

Experiences from the Field: UNDP-CSO Partnerships for Conflict Prevention




**Bureau for Resources and
Strategic Partnerships
(BRSP)**

**Bureau for Crisis Prevention
and Recovery
(BCPR)**

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<http://www.undp.org/cso>

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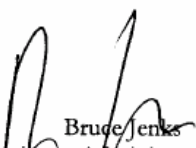
FOREWORD

There is increasing recognition of the linkages between violent conflict and sustainable development in the world's poorest countries. In recent years, civil strife and violent conflict have eroded hard-won development gains in many countries. UNDP has come to realize that addressing the root causes of conflict, supporting local, regional and national capacities for peace and development, and working with diverse partners are critical in preventing the recurrence of armed conflict.

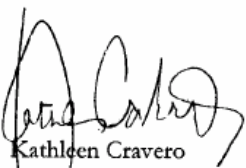
In particular, the experiences of UNDP in a number of conflict settings have shown that development interventions need to incorporate conflict prevention measures, through enhanced early warning systems and effective engagement with civil society organizations, particularly at the community level, as peace and development cannot be imposed from the outside. The multiple roles that CSOs play in advocacy, mediation and mobilization, research, analysis and project implementation are key to conflict prevention and sustaining recovery. Ensuring lasting peace involves engaging with women, youth, grassroots organizations, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, particularly as issues related to equity, social inclusion, resource management and respect for human rights are often at the core of most conflicts. Moreover, a conflict sensitive approach to programming increases the overall effectiveness of development assistance.

Since 2002, the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery and the Civil Society Organizations Division in the Bureau for Resources and Strategic Partnerships have been working together on a small grants programme for civil society organizations in post-conflict situations. This new initiative has at its core capacity development of CSOs, and is aimed at transforming UNDP engagement with CSOs from a relationship of service provision and sub-contracting to one of genuine partnership in the fields of advocacy, agenda setting, human rights and economic recovery. The six case studies in this publication spotlight some of the innovative approaches adopted by country offices in engaging with CSOs and local communities. Three members of the UNDP CSO Advisory Committee also offer their insights on key issues to be addressed in conflict prevention.

The CSO-led global conference, *From Reaction to Prevention: Civil Society Forging Partnerships to Prevent Violent Conflict and Build Peace*, taking place at the United Nations (19-21 July 2005), positions CSOs at the forefront of the conflict prevention debate. The conference has provided UNDP with an opportunity to reflect on its experiences in this area. UNDP is committed to broadening its understanding of the role that civil society can play in conflict prevention and supporting the implementation of global agendas at the local level.



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Table of contents

Acronyms	3
Overview	5
Colombia: Small grants, big impact <i>Alejandra Pero and Meegan Murray</i>	7
Implementing the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons: The contribution of CSOs <i>Marc-Antoine Morel</i>	14
“Human rights are key to preventing conflict” <i>Interview with Amanda Romero-Medina</i>	18
Nepal: Promoting peace at the grassroots <i>Sharad Neupane, Anil K.C, Thakur Dhakal</i>	21
Ukraine: Peace and stability through human security <i>Basant Kumar Subba and Oksana Leschenko</i>	27
“Address the structural causes of conflict” <i>Interview with Victoria Tauli-Corpuz</i>	34
Cyprus: Civil society partnerships in a challenging context <i>Marina Vasilara</i>	37
South East Europe: Making the case for local actors in early warning <i>Katrin Kinzelbach, Eva Riečanská and Alina Mungiu-Pippidi (eds.)</i>	41
“The processes of conflict transformation” <i>Interview with Sunila Abeysekera</i>	47
Ways forward	50

Acronyms

ARC	Autonomous Republic of Crimea
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
BDP	Bi-Communal Development Programme
BPC	Business Promotion Centre
BRSP	Bureau for Resources and Strategic Partnerships
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CCED	Coordination Committee for Entrepreneurship Development
CIDP	Crimea Integration and Development Programme
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CORDESPAZ	Community for Peace and Development
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EAANSA	Eastern African Action Network on Small Arms
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FDP	Formerly Deported People
HDR	Human Development Report
HSDC	Human Security and Development Council
IANSA	International Action Network on Small Arms
KANSA	Kenya Action Network on Small Arms
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHDR	National Human Development Report
PISG	Provisional Institutions of Self Government
PoA	United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

REDEPAZ	National Peace and Reconciliation Network
REDES	Reconciliation and Development Programme
RFID	Regional Forum for Integration and Development
SABA	Small Arms Baseline Assessment
SAS	Small Arms Survey
SGP	Small Grant Programme
SPDI	Support for Peace and Development Initiative
UNDDA	United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNIDIR	United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
UNIFEM	United Nations Fund for Women
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
WAANSA	West African Action Network on Small Arms

Overview

Civil society organizations perform multiple functions in situations of crisis and play a critical role in sustaining peace. They bring unique skills of mediation and reconciliation, defend and secure human rights, and develop creative strategies for building peace. CSOs have an extraordinary capacity to mobilize communities and provide services in situations where others cannot. Especially in conflict settings where governments are weak, fragile or non-representative, the efforts of CSOs can usefully complement the work of UN agencies, including UNDP. Of particular importance are CSOs representing grassroots communities, women, youth, indigenous peoples, as well as racial and ethnic minorities who tend to be the most affected by conflict.

Aside from their capacity for rapid response in post-conflict situations, CSOs also contribute in many ways to prevent the emergence of violent conflict. Their call for a paradigm shift from reaction to prevention is increasingly recognized in the United Nations system. Emphasizing the need for such a shift, participants at the recent General Assembly hearings with civil society, NGOs and the private sector stated that a prerequisite for prevention was attention to underlying causes for conflict (through measures such as peace and human rights education, job creation for youth and improved governance with the active participation of civil society). They underscored the critical role of civil society, especially of communities with local knowledge.¹ As noted by Sunila Abeysekera, “Voices of sanity and tolerance emerge from civil society, sometimes the only ones with integrity, and can act as catalysts for mobilization against conflict.”

The intention of this report is to highlight innovative partnerships between UNDP and CSOs. In view of the global conference *From Reaction to Prevention: Civil Society Forging Partnerships to Prevent Violent Conflict and Build Peace*, the CSO Division of BRSP and BCPR invited country offices, regional centres and headquarters to present case studies documenting their experiences in engaging with civil society partners. While not an exhaustive assessment, these experiences provide an overview of wide-ranging partnerships with civil society at the national, regional and global levels. They highlight the value to UNDP of working with civil society at the community level, as well as with marginalized groups. The experiences offer important lessons to UNDP as it expands its work with CSOs in conflict prevention and peace building.

The case study from South East Europe examines UNDP engagement with a network of local NGOs and think tanks in developing early warning systems. The Colombia case study delves into the mechanisms and tools that can be used to strengthen the capacity of CSOs in post-conflict environments and highlights some lessons learned from a pilot small grants project. The case study addressing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons assesses the contributions of CSOs in the area of research and the development of international instruments to monitor the spread of small arms. The Cyprus case study describes the partnership established between the Bi-communal Development Programme and the Mediation Association, a CSO with expertise in building skills in mediation and reconciliation. The case of Nepal addresses the issue of enhancing the capacity of community-based organizations in peace building efforts at the local level. The Crimea Integration and Development Programme of Ukraine emphasizes the importance of area-based development as an entry point to promote and strengthen partnerships with local civil society organizations.

Three members of the UNDP CSO Advisory Committee also contributed their insights on issues of conflict prevention and recovery. They have shared their experiences in partnership building and the

¹ The informal interactive hearings of the General Assembly with non-Governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector were held at United Nations Headquarters on 23 and 24 June 2005. For a summary of the proceedings, see: www.undp.org/cso

role that UNDP can play in conflict prevention and peace building. Established in 2000, the CSO Advisory Committee is made up of 15 civil society leaders who directly advise the UNDP Administrator and senior management in overall policy and programme direction. Since its inception, conflict prevention and peace building have been key concerns of the Committee and priority items for discussion.

Over the last few years, the CSO Division of BRSP and BCPR have been working closely to address the opportunities and challenges of engaging with civil society partners in conflict prevention and peace building. A joint pilot small grants programme was designed to strengthen UNDP-CSO partnerships and develop CSO capacity in peace building in Colombia, Liberia, and Sri Lanka. A number of lessons are emerging from the experiences of these three countries, which may be applied in other crisis contexts. The pilot programme has demonstrated the benefits of local committees made up of civil society actors to oversee and advise on the direction of the projects, the importance of CSO mapping exercises to assess CSO capacity and identify partners, and the importance of scaling up local capacity to the national level. The programme has also underlined the importance of broadening and strengthening CSO networks and developing the capacity of grassroots organizations and highlighted the overall catalytic impact of a small grant in enhancing relationships between country offices and CSOs.

UNDP is committed to broadening its understanding of the role that civil society can play in conflict prevention and supporting the implementation of global agendas at the local level. UNDP policies of engagement with civil society organizations (2001) and indigenous peoples (2001) are embedded in a human rights framework and establish guiding principles for developing partnerships with CSOs and indigenous peoples based on trust and mutually set agendas. The UNDP public information and disclosure policy also commits the organization to principles of transparency and information sharing, which are critical components in strong partnerships with CSOs.

The experiences presented in this report underscore the critical importance for UNDP and other international organizations to actively engage with civil society actors at all levels in preventing violent conflict and rebuilding peace. In many cases, the credibility and effectiveness demonstrated by CSOs have led to a transformation in the nature of their relationship with governments and the United Nations – from programme sub-contractors to policy advisors and interlocutors. This evolution in the scope of partnership with civil society organizations is essential in addressing the growing challenges of conflict prevention and peace building.

Colombia: Small grants, big impact

Alejandra Pero² and Meegan Murray³

This case study is based on a mission to Colombia undertaken by the CSO Division and the Transition Recovery Unit in late May 2005 to assess the work of a pilot small grants programme aimed at strengthening the capacity of CSOs in post-conflict environments. It examines the mechanisms and tools used to enhance partnerships with CSOs, and identifies some lessons learned from this programme.

I. Background

The UNDP BCPR-BRSP initiative with civil society organizations in post-conflict environments, launched in 2002, seeks to develop the capacity of CSOs to create effective and sustainable partnerships with UNDP in peace building. A pilot small grant programme covering Colombia, Liberia and Sri Lanka, now ongoing, involves partnerships between UNDP country offices and CSOs in building peace through dialogue, recovery of democratic and civilian institutions and economic revitalization.⁴ By the end of 2005, the BCPR/BRSP Small Grant Programme (SGP) expects to have achieved a number of results, among them:

- A mapping assessing national CSOs active in the above areas to identify preferred partners for future cooperation.
- Enhanced participation by CSOs in policy dialogue with government, multilateral agencies and other civil society actors.
- Strengthened and sustained cooperation and partnership between UNDP country offices and CSOs.
- Improved CSO capacity to implement effective peace building initiatives.

The projects began implementation in June 2004. This case study examines the progress of the small-grant programme in Colombia eleven months since its launch.⁵

The BCPR/BRSP Small Grants Programme (SGP) is housed within the Reconciliation and Development Programme (REDES) in the country office, and focuses on strengthening institutions and laying the groundwork for the design of public policies. REDES does this by promoting alliances between the State, the international community, the government and CSOs, and supporting civil society participation in peace and development initiatives. The small grants programme strengthens the civil society dimension of REDES as it provides tools for identifying key actors and direct support to CSO peace initiatives that range from the local to the national levels. It has also enabled REDES to diversify their support to other types of CSO-led peace initiatives as well as to other regions.

