

This Spring issue of the CCTS newsletter features three articles on aspects of conflict transformation support work. The first relates to the Balkans region and consists of an extended summary by Nick Wilson of his evaluative report to be published shortly on the Pakrac Project in West Slavonia in the 1990s. The other two focus on current work in, or related to, the Caucasus. Roswitha Jarman gives a personal account of the work she and others are doing to help children in Chechnya to cope with the traumas of war, while Chris Hunter describes the work of the Centre for Peacemaking and Community Development. On page 8 there are brief descriptions of the Community Development Action International (CODA International) and the Moldovan Initiative Committee of Management (MICOM) – the two latest organisations to join CCTS. On the final page there is a brief review by Michael Randle of Howard Clark's recent book on civil resistance in Kosovo, including news of a longer review on the CR-CCTS website, and details of our next seminar.

Once again we thank Anne Rogers for her work in preparing our newsletter for publication. We also thank all our contributors, and Michael Randle for acting as editor.

Innocence and experience – the volunteer project Pakrac, grassroots peacebuilding in Croatia, 1993 - 1997

In 1997, colleagues in the Centre for Peace Studies, Zagreb, suggested that as Nick Wilson had been active in the newly ended Volunteer Project Pakrac (VPP) he might usefully draw out the learning from it as a participant-observer. To do this, he collated a 'conglomerate view' drawing together the views of sixty of the project's participants and Pakracani. What follows is a much-simplified version of some of his findings. [Note: 'Pakrac' is pronounced 'PAKrrats'. Both A's are flat, as in 'jack'. 'Pakracani', the collective noun for the inhabitants, is pronounced 'PAKRRaachanee'.]

Pakrac, a town of 10,000 in rural West Slavonia, was one of the first flashpoints of the war in Croatia. In spring 1991, radical Serbs among the relative Serb majority in the municipality staged an unsuccessful coup, declaring Pakrac the regional capital of a Serb autonomous enclave. Violence accelerated slowly to a peak in late 1991 when, as part of the wider Croatian war, Pakrac was heavily damaged. The defence put up by outgunned local 'Croatian' forces (actually made up of the wide range of ethnicities found in the area, including Serbs) against 'Serb' irregulars and the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) radicalised the remainder of the population.

By January 1992, JNA resources were draining away to Bosnia. This altered the local balance of power, leaving West Slavonia divided between Croatian control and the self-declared Republic of Serbian Krajina (RSK) along a ceasefire line enforced by the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR). West Slavonia was the only area in Croatia where both zones were under the jurisdiction of the UN. Pakrac was itself divided between these zones, with no local movements between its urban, 'Croatian' part and the smaller semi-rural suburb of 'RSK Pakrac'.

Top-down peacebuilding

During 1992, the charismatic head of UN Civil Affairs in West Slavonia was able to exploit the ambiguities of his mandate and the flexibility of his UN military counterpart to push along a mid-level

localised peace process. Tough weapons control and robust chairing of face to face meetings between local

officials created some flexibility in what was still a fresh situation. This encouraged a UN diplomat to form an ad hoc project to attract non-UN resources into this peacebuilding 'push' under the auspices of the UN's regional office in Vienna (UNOV). This 'UNOV-Pakrac' (UNOV-P) initiative was far ahead of most UN practice at the time, taking literally Boutros Boutros Ghali's emphasis in *Agenda For Peace* on creative approaches to moving from peacekeeping to peacebuilding.

UNOV-Pakrac in turn invited the Anti-war Campaign Croatia (ARK), a network of twenty-plus indigenous NGOs, to co-operate in the area. To ARK, the security and political umbrella which the project offered, and the chance to complement ambitious mid-level talk of re-settlement with work at the

grassroots, seemed attractive. After six months exploration with Pakracani, ARK agreed to a short term experiment, offering small, self-funded groups of local activists and local and international volunteers to 'Croatian Pakrac' to do basic physical reconstruction and social assistance, ideally spreading to 'RSK Pakrac' later.

Grassroots peacebuilding

The Volunteer Project's initial aim was little more than to not be expelled from Pakrac. It consequently had a volatile internal power structure and grew in an organic way which was responsive, but also largely unplanned.

