

Dear Readers

This is our first CCTS newsletter in several months. In the face of world events we have all been more than a little preoccupied. Still, our work goes on and it is good to continue to reflect on what we are trying to do and how.

This issue contains three articles. The first is by Celia McKeon, Acting Manager of Conciliation Resources' Accord Programme, the aim of which is to create opportunities for learning from peace processes. Her article summarises a recent international workshop on 'Mechanisms for Political Participation of the Public in Peacemaking'. The second is by Diana Francis, who reflects on some fundamental questions raised during a large evaluation process in which she participated. And the third is the review by Michael Randle of Howard Clark's new report: 'Kosovo Work in Progress: Closing the Cycle of Violence'. On the final page there is news of the publication of Diana Francis' book on conflict transformation.

We hope soon to announce a new seminar series and will be in touch with you as soon as our plans are formulated.

Mechanisms for political participation of the public in peacemaking

A summary by Celia McKeon of an Accord Programme analysis workshop held in February 2002

As vehicles for bringing an end to war and violent conflict, peace processes go well beyond the issues of dealing with violence and play a crucial role in defining the future political landscape of a country. Very often, however, negotiations take place behind closed doors and are dominated exclusively by the warring parties. Deals are often brokered in foreign countries by international mediators. The public is barely informed of vital decisions being taken about the future governance of the state in which they live, let alone asked to participate in the process for reaching those decisions. Yet many would argue that public awareness of and support for peace agreements can be a key factor in their success. So how can the public be enabled to participate directly and effectively in political processes in a way which generates a broad ownership of the agreements reached? What are the implications of such process mechanisms for conflict transformation? What is there to learn from mechanisms developed and implemented in processes to date?

The Accord Programme at Conciliation Resources (www.c-r.org/accord) which is known primarily as a publication series, 'an international review of peace initiatives', is aimed, more broadly, at 'creating opportunities for learning from peace processes'. Normally focussing on a specific country or conflict, CR's first thematic project in the Accord series, currently underway, focuses on this issue of "mechanisms for political participation of the public in peacemaking". In February 2002, as part of the project, and following on from a consultation process with practitioners in 15 countries, CR organised a joint analysis workshop. The weekend event brought together professionals from eight countries – all of whom are engaged in promoting, developing, or assessing such mechanisms – to exchange experiences and share analysis. The following summary attempts to capture something of the issues, dynamics and spirit of a fascinating weekend of comparative learning. The insights shared here belong in the first instance to those who participated.

Coming together for joint analysis

“It is different and it is so valuable to listen to and learn from people who are investing their lives in concrete situations, in different parts of the world.”

The CR team welcomed delegations of civil society practitioners from Colombia, Guatemala, Mali, Northern Ireland, the Philippines, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Somalia. Between them they represent an enormous diversity of contexts and experiences; the processes they are engaged in are at markedly different phases and have emerged in their own specific ways; cultural values, symbols and references are extremely varied.

To create sufficient focus for the weekend, each of the participants was asked to prepare for the workshop by thinking about the specific mechanisms in which they participated:

- Who initiated it (e.g., government, international agency, civil society group, etc.) and why did they think it was necessary?
- How was the mechanism created and who negotiated it?
- What was the mandate and how did it relate to the formal political negotiation process. Was it a consultative or a decision-making forum? Was it formally recognised by the government?
- What types of people participated in it and how were those groups and individuals selected? How did the mechanism address the dilemmas of representation and inclusion? Did sectors of society that are usually marginalised have a voice?
- How did the process itself influence conflict dynamics and relations between the individuals involved and the groups they represented?
- How is this process mechanism viewed now? In retrospect, what difference has it made to the political life and conflict dynamics of the country?

The group focused for one morning on three specific processes. Delegations from Guatemala, Mali and South Africa were asked to make short presentations on the processes they had been part of, focusing on *how* the mechanisms had operated, looking retrospectively at their impact on conflict transformation and identifying particular areas for learning. The Guatemalan delegation described the experience of the multi-sectoral Oslo consultations – between the URNG (Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity) and five sectoral groupings – and of the Civil Society Assembly, which comprised a broader range of sectors mandated to generate consensus papers to feed in to the negotiations. Participants from Mali described the regional “concertations” throughout the country, which led to increased support for defining solutions to the problems of the north. They went on to analyse the important function played by “inter-community

meetings” which consolidated a “pragmatic peace” at local level, creating the conditions for a national peace ritual whereby decommissioned weapons were burned as a “flame of peace”. The delegation from South Africa considered the experience of the National Peace Accord and of the CODESA (Convention for a Democratic South Africa) process, highlighting the important historical antecedent of the Freedom Charter and the value of culturally meaningful concepts and metaphors in mobilising popular support for peace.