The UNDP National Human Development Report (NHDR), *Callejón con Salida* (2003), focused on the conflict in Colombia, identifies some of the major challenges facing civil society and provides key recommendations for working with CSOs in peace efforts. Although the NHDR dates back to 2003,

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⁴ For more information on the initiative and the programme document, including criteria for selection of countries, see: <http://www.undp.org/cso/areas/bcpr.html>

⁵ The BRSP/BCPR mission team would like to thank the country office for their contributions to this case study.

it continues to play a significant role in the country office's overall programme direction and is regarded as a current and valuable reference document. It provides a platform for debate on issues of peace and reconciliation, the role of CSOs, and human rights.

II. Political context in Colombia

Colombia is a middle-income country, with a working democracy, rule of law and an ongoing 40-year conflict. Colombia is also one of the largest recipients of US aid, with much of it directed towards military spending. The effects of drug trafficking and the large tracts of money being channeled through armed groups add a complex dimension to the country's conflict. In 1997, the possibility of signing peace agreements between the armed groups and the Government fell through. A hard-line approach to the conflict was adopted, which the current Government has intensified.

Nevertheless, recent political dialogue – known as the London (2003) and Cartagena (2005) process – has set the scene for an international cooperation strategy, in addition to guidelines and a mandate for working on peace agreed upon through consultation with multiple actors.⁶ The London/Cartagena process brought together the Government of Colombia, the international community, the Church, the business sector and CSOs to debate and agree upon a set of principles and areas of intervention.

The country's civil society has benefited from this process as it provides support and a road map for engagement. So has UNDP, which is viewed as a critical facilitator and partner in the follow-up. The London/Cartagena process has legitimized the UNDP role in strengthening peace and development programming and networks, developing local and regional initiatives, building the capacity of CSOs, strengthening CSO alliances, and scaling up local and regional work to the national level. UNDP is also the secretariat for the G-24, a group of 24 countries cooperating with Colombia and the European Commission.

III. Mechanisms and tools to enhance engagement

The Local Selection Committee

A key component of the small grants programme is the Local Selection Committee. This multidisciplinary group composed of partners and experts from civil society serves in an advisory capacity to UNDP throughout the programme. The committee defines the selection criteria for the CSO initiatives to be supported, reviews the CSO proposals for support, and makes recommendations for implementation.⁷

The committee has created a transparent and consultative selection process and is actively involved in programme implementation. Members strongly support the programme, recognizing the importance of such initiatives in strengthening civil society actors in preventing conflict, strengthening legal institutions, and ensuring civic participation and respect for human rights. In keeping with the principal mandate of the committee, UNDP convenes it to meet in connection with

⁶ The London Conference took place in July 2003 followed by the Donors Conference II (Coordination and International Cooperation) in Cartagena in February 2005.

⁷Members: Augusto Ramírez Ocampo, former Minister of State and former Director of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, currently international affairs analyst. Ana Teresa Bernal, director and legal representative of the national peace and reconciliation network REDEPAZ. Jorge Londoño, Mayor of Usme (locality of Bogotá). Elisabet Hellsten, director of international cooperation for the Swedish International Development Agency of the Swedish Embassy in Bogotá. Carlos Ivan Lopera, mapping consultant. Raúl Rosende, coordinator of REDES, Reconciliation and Development Programme of UNDP Colombia. (Hans Petter Buvollen from the UNDP office in Guatemala participated in one Local Selection Committee meeting during his mission in September. The BRSP/BCPR mission team and Olmo Guillermo Liévano, peace adviser to the Governor of Huila, participated in a meeting in May.)

CSO activities supported by the small grants programme. The committee's guidance and advice have improved the CSO-led activities and scope of work.

The committee has provided recommendations on how the BCPR/BRSP SGP could benefit from and/or relate with other ongoing work in the country office, such as the *Banco de Buenas Practicas* (Bank of Good Practices), a database of good practices in the arena of peace and development, which is housed in the NHDR office.

The committee in Colombia has become a key forum for regular interaction between UNDP and civil society actors. It has provided overall guidance to the programme direction and has enhanced UNDP capacity in CSO partnership building. For UNDP, there are clear benefits of a committee made up of civil society actors that can act as a sounding board and feedback mechanism in UNDP programme development. The committee is expected to be enlarged with an enhanced mandate to serve as a vehicle for a more institutionalized relationship between CSOs and UNDP, an overall goal of the CSO Champions' Initiative, launched at UNDP headquarters in 2003.⁸

The CSO mapping exercise

The CSO mapping exercise to identify potential partners, conducted by a consultant affiliated with a national CSO network, REDEPAZ, and familiar with key civil society actors in Colombia, has resulted in a detailed register of 154 CSOs and CSO-led peace initiatives. The information gathered, based on a questionnaire, included details such as thematic area of work, strengths, weaknesses, challenges and successes of the initiatives. Following field visits to assess their capacity, 34 CSOs were invited to submit a proposal. A total of 21 proposals were received and six were selected. The selection committee identified the CSOs, using criteria from the project document and additional criteria suggested by its members.⁹

The mapping highlighted successful CSO-led activities and made those experiences visible. It also allowed for the identification of CSO-led peace initiatives other than those that the country office and REDES were familiar with. It has thus allowed the country office to enlarge its network and incorporate these CSOs into other processes. In addition, the mapping allowed the country office to understand the full range of CSO-led peace initiatives and their affiliations with national and regional platforms. The mapping has become an important resource for the country office – and will be an ongoing database.

The country office has since continued to seek out and identify additional CSO-led peace initiatives that were not included in the first round of mapping through consultation with other UNDP offices and other UN agencies.¹⁰

IV. The CSO-led peace initiatives

The small grants programme is supporting six CSO-led peace initiatives in various regions of the country and is engaged in a diverse set of peace building activities. The initiatives involve a range of sectors including youth and women at the local, regional and national levels. Broadly speaking, they

⁸ The CSO Champions' Initiative seeks to showcase innovative CSO partnership building at the country level and promote mechanisms to enhance those partnerships. For more information, see: <http://www.undp.org/cso/champions.html>

⁹ An evaluation form was designed by Hans Petter Bulloven, UNDP Guatemala, to facilitate the selection process, and included considerations for relevance, impact and sustainability (technical, financial, and political).

¹⁰ Efforts are being made to broaden the mapping to include CSO initiatives documented in the *Banco de Buenas Practicas*, active participants in the human development area (and in the implementation of the 2003 NHDR), and those referred to by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Humanitarian Situation Room and their monthly geo-referenced report.

work with vulnerable groups, construct alliances, strengthen networks and support social cohesion. They seek greater participation in decision-making and work to unite people, deepen democracy, promote dialogue, and ensure greater local and national ownership of political processes. The initiatives propose alternatives to conflict and violence, based on a set of common principles and values decided in consensus.

The committee set out that the selected CSOs should be carrying out peace activities working on three levels: national, regional, and local. The selected national CSO-led peace initiatives are rooted at the regional and local levels and the local ones are linked politically at the regional and national levels. All CSO-led peace initiatives have been selected because they present a clear peace agenda and have the mechanisms and capacity to follow up on peace processes. They have established indicators to measure impact and influence in the peace process. The initiatives have a multiplier effect as they can be replicated in other areas and circumstances. They were selected for their political and technical sustainability, a key component for survival and continuity.

For example, the community for peace and development (CORDESPAZ) youth initiative¹¹ provides support to local youth clubs that train young people and leaders in conflict resolution skills and developing a culture of peace. It also supports young leaders in schools and in marginal communities, student ombudsmen and youth networks, mobilizing others in the practice of non-violence.

In the southern region of Huila, the CSO-led peace initiative¹² entitled *Consolidación del proceso de asamblea constituyente* (Consolidation of the Constitutional Assembly Process) provides support to a constitutional assembly at the municipal level. A constitutional assembly is an organized group of people within a community exercising its constitutional rights to actively participate in decision-making at the local level. The initiative in Huila focuses on civic empowerment, mobilizing civil society sectors and the development of the constitutional assembly as a new governance model. The assembly unites all sectors of society ranging from women and cooperatives to youth and indigenous peoples. The work includes capacity development of leaders, information dissemination, and exchanges with the other assemblies. The assemblies enhance people's ability to participate, identify key issues of concern and develop an agenda for work; i.e., participation in the development plans of the municipality and budgets. A strengthened constitutional assembly also promotes civic resistance to the armed conflict.

Similar work is being supported through the small grants programme to the *Asociación Mogotes Pueblo Soberano* (Association of the Sovereign People of Mogotes) in the region of Mogotes and Olivial, where support is provided to local village assemblies that feed into a constitutional assembly at the municipal level.

REDEPAZ, *la Red Nacional por la Paz y Contra la Guerra*, a national network for peace and against war, has been selected to receive support to expand and consolidate its social movement for peace based on social justice, democratic values, respect for human rights, life and diversity. The work engages multiple groups and actors to develop a political strategy and a common platform for action built through consensus. The communications strategy includes a commercial for television.

An alliance of women's organizations, *Iniciativa de Mujeres Colombianas por la Paz* (IMP), the Initiative of Colombian Women for Peace, seeks to enlarge its network and strengthen women's networks to influence municipal policies and follow up on the municipal plans. IMP seeks to strengthen women's organizations as valid interlocutors in decision-making and ensure the inclusion of women

¹¹ The BRSP/BCPR mission team visited the CORDESPAZ youth initiative in Facatativá.

¹² The BRSP/BCPR mission team visited the CSO initiative in the municipality of La Argentina in Huila.

in national and local peace and development programmes funded by the international community and the Government.

Madres de la Candelaria (Mothers of Candelaria) seeks to raise awareness and sensitize the public at large about Colombia's victims, the disappeared and the internally displaced. The work involves organizing workshops on human rights and providing psychosocial care to victims' families. The mothers of Candelaria meet every week to march and ensure the visibility of the victims.

Six local committees have been established to monitor the activities and finances of each of these peace initiatives and evaluate implementation of each project. Each committee is made up of a representative of UNDP/REDES, the UNDP administrative and finance officer, a CSO representative, and a representative of the beneficiaries of the project. The committees strengthen the administrative, financial and organizational capacity of the CSOs.

The small grants programme facilitates links between the six peace initiatives and broader national political processes. In May 2005, UNDP with other donors organized a CSO forum entitled *Iniciativas de Paz: Una Lógica de Vida* (Peace Initiatives: A Framework for Life), which brought civil society actors in a dialogue with the Government.¹³ The intention was to share CSO good practices and provide a space for exchange with Government authorities. The forum highlighted the innovative work of various local and regional peace initiatives emerging from indigenous peoples, afrodescendant communities and women's coalitions, among others. Representatives of the six CSO-led peace initiatives participated in the forum.¹⁴

V. Emerging lessons

Civil society in Colombia is multiethnic, highly mobilized and organized, and is a critical player in rebuilding the country's social fabric. CSOs, particularly those from vulnerable groups such as indigenous peoples, afrodescendants, women and youth, are very important actors as they are allied across regions, and present alternative strategies and innovative initiatives. These communities tend to be the most affected by the conflict, and it is at the community and grassroots level where peace emerges.

The CSO-led peace initiatives have developed a culture of participation and civic mobilization that could eventually reach power structures.¹⁵

Building and strengthening partnerships across sectors, and with the international community, including donors, international NGOs and the United Nations system, is critical in Colombia. These cross sectoral partnerships enable the exchange of experiences, knowledge and practices, and are key for opening spaces for dialogue between government and CSOs, and creating a safe environment.¹⁶ The United Nations in particular plays an important role in Colombia, as it is a trusted partner and is greatly supported by CSOs. Its role as facilitator and impartial broker can therefore be further bolstered. Nevertheless, how best to utilize that neutral space remains a challenge.

¹³ The BRSP/BCPR mission team attended the CSO forum in May.

¹⁴ In preparation for the forum, UNDP organized a capacity development workshop for CSOs. The workshop served to strengthen CSO networks, exchange practices and knowledge, develop common positions and identify next steps.

¹⁵ Presentation by peace advocate and writer, Esperanza Hernández at the CSO forum in May 2005.