Almost instantly, the fact that participants lived and worked among Pakracani in similar conditions, unlike International Government Organisation (IGO) and International Non Governmental Organisation (INGO) staff, provided a base of trust and respect among 'Croatian' Pakracani. Basic reconstruction by short term participants formed the core of the project throughout its life. Here, and in initial spontaneous social assistance, participants actively sought to compensate for their lack of 'expertise' by emphasising unstructured informal listening as a way of understanding local specificities.

The informal listening, in conjunction with the limitations of what VPP could offer, led the project to combine physical reconstruction and social assistance (and later community development / empowerment) in an 'integrated' peacebuilding approach. Operating on a small scale in a defined area, VPP was able to reintegrate these two strands of the peacebuilding process, which are often artificially separated by specialized intervening agencies.

Bearing in mind that mechanistic, linear accounts misleadingly simplify the circuitous complexity of grassroots peacebuilding, VPP's work can be summarised as the following. Spontaneous contacts were gradually extended and systematised, building a base in the 'Croatian' community founded on seemingly innocuous activities (playing with children, language lessons...). Long term volunteers then acted as catalysts in the much more difficult coalescing of a few Pakracani around particular issues and needs, in some cases in groups such as a youth club, women's group, or interests such as a school-based email project. Other activities, including a 'Small Repairs' programme, and 'Community Visits' to the vulnerable, were largely carried out by VPP, but had the same reflexive advantages of opening up contacts between different parts of the decimated and internally divided 'Croatian' community and introducing elements of difference, solidarity and friendly listening. Over the next three years these initiatives in turn became springboards for social development and a diverse set of activities and trainings aimed at 'empowering' groups and individuals.

Volunteer turnover meant that some of these activities lacked continuity, but as all depended on

the unpaid involvement of Pakracani, only work appropriate to local needs survived. By 1995, mature activities were bearing fruit. Structures such as the Youth Club and Women's Group were almost fully independent, and

were interacting with each other and outsiders in proactive ways that were encouraged by VPP's emphasis on developmental, not humanitarian, aid.

Unfortunately, the Bosnian war and UN office politics meant that the UN's mid-level peacebuilding 'push' in West Slavonia stalled at the very moment that VPP began. It also transpired that UNOV-P's \$3 million budget was almost entirely earmarked for impossible wholesale physical reconstruction. VPP and UNOV therefore diverged, with VPP relying on a core income which never topped £4000 cash per month, raised from a shifting rainbow alliance of mostly small supporters. Despite this, UNOV-P staff were able to 'play' the UN system to supply essential documents to volunteers crossing the line, and in time, were also able to scrape together modest funds for some of VPP's activity. Yet accepting this help carried its own risks as UNOV-P, with virtually no presence on the ground, was nonetheless apt to take the credit for the project's efforts.

As for VPP's wider aims, 'reconciliation' had long since been relegated to the status of an ultimate motivating ideal, replaced by 'normalisation', 'social reconstruction' and later, 'peacebuilding'. These concepts all had limitations, but were at least easier to break down into achievable aims, and helped to express the complexity of the work. VPP hoped that 'social reconstruction' on each side might lead to pretexts for cross-entity communication and trust-building at the grassroots level. This was, however, tempered by the realities of the unresolved ceasefire situation.

VPP was only able to place a few representatives in the grim promontory of RSK Pakrac. Conditions were also so adverse as to make it impossible to initiate more than a few of the most basic activities there. However, ARK persuaded activists of Grupa MOST, of the Serbian Centre for Antiwar Action, to assist parallel work in RSK Pakrac. This work was hampered by the extreme isolation of the area even from Belgrade, but grew steadily until 1995. In particular, VPP participants undermined the 'otherness' of both 'sides' by passing hundreds of private communications between relatives and friends separated by the line.

On 1 May 1995 the Croatian army overran the West Slavonian sector of the RSK. Most Serbs fled, some being killed en route. Immediately afterwards, VPP offered direct protection to remaining Serbs and provided a way in for responses by Serbian and Croatian NGOs. VPP then sought to use its relationships with both sides to develop direct communication between them, but failed to make a convincing case for the potential of this work to its disillusioned former funders, who were increasingly attracted to Bosnia. The project consequently became more dependent on IGO and INGO funding.

Combined with a reduced need for physical assistance, this tended to de-integrate the VPP's activities, risking turning it into a sub-contracted delivery vehicle for atomised social development, or woefully ill-defined 'psycho-social work', without a uniting peacebuilding agenda.

VPP nevertheless continued to develop its activity on both sides of the line, concentrating on the sustainability of its local 'seed' initiatives. Although the project closed in March 1997, support by ARK has allowed several of these to continue, with other developments now appearing based on links and 'empowerment' traceable to VPP.

Lessons

The political, military and economic conditions in Pakrac were obviously hostile to grassroots peacebuilding. We might conclude that VPP took place 'too early', or even question the premise of building 'peace in a pocket' in the context of an ongoing war. Yet events were by no means bound to unfold in the way they did.

VPP was ultimately too isolated at the grassroots to greatly influence the hardening situation which arose after the hopeful 'push' of 1992. As an experiment in the mobilising of myriad local, semi-local and international civilians and a wide 'international constituency' of supporters, VPP had much success. Yet the project also shows that, unless grassroots peacebuilding is also 'vertically integrated', with co-operation by intervenors and local actors operating at different levels of the conflict, advances at the grassroots will be held back by political, military, economic and institutional blockages.

To create an area-based peacebuilding 'push' at multiple 'levels' after the unravelling of the initial mid-level UN effort would have required more humility from all concerned. IGOs and INGOs in particular needed to move away from seeing local NGOs like VPP as 'filling in' for the big boys, local populations as beneficiaries, and international populations as donors served by 'expert' professionals. As things were, VPP was at constant risk of having a merely palliative role, or inadvertently assisting the forcible 'reintegration' of the RSK by 'pacifying' Serbs.

Nonetheless, by developing communication, openness, and a self-organising capacity, VPP increased the options for the Pacracani despite the intractability of the wider situation. Based on informal listening to the expression of local needs rather than the 'implementation' of alien models, these inputs were generally well conceived. In this sense VPP's efforts tended towards improving in the long term the capacity of West Slavonians to deal with conflict creatively.

Participants, their eyes on another goal, are apt to forget the approximately 1.5 Million Deutschmarks of help-in-kind that VPP attracted. The achievements of volunteers working with commitment, intuition and minimal resources raise the question: who is

competent to carry out interdisciplinary, cross-cutting peacebuilding at the grassroots? Key activists also stress the value of the co-operation of the resistance/peace movements of Croatia and Serbia in Pakrac as a foundation for later joint action.

VPP did, however, suffer from problems common in voluntary initiatives. Participants were often acting at the edge of their competence – though at least they did acknowledge this. High aims, (dis-)organisation, unreliable funding and a lack of parallel experiences caused chronic burnout among all long term participants. Moreover VPP was so well attuned to the ceasefire situation that it was unable to adapt when conditions changed, leading it to perpetuate some elements beyond their usefulness. Sensitive guidance from executive structures with parallel experiences *might* have helped.

VPP was cheap. But it demonstrates that such work needs to be long term to be effective, carries hidden costs, and requires funding cycles attuned to building trust and supporting qualitative change rather than aiming to achieve short term quantifiable 'results'.

Perhaps most difficult for self-critical participants to accept is VPP's value as a peacebuilding 'primary school' for almost 300 indigenous and foreign participants and myriad organizations. The influence of this 'diaspora', imbued with bottom-up peacebuilding skills, in different capacities at many 'levels', both in the region and elsewhere, is uncertain. But several grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in the region are the identifiable descendants of VPP.

The most insightful of my informants constantly qualified their statements: this work does not lend itself to the false certainties peddled by governments and heavyweight INGOs. However, the repetition of some of VPP's mistakes elsewhere indicates the need to penetrate beyond the surface features of such experiences, draw out the complex learning, and express it in ways which truly engage with the messiness of peacebuilding at the grassroots.

This article draws from *Between Dreams and Reality: The Volunteer Project Pakrac - Grassroots Peacebuilding in Croatia* by Nick Wilson (forthcoming), the research for which was funded by the Department for International Development, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, WA Cadbury Charitable Trust, W F Southall Trust, Polden Puckham Charitable Foundation, Westcroft Trust, Lansbury House Trust Fund and CCTS.

Nick Wilson

Healing as part of conflict transformation

In this article Roswitha Jarman explores how outsiders coming in to war-torn regions can contribute to healing the personal and interpersonal hurt of individuals and groups and thereby contribute to the process of conflict transformation.

Since 1996 I have been involved in training Chechens to help their people cope with the trauma caused by the two wars in Chechnya. The work is carried out by a local NGO set up in 1995 with financial help from the Netherlands. A woman paediatrician from Grozny recognised the need to help children cope with the emotional distress caused by horrific experiences. She assembled a number of local women, mainly teachers, to train for such work. I have been involved in this training since the beginning and have learned alongside the women how best to respond to the needs of children in distress.

For the civilian population, and particularly for the children, the experience of these wars has been horrific. Homes and villages have been bombed indiscriminately. Children have seen killings and destruction and lived in fear for months on end. Most have lost their homes and close family members, and lack any kind of ordered social environment. They have little trust in the ability of adults to protect them, suffer nightmares, and have an acute fear of noise and darkness. Flashbacks disturb their days, bedwetting, frequently, their nights. Many are unable to focus and have a very short attention span. Teachers are at a loss to know how to relate to them. All are grieving and often experience strong feelings of guilt about not having prevented distressing events. Many, too, are angry and frustrated and unable to understand or come to terms with what has occurred. The loss of trust in adult behaviour has made them take on adult roles, a process that contributes to the further break-up of family life. They have lost their childhood.

Teenagers experience rage at the events that so completely altered their lives and environment, and robbed them of their youth. Women feel humiliated that they were powerless to prevent the catastrophe, and cannot now provide for their families. This undermines their self-esteem and sense of personal dignity. All these factors need to be taken into account in undertaking the healing work.

The humiliation and intimidation has not ended. People face questioning, searches and frequently arbitrary arrest at Russian checkpoints. Their life is bleak and there is little hope for the future. Nevertheless there is a strong will amongst the people not to be defeated by events.

Upholding dignity

An essential element in the healing process is to uphold the dignity of people. For those coming in from outside, this implies respecting the local culture and traditions, and being a respectful witness to the stories people have to tell and the emotions they express. It also implies involving people, children included, in decision-making processes as they adjust to the present life and prepare for the future.

During and after the first Chechen war, trained women counsellors, set up centres in their villages, often in their homes, to work with groups of children, adolescents, women and teachers. It was in the schools that the needs of the children first became evident, and since most counsellors came from the teaching profession, co-operation with the schools was excellent.

As the emotional well-being of the children improved, the village administration became more aware of the work and added its support. The centres became focal points in the healing process and in rebuilding communities. However, when the second war started, these good beginnings were destroyed. Most counsellors had to leave their homes and are now working in the refugee camps in Ingushetia.

The Chechens displaced from their homes have lived for over a year in harsh conditions, mostly under canvas in huge campsites. I am amazed at the dignity that many people have preserved in these grim conditions. However, amongst the young particularly, there is much anger and aggression.

Psycho-social rehabilitation has become the in-word for Western organisations working in post-war situations. However, if it is to contribute to the healing process, rather than be a further source of humiliation, the work must be grounded in the expressed needs of the people. I see psycho-social healing coming about in several ways. At the most basic level it occurs through people being together in simple relationships, talking and listening to each other or sharing in some common activity. Everybody is involved in such healing work. It is a natural and valuable process in all cultures and it includes the sharing of stories, a means by which people grow and build up their strength and resilience.

Active listening

But over and above this, we as counsellors can contribute special skills to the healing process. Through active listening, we can help people move through painful and disturbing experiences and the potentially destructive emotions of fear, anger, guilt, frustration and loss towards a process of transformation.

Our listening must enable us not only to hear the story itself but also the pain within it. And the listener must not be afraid to feel this pain. If the pain is not acknowledged there can be no deep healing. We can also bring in other skills that help people to understand and express the emotional turmoil they are experiencing through play, art and movement. This can help them to take charge of their emotional energies rather than be driven by them.

For me, psycho-social rehabilitation means enabling people to analyse and understand their emotions and thereby open up options for dealing with them and for rebuilding relationships. Some people talk of Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), but practitioners have found that few people suffer the kind of extreme trauma that requires specialist treatment. People are not ill – they have experienced extremely distressing events. I prefer to talk about distress rather than trauma.

Acknowledging pain

The training I have offered has been on an experiential rather than an academic level and is based on the humanistic counselling approach. This means respecting and working with the self-healing potential of each person. It is centred around creating a safe space, developing empathy and active listening skills, and using art and play as therapy. Play is important because it helps to rebuild interpersonal and social relationships. The training has included inventing rituals to cope with loss, grief, guilt and anger. There has been work, too, around easing stress and tension, including the use of relaxation exercises.

Creating a safe space, not only in a physical but, more importantly, an emotional sense, is vital for this work. In a culture where shedding tears or giving way to emotions is seen as weakness, this is particularly important. The ground rules in the groups make it acceptable for people to behave differently. Tears are not taboo and anger can be expressed in a safe way. Time is made for remembering and mourning and adjusting to the reality of life as it is now.

Sessions generally start and end with circle time. The children sit in a circle and acknowledge each other. Anything of a sensitive nature can be said at this time. Events, personal stories, feelings, needs, news from home can be shared in the circle. There is no pressure to share, but each child knows that this space is available where it is safe to talk.

The circle time becomes very precious once the trust of the group has been built up and the children know each other well. Such a group is like a mini-society in which participants start to trust and care for each other. Different ways of behaving and coping can be explored, self-esteem rebuilt, and the imagination stimulated.

Through play and fun, children are allowed to be children again and to put aside some of the responsibilities placed on their shoulders so abruptly by the violent events.

Respecting cultural traditions

As noted earlier, it is important to respect and work within the cultural traditions. Boys whose fathers or older brothers have been killed suddenly have the burden of being the oldest male for the remaining family with all the responsibility that this entails in the traditions of the Caucasus. I found that boys valued talking about their new roles and making sense of them. The counsellor needs to be sensitive and finely tune her input so as not to violate the child with expectations that are contrary to its upbringing.

Some children need individual time. However, the child should never feel forced to tell his or her story. If the child suffers flashbacks – intruding images of the event – the counsellor can explain that these can only cease when the emotions within the story are expressed and heard.

In working with distressed children it is helpful to restore the link between the past and the present by bringing to mind the whole chain of events. There was normal life before the disastrous event and the emotional reality of that time included elements of anxiety and fear. Then came the event itself and the trauma associated with it, including often a sense of guilt at having survived when family and friends did not. Finally there is the present reality and the need to adjust to it. Recalling the sequence of events and emotions in this way can assist the child to build a bridge to the past and to bring their own resources to bear upon the present.

Restoring the link between past and present

Most often counsellors sit alongside the children as they play. The counsellor may verbalise what is going on in the play and through this exchange help the healing process.

A number of examples of such sessions follow:

An explosive device thrown into a courtyard severely injured a six year old girl and her younger sister. The younger girl started to scream but when the older girl saw the distressed face of her mother as she came running out to them she decided not to cry. Her leg had been severely injured and the pain was so intense that she clenched her teeth too hard and broke one of

them – but still she did not cry out or complain. She received medical attention but continued to show no sign of pain or emotion.

The mother brought her to a counsellor saying that she had lost emotional contact with her daughter. Could the counsellor help? As soon as the child joined the group, she went straight to a pile of soft toys and found amongst them a little animal whose leg had been injured. She immediately started to care for this toy animal, bandaging its leg, putting it to bed, asking it if it was hurting. The counsellor sat next to her and joined in the task and conversation. After several visits to the centre, the counsellor gently asked about the girl's own pain. Bit by bit the girl talked about herself and acknowledged and cried about her pain.

Eventually the counsellor said that she thought the mother would like to know how she was feeling. At first the girl resisted, saying it would hurt her mother. When finally she agreed to tell her, the emotional release was intense. Mother and daughter embraced and cried in each other's arms.

Making emotions concrete

Another example is that of a boy who had witnessed his father being killed and was withdrawn and depressed when he first joined the group. Fortunately the counsellor had known and respected his father and talked to the boy about him. The boy was eager to hear more, continued to come to the group, and gradually took on some of his father's positive characteristics. His face lit up talking about him and he learned to cope with his grief.

In another group a boy was tormented by images of what he called devils – men wearing balaclavas. The counsellor encouraged him to draw these devils and when he had done so asked him what he wanted to do with them. He crumpled them up, threw them down, and stamped on them, rubbing them into the ground. Having done that his expression changed. He looked relieved and smiled.

These examples show how valuable it is to help the child make concrete his or her strong and distressing emotions so they can understand them cognitively. The child is then in a better position to control them.

Using role-play to test reality

Where the child has a strong sense of guilt for not having prevented the destructive events, or not having saved the life of a particular person, role play can be a helpful way of testing the reality. In one instance, a small girl was carrying her baby sister down some stone steps when a helicopter flew low over the house firing guns. The girl dropped her baby sister in fright. The baby died, and girl was tormented with feelings of guilt. In the group she attended, the counsellor set up a role play re-enacting the chain of events with the girl observing. This

experience helped her to recognise the reality of what had happened and to let go her feelings of guilt.

When working with children who have suffered a loss, counsellors often find it helpful to use an empty chair or cushion. The child is encouraged to imagine the lost person sitting there, engage him or her in conversation and say goodbye. This can be a powerful way of helping the child cope with the loss, which will usually have occurred with brutal suddenness. Talking about photographs and personal objects can also be helpful in coping with loss.

Training local people

Local people can, with minimal training, contribute to the healing process, not only in the case of the individual child but also of the community. To use local people in this way is healthier and more empowering for the community than bringing in experts from outside. It is important to remember that people in these situations are not psychologically ill – rather they are people who need support during a period of disruption and distress. Counsellors who received this training during the first Chechen war and remained in the country have attested that their training helped them and the community around them to cope better with the horrors of the second war.

I would like, finally, to express my admiration for the dignity, strength and beauty of the people of Chechnya. I have observed how they have maintained these qualities amid the horrors of life on the edge of existence. This is one of the positive things that can be taken from a grim situation and indicates that if the war can be ended there is the basis for building a better future.

Roswitha Jarman

The Centre for Peacemaking and Community Development

This article by Chris Hunter summarises the work of the Centre for Peacemaking and Community Development (CPCD), which, since it was founded in 1985, has focussed on conflict prevention, conflict resolution and the support of victims of conflict in Russia, primarily in the North Caucasus region.

CPCD supports numerous local organizations, and international organizations without experience of this complex region, in the above fields. It has its own staff in Russia, including three expatriates and almost 200 local staff/ volunteers.

The programmes run by CPCD include psycho-social rehabilitation for children, adolescents and students suffering from the stressful consequences of war, and has a peacebuilding network of youth groups and CPCD representatives in six North Caucasus republics – Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and North Ossetia. The network facilitates several training programmes in conflict resolution, peacebuilding and human rights for people in these republics and other parts of Russia.

CPCD has an educational programme in Ingushetia, running schools for 1000 Chechen refugee children, and is now building more schools with UNICEF support to provide education for a further 3000 refugees. It has its own bakery and grain mill, used to provide bread for Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) in western Chechnya. As one of the few NGOs with long experience of working in the region and therefore able to function in Chechnya, CPCD distributes food from the World Food Programme to 35,000 IDPs in western Chechnya each month.

It also runs a mines awareness programme in both Chechnya and Ingushetia, and has set up a Chechen section of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. In Moscow and the North West of Russia, it runs a programme to support conscientious objectors and efforts to introduce a fair Russian law on alternative service to correspond to the rights of young men as enshrined in the Constitution.

although the situation has calmed down to some extent over the last couple of years, there is continued tension between Kabardinians and Balkars and the potential for conflict remains.

In Dagestan, the position of refugees is serious, and tension is high between Ingushetia and N. Ossetia as a result of the Prigorodny conflict of 1992. In short, the whole N. Caucasus region is volatile and vulnerable to conflict. What is more, people in this region feel isolated from, and to a large extent ignored by, the outside world. The precarious security situation often prevents international organisations from working in the region, and local non-governmental organisations struggle to survive, mainly due to lack of funding.

This recent history of war and instability has left many people bereaved, dispossessed and traumatised. Young people have been deeply affected. In many cases, they have lost family members in the fighting, have been deprived of an adequate education and face a future with few prospects. A long-term approach is needed to help develop a civil society and empower young people to play an active role in social reconstruction and rehabilitation.

The North Caucasus

The North Caucasus region of the Russian Federation has experienced several armed conflicts in the last ten years, one of which is still going on today. The war in Chechnya is far from over – many people are fleeing to seek refuge in Ingushetia as the ‘cleansing’ operations, arbitrary arrests, torture and shootings carried out by Russian soldiers continue. People are still leaving in the hope of finding better shelter during the winter months than the destroyed houses they occupied in the summer. Landmine injuries occur with increasing frequency, and Chechen fighters continue to attack Russian targets.

In addition, ethnic tensions have been rising in Karachaevo-Cherkessia. In Ingushetia, the strain of accommodating over 160,000 refugees is beginning to show, and in Kabardino-Balkaria,

Training seminars

CPCD is also a partner with Friends House Moscow, the Center for Conflict Management, Norway and the Russian ‘Forum of Migrants’ Organizations’ in running a series of training seminars for 12 Russian and 12 Chechen or other North Caucasian trainers. The trainers chosen – ‘middle-level actors’ from respected NGOs and community groups with some influence on the leaders of their communities, and grass roots actors – will then be able to hold workshops and train other trainers in conflict resolution skills, human rights and democratic processes.

The course model has been used by the Norwegian Peace Council and the International Association for Humanitarian Cooperation in Belarus and the Balkans. The course explores the nature of human rights, encouraging people to discover their meaning based on their own experience and to link this to everyday situations. Rights and responsibilities, power, law, punishment and ethical norms are studied. The course also covers how to plan and run workshops, and investigates concrete human rights issues relevant to the participants. It aims to empower people to initiate social change and community development work using a rights- based approach.

CPCD tries in a modest way to address the strongly negative view of Chechens in Russian society, deepened by years of propaganda. We are presently in the process of publishing a collection of traditional Chechen fairy tales in Chechen, Russian and English to promote an understanding of the nation's culture and traditions. We are also supporting the Chechen children's dance ensemble 'Daimohk', which plans to visit Russian towns and perform to Russian audiences, promoting personal contact and cultural exchange.

Chris Hunter

Welcome to new members of CCTS

We welcome the two latest organisations to join CCTS – Community Development Action International (CODA International) and the Moldovan Initiative Committee of Management (MICOM). The information that follows is taken from their respective publicity leaflets:

CODA International

Address:

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London N7 7QG

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Website: www.cit.org.uk

Director: Bob Neidhardt

CODA International is a UK-based overseas development organisation. Its aim is to organise educational and social development activities with disadvantaged groups in Southern Africa and Central America by providing skills and resources to partner organisations.

CODA wants to increase the effective developmental impact of Southern Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) within their communities. Its objective is therefore to develop within partner organisations the skills and resources to achieve their aims independently. It does this through programmes of training designed to effect institutional capacity building. CODA tries to ensure that the results of its projects are sustainable and do

not create new forms of dependency.

Established in 1987, CODA is already a highly respected Non-Governmental Development Organisation (NGDO). It's focus has been to respond to requests from democratic organisations working for change in Southern Africa and Central America for the transfer of skills and technology. Increasingly this work has included a focus on the broader capacity building work of organisational and institutional development.

CODA's project work is supported by a small London-based staff. Given the success of this work and the fine reputation developed in Southern Africa and Central America, the challenge for the coming period is to broaden and increase sources of funding so that Coda can respond adequately to the increased number of requests from prospective overseas partners.

CODA International is a registered charity. Its main funding comes from the Department for International Development and the National Lottery Charities Board. Sister and Partner organisations include Computer Aid International, the Federación Centroamericana de Organizaciones Comunes (FCOC-CA), the Movimiento Comunal Nicaragüense, the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR) and the public services union UNISON.

MICOM

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638 Springfield Road, Belfast BT12 7DY
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Violent conflict erupted in Moldova in 1992, after Transnistria, a breakaway region, was established with its own president and government. An international peacekeeping force maintains the ceasefire, alongside a Peace Mission from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). In response to requests for assistance in 1992, from people at community level and ultimately from both presidents, Moldovan Initiative Committee of Management (MICOM) was formed to assist self-help movement towards Conflict Resolution and system change, through a strategy of Community Development. From within this strategy the Joint Committee for Democratisation and Conciliation (JCDC), which performs the role of an 'internal neutral', emerged.

The MICOM/JCDC partnership has been engaged in a process of community development /conflict resolution to address needs attending transition from the collapsed Soviet system to the development of democratic practices and structures. Movement is generated and assisted towards the resolution of the conflict, and the creation in Moldova / Transnistria of a viable plural democracy, underpinned by a developing mixed economy and lively civil society.

MICOM exists to assist the generation of movement towards:

- the development of an alternative to the totalitarian system;
- a settlement of the Transnistrian issue;
- the resolution of the underlying Moldovan/Transnistrian conflict;
- building on gains by governmental and non-governmental authorities within and between Moldova and Transnistria, as well as 'spin off' gains in Northern Ireland and the CIS.

Participants from Moldova and Transnistria include local authority representatives (mayors); Joint Control Commission leaders; governmental negotiating teams; parliamentarians; journalists; business people; NGOs; student and women's groups. Also represented are local authority representatives and assembly members from Northern Ireland – Unionist/Loyalist and Nationalist/Republican; community workers and activists in Northern Ireland; specialists in conflict resolution, international affairs and government from universities in Germany, Ireland, UK and US; the OSCE, Russian and Ukrainian mediating ambassadors in Moldova.

MICOM's programme of work involves workshops, conferences, seminars, symposiums, study visits, NGO training, field work, assisted analysis, international educational exchanges.

The trust and confidence instilled in MICOM/JCDC partnership by presidential, governmental and non-governmental leaders has grown since the outset of the process, and these parties are encouraging MICOM/JCDC to continue in their efforts to engender movement. Its success in Moldova/Transnistria is acknowledged by government officials, political and community leaders to have also influenced movement at all levels of leadership in Northern Ireland.

The MICOM/JCDC programme is located mainly in Moldova/ Transnistria and Northern Ireland.

MICOM and JCDC are non-commercial, voluntary organisations, core-funded from 1997-99 by CS Mott Foundation, US; the Department for International Development, UK has funded recent projects. MICOM/JCDC partnership works under the aegis of Charities Aid Foundation, London.

Civil Resistance in Kosovo: a new book

Howard Clark, a founding and still corresponding member of CCTS, published last autumn an important study entitled *Civil Resistance in Kosovo* (Pluto Press, London, 2000). This traces the course of almost a decade of nonviolent resistance by the Albanian population, from the annulment by Serbia of Kosovo's autonomous status in 1989 to the NATO war of intervention in 1999. The campaign was led by Ibrahim Rugovo, President of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), with the active involvement of the main student body and a variety of grassroots organisations.

Howard emphasises the impressive achievements of the resistance in the establishment of alternative social institutions and the refusal of the Albanian population to acknowledge or co-operate with the Serbian authorities. He notes, however, the difficulty under which the resistance laboured, given that Milosevic's aims of changing the ethnic composition of Kosovo and fully incorporating the territory into Serbia did not require the co-operation of the population in any major way and that therefore the classic nonviolent strategy of non-cooperation could exercise only limited leverage. He then draws on the insights of theoreticians of nonviolence, and on the critiques and proposals made by some of the leading activists in Kosovo in the later 1990s, to outline the elements of what could have been an alternative strategy of 'active nonviolence' aimed at undermining support for Milosevic within Serbia and mobilising international action against his regime.

I have written a review-article for CCTS which summarises the account and analysis set out in Howard's book. It was too long to include in this Newsletter, but will be available in April on the CCTS Website: www.c-r.org/ccts/index/htm. We would encourage our readers to download the article, to read the book – and to request their local library to stock it.

Michael Randle

Looking forward

Our summer Newsletter will consist of the preparatory paper (by Judith Large) and report of our next day workshop, *The Interplay of Domestic, Regional and International Forces in Post-War Peacebuilding*, which will be held at Friends House, Euston Road, on May 10th. (See separate sheet and reply slip.)

CCTS: Participating Organisations

International Fellowship of
Reconciliation, Alkmaar

War Resisters International, London

Richardson Institute for Peace
Research, Lancaster

Quaker Peace & Social Witness,
London

Responding to Conflict, Birmingham

International Alert, London

Conflict Analysis and Development
Unit, London

Conciliation Resources, London

Centre for Study of Forgiveness &
Reconciliation, Coventry

Moldovan Initiative Committee of
Management, Belfast

Community Development Action
International, London

Chair: Diana Francis

Treasurer: Guus Meijer

Minutes Secretary: Michael Randle

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