability explains Mariama Konneh, our West Africa programme director.

"All conflicts, from neighbourly disagreements to larger political and chieftaincy disputes, can escalate into major conflicts if left simmering. Sierra Leone's war reached almost every corner of the country. It was clear to us and BPRM that for a peace process to mean something genuine to the people, it needed to be felt at community level."

Making sure that such methods of alternative justice run smoothly alongside Sierra Leone's re-emerging state institutions and justice system has also been crucial.



Margaret Koroma (front) says her training and work as a voluntary peace monitor in helping resolve the 30-year conflict between Niawa-Lenga and Selenga chiefdoms has made her more confident in Sierra Leone's patriarchal society. "Nothing will shake me and I say what I want to say."