¹⁶ International observers accompany local and national CSOs in their work as their presence helps to deter violence. This is commonly known as protective accompaniment.

It is critically important to build networks with the potential of bridging the work at the local, regional and national levels. Strengthened CSO networks can also act as a mechanism to prevent conflict.

Ensuring that local CSO initiatives can possess influence and that they are linked politically to national processes have become evident as key criteria for partnership. Strengthening the capacity of CSOs and empowering them to articulate their demands and rights are critical steps for enhanced engagement. Scaling up local and regional processes to the national level is key. National level forums are important arenas for local and regional CSOs to interact more broadly, make their initiatives visible and provide a space for their voices to be heard.

Creating a means for political dialogue among actors is a key element in the REDES work, but demonstrating that spaces for dialogue are beneficial and worthwhile is a major challenge. Political fatigue with the prospects for peace also poses a significant challenge for the country office and its efforts.

The challenge for the country office lies in applying these lessons in other programmes and with other actors. Promoting development at the local level as a means to break the pattern of poverty, conflict and violence will also be an ongoing challenge.


VI. Preliminary conclusions

The BCPR/BRSP SGP in Colombia has provided the UNDP country office with an incentive to work with CSOs outside of the Peace and Development Programmes¹⁷, traditionally supported by REDES. It has been catalytic in enhancing the relationship between the country office and CSOs. The selection committee and a comprehensive mapping have laid a solid foundation for the country office's future engagement with CSOs.

Further, the small grants programme has benefited from being housed within a larger country office programme, and from the visibility it has gained by being situated within a bigger context. It has allowed the office to work locally, broadened its outreach, and deepened the civil society dimension of the work of REDES. It has also developed tools for measuring and evaluating the success and impact of the work. At the same time, REDES has gained an expanded scope and direct lessons from the ground.

The mapping component of the small grants programme has emerged as an immensely relevant tool for the country office. The country office has decided to reopen the process to ensure that the mapping includes as many relevant CSOs as possible, therefore making it a more robust tool, and one that will better complement and enrich other similar initiatives within UNDP and elsewhere in the United Nations. After the mapping, it became evident that it would be useful to revise the categories of potential partners to better reflect needs. The country office plans to update and maintain this database as a live and dynamic resource, with additional information such as CSO involvement in civil society networks or alliances.

¹⁷ Peace and Development Programmes have been in existence for nearly 10 years. They were established by small groups of organized farmers and communities concerned with poverty and violence in their communities and led by local churches. These incipient forms of social organization grew to become larger social structures enabling communities to feel less vulnerable. Local and regional entrepreneurs, and CSOs became increasingly interested in such initiatives and found them to be fertile ground for peace building and development. These initiatives soon became an ambitious and promising set of socioeconomic, cultural and political incentives for peace building as opposed to isolated social experiments.



The six selected CSO-led initiatives have grown empowered from their experience on a number of different levels. They have networked among one another, interacted with Government officials and benefited from advice from the Local Selection Committee. Regular contact between them and the country office has also led to mutual learning and frank exchanges. The local committees established at the project level are an innovative accountability mechanism.

Overall, the small grant programme shows that small funds can go a long way. But it needs more time to deliver real results and establish a solid foundation for partnership. The one-year timeframe is to be revisited.

In conclusion, the small grant programme epitomizes the core principles articulated in the 2003 *National Human Development Report*, which underscored that peace must embrace a whole range of groups and entities that seek it. The programme fosters broad participation to engender a more balanced point of view on the conflict and a repertoire of options for building peace. As stated in the NHDR, “Civil society is a power, that power exists to be used and using it well will help bring peace.” The programme is demonstrating the benefits of dialogue with authorities and the documenting of best practices in establishing peace. Above all, it is proof of the important role CSOs play in building peace and preventing conflict, the benefits of partnership with civil society, the need for a set of tools, and the clear benefits of working with diverse actors.

Implementing the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons: The contribution of CSOs

Marc-Antoine Morel¹⁸

This case study looks at the contribution of CSOs in the elaboration of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons and their role in its implementation. It also describes the Capacity Development for Reporting to the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms project launched by UNDP, UNDDA and UNIDIR, in close cooperation with the Small Arms Survey research institute.

I. Background

The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA) was adopted in New York in July 2001. With this instrument, States agree to fight against the proliferation of illegal small arms and light weapons, to reinforce and further co-ordinate efforts against the illicit trade of these weapons at the national, regional, and global levels. To assess and communicate their level of implementation of the PoA, States are encouraged to submit an annual national report to the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA).

Upon requests for technical assistance from Member States preparing their reports, UNDP, UNDDA and the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) jointly designed and launched a “Capacity Development for Reporting to the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms” project, in close cooperation with the Small Arms Survey (SAS).

Since its launch in 2003, the capacity development project has focused on increasing the number of reporting countries and improving the quality of reports submitted. To that end, the project has developed guidelines and reporting templates to assist States with reporting. A number of countries have received direct assistance to host national and regional workshops.

Aware that the ultimate goal of the joint project is to encourage States to implement the PoA itself, the project partners have used the reporting provisions of the PoA and this project as an entry point to sensitize States and UNDP country offices on the issue of small arms proliferation in regions affected by such a threat. They have been successful in raising awareness among policy-makers of the links between small arms proliferation and other issues, such as justice and security sector reform or transitional recovery. These links proved to be of particular relevance, for instance, in Burundi where the questions of small arms and justice and security reform are very much interlinked.

II. Partnership with civil society organizations

Just as in the field of mine action, CSOs at national and international levels play a decisive role in lobbying for tighter control measures on small arms and light weapons. The UN PoA itself recognizes the contribution of CSOs in the elaboration of this instrument and their role in its implementation. Although governments bear primary responsibility for implementing the PoA, the text clearly and repeatedly calls on them to strengthen their cooperation with civil society¹⁹. In that

¹⁸ Small Arms and Demobilization Unit, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, UNDP Geneva.

¹⁹ For instance, paragraph 16 of the preamble recognizes “the important contribution of civil society, including non-governmental organizations and industry in, inter alia, assisting Governments to prevent, combat and

context, several networks of NGOs have been created over the years at the international and regional levels with a view to better coordinating actions, broadening and strengthening international small arms advocacy and research efforts. The influence and determination of such CSOs have been critical in strengthening the international legal regime that governs the use of small arms at international, regional, and sub-regional levels. For instance, the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) played a key role in raising and unifying CSO voices at the United Nations Conference in New York in July 2001. Forty-six CSOs from gun-affected countries participated in the Conference and its preparatory meetings, which resulted in the adoption of the UN Programme of Action.

The involvement of CSOs in the project is all the more relevant, considering that the issue of small arms can no longer be viewed merely from a disarmament perspective, but should be seen more as a multidimensional challenge with developmental, humanitarian, and environmental aspects. When the capacity development project was launched, NGOs and CSOs were seen as natural partners. In particular, a specialized small arms research institution, the Small Arms Survey (SAS), has been fully part of the project, under the direction of UNDP.

As an implementing partner, SAS is responsible for developing assistance tools, conducting workshops and training, participating in field support missions, and establishing and maintaining support services (help-desk). The project also works closely with other field-based CSOs that support the implementation of the programme, thanks to their extensive knowledge of local culture and their expertise in the field of small arms. These CSOs are also often associated with awareness-raising activities. They also participate in the elaboration of Small Arms Baseline Assessments (SABA), comprehensive studies on the extent and nature of the small arms issue in a given country. For example, in Burundi, after a quick mapping of existing local CSOs, it was agreed that the assessment would be conducted by a local NGO, Ligue Iteka, under the supervision of experts from the Small Arms Survey.

The rationale for such a partnership is both in terms of expertise and resources. As the UNDP Small Arms and Demobilization Unit does not have the necessary resources to be actively and directly involved in many situations worldwide, partnerships with other UN institutions and CSOs are critical to fulfill the objectives of the project. Furthermore, a significant part of the project consists of research-oriented activities, for which UNDP does not have the mandate or the expertise. The partnership with the Small Arms Survey has thus proven very valuable.

At the headquarters level, the partnership consists mostly of research-linked activities. The Small Arms Survey assists UNDP in tasks ranging from analysing reports submitted to the UN to designing assistance material. At the field level, the partnership consists mainly of technical support. SAS participates in workshops and represents the project in the absence of other partners.

Considering the critical role that CSOs play in initiating, promoting and assisting governments in the implementation of tougher control measures, UNDP strongly and consistently encourages Governments to recognize CSOs as full partners in activities on issues relating to small arms at the country level. In particular, UNDP has presented the following arguments in support of the participation of CSOs to convince governments that are still reluctant to engage with them:

eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects". Also, according to paragraph III.2, "States undertake (...) to encourage the establishment and strengthening of cooperation and partnerships at all levels among international and intergovernmental organizations and civil society, including non-governmental organizations and international financial institutions."

- The Programme of Action itself encourages States to strengthen their cooperation with CSOs.
- CSOs support governments and sub-regional organisations in the effective application of arms control measures, as well as in the collection and destruction of small arms and light weapons.
- CSOs can sensitise populations on the problems related to small arms proliferation.
- CSOs can promote national debates on the problems of small arms proliferation.
- CSOs campaign for effective arms control measures, including comprehensive legislation.
- CSOs work towards promoting “a culture of peace” in societies.
- CSOs help governments in practical programmes, such as setting up early warning and rapid response systems on arms proliferation and potential conflicts.
- CSOs support peace education efforts.
- CSOs promote the participation of women and youth in the consolidation of peace and disarmament.

III. Lessons learned

In the field of conflict prevention and peace building, a UNDP-CSO partnership allows for an integrated approach that encompasses all relevant national and local actors and is crucial to promoting national ownership. For example, when developing SABAs, UNDP seeks as much as possible to contract national CSOs in order to ensure the use of local expertise and capacities. By developing their own expertise and working closely with governments, CSOs gain credibility and respectability, thereby becoming reliable partners with governments and the international community in the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Partnership with CSOs is also important for securing the engagement of governments, which may be less likely to feel that the UN is imposing foreign standards and actors if local CSOs are involved.

The partnership with CSOs under the capacity development project has proved to be very successful and valuable, particularly in the field, where local CSOs provide critical information, expertise and networks for the implementation of projects. This is key in crisis countries, where access to information is much more difficult.

However, such partnerships still raise questions, notably in terms of the perception of these organizations by the governments with which UNDP works. Some governments still consider the issue of small arms a sensitive question, closely linked with notions of national security. As a result, some governments may mistrust and ignore CSOs, excluding them from meetings and consultations, and CSOs often carry out activities on their own, thereby duplicating efforts and wasting precious resources.

Prior to engaging in a given country, it is therefore critical for UNDP to assess the level of openness with regard to CSOs in general – for instance through discussion with all relevant partners and information from sources, such as international and regional networks or research institutes engaging with governments on the issue of small arms. Other indicators may help to assess the level of openness and transparency of governments on the issue of small arms. These include: their participation in regional/international meetings, the submission of reports (and their content) to the UN, the number of CSOs dealing with the issue of small arms in the country, and so on. By failing to carry out this initial assessment, UNDP could compromise its chances of engaging with governments. For governments that are reluctant to get involved with CSOs, advocacy is a critical element of the UNDP strategy.

CSOs must also adhere to a number of rules and obligations. Research institutes, in particular, must pay special attention to the type and accuracy of information that will be made public. For example, in a specific case, the Government became reluctant to engage with CSOs after one research institute published information that was later revealed to be inaccurate. Credibility, professionalism and impartiality are absolute prerequisites for CSOs to engage with governments on the issue of small arms.