These case studies were followed by extended sessions of exchange and analysis, during which participants shared the details of their individual experiences, challenging each other to explain particular features, opening up the issues and highlighting particular areas of concern. While recognising that peace processes are not typically linear in nature, the group decided to proceed by considering the various mechanisms at different developmental phases in the transformation process: 1) preparing the ground for negotiations; 2) accompanying or participating in formal negotiations and 3) implementing and consolidating agreements. For each of these phases they considered specific experiences as examples of mechanisms for political participation of the public.

Finally, the participants were asked to think about recommendations emerging from the experience of comparative analysis.

As organisers, CR has tried to identify particular learning with regard to the methodology for the event. Despite the huge diversity of experiences brought to bear, the discussion remained focused – a point appreciated by participants and organisers alike. We feel that the success of this methodology is in large part due to a) care to create sufficient definition for the topic under consideration; b) extensive consultation which enabled us to identify people with similar, direct experience of the topic c) use of a facilitative style which created the conditions for thoughtful exchange and analysis.

Cross-cutting issues

“The thing I’m particularly interested in is ownership of peace processes, because without proper ownership, peace is not durable, is not sustainable. If you revert to person A’s peace, or person B’s peace, then that’s not peace, that’s war. So how does everybody share in the ownership of the peace? This is important because politicians are rather volatile and they will fight and they will come to an agreement without giving people the time to realise why they have fought or why they have come to an agreement. Unless people own the peace process, then these people will continue to fight, whenever it suits them.”

Participants identified a number of cross-cutting issues which emerged repeatedly throughout the

course of the weekend. They stressed that public participation “is not an end in itself” but an opportunity to bring change and to influence the political direction of the state. Peace and politics cannot be separated, and it was stressed that peace advocates need to develop their political voice, to directly influence the political process as a means of bringing about the transformation which is required to achieve their vision of a peaceful future.

Ownership of the process at various phases is a key concern of many participants. It was pointed out that processes which generate greater public ownership are perhaps less likely to be vulnerable to collapse; broader support for an agreement could serve as a deterrent to those considering a return to violence as a means to achieve their political aims. However, it was also emphasised that the public is not a homogenous body and thus that mechanisms for promoting public participation need to address the diverse and often contradictory aspirations of various sectors and communities.

Such conditions represent considerable challenges for any society, and particularly so for those where the violence has become deeply entrenched over a number of years and has been resistant to previous initiatives. Participants from Colombia questioned how to build effective coalitions, united enough to deliver a clear message yet strong enough to withstand the inevitable tensions of diverse aspirations for the peace desired. Participants from the Philippines challenged the value of mechanisms for public consultation in processes, which did not then succeed in addressing the root causes articulated. They described the disillusionment experienced when public participation is treated as “public relations”. One participant from Guatemala described what she saw as superficial participation by the public, in a process which was ultimately unable to deliver structural changes and which wasted opportunities for real public participation by using poor consultations and a badly designed referendum. She emphasised the need for mechanisms for implementing and monitoring the consolidation of the peace agreement.

The quality of peace processes and the degree to which local ownership is valued are also significantly affected by wider geopolitical forces and agendas, as well as by the manner of international interventions and support for the peace process. Participants commented on the potential value of international assistance from institutions and governments who are keen to support local initiatives. They were concerned that external interventions should not displace local resources, or shift the agenda from priorities articulated by civil society. Rather, civil society involvement should be sought at the earliest stages, particularly among groups whose interests are frequently marginalized.

It became clear that the participants viewed peace processes as more than just vehicles for ending the immediate violence. Instead, many considered these moments to be key opportunities for promoting

deeper transformative social change. A number of participants expressed their wish for peace processes to be able to address broader developmental issues. They wanted to be able to create the conditions for improved social justice. They are committed to the long-term project of “civilianising structures”, of creating accessible institutions which empower ordinary people to play an active role in their own governance.

Mechanisms for different phases of a peace process

“How proactive should civil society be? Should we have a political proposal for the negotiations? Yes, but we also need to go beyond the negotiating table. We need to prepare our own agenda and strategies so that they are more than symbolic, so that they are transformative.”

As mentioned above, there can be no set of instructions providing neat formulas for interventions at different stages of a process. The widely differing circumstances which constitute the political reality of a country experiencing conflict will demand culturally appropriate mechanisms. However, participants felt that there was value in exploring how the mechanisms they had been part of related to particular moments in the political process.

Preparing the ground

Thus, one participant from Northern Ireland recounted how he had participated in Initiative '92. This initiative established a commission whose function was to open up public debate through extensive consultations about conflict issues at a time when they were otherwise only raised in public discourse by militants. Although unable to interface directly with a political process (at the time there were only secret efforts underway to initiate negotiations), the commission is credited with creating a climate suitable for peace talks. The organisers were also later able to channel some of the ideas which emerged into the 1997-98 negotiations.

Accompanying the formal negotiation process

A participant from Guatemala described the mandate of the Civil Society Assembly, which comprised ten social sectors, including indigenous peoples and women. Each sector was mandated to draft consensus papers on seven substantive negotiating themes. Taking each theme in turn, the individual sectors were invited to present position papers that were then debated until a consensus paper could be presented at the main negotiations. The participant commented however that a number of factors led to an erosion of the influence of the Civil Society Assembly, with the result that it was ultimately unable to assume the critical function of monitoring the implementation and consolidation of the agreement to ensure that it resulted in political change.

Implementation and consolidation

It was noted that fewer participants had experience of mechanisms which occurred at this stage in a peace process. This is perhaps in large part a reflection of wider perceptions that a peace process is complete at the moment when an agreement is reached. Yet many participants stressed that the period of implementation and consolidation is in fact an absolutely critical moment in the success of the entire negotiation process. A couple of participants related details of referenda which had been undertaken as a means of enlisting or demonstrating public support for an agreement reached between the warring factions. The experiences of the inter-community meetings in Mali also provided an instructive example of efforts towards a “local peace” which could take root and thereby consolidate a national-level settlement.

Promoting learning on mechanisms for political participation of the public

“Each experience of comparative learning has been a step forward. Here we have managed to learn more, comprehend more, but we need to give continuity to this effort.”

The workshop was not principally about generating a series of policy recommendations. It was about creating opportunities for comparative analysis for practitioners engaged with a common issue. It was carried out in the hope that the learning would inspire and stimulate new thinking as well as creating resources and contacts for people seeking to learn from the experiences of similar processes elsewhere. Nonetheless participants did spend some time identifying key points that they would wish to communicate to different audiences, including civil society peacemakers and international intermediaries.

The full list of these principles and ideas are presented in the workshop report, available electronically in the occasional papers section of the CR website (www.c-r.org) or in hard copy from CR staff. It has also been distributed to a number of key policy-makers and external intermediaries with an interest in peace processes.

Meanwhile, the Accord project continues. A publication as part of the series, *Accord: an international review of peace initiatives* is currently being developed, with the aim of providing fuller documentation of some of the process mechanisms described briefly here. It is being developed in collaboration with individuals and institutions directly involved in implementing and assessing these mechanisms and will seek to provide analysis of their contribution to conflict transformation and the obstacles encountered along the way. It is our hope that by engaging directly with the issues and questions raised by practitioners in the workshop, the documentation can be of real and practical benefit to people around the world who are actively seeking to promote or design mechanisms for the political participation of the public in peacemaking. We are also intending to conduct an international policy seminar at a later stage in the project, to present some of the learning which emerges and discuss it with representatives of national governments and inter-governmental institutions engaged in the project of ending armed conflict and promoting sustainable peace.

More importantly, diverse and vibrant work also continues in the eight countries mentioned here, and in many more besides, by people who are looking at ways to enable effective broad-based participation in the processes which will define their political future. It is our hope that this project contributes in a small way to their endeavour.

Celia McKeon

For further information about this project, or any other aspect of the Accord Programme, please contact Celia McKeon at Conciliation Resources on +44 (0) 20 7359 7728 or by email at cmckeon@c-r.org.

Evaluation: Reflections on experience

In this article Diana Francis reflects on some of the problems and possibilities of evaluation work, prompted by her recent involvement in a large evaluation process.

In January this year I was invited to be part of an evaluation team reviewing a large government programme in support of peace and stability in the Balkans. I will not name the government or describe the programme further. Suffice it to say that it was substantial and that the civil servants involved were passionately committed to it. They also had a commitment to open-ended process and to giving as much power as possible to their partners in the region.

For several reasons I was reluctant to join the team. I had relished the idea of a quiet start to the year. I am sceptical about evaluation in some respects and have reservations about the capacity of outsiders to contribute to it, other than as facilitators. I have seen many instances where external consultants who made judgements and recommendations got things wrong because they had missed crucial bits of understanding or information. I was persuaded to accept involvement by the plight of the civil servants responsible who urgently needed to find people to do this external evaluation, which was built into the design and timeframe of the programme. (Probably not a good reason for accepting an assignment! And in this case time pressure was one of the worst aspects.) The work would give me an opportunity to visit old friends in the region and to get a feel for the current situation in the places I visited. And I would have a chance to learn more about evaluation, how it can work and what it can and cannot accomplish.

The need for preliminary grounding

As indicated, the pressure of time was there from the beginning. Those who had been responsible for setting the wheels in motion had clearly left it too late for a steady, strategic beginning. They had not counted on the busyness of the people they wanted to invite, or on the time it would take to bring them together. They had probably not visualised the different steps that would be needed to bring a team together and brief them; to give them time to get to know each other and to find available time in common; to allow them to share assumptions and understandings about peace and stability, explore their respective approaches to evaluation, agree purposes, devise a strategy and define tasks, identify strengths and weaknesses in relation to what was to be done, and to clarify roles, assign tasks and agree procedures. Nor, I think, can they have thought how much time would be needed to make the necessary plans for travel in the region, including the purchase of air tickets, obtaining of visas and making appointments for visits to different organisations. Time needed to be allowed also for the digestion (individual and collective) of information and the writing of the report itself, especially a team's findings and the ways they are represented have to be agreed by several people, working at a distance.

In practice little of the preparatory thinking outlined above was done by the team, except on the hoof. The three original team members, whose diaries were already complicated, came from the US, South Africa and the UK and had never met each other before. They were chosen on the basis of existing connections with those who were commissioning the evaluation, but the fact that they did not know each other in advance, and their distance from each other and from the region, clearly did not help to expedite

the process or reduce its complexity. Two further members were added after the process had begun, by the decision of the 'lead consultant' whose colleagues they were.

I have reflected, frequently, during the process, on the merits of composing a team of very diverse people – one from the field of development, one a journalist specialising in journalism and human rights, and me (plus, subsequently, two more on the development side) – with very different experiences, perspectives and personalities and regional knowledge ranging from substantial to non-existent. The different fields of expertise were arguably important and contributed to a collective knowledge base much larger than could have been provided by one person – or, perhaps, by a team from one field alone. But since in practice we had to divide the work of visits and interviews, and not always in line with our particular knowledge and experience, what this meant was that different parts of the elephant were viewed through very different spectacles and described in very different voices. (Had we had adequate time for the kind of team building suggested above, this difficulty might have been greatly reduced.)

We did agree, from the start, that the process we wished to initiate would be participatory, facilitated by us but done in conjunction with the government's 'implementing agencies' and with their local partners, contributing to their own review of their work and achievements and their planning of the programme's next phase. What I think we did not adequately acknowledge was that the broad overview which we were supposed to reach might need a perspective which could not be found within the programme.

A huge amount of paper – minutes, reports, interim evaluations, internal and external – was loaded onto

us: almost too much to carry from the taxi into the airport. I digested as much as I could through erratically reading and skimming, but at a certain point realised that I could absorb no more through print and that my efforts were becoming counter-productive. I realise I need a more strategic approach to reading – or someone to do some judicious pre-selection for me.

We never had time to make an overall plan for our travel and meetings, staggering from one phase to the next. Nor did we approach those we met with an agreed list of questions. This made conversations more fluid and interesting, but meant that we tended to focus on different things, so that it was hard to reach a shared overview of what was important to those we had met.

Conflicting voices and other grounds for uncertainty

To begin our conversations in the region, we agreed to invite different partners to a conference to discuss their experiences and views. This, like the subsequent visits to a great number of individual organisations, was difficult to organise at short notice. The whole point about these organisations was that they had work to do! The idea was mooted that our draft report should be shared with them at a final conference, so that they had a chance to propose adjustments to it and also to use it in their thinking about the future. In fact that will not happen. There was not sufficient clarity about it in time for dates to be found which were convenient to all or most of those who would have liked to participate, or for general enthusiasm for such an event to be generated. Instead there were separate meetings with different categories of people after the draft report had been circulated, so that they could respond to it and influence the final version. This proved an important, useful part of the process.

While we chose a participatory approach and had a clear task of representing in a faithful way the voices of those we met, listened to and interacted with, those voices were at times conflicting and always different in particulars or emphasis, making generalisations difficult, if necessary. Furthermore, meeting representatives of the organisations concerned is not the same as seeing what they are doing (though in a few cases we did that too). A great deal has to be taken as given. Yet one of the points of difference between the accounts we heard lay in the assessment made by those interviewed of the real substance of some of the work which appeared on paper to be being done.

Not only did it prove difficult to construct what felt like a reliable overall picture or detect a common voice (though distinct voices were to be heard) to represent the views of those involved in the programme; we were also expected to add our own commentary and opinions and, as already indicated, an overview which would be strategically useful. This felt to me like a heavy responsibility. What if

people lost funds because of what we said and we were wrong? What if the programme were adjusted on the basis of our recommendations and those recommendations were not well founded? How seriously would our conclusions be taken and how could we handle the power we had been given responsibly, especially when time was so limited?

The cost of the exercise, in terms both of the time of all concerned and in the money spent, has been a matter of concern to me. I can see that if a great deal of money is being allocated to a programme it is worth trying to ensure that it is well spent. And there are aspects of any programme which, with all the caveats above, can be assessed in relation to their own explicit aims – in this case, for instance, the goal of building practical co-operation. It is also possible to see where relationships and organisations are working well, where proper analysis is being done and applied, and whether objectives set are being met.

But the impact of a programme in terms of its wider aims, in this instance of contributing to peace and stability, and its assumptions (that establishing democracy is a guarantee against civil or regional war, for example, in this case) – these are impossible to determine by any empirical means – certainly within the confines of such an evaluation process. Shifts in the big political scene, when they can be identified, are not often capable of attribution to any one source. The relationship between grass roots work and high politics is notoriously difficult to delineate. And who can demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt the importance of such things as refugee return, human rights advocacy or media development in contributing to peace and stability? Or their relative value compared with each other, or with economic development, or with work to address ongoing conflicts, and old resentments and hostilities, in more direct ways? These things can, as far as I can see, be assessed only theoretically and philosophically, and evaluators will have differing viewpoints. So it was with us, causing us considerable difficulties in reaching agreement on our assessment of the situation(s) in the region and consequent recommendations, all having to compromise. This in itself must relativise the reliability of evaluators. I know I would have made different recommendations if I had been left to my own devices. Whether they would have been better I cannot say.

Maybe the best one can do with all this is to encourage the clarification of at least working definitions of aims, an explicit rationale to relate activities to those aims, agreement on criteria for success in particular endeavours which can be measured, and ‘indicators’ of whether these criteria have been met. An explicit rationale will involve a number of fundamental assumptions and values, which can, perhaps, be brought into awareness, reviewed, challenged and affirmed or modified.

Challenging assumptions

In this particular evaluation process, some of my own assumptions and values were brought into relief and challenged. For instance, while we were in Sarajevo, one of our team met an old man in a meeting who came back to see her later on his own, to tell his own story and press his concern. He had been 'somebody' in his younger life – had worked for the government in Africa and elsewhere, owned a nice apartment and was widely known and respected. Then in the war he had been forced to flee. When he returned, he found his flat occupied by strangers. They would not even allow him to collect his personal papers, let alone his other possessions. He was now without property or status, floating on the edge of a society of which he had once been an integral and respected part. He argued that if human rights were important to peace, then the plight of old people like him was important and should receive concerted attention.

In any general and generous view of peace and stability, this man matters. The sad truth is that at the strategic level, in terms of Peace and Stability with capital letters, his plight is unimportant. It is a truism that young people 'are the future'. Top politicians or the economically powerful are seen as important because they are the ones who wield power on the large scale. An old man without power is, by definition, unimportant. Many of the refugees who have not been able to integrate themselves into new contexts or to return to their original homes are not 'important' people, except in so far as they provide grist for the political mill or can be manipulated to fuel resentment. Yet I would argue that the foundations of peace are laid in respect for the weak and that, without that respect, what I want to call peace cannot exist. Without the values that would give such members of society a dignified place within it, the only stability that can be achieved is the stability of control – a contradiction in terms. But in the short term, which must be secured if the long term is to be reached, do there have to be other priorities? That would be hard to accept, and maybe we should resist the idea that a choice has to – or can – be made. Can peace exist within a society without compassion at the individual level?

It is by no means clear that such philosophical discussions have been held by the government and civil servants in question. The programme is doing 'good things', worthy in themselves. How the Peace and Stability to which they are meant to contribute are understood is not apparent, and whether those good things which are being done are the most cost-effective contribution to its potential establishment was therefore not only hard but impossible to assess. However, there was agreement in the team that, given the prominent use of the words 'reconciliation' and 'democracy' in the programme's literature, and in the light of the overarching goal of Peace and Stability, those activities supported should be reviewed by the programme's participants, to explore whether their

design and implementation could be more strategically related to that purpose.

In addition I proposed the inclusion in the programme of organisations and projects whose purpose was to address conflict as such and of organisations directly concerned with democracy, to promote activities specifically focused on reconciliation and education for pluralism and the constructive, democratic handling of conflict. My proposal was not, however, included as a recommendation in the report.

One of my personal assumptions is that conflicts are better addressed explicitly and directly rather than avoided or addressed obliquely. I realise that this is a temperamental as well as theoretical and sub-cultural viewpoint. I know it is open to challenge and perhaps deeply flawed. Nonetheless, in the programme in question there is what I see as a lack of any overt discussion of underlying conflicts within the regional networks whose work and impact are in the process of evaluation. Issues which divide are ignored, in the hope that contact and co-operation will overcome the divisions. This is not an unusual approach, but it is not mine, and I see that some tensions are exacerbated by clumsy choices which could have been avoided if the relevant issues had been 'out there'. I believe that addressing conflict constructively and directly, and learning to understand and talk about its elements and dynamics, is like learning grammar as a route to competence in a language, saving a lot of time and mistakes and providing firm foundations on which to build. (Maybe deeper exploration of this metaphor would reveal more of the pros and cons of my approach.)

The role of the outsider

Given that those organisations involved in this programme had their own *raison d'être* before the programme began, it is maybe inappropriate for an external donor, avowedly wishing to support local endeavours, to ask them to refocus their efforts in line with external goals. The relationship between 'outsiders' and 'insiders' was a strong theme in our evaluation, but one which I do not have room to explore here. I should note, however, that it was not unrelated to my doubts about our role – as an external team of evaluators working for an external donor. The potential importance of our coming from outside the region was perhaps to give a strategic overview and critique of the programme's structure, rationale and outworking. This we largely failed, I believe, to do.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, given so many doubts and questions, I found myself by far the most reluctant in the team to reach conclusions on anything. This can be seen as a disability in an undertaking looking for clear assessments and recommendations. Working in a team was reassuring when we were substantially in agreement amongst ourselves (though I am not

convinced that it should necessarily be so – it would be possible to generate some kind of suspect dynamic together). When we were in disagreement, I found myself becoming, paradoxically, more sure of myself – perhaps simply more stubborn.

My greatest comfort was the fact that our power was far from absolute. Those affected, in whatever way, by our findings could argue with them, take them with a pinch of salt or reject them – as they did with some of the views and recommendations of past evaluators. The fact that we were hired did not mean that those who hired us gave away their own power and responsibility. And those whose activities are funded (in part) by them also have the capacity to evaluate our report and make their own choices.

In spite of all my misgivings, I do believe that, thanks to all our hard work, and to the tenacity, sang-froid and good humour of our highly skilled team leader, we handed in, at last, a substantial account and appraisal of what we had seen and observed, and recommendations for the future which will provide, I think, at the very least, useful food for thought. It was

important that we took the time and trouble to receive feedback from all concerned on the first draft of the report, which enabled us to check our perceptions and resulted in considerable improvement to it in terms of both accuracy and cogency.

As time passes I shall further digest this experience and hope that it will indeed have added to my personal understanding of the work we in CCTS are engaged in and the ways we can think honestly and constructively about its effectiveness. In the meantime I have been heartened both by the commitment and professionalism of the people we met in our travels and by the vision and enthusiasm of the government employees who are seeking to support them and stimulate co-operation and shared agendas. The ethical issues surrounding the role of outsiders in stimulating anything in other people's countries would be the subject for another long article!

Diana Francis

Coexistence in Kosovo

This review of Howard Clark's report, 'Kosovo Work in Progress: Closing the Cycle of Violence', has been written by Michael Randle.

Howard Clark has followed up his book, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo* (Pluto Press, London, 2000) with this report on the efforts to close the cycle of violence in the aftermath of repression and war. The report is based on three visits he made to Kosovo since the end of the NATO military intervention and bombing campaign, and on his knowledge of the country itself and many of its most radical and creative individuals and groups.

There are six principal ways, he suggests, in which a community can close the cycle of violence. First, through the pursuit of 'restorative' justice which implies not just punishing the guilty, but providing them with the opportunity for rehabilitation, distinguishing between degrees of culpability, and giving the innocent a chance to publicly clear their names. Second, through emotional healing to prevent the wounds of the past from poisoning future relations. Third, through forgiveness which can be the means of establishing the basis of a new relationship. Fourth, through drawing a line under the past. Fifth, through compensation and reparations, facilitating social and economic development. And finally through the pursuit of Truth which implies both listening and talking and ultimately a dialogue in which there is a mutual search for truth from various angles. The report examines progress in each of these respects.

How far then has society in Kosovo progressed towards coexistence? At best, it seems, only patchily. A crucial obstacle at the start was the tardiness of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), and the wider international community, in establishing an effective police force and system of justice. It was a year before the first Serb was convicted of a war crime in Kosovo, and by Spring of 2001, only around 40 Serbs had been arrested for serious crimes

committed during the war – most of whom escaped before coming to trial.

There were, of course, genuine difficulties in the way of delivering justice, not least the fact that many of those responsible for war crimes fled to Serbia and were beyond reach, at least until the fall of Milosevic. Nevertheless the effect has been that the Albanian population have been inclined to view all Kosovo Serbs as guilty until they can prove their innocence, and sometimes to mete out the rough justice of the streets. In the first month or so after the end of the NATO war, violence against Serbs was rampant, with expulsions, arson, beatings, abductions and torture. The international administration recorded the death of 150 Serbs in the first six months after taking charge, but, as Howard points out, the numbers would have undoubtedly been much higher if most Serbs had not fled the country as the Albanians returned. The Serbs who decided to remain could be divided, Howard suggests, into those with a clear conscience who were willing to give coexistence a try, and those preparing to group together to fight a rearguard action. But the lawlessness and violence soon forced the first group to flee the country or to seek international protection in what have become Serb enclaves.

Howard's analysis here of the deleterious effects of the absence of an adequate system of law

enforcement raises a question mark against some traditional pacifist thinking. For the rule of law requires a means of enforcement, a well-trained and equipped police force and, at least in situations like Bosnia and Kosovo, probably a military presence to back it up. Nonviolent initiatives from below may eventually succeed in building a society in which force plays a minimal role, but intellectual honesty requires us to acknowledge that at this moment in history, in situations such as this, a totally nonviolent solution to the social and political problems faced by the society as a whole does not exist.

UNMIK's failures in the area of establishing the rule of law have been compounded by the ad-hoc nature of many of its procedures. Howard takes it to task in particular for its lack of transparency in dealing with locally recruited staff accused of war crimes. He cites the case of a Serb, Petar Topoljski, working as an interpreter for UNMIK who was accused in the Albanian Kosovan newspaper *Dita* in April 2000 of being a war criminal. UNMIK, instead of suspending him and arranging for some kind of judicial process to establish his guilt or innocence – or the degree of his guilt if he was guilty – simply ignored the allegation. Topoljski was then murdered. Some model of appropriate processes, Howard argues, needs to be established in this and other UN operations if they are to be effective in promoting co-existence.

UNMIK aside, there has been a huge investment of effort and money in Kosovo by International NGOs and agencies, not all of it well directed. Howard is particularly critical – as are many of the grassroots organisations in the country – of the explosion of trauma counselling projects, many of them funding—led. The assumption underlying most of them is that the experience of war and bereavement has produced a psychological disorder, 'trauma' – to be treated by Western-style talk therapies – rather than a rational response of anger and grief which requires above all the re-establishment of social networks and support-systems. He cites Sevdie Ahmeti of the Centre for the Protection of Women and Children who argued at an OSCE conference that what most women need to overcome trauma is not psychological counselling but 'jobs and homes to go to'.

Another woman, Natalie Losi, manager of the International Organisation for Migration's (IOM) project Psychosocial Trauma Response in Kosovo, criticises the arrogance of most of the international experts who descended in large numbers on the territory, usually 'with toolboxes of pre-packaged instruments of which PTSD [Post Traumatic Stress Disorder] was the most popular'. IOM does believe that psychological support work is necessary, but it argues it is no alternative to war-crimes investigations, and it must be based on treating the local people as protagonists, acknowledging their role in supporting each other, respecting the methods used within the culture, and restoring the social ties broken by the war.

It's not all bad news. Howard detects what he describes as 'undertones' of movement toward tolerance and coexistence. Full reconciliation in the sense of establishing friendly relationships between the two communities is not on the agenda and nor is there any indication of a consensus about what the future political status of Kosovo should be.

Moreover in the absence of such a consensus, Howard considers it would be premature to set up a Truth Commission along the lines of those in Chile or South Africa since it would become one more propaganda battleground for the two communities rather than providing a means for a mutual search for the truth. Still, within the interim framework established by UNMIK, some accommodations at least have been made and positive programmes initiated. IOM's Counselling and Referral Service, for example, is a programme which mainly addresses the socio-economic needs of former Kosovo Liberation Front (UCK) fighters, though it also includes a psychosocial element. Some 3000 former members of UCK now work with the Kosovo Protection Corps (TKM), set up by UNMIK to do public works and respond to civil emergencies. The TKM has been criticised by some commentators as constituting 'the UCK in mothballs' but UNMIK sees it as an opportunity for former combatants to serve the community in a different way. As an example of the contribution it can make to peacebuilding, Howard mentions a project in the town of Gjilan where TKM members built a Roma Resource Centre and formed a work crew with Serbs to reconstruct the City Park.

However, these positive initiatives to change cross community relations are, in Howard's words, 'a patchwork'. A 'culture of peace' does not exist on any scale, and it is even hard to locate 'points of gestation'. While noting that the international operation bears much of the blame for this situation, Howard argues that the majority Albanian population also has some responsibility for it and suggests steps it could take to promote coexistence. These include the reframing of identity along lines of gender, generation and occupation as a basis of cooperation, creating a collective memory that acknowledges the wrongdoing on each side and honours those who stood out against the violence of their own side, and insisting on human rights standards. Above all, Albanians can take steps to ensure the safe return of the Roma and Serb population which fled the country in the wake of NATO's military victory.

The report (40pp., ISBN no. 1903818079) was published in January 2002 by the Centre for the Study of Forgiveness and Reconciliation. It is available for sale from them at Coventry University, Priory Street, Coventry CV1 5FB for £10 (for institutions), or £5 (for individuals). Alternatively it can be downloaded from their web site: www.coventry.isl.org.uk/forgive/about/howard.doc.pdf

Michael Randle

Hot off the Press

People, Peace and Power: Conflict Transformation in Action, a new book by Diana Francis, has just been published by Pluto Press. The book examines the theory of conflict transformation, and the role of nonviolence within it, and translates this theory into practice using extensive case studies from a variety of practical workshops.

The book costs £15.99 from bookshops, and is also available directly from Pluto, currently for £12.79 + p&p (tel. 01264 342832, or via their web site at: www.plutobooks.com, by quoting reference PLPEACEP02).

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London

Chair: Diana Francis

Treasurer: Guus Meijer

Minutes Secretary: Michael Randle

Secretariat: Conciliation Resources, 173 Upper
Street, Islington, London N1 1RG

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7359 7728

Fax: +44 (0) 20 7359 4081

Email: ccts@c-r.org

Website: <http://www.c-r.org/ccts>

Newsletter production

Editors: Diana Francis and Michael Randle

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