Competition among NGOs is also an emerging concern, given the growing number of organizations now engaged in combating small arms, at international, regional and local levels. Generous funding of such advocacy efforts has led to a proliferation of organizations engaged in this field and increased competition among them, resulting in some instances in a deterioration of the working environment, an atmosphere of mistrust and lack of communication. One of the first priorities for UNDP is therefore to assess organizations for their reliability and to encourage a minimum level of cooperation among them. In that context, UNDP strongly encourages the creation of national / regional / sub regional networks of CSOs, which have proved to be valuable coordination mechanisms. This is particularly true in Africa, with examples such as the West African Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA), the Eastern African Action Network on Small Arms (EAANSA) and the Kenya Action Network on Small Arms (KANSA).

IV. Conclusion

The second and last phase of the capacity development project is scheduled to end in September 2006, following a review Conference that will take place in July 2006. At this time, no decision has been taken on whether the project will be extended beyond that date. It is possible that a new project will be created to further develop the capacity of States to implement the Programme of Action. If such a project were to be launched, it would also work closely with CSOs active in the issue of small arms, taking into account lessons learned from the current project phase.

“Human rights are key to preventing conflict”

Amanda Romero-Medina has been active in the Colombia human rights movement since the 1970s. A researcher and educator on human rights, Ms. Romero-Medina has focused her work on violence in Colombia as it affects afro-descendants and indigenous peoples, as well as on the rights of internally displaced people. She has been engaged in research and training in social, economic and cultural rights in the southern border areas of Colombia, integrating migration, ethnic rights and internal armed conflict. She is the Andean representative of the American Friends Service Committee in Bogotá.

What do you think are key issues that need to be addressed in prevention?

When we talk about conflict prevention, one key issue that we may miss is human rights. There is a long history of human rights standards established in an international framework, which set down obligations of states to their populations.

What roles do CSOs play in conflict prevention?

CSOs express alternatives and a diverse set of voices and perspectives that represent the different and varied experiences of societies at large. CSOs tend to be dynamic and vigorous in their approach. They can provide positive and creative criticism to their government and effectively exercise their right to oppose certain policies and to propose alternatives. CSOs can identify issues that governments do not always see or want to tackle.

What do you see as key challenges for CSOs?

Civil society organizations face a big challenge: that of raising the voices of those who are the real protagonists in situations of conflict. Very often, people pretend to represent the victims, but in fact speak for them and consider them incapable of resolving their own problems. Particularly as we tackle humanitarian issues, organizations should try to do no harm, when investing or intervening in activities such as reconstruction

of homes or providing food to communities that have been forcibly displaced.

Another challenge is how to coordinate actions between international and national NGOs that address conflict-related issues. An additional issue is how to give women the role they deserve in conflict situations, as women and children are the most affected and vulnerable.

What is the UNDP role in this area?

UNDP has many roles. When we talk about identifying the root causes of conflict in development issues, UNDP has a key role to play, such as providing advisory services to governments operating in situations of crisis or possible crisis, as a result of misguided development policies. However, UNDP still requires training and capacity building from within, to overcome mistakes or the lack of commitment by their staff, which may not be well prepared to respond to conflict. There are several United Nations bodies that overlap when it comes to conflict, so there has to be a real understanding of one's role. If UNHCR, UNICEF or UNIFEM are in a given country when a crisis explodes, the UNDP role relates to development and prevention of conflict – from the perspective of monitoring the situation with key indicators on human rights and other human development standards.

While the United Nations has a broad approach to a given country, UNDP can provide technical advice on development interventions and monitor them. As the coordinator of the United Nations system at the country level, UNDP must play a key role in training UN staff on issues that are often put aside, such as gender, and the needs of different generations such as the youth and the elderly.

What are your experiences with UNDP engagement on conflict prevention issues?

My engagement has been mostly as part of the global CSO Advisory Committee that advises

the UNDP Administrator and senior staff at headquarters in New York. I have been able to share with committee members and UNDP managers the Latin American perspective on human rights and indigenous peoples' issues, as well as to comment on how approaches to trade, the private sector and globalization interrelate from one region to another and how CSOs tackle these issues and help transform them. I believe that we have made useful inputs and we have been heard. My personal and institutional contribution is from the perspective of a faith-based organization.

What is your notion of “partnerships”?

To me, partnership means that civil society organizations should be regarded as equal partners to the governments. While the United Nations is an intergovernmental organization, we also rely on the charter of the United Nations, which begins with “we the peoples of the United Nations.” Civil society organizations are the *raison d'être* of the governments, as civil society elects the governments, and not the other way around. The Millennium Declaration requires more dissemination and strategic reflection. When it comes to the MDGs, our role is to constructively and creatively help our governments and more importantly our societies and in particular the most marginalized and forgotten sectors to be heard in public fora at the international level.

What constitutes a good “partnership” in this area?

A good partnership is not a matter of giving money to civil society organizations to implement programmes that will have a big impact. Sometimes, United Nations bodies tend to think that results require a “big impact” approach, focused on providing funding to several large organizations. However, we sometimes find that small initiatives, not necessarily linked to one another, are better in terms of creating solid experiences and results – as compared to feeding increasingly large NGOs that create bureaucratic and rhetorical apparatuses that do not necessarily respond to concrete demands in the field. A good partnership

includes NGOs and civil society organizations, such as faith based, youth and women's organizations, and many others that share experiences in the field; develop criteria and guidelines together; respect the culture, gender, and the history of the country; do not apply models, or replicate lessons from other settings. Applying lessons from one context to the other is indeed very relative and depends on the historical moment in that country, and the key protagonists and actors present at a given time.

What do you understand as “national ownership”?

No national ownership can be built without local ownership. We first need to understand the dynamics in a particular region, municipality, town or ethnic culture to know whether we are really building national ownership of the kind that people in that country identify for themselves. For instance, in the field of environment, we need to know whether local and indigenous communities are being consulted on issues such as water supply and forestry.

What do you see as key opportunities and challenges for UNDP to engage in partnerships with CSOs in conflict prevention and peace building?

One of the key opportunities for UNDP has to do with the growing strength of women's movements and the rising profile of youth issues. In my region, youth make up the majority and women constitute half of the population of the countries. The other opportunity is that, maybe with a few exceptions, Latin America is undergoing many changes such as more progressive governments, greater involvement of civil society, and a set of constitutional provisions and other international scenarios that are very important. The challenges have to do with how UNDP aligns itself behind a single agenda in a particular country, for example free trade agreements. The Andean free trade agreement tends to neglect and deny the property rights of indigenous peoples and destroy the agricultural strengths of farmers by bringing exports of corn and other crops

to our region. Therefore, the challenge remains how to help the ministries of agriculture in Latin America, particularly in small countries such as Nicaragua or El Salvador, maintain food security for the population, while at the same time supporting development agendas and trade and investment strategies required for the population.

Can you identify issues that tend to be neglected?

When we speak of conflict prevention, key issues such as impunity are not always tackled. While it is easy to speak about the need for peace agreements, it is another matter to think that we should forget the past, be pragmatic and not address impunity. In addition, the issue of land tenure and the redistribution of income in Latin America are increasingly important from a conflict prevention perspective. Although it is more than 20 years since the wars in Central America ended, the welfare of the population has not improved and it is clear that we have a situation in which people have been losing out on possibilities for a better world.

What observations would you like to share on the Global Conference?

My observations deal with the experiences of peaceful resistance to conflict that the Latin American region is currently proposing. While Colombia may deserve more attention, we also want to tackle conflict from a regional perspective because US military interventions are affecting the entire Andean region. We also feel it is a challenge to speak about the current situation in Venezuela. Each country has to choose its own government and development path and no country has the right to intervene militarily, if the Venezuelans maintain their current Government. In addition, the political instability in Bolivia and Ecuador is a real risk for the region, contrary to advancements in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and even in Brazil where ethnic issues are given proper attention. There is growing concern about violence and juvenile delinquents in Central America, particularly as this phenomenon spreads to other parts of the continent. The situation in Haiti is critical in terms of human survival. Lastly, we would like to address openly and publicly issues such as domestic violence as one of the main obstacles to achieving developed societies in our region.

Nepal: Promoting peace at the grassroots

Sharad Neupane, Anil K.C, Thakur Dhakal²⁰

The UNDP Support for Peace and Development Initiatives programme in Nepal has been working on peace building and conflict transformation for the last three years. Its main objective is to work in partnership with civil society organizations (CSOs) to build local capacity for peace. This case study discusses the activities of the programme and provides reflections on the lessons learned and the nature of the partnerships with civil society organizations.

I. Background

Nepal has been experiencing violent socio-political conflict since February 1996. The armed protests initiated by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) on a small scale in the mid-western hills, grew exponentially engulfing the entire country within nine years. Since the Maoist insurgency movement began, more than 12,000 people have lost their lives as a consequence of armed confrontation and many more have been widowed, orphaned and disabled. Security threats have displaced about half a million people. The conflict has affected the lives of many ordinary Nepalese in remote and rural areas and threatened the fragile state of democracy and good governance in the country. There are signs that it is gradually becoming a protracted situation as its scope and dimensions have expanded.

The Government and the Maoists initiated peace negotiations in August 2001 and again in January 2003, raising hopes each time that a lasting peace would be established. However, due to lack of preparedness and trust from both conflicting parties, no agreement was reached. The failure of the two rounds of peace talks led to more violence and destruction in the country. Amidst continuing chaos and political instability, King Gyanendra assumed executive powers, and imposed a state of emergency, which is now lifted. The political crisis and the growing violence by the Maoists have diminished prospects for early peace. The major political parties are on the streets demanding the reinstatement of parliament and restoration of democracy. This has further alienated the King from the major political forces.

In the current situation, ordinary people, especially in remote parts of the country, are caught in a vicious circle of violence, viewed with suspicion by security forces and the rebels. Those who can afford to have left the villages. Many male members of the community mostly youth have migrated to district headquarters, the capital or to India and other countries in the Middle East. The people of Nepal have never before been exposed to such brutal violence and are unprepared for it.

Civil, political and economic life all over the country has suffered drastically, as have development activities. The already poor state of service delivery has further deteriorated. Rebels have destroyed large parts of rural infrastructure (school buildings, health posts, telecommunications towers, Government offices, bridges, water supply schemes and hydro power projects).. The deepening violence and its impact on specific social groups, particularly youth, women and the elderly, has been devastating. There have been serious violations of human rights on both sides and a culture of impunity has been established.

In response to the conflict situation in Nepal, in May 2002, the Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) undertook a comprehensive review of the country programmes from a conflict perspective and proposed six basic strategies. As a follow-up to the BCPR recommendations, there

²⁰ UNDP country office, Nepal

was a repositioning exercise in 2003 and 2004 with a strong focus on social inclusion and social cohesion aimed at mitigating conflict. Service delivery and empowerment through social mobilization, particularly targeting vulnerable groups such as Dalits (oppressed due to social exclusion and the caste system) and ethnic minorities became the focus of UNDP programmes.

II. Rationale for the partnership

In a situation of conflict, civil society organizations (CSOs) can advocate against human rights violations. The civil society sector in Nepal, however, is relatively weak, with few CSOs in operation before 1990. Nevertheless, the democracy movement has created an enabling environment for them. Today, about 120 international CSOs and nearly 30,000 local CSOs are registered with the Social Welfare Council (a Government co-ordinating body for NGOs). Less than 10 per cent of them are in operation, however, working in human rights awareness, adult education, primary health, non-formal education, micro-credit, community-based rural infrastructure works (such as drinking water, irrigation, roads, suspension bridges) and livelihood support.

Some human rights organizations and the Nepalese media play a vital role by raising the issue of human rights violations and conflict sensitive reporting. Over the past few years there has been greater involvement of civil society in peace initiatives. People are voicing their desires for peace through different fora. In addition, there is a tremendous increase in capacity building efforts aimed at CSOs through education and training on peaceful conflict transformation, human rights, good governance, and research on causes and consequences of conflict in Nepal. As a result, issue-based CSOs working on peace and development are gradually emerging. However, much more needs to be done to address the deficit of vibrant CSOs, especially outside the major cities, and widen outreach to the conflict-affected rural population.

Due to the violent conflict, the Government's effective presence in the remote parts of the country is limited. CSOs are the only ones that reach such areas. Furthermore, the United Nations stresses the role of civil society in preventing violent conflict and in building peace from the bottom up. Continuous pressure from informal community groups, organized NGOs, professional associations, trade unions and the media has been quite influential in advocating for human rights and peaceful conflict transformation. In addition, CSOs implement socio-economic activities such as training to develop vocational skills, support for immediate livelihoods and community-based saving-credit services as a part of the peace initiative package.

In 2002, as a result of increasing violence with a severe impact on civilians, particularly women, children and youth, UNDP with financial support from seven bilateral donors (Denmark, Finland, Switzerland, Germany, Norway, Canada and DFID of the United Kingdom) launched Support for Peace and Development Initiatives (SPDI). It seeks to enable Nepali civil society through its community-based organizations and NGOs to participate in the process of peace building. SPDI supports local peace initiatives outside the Kathmandu valley and addresses local needs in conflict prevention and peace building. Overall, it is designed to ensure the active participation of civil society actors in decision-making.²¹

Linkages and networking of community initiatives with district, regional and national advocacy groups have yet to be strengthened to have influence at the national level. However, in three years, SPDI has shown that CSOs in remote conflict-hit areas can be effective vehicles for the message of peace and advocacy and in implementing activities to prevent violence. Successful peace negotiations

²¹ The current initiative has been extended until February 2006. By then, the second phase of the programme is expected to begin.

in the future can be sustained only through full trust and co-operation at the local level. It is only the local people at the grass-roots level who are able to exert pressure on the local cadres of the rebels.

III. Programme innovations

The guiding principles for SPDI are:

- Activities must be initiated and carried out by Nepali CSOs.
- All activities must be transparent and non-political in nature.
- Joint collaboration and cooperation between two or more CSOs are encouraged.
- Flexibility is a key component in the context of a rapidly changing conflict scenario.
- All interventions must respect international human rights standards and be highly sensitive to gender, ethnicity, and culture.

Representatives of civil society organizations are in the decision-making structure. A steering committee comprised of three donor representatives, three civil society members including partner organizations and chaired by UNDP is responsible for strategic and policy related matters. A project review committee with five eminent CSO personalities reviews proposals submitted by CSOs, and identifies appropriate proposals and partner institutions to implement peace interventions. UNDP facilitates and coordinates the initiatives as required. A small project management unit has been established to carry out day-to-day management and oversight functions.

For the convenience of local CSOs the proposals are accepted in the Nepali language. SPDI partners decide on the nature and type of intervention that is most feasible and relevant to the area they work. Partner CSOs have established their networking forum to share and learn from their experiences.

Unlike other UNDP programmes executed by Government entities, SPDI is directly executed by UNDP with Government consensus. It is able to reach the worst-hit areas, as rebels resist activities implemented by Government entities. CSO partners, under the UN umbrella, are implementing field-level activities.

SPDI has so far provided funding to 88 CSOs and supported innovative local initiatives that address the causes and consequences of social unrest and violence. At their core, the initiatives sought to mobilize the community and build local capacity for peace and conflict transformation and socio-economic rehabilitation of direct conflict victims. The initiatives were implemented in 39 districts, with strong presence in mid- and far-western Nepal, two highly conflict-affected regions.

SPDI has played a key role in connecting grassroots-level organizations with district, regional, national and bilateral organizations. As a result, SPDI partners have extended their peace networks and are free to modify their interventions according to dynamics of conflict.

For example, SPDI partners together with other CSOs and CBOs in Dang district – a highly conflict-affected district in the mid-western region – convened a public demonstration with peace rallies to urge conflicting parties to end the violence and settle the problem peacefully. The demonstration was one of the largest ever seen in the region. Likewise, in the Bardiya district, CSOs and CBOs came together to denounce the rebels' policy towards CSOs and announced their own principles and guidelines for working in the districts and villages.

SPDI has found the partnerships to be very useful in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of working with CSOs, particularly those based in remote districts. A recent capacity assessment audit of the partner CSOs has identified areas that need support and improvement. As most of the CSOs are relatively new, there is a need to build capacity in financial management, human resource management and improved organizational culture for enhancing transparency, accountability and

participatory approaches in their decision-making process. For their part, many CSO partners feel empowered working with UNDP and would like to continue the partnership as it has provided them confidence and a sense of immunity from the conflicting parties.

IV. Main achievements to date

UNDP/SPDI has succeeded in implementing the delivery of development assistance to areas highly affected by violent conflict through partnerships with CSOs in remote rural areas. CSOs have addressed the impact of conflict, strengthened dialogue and interaction and helped to promote a culture of peace, human rights and non-violence.

The CSOs have benefited from the partnership through financial support for their initiatives on human rights awareness and education, peace campaigns, rehabilitation of victims and internally displaced people. They have grown in confidence and capacity as they worked in conflict transformation and shared their learning with other CSOs. Professional training on conflict transformation, human rights and institutional development helped to improve their visibility and credibility as professional, impartial actors creating spaces for democratic dialogue and peace building.

CSOs seek UNDP cooperation and strategic advice on issues of conflict transformation and peace building and view UNDP as a trusted partner.

Some key achievements can be summed up as follows:

- SPDI has catalyzed the formation of forums for peace. These forums are organizing collective peace campaigns, and advocating for protection of human rights. Strong forums have emerged in particularly conflict-hit districts like Dang, Bardiya, Banke, Bajura and Kalikot.
- Advocacy for human rights has increased, even without funding support. There are several success cases of local level mediation to free abducted or extra judicially imprisoned persons. Likewise, there are also several cases of successful mediation to return internally displaced people back to their own homes as in Jumla and Banke.
- When most projects of the Government and other development organizations were being withdrawn from conflict-hit districts, SPDI decided to introduce a micro-development project through local CSOs. Once the SPDI partners started working in these districts, many external development agencies came in.
- CSOs are emerging as credible mediators to negotiate on various local issues.
- Horizontal and vertical partnerships have been established among different civil society groups.
- There is joint advocacy, collective campaigning and resistance to conflicting parties.
- SPDI partners have developed a common code of conduct for CSOs working on conflict.
- Partners have benefited from learning and sharing opportunities and they are better prepared to deal with the situation.
- The programme has strengthened the capacity of some 800 community-based organizations, benefiting 26,530 households.
- The capacity of 88 CSOs to address conflict transformation and peace building has increased.

- Some 1,500 affected children received fellowship for schooling and 1,900 direct victims of armed conflict gained skills and initiated micro-enterprises.
- A total of 4,176 community people have received training on human rights, peace and conflict transformation.
- Some 7,000 local people and community leaders participated in various interaction programmes on human rights and conflict transformation.

V. Assessment of lessons learned

- CSOs can act as alternative channels of communication among and between the conflicting parties even at the time of violent conflict.
- Community-owned peace initiatives are possible even in areas severely affected by the conflict.
- Conflict victims and ex-rebels can contribute positively to the peace building process.
- As a large number of local CSOs are emerging in every district, it is important to assess their experience, capacity, accountability and reputation in the community before establishing a partnership with them.
- CSOs and CBOs without political affiliation are readily accepted by conflicting parties and are therefore instrumental in creating space for development work. The greater their neutrality, transparency and accountability, the more successful they are in implementing activities.
- CSOs are more confident implementing programmes in partnership with the United Nations system and are willing to continue to work with the United Nations as it is perceived as an impartial institution by both conflicting parties.
- Local CSOs are more successful in identifying local causes and consequences of conflict and more efficient in addressing these issues with full ownership and greater accountability. However, their capacity in human resources and financial management is very limited. CSOs working in remote areas lack organizational and management capacity and need further support.
- Media and human rights groups have easier access in conflict zones. Because of their special skills, they can better defend themselves, negotiate and mediate with rebels and security forces. Conflicting parties also need help from civil society groups to promote their agenda and publicize the atrocities of their rivals.
- Though the local CSOs to a certain extent are able to address the root causes of conflict and contribute to peace building at the local level, it is still difficult to link their work at the national level and show impact at the national level.
- Good partnership is constituted of working together to build trust and confidence. Equitable partnership between donors and recipients helped to build trust.
- CSOs often face harassment from both parties to the conflict. Those with in-depth knowledge on human rights and legal issues are more effective in defending themselves and in continuing to work in conflict zones.

- Peace building and conflict transformation work takes time. A long-term vision and commitment is necessary.
- As SPDI has forged partnerships with CSOs to be able to work in difficult conflict situations, this should be further nurtured through simplified operating guidelines, promoting democratic values with such groups including improvement in organizational and management culture.

Ukraine: Peace and stability through human security

Basant Kumar Subba²² and Oksana Leschenko²³

In the late 1980s, an influx of a large number of formerly deported people and their descendants into Crimea led to social, economic, and political tensions with the prospect of conflict. In 1995, at the request of the Government of Ukraine, UNDP established the Crimea Integration and Development Programme to facilitate their reintegration with the goal of maintaining peace and stability in the region. This case study discusses the development of the programme, now in its third phase, and its achievements.

I. Background

The Crimean Tartars, along with other ethnic groups including Bulgarians, Armenians, Greeks and Germans, were forcibly deported from their homeland to various republics of the former USSR in 1944 for alleged collaboration with Nazi Germany. Since the late 1980s, more than 260,000 of the Formerly Deported Peoples (FDPs) and their descendants, mainly Crimean Tartars, have returned to Crimea and now constitute over 12% of the population of the peninsula. The influx of such a large number of people, coupled with the difficulties arising out of a multiple (political, social and economic) transition²⁴ has strained the economy and existing social and communal services. The exclusion of the general population from the decision-making processes has also proven to be an area of great contention, which has increased tensions between organs of power and formerly deported peoples, especially Crimean Tartars.

Crimea lags behind other regions of Ukraine in economic performance. It also faces the enormous challenges of reintegration and resettlement of FDPs. In the absence of a national repatriation plan and adequate budgetary funding, Crimea had been left almost entirely on its own, barring some support from multilateral and bilateral donors, to cope with the large influx of people into its territory. The resettlement has taken place in a very ad hoc and spontaneous manner, resulting in the emergence of compact settlements of FDPs in areas unfit for residential purposes. In addition, the absence of communal and other basic infrastructure, such as roads, water, electricity and gas, and great distances separating social services from users cause immense hardships for FDPs, not to mention an acute housing problem. Savings have been usurped by the hyperinflation of 1991-92 resulting in the inability to finish construction of houses. Many still live in hostels, basements and rooms with no heating or gas supply. Deplorable living conditions compounded by harsh winters have led to an increase in sicknesses, especially respiratory diseases and tuberculosis among FDPs, children and the elderly in particular.

The socio-economic conditions of FDPs are much worse than those of the rest of the Crimean population, with major disagreements over the distribution of resources, especially land. With a mass media whose loyalty lies with specific interest groups, consensus building is a challenge. In this situation, the potential for conflict remains high as long as persisting problems of poverty and unemployment, poor social services, lack of infrastructure, differing levels of development between regions (South Coast versus Steppe) and unequal access to opportunities (between FDPs and non-FDPs, urban and rural populations, etc.) are not addressed or if people feel that these issues are not being dealt with.

²² Crimea Integration and Development Programme.

²³ UNDP country office, Ukraine

²⁴ Multiple transition process refers to the political, social and economic transformation of Ukraine from 1999-1994. Hyperinflation in 1991-92 caused huge economic damage to individuals.

II. Evolution of the programme

The UNDP Crimea Integration and Development Programme (CIDP) has been facilitating the process of resettlement of the FDPs. Its main objective is to prevent conflict and maintain peace and stability by supporting socio-economic development, integration and self-reliance in communities with a high proportion of FDPs. UNDP has implemented CIDP in incremental stages.

Phase I of the programme (June 1995-June 1998) was implemented in two pilot rayons (districts). The programme focused on improving social and communal infrastructures in compact settlements of the FDPs. During Phase II (June 1998-mid 2001) CIDP expanded its activities to four administrative rayons and continued to improve social and communal infrastructures in the settlements. In addition, it carried out various activities for capacity building of local government and empowerment of youth and women. For example, the programme supported Bakhchisarai and Belogorsk regional administrations to build capacity on strategic and decentralized planning. As a result, these two pilot regional administrations established planning units in economic departments. The programme also supported two youth organizations “We” and “Arslan”, in the Belogorsk and Bakhchisarai regions respectively. These youth organizations conduct various trainings for young people on democratization processes, and organize various cultural activities in partnership with local authorities.

In Phase III (2001-2004), CIDP expanded its activities to 10 out of 14 rayons of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. The programme moved from a target-oriented to an area-based, holistic and inclusive development approach. The area-based development approach allows wider participation of all stakeholders (Government, educational and cultural institutions and communities) in conflict prevention and peace building processes. The programme identified five major areas of interventions: (i) human security and sustainable development (early warning and preventive measures), (ii) tolerance and social cohesion promotion through education and culture, (iii) good governance and community development, (iv) economic development and income and employment generation, and (v) sustainable access to basic infrastructure and services.

The programme thus went through a process of evolution, adapting to the changing situation. The concepts of human security and sustainable development are applied as a means of providing input to policy and decision-making processes that would maintain peace and stability. The Governments of Canada, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, Sweden, Greece, Norway, and the Netherlands have been contributing to conflict prevention and peace building processes through this programme.

III. The Area-based approach

The CIDP area-based approach is about targeting a specific geographical area in an integrated, inclusive, participatory and flexible manner. The complex situation and set of development challenges in Crimea would be difficult to address through sector-specific or target-group-specific interventions. The CIDP comprehensive approach of strategic interventions seeks to foster sustainable development with the intention of preventing conflict and building peace and stability.

This approach is people-centred, working with and establishing linkages between people and places (villages, towns and cities that are connected through administrative, political and economic functions) on addressing shared needs and priorities and tapping opportunities. Fully taking into account the complex interplay of all actors (such as the Government, community organizations, youths and women NGOs, entrepreneurs and school communities) has resulted in a bottom-up and participatory approach.

The programme has set up horizontal linkages between peers and vertical linkages between different levels of planning and decision-making, through networks of partnerships and support institutions at

all levels, to feed into policy and institutional reform at the national level. Throughout, the programme adopted a flexible and responsive approach in relation to changing realities to maximize relevance.

The development objective is fully in line with the policies and strategies of both the Government of Ukraine and the Government of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. There is also congruence with the overall mandate of UNDP, which is to support sustainable human development in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and endorsed by the Government of Ukraine. The UNDP Executive Board has also identified conflict prevention and peace building as part of its corporate core results and practice areas.

IV. Partnerships and activities

CIDP underwent three stages in its evolution. The first stage of CIDP intervention was addressing the emergency needs of the returnees, in order to prevent possible instigation of conflict in the mid-1990s. CIDP worked with the Government and representatives of FDPs to address basic social and communal infrastructure needs in the settlements. For example, it constructed the Crimean Tartar school, healthcare centre and water supply system in the Kamenka settlement, one of the largest Crimean Tartar settlements, in the sub-urban area of Simferopol City. The school and water supply systems were constructed in partnership with the Government (republican and local) and the health care centre, in partnership with a local CSO.

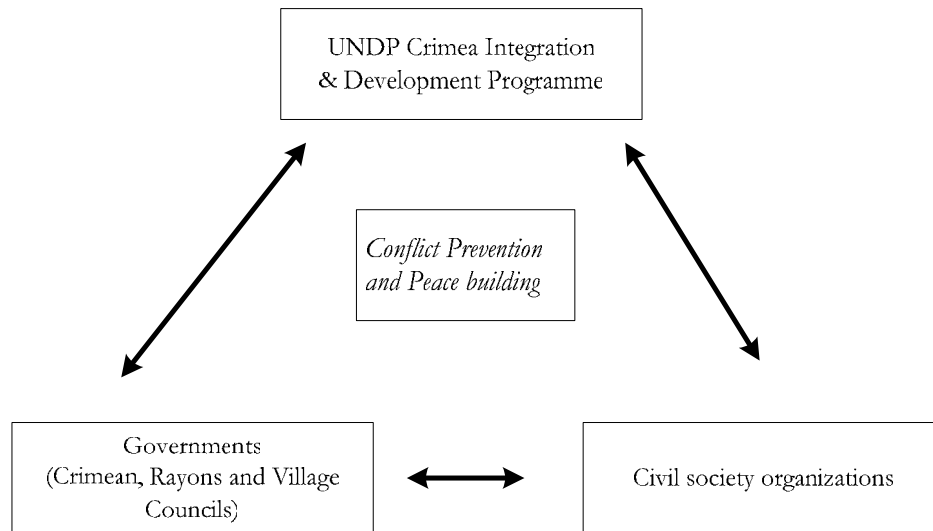
The second stage of CIDP support was focused on improving living conditions in targeted FDP settlements in sub-urban areas, which have a large number of FDPs and virtually no infrastructure. Such living conditions reflected a huge disparity between FDP and non-FDP residential areas²⁵. The programme created and supported a number of youth and women's organizations, as well as business centres registered as CSOs. These organizations worked with UNDP/CIDP in order to implement various activities. At the same time, the programme worked with the Government on social and communal infrastructure projects and established linkages of community priorities with Government plans. During this stage, CSOs were the main partners of CIDP.

During its third phase, CIDP became more people-centered and focused on creating an environment that encourages communities to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives. Residents were encouraged to form self-help community organizations, where different ethnic groups can share problems and prepare their own development plans. Such plans are linked with those of the village and regional councils, through the Regional Forum for Integration and Development (RFID) established in the rayons.

During the last three years, CIDP facilitated the formation of more than 355 community organizations in 158 villages, 75 school parents' committees and seven business promotion centres in rural areas of ARC. In other words, UNDP/CIDP supported the development of these civil society organizations in the target communities. Consequently, CIDP established partnerships with them, in order to implement various activities aimed at preventing conflict and building peace. The programme also facilitates partnership between CSO communities and local governments in order to decrease potential tension since, in most cases, conflict escalates due to misunderstanding and distrust between the authorities and communities. This model of partnership (see Figure 1) therefore seeks to enhance mutual understanding and trust among the key actors.

²⁵ These shifts were dictated by the situation and priority needs of the population. They do not reflect recommendations that emerged from any evaluation.

Figure 1: CIDP Model of Partnership



V. Human security

CIDP has been undertaking numerous activities to promote integration and development in Crimea, including those in support of social and economic development, good governance, community self-help initiatives, basic infrastructure and services, and a human security monitoring system. These activities are implemented in a crosscutting manner to strengthen integration and address specific issues of human security. As such, they fit into the broader context of the human security conceptual framework.

The UNDP *1994 Human Development Report* captured the essence of human security: “The concept of security has for too long been interpreted narrowly: as security of territory from external aggression, or as protection of national interest in foreign policy or as global security from the threat of a nuclear holocaust. It has been related more to nation-states than to people... Forgotten were the legitimate concerns of ordinary people who sought security in their daily lives. For many of them, security symbolized protection from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression and environmental hazards.”

The concept of human security within the CIDP framework is therefore a response to protection from disease, hunger, unemployment, social conflict and exclusion in a decision-making process. Human security and sustainable development can be interpreted as an outcome of empowerment of people, the promotion of tolerance, the improvement of living conditions and the creation of employment and income opportunities. In other words, improved human security reduces the scope for conflict and creates an environment of peace and stability.

To this end, the UNDP/CIDP, in partnership with the Government of Autonomous Republic of Crimea, facilitated the establishment of the Human Security and Development Council (HSDC) as a consultative and advisory body at the Council of Ministers of the ARC with the objective of promoting the concept of human security and sustainable development as a policy priority in Crimea. The Council, chaired by the First Deputy Prime Minister, is composed of representatives of key ministries and Ukraine, Verkhovna Rada of ARC, Medjlis, Association of Interethnic Organizations, Association of Academia, UNDP and CIDP. Its main functions are to (i) monitor social and economic development and levels of human security; and (ii) develop policy recommendations in the

areas of special concern and advocate for their implementation at different levels of the Government. In addition, HSDC determines priority areas of research and indicators of human security and development.

To help HSDC to achieve its objectives, an analytical group and a research body have been formed within CIDP. The analytical group conducts regular research and produces independent reports, which are discussed by HSDC, prior to publication and dissemination. As recommended by HSDC, the socio-economic, political and interethnic situation is being monitored. In addition, there is a regular monitoring of the mass media (newspapers and electronic media) to identify major problems related to human security in ARC, which are not directly linked to sectoral issues (such as socio-economic, political and interethnic). The group conducts public opinion polls to gauge the views of citizens on policies and strategies of the Government. A human security and development monitoring system analyses the trends in human security, to help policymakers and civil society take the necessary measures to prevent possible conflict in the peninsula.

VI. Conflict prevention and peace building in action

To address the root causes of conflict, UNDP/CIDP encourages citizens of different ethnic backgrounds to organize themselves on principles of inclusion, participation and consensus-based decision-making. Central to these organizations are community mobilization and empowerment to promote social cohesion and participatory decision-making mechanisms at the grassroots level. . Hundreds of people of different ethnic backgrounds have become members of these organizations. They identify their priority needs and develop their own visions and plans for improvement of their livelihood.

The community organizations, in partnership with local government and UNDP/CIDP, have set up 156 community-based social and communal projects such as healthcare and childcare centres, water supply systems, roads, youth centres and children's playgrounds. These projects have not only improved the access of communities to social and communal services but also made different ethnic groups more socially cohesive. Communities operate and manage the services in partnership with local authorities, thereby empowering them to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives.

In the same way, the school parents' committees have implemented more than 26 projects that include computer classes, computer-based multi-cultural museums in rural schools, and repair of school conference halls in order to perform multicultural activities. In addition, through a network of schools, cultural centres and NGOs, UNDP/CIDP organizes various multi-cultural activities at rayon/district level, in order to enhance understanding and respect of different traditions and cultures. The initiatives carried out in schools and through the network have promoted tolerance and improved the quality of education in rural schools.

The business promotion centres formed in rural rayons lobby for and defend the interests of the business communities and provide various services that promote entrepreneurship. More than 1000 entrepreneurs have become members of the centres , which have been able to provide services to more than 13,000 people. As a result of strong partnerships with local authorities, "one stop shops" have been established to simplify business registration and issuance of permits for operation of a business. The BPCs are also represented in the Coordination Committee for Entrepreneurship Development formed under the chairmanship of Regional Administrations. These initiatives have created an environment conducive to the development of small and medium enterprises, which create income and employment opportunities for formerly deported people as well as other citizens, thereby reducing social and economic tension and maintaining peace and stability.

VII. Summary of achievements

The major achievements of UNDP/CIDP during the last three years can be summarized as follows:

- The Crimea Human Security and Development Report published by UNDP/CIDP is used as a reference document in discussions on various policy related issues. The report has played a vital role in making policy-makers aware of the issues that could escalate conflict if they were not addressed in time.
- More than 150,000 people (43 per cent FDPs and 57% non-FDPs) have benefited from programme activities.
- About 75 school parents' committees have been formed with more than 6000 parents of different ethnic groups of Crimea. The committees together with school administrations have prepared school development plans, including tolerance promotion initiatives and implemented 26 projects. More than 6,000 parents and 3,000 students actively participated in the projects and activities that contribute to the increase of tolerance and intercultural understanding among different ethnic groups. Working together in the projects, the parents not only enhanced social interaction and cohesion but also drew a road map for the peaceful coexistence of their children.
- The participation of school parents' committees in decision-making processes improved the partnership between them and local authorities. It enhanced transparent solutions to the most burning social problems in the educational sphere that, in turn, have contributed to the prevention of social conflicts growing into interethnic ones. As a result, the deputies of the rayon councils have decided to allocate a budget for funding the tolerance-related projects and activities of the school communities.
- A total of 355 community organizations have been formed in 158 villages and settlements of Crimea, with 67,416 people of different nationalities (Crimean Tartars, Russians, Ukrainians, etc) as members. They have established community development funds through monthly membership fees. These funds are mainly used for social help (emergency needs such as medicine) to members. The community organizations have created an environment for all ethnic groups to be united towards solving common social, communal and economic problems. They have improved the relationship and understanding of different nationalities and consequently reduced distrust and built peace and friendship in neighbourhoods.
- The community organizations have developed and implemented more than 156 community-based projects to improve their living conditions. The implementation of these projects has given all ethnic groups access to social and communal services and has reduced social tension between returnees (formerly deported people) and local people (Russians and Ukrainians).
- The community organizations have mobilized local resources from the community and local authorities amounting to more than \$892,000 USD to implement community development plans. Moreover, RFID became a platform for dialogue with local authorities and promoted participatory planning at rayon level. Consequently, the rayon administration participating in the programme has started to provide budget support for the community plans.
- The community organizations in partnership with local authorities have operated and managed projects of social communal infrastructures, demonstrating that decentralization of public services ensures sustainability.

- Business communities managed to lobby in local governments and establish “one stop shops” to simplify business registration and operation processes. The ministry of economy has accepted this concept and the Parliament of ARC approved a budget to establish “one stop shops” in all rayons.

VIII. Lessons learned

- The lack of human security (threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression and environmental hazards) leads to the escalation of conflict. The political and economic transition in Ukraine is another major factor of instability and a threat to the maintenance of peace and stability in Crimea. In this context, the Human Security and Development Council played an important role for policy input to the ARC Government based on a system of human security monitoring and information. However, due to diverse representation in the council, it can be time consuming to get consensus on the human security and development reports, which covers sensitive issues such as interethnic relations, political analysis, and economic development. Objective judgment of the dynamics takes much longer than the three months initially assumed. It is more reasonable to produce the report every six months.
- The promotion of tolerance through schools has proven effective and efficient if a school administration creates an environment that allows the participation of parents in decision-making processes that affect the future of their children. Therefore, tolerance promotion activities should be implemented together with social cohesion activities, to allow parents and children of different ethnic groups to work together.
- The social and community mobilization process has been found to be an effective tool for building a democratic, participatory and transparent decision-making mechanism at the community level. Consequently, it united the people of different ethnic groups to solve their common problems and, in turn, has improved understanding and respect among the ethnic groups. However, initially, local leaders and governments have perceived the social mobilization as a threat to their authority. Therefore, it is necessary to make the concept and strategy of the programme clear to all partners prior to its implementation on the ground.
- The most important lesson learned from the Crimea Integration and Development Programme is linked to the need to enable a flexible response in the program design, depending on the situation; the programme should work on an area-based, participatory, bottom-up, demand driven basis, and most importantly, be inclusive concerning concepts and approaches; the programme should encourage all key actors to participate in conflict prevention and peace-building initiatives through partnership mechanisms.

IX. Next steps

Conflict prevention and peace building is a continuous process. Sustainable peace can only be achieved through a collective effort between the Government and CSOs. UNDP/CIDP has ensured peace and human security by strengthening partnership between the Government and CSOs at the grassroots level. In order to achieve this objective more broadly, UNDP/CIDP is planning to organize workshops, seminars and roundtables to bring grassroots experiences on conflict prevention and peace building, through social mobilization, to a wider CSO audience and representatives of all levels of government. The aim of this effort is to formulate a strategy and policy that would be internalized by the government structure. Finally, the CIDP experience will be shared with the international community, including the United Nations.

“Address the structural causes of conflict”

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz is the Executive Director of the Tebtebba Foundation, an Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research, Advocacy and Education, in the Philippines. Ms. Tauli-Corpuz is chairperson of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations and a member of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. She is also Chairperson of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

What are the key issues that need to be addressed in conflict prevention?

We need to look into the structural causes of conflict. Conflict is like a disease – for you to be able to cure the disease, you have to focus on the root causes, it is important to look into situations of inequality, discrimination and marginalization, as well as into tensions that have been created because of misguided government policies.

What role do CSOs play?

I think that CSOs play a very important role because they understand conflict, especially if they are based in the communities. They live through it and are well placed to address the issues. Of course, there are differences, as some civil society organizations are based in the country, and others are from outside. There should be a differentiation of the roles of CSOs, depending on where they come from. For instance, external CSOs need to be sensitive to the particularities of the situation in order to do no harm. We have to realize that CSOs can in fact reinforce or heighten conflict. In addition, international NGOs must support the role of local CSOs and share ideas and experiences from other settings, as some lessons may be useful for civil society at the community level. International CSOs can also help mediate issues surrounding conflict, by setting up an infrastructure for dialogue to take place. Local CSOs sometimes become so immersed in the conflict that they may not see and consider other aspects for resolution. In addition, if local CSOs have links with

protagonists in the conflict, they can help bridge that gap.

What is the UNDP role in this area?

As an inter-governmental organization with close links with governments, UNDP has a key bridging role to play, in particular with civil society. Of course, as a development agency, UNDP can look into the structural causes of conflict; these are usually related to “mal-development”, resulting in the imposition of development projects destructive to or further marginalizing communities. In particular, UNDP has a role in examining the impact of development projects on communities, especially on indigenous peoples. UNDP can help assess the adverse impact of such projects, look into government and international policies that support and reinforce this kind of development, be a critical voice, and allow communities to represent their views. Unfortunately, that is not a role that UN agencies (including UNDP) or NGOs play very much or very well, as it involves being tough in dealing with governments and international donor agencies. These are however issues that UNDP should confront head-on, especially if it wants to play a bigger role in conflict resolution.

What have been your experiences with UNDP?

At an international level, in view of my involvement with the CSO Advisory Committee, I have worked with UNDP to develop a policy of engagement with indigenous peoples. We developed case studies on conflict in different countries and UNDP helped to support the international conference that we (Tebtebba) held on conflict resolution and indigenous peoples. Unfortunately, I do not have that much experience with UNDP at the national level, except in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (Bangladesh) where UNDP was considering a development project, which is in the territory

of the indigenous peoples there. Our partners, the indigenous peoples in that region, felt that they had not been consulted in the development of the project. I was part of a UNDP stocktaking mission, which was organized to talk to the country office, the Government of Bangladesh and the Hill Tracts people, to bring them together. This worked very well because they were able to discuss arrangements that allowed the involvement of indigenous peoples' organizations.

What is your notion of partnerships?

A partnership is a relationship between two or several entities. This relationship is based on principles of trust and an understanding that we have different expertise in different areas and different constituencies. When you enter into a partnership, the relationship should be one in which the objectives of each partner are met. You cannot just enter into a partnership to go through the motions. Of course, a good partnership must be open, frank and, above all, not be ridden with hidden agendas. It also means understanding the real nature of the work and the constituency we are working with.

What constitutes a good partnership in conflict prevention?

If we enter into a partnership with UNDP, for example, we have to understand very well how the UNDP system works, to establish realistic expectations. From a UNDP perspective, it will be important to understand the situation in which civil society organizations operate – so that if it is asked to facilitate a dialogue with the government, it will not just be siding with the government. Our experience is usually that UNDP is so worried that the Government will consider them “persona non grata,” that they don't often represent the views of people who are not necessarily friendly with the government.

As conflict remains a sensitive issue, governments feel very protective of their own situation, in particular from what they see as interference into their internal affairs and the undermining of national sovereignty. The

issue of national sovereignty affects United Nations agencies, but also indigenous peoples, as they are not necessarily found within the borders of nation states. However, if agencies primarily work within a national framework, what kind of relationship can be established with indigenous peoples such as those spread across Myanmar, Thailand, Bangladesh and India? If you work within a national framework, and your framework cannot accommodate a particular situation, we must find new ways to do so.

How do you understand “national ownership”?

Ownership takes place when constituents feel they are part of a process and are not being brought in as tokens. Constituents should be involved from the very beginning, when a concept is being designed, to the implementation and monitoring of that project. Maybe we can talk about “ownership” because indigenous peoples are not always necessarily caught in a national framework; it can be a very local framework, and it can also refer to transnational issues. We know that issues that influence conflict are global policies and decisions, and if you want to deal with the issues in a more holistic framework, you need to engage at all these levels.

What are the key opportunities and challenges for UNDP and CSOs?

UNDP has the advantage of good relationships with governments, a presence worldwide and its role as coordinator of UN bodies in each country. UNDP is also involved in development with local communities, including in conflict-prone and affected areas, so that its experience with conflict prevention and resolution is also something that can be built upon. The challenges lie in how UNDP understands the situation in conflict areas and involves local people themselves.

Sometimes, UNDP involves people only at the national level or brings in consultants without real knowledge of the situation at hand. UNDP sometimes also facilitates the

entry of international NGOs, so called experts on conflict. There needs to be some rethinking in terms of bringing in actors in the field of conflict resolution, in particular in view of the sensitivity and the risks for communities. I would like to see more in-depth dialogue between UNDP, the people affected by conflict and NGOs involved, to agree on roles and discuss what it takes to play these roles well.

Can you identify issues that tend to be neglected?

What tend to be neglected are the structural causes of conflict. While peace agreements are important, when they do not deal with the real issues, violence will return. How do you deal with structural causes, for instance, policies that are very negative or adverse for indigenous peoples? Which government frameworks need to be changed? What are the roles of international organizations to ensure that the projects they fund do not harm communities? These issues are not looked at because a crisis-oriented approach is adopted in situations of emergency.

The other issue is the reconstruction that takes place in keeping with the peace agreements. How do you ensure that the agreements are implemented? Linked to this is the inclusion of the real actors in peace negotiations. Usually, those in the negotiations are the armed groups, but not indigenous peoples. It is imperative to involve other parties in negotiating panels, even if they are not part of the armed group, especially if they are going to be

directly affected by the issues being addressed. In the ongoing peace negotiations between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front , the indigenous peoples in Mindanao (Lumad peoples) are not involved even though the land negotiations directly affect them. If they are not included, there is danger of more serious conflicts in the future.

A similar problem arose during the Peace Negotiations between the Government of Guatemala and Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity Party . The indigenous peoples were not involved from the start and it was only after persistent efforts on their part that they were included and an agreement covering indigenous peoples emerged. UNDP can play a role in ensuring that all concerned parties are included in peace processes. The lessons from these experiences should be used to influence ongoing and future conflict resolution and prevention.

What observations would you like to share on the Global Conference?

There always are and will be many conferences, and people will attend them, speak and feel good afterwards. It is in the follow through and the development of solid recommendations that conferences sometimes fail. The reason may be that they do not bring together people who are involved in solid work on the ground. Any global conference should be able to look at the global level, talk to NGOs as well as critically assess what they need to be able to make a difference on the ground.

Cyprus: Civil society partnerships in a challenging context

Marina Vasilara²⁶

This case study describes a Bi-communal Development Programme's partnership with the Mediation Association, a Turkish Cypriot civil society organization. Since 1998, UNDP in Cyprus has been promoting peaceful relations and communication between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities. The programme has strengthened Cypriot civil society and promoted democratic dialogue. The case study describes the ways in which the Mediation Association was able to overcome its challenges with the help of the programme's funding and organizational support. It discusses the contributions of the Mediation Association to the Turkish Cypriot community and lessons learned from this civil society partnership.

I. Background

Since its inception in 1998, the Bi-communal Development Programme²⁷ has invested nearly \$70 million in Cyprus. These resources have been used to restore historical treasures, support the rich arts and cultural heritage of the island, foster civil society development, strengthen infrastructure, protect the island's unique ecosystems and support agricultural growth. All of these efforts have been directed at promoting opportunities for constructive interaction and dialogue across the Green Line²⁸ so that the two communities can work together and plan for a common future.

The Bi-communal Development Programme fulfills its role by identifying issues of common interest for both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots and encouraging the two communities to work together on projects addressing those issues. Since the launch of its initial projects, the programme has evolved into a multi-disciplinary initiative that has funded over 180 projects mainly in the areas of civil society strengthening, cultural heritage preservation, environment and agriculture, health and education, peace-building, and mediation and social advocacy. The Bi-communal Development Programme has used three different grant mechanisms to fulfill its mandate: intermediary grants²⁹, project grants³⁰, and special initiative grants for ad-hoc activities. The goal is to create the necessary conditions for a peace settlement.

To achieve this, the programme has encouraged a number of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot CSOs to work together on locally owned projects in areas of mutual concern. Such cooperation has in turn led to other partnerships. The partnership with the (North Cyprus) Mediation Association in the Turkish Cypriot community emerged from one of these community-based projects. This partnership is an example of how the programme has sought to address the immediate needs in civil society and serve as a link to the broader goal of developing the capacities and skills necessary to implement an eventual political agreement. The United Nations Secretary-General's plan for a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem, known as the "Annan Plan"³¹, included the

²⁶ UNDP/UNOPS Bi-communal Development Programme in Cyprus. Assistance was provided by Ece Ackaoglu and Khalida V. Hassan, UNDP CO Cyprus. The author would like to thank Ali Yaman, Turkish Cypriot Mediation Association.

²⁷The Bi-Communal Development Programme is currently being finalized for a new three-year phase.

²⁸The Green Line separates the Northern Turkish Cypriot and Southern Greek Cypriot parts of the island.

²⁹Intermediary grants were used to support umbrella organizations or CSOs who in turn would provide assistance to other organizations.

³⁰Project grants were used to support bi-communal initiatives between Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot CSOs in all areas, including cultural heritage promotion, environmental awareness, health related issues including HIV/AIDS and drug abuse, as well as other youth based initiatives.

³¹The fifth version of the Annan Plan was placed before the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities in simultaneous referenda on April 24th, 2004. The Greek Cypriot community rejected the plan with a 75 per cent vote against it. The Turkish Cypriot community accepted the plan with a 65 per cent favourable vote. Without approval from both communities, however, implementation of the plan was not possible.

establishment of a reconciliation commission that was to be supported by information provided by the Mediation Association.

The Mediation Association remains the only organization of its kind in the Turkish Cypriot community providing mediation training and services to the public through an established office. This case study describes the Mediation Association's strategy in confronting and overcoming the challenges it faces as a CSO in Cyprus and its partnership with the Bi-communal Development Programme.

II. Building bridges

Bi-communal cooperation has always been a challenge in the politically volatile environment of Cyprus, an island divided for over 30 years, with its two major communities physically separated from each other from 1974 until the opening of the checkpoints in April 2003. At the time of its initiation, the partnership between the Bi-communal Development Programme and the Mediation Association suffered both logistical and political barriers to collaboration. The logistical problems included restrictions imposed by Turkish Cypriot authorities on the movement of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots across the Green Line that divides the island. While UNDP facilitated a number of meetings, there was little possibility of continuous exchange or collaboration between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. In addition, some public authorities mistrusted the CSOs involved in the region.

This scenario presented continuous challenges to the Mediation Association and other CSOs seeking to work on issues of common concern with partners from the other communities. However, experience showed that where bi-communal contact was limited, intra-communal capacity-building processes (in this case, within the Turkish Cypriot community) made an important contribution, since the same dialogue skills could be applied to future mediation or negotiation efforts between the two communities. There was little tradition of mediation on the island to start with in the late 1990s, and the Mediation Association sought to introduce it at a basic social level to allow each community to develop a practice of communication and compromise. Together, the Mediation Association and the Bi-communal Development Programme promoted the notion of peaceful conflict resolution throughout the island, beginning from minor intra-communal problems and working towards solutions to larger bi-communal problems. Building skills in communication, through mediation, is seen as a fundamental prerequisite in establishing dialogue not only between the two communities, but also within each community.

III. Key elements of the partnership

The rationale for the Mediation Association partnership, which began in 2000, stemmed from the political setting, its mandate, and its compatibility with the interests of the Bi-communal Development Programme. The Mediation Association's mission rests on the propagation of the 'mutually beneficial' philosophy of mediation. It aims to empower the communities of Cyprus by providing community mediation services that can establish meaningful relationships through effective communication skills. The organization recognizes the power of mediation in reconciliation, mutual understanding, tolerance, and ultimately conflict resolution. It aims at challenging and eliminating ingrained prejudices held by Cypriots at all levels of society.

The Bi-communal Development Programme sought the Mediation Association as a partner because of their common interests, and in response to the need for such an institution within each community. The Mediation Association's activities have included fund raising for its mediation centre, translations of training materials into Turkish, social events, mediation training activities, work in formal education, drafting legislation to reform established legal practices, and mediation services for the community in general. The last continues to be vital, and as such, the Mediation Association's work is an ongoing, self-sustaining project.

A mirror institution in the Greek community was established in 2000. The partnership between the Bi-communal Development Programme and the Mediation Association consisted of two separate funding projects. The first allowed for the establishment of a centre run by the Mediation Association to provide mediation training and mediation services. The second project assisted the centre in expanding its mediation training and services. Established in 2000, the Mediation Association became increasingly self-sufficient and the Bi-communal Development Programme gradually reduced its funding until the centre was able to run on its own; nevertheless, the partnership continues to grow.

Originally, the Bi-communal Development Programme funded the Mediation Association's direct and indirect administrative expenses and set-up costs of the centre. The second contract, however, covered only 20% of administrative costs. Total funding that extended over the length of the partnership amounted to approximately 100,000 USD. The Mediation Association is now able to train many of the Bi-communal Development Programme's CSO partners and there is ongoing dialogue on community and island-wide issues, such as the integration of mediation skills in both formal and informal educational practices. It has trained 1500 people in mediation skills through workshops and seminars in schools, universities, private and public organizations, and other CSOs. It has taken the initiative generated by this partnership to bring the philosophy of mediation into established legal practice. In addition, it has sent Turkish Cypriot authorities draft legislation to incorporate mediation into the formal "court procedures". On the education front, the education committee has presented a project to the Turkish Cypriot education authorities outlining ways in which mediation can be incorporated into the formal curriculum and used to resolve conflicts in the school setting. Overall, the Mediation Association continues to promote peaceful methods of conflict resolution at all levels of community life.

IV. Basics of the partnership

In its peace-building endeavours, the Bi-communal Development Programme has developed a number of CSO partnership models - seeking to realize a complementary relationship with its partners, supporting the strengthening of technical and financial capacities of CSOs, and creating a space for meaningful contribution to reconciliation and democratic dialogue. Projects with island-wide benefits and with both immediate and long-term effects have been supported, fostering the cooperation needed for peace building. In the context of conflict prevention and peace building, partnerships with CSOs aim to contribute to an atmosphere of cooperation and understanding. This partnership embodies a long-term commitment to communication and a mediation strategy necessary for peace building, development, and the transition to a post-settlement structure. To fulfill this commitment, the Mediation Association through its projects must also constructively interact with fellow CSOs and reinvest its knowledge back into the local community. Due to the political context of Cyprus, the Bi-communal Development Programme has found the Mediation Association to be an asset in establishing direct and indirect ties with different sectors – such as legal bodies, CSOs, professional associations, and individuals – of both the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities.

V. Criteria for meaningful partnerships

Drawing from the lessons learned from successful partnerships, the Bi-communal Development Programme has developed a set of expectations for its future partnerships. A meaningful or substantial partnership is one in which the goals of the programme are shared by the civil society partner, and where there is common understanding of the results and outcomes that both parties expect. Cypriots themselves must determine the focus of the project or its subject matter with the best interest of their common future in mind. CSOs must also have the required level of organizational capacity, leadership and commitment to maintain their projects in the long term. A good partnership may have a localized focus, but can benefit a diverse cross-section of the community if the initiative is sustained and its objectives are met on time. A successful partnership

does not end with the project in question, but develops as the CSO's presence in the community is solidified and relations with other civil society organizations are affirmed.

The Bi-communal Development Programme's cooperation with the Mediation Association highlighted the ways in which civil society organizations add value to policy and programme formulation and implementation by providing access to a diverse and talented group of individuals and groups deeply concerned with a specific issue. In the past, a key challenge for the Bi-communal Development Programme and its CSO partnerships has been the threat perceived by authorities or state bodies in such collaboration. Some in positions of authority worry that civil society strengthening can take place at the expense of public authority and accountability. The Bi-communal Development Programme and CSOs directly addressed these concerns by showing the value added of civic participation on issues of national importance. The fact that the Mediation Association has been invited to develop a social skills curriculum within the formal education apparatus demonstrates that its technical contributions can complement rather than compete with Turkish Cypriot authorities' functions. Constant and active community participation in establishing and developing the Mediation Association led to similarly active participation in its programmes once the centre was established. Such civic commitment augurs well for future peace-building processes.

Through mediation training services, the Mediation Association was also able to establish ties with local educators and legal professionals. With its focus on communication skills, it was able to help its partners better reach the clients they serve. In its quest for sustainability, the Mediation Association has continued to network internationally and is involved in sharing and disseminating information with multiple actors, such as higher education institutions and other international CSOs. Under the "Australian Project" the Mediation Association, in coordinated efforts with the University of Cyprus and with the cooperation of the Australian High Commission, plans to hold a three-day conference on cross-cultural mediation. The Australian Project is designed to bring Australian academics to north Cyprus to present information on aspects of mediation in a multi-cultural society.

These efforts are part of a general trend towards enhanced networking advocated by the programme. The Bi-communal Development Programme has continuously encouraged its partners to establish linkages with the international community, and, in particular, with European networks and alliances. Such efforts help to sustain and develop partnerships, which create a network of support among CSOs. The partnership has underlined for UNDP in Cyprus the importance of supporting the organizational structure of CSOs, providing seed resources and encouraging a long-term vision for a sustainable future. Moreover, the partnership emphasized the need for local leadership and direction; nothing can be achieved without the efforts of organized, well-trained, and committed individuals on the ground.

South East Europe: Making the case for local actors in early warning

Katrin Kinzelbach³², Eva Riečanska³³ and Alina Mungiu-Pippidi³⁴ (eds.)³⁵

In the past decade, UNDP has been engaged in developing national capacities on conflict analysis and early warning in the countries of South East Europe, most of which have in the recent past experienced violent conflicts or major socio-economic crises and destabilization. The capacity development projects address the need for regular expert analysis and timely response to potential risks related to policy failures and inadequate performance of public institutions. This paper looks at the UNDP partnership with a network of local NGOs and think tanks in South East Europe and discusses experiences and lessons learned on early warning by civil society, including the challenges of triggering early response.

I. Background

Since the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, the world's attention has been periodically focused on a relatively small corner of South East Europe, their localized conflicts and conflict potential. While these conflicts were not unpredictable, they precipitated situations where domestic institutions proved incapable of dealing with crises, for which there was significant warning. The inability of national and international actors and institutions to deal effectively with these threats is due, in large part, to the poor connection between existing information and analysis, on the one hand, and response, on the other. One of the lasting legacies of Communist governments is the absence of substantial policy debate that would create the framework for informed decision-making. Instead, governments and the societies they govern often seem to live alongside each other, rather than together.

The countries of South East Europe do not lack civil society capacity for informed policy debate. In most states and territories in the region, civil society is well developed. There is also a high level of academic thinking in a variety of social sciences. It is therefore striking that data and inputs are not translated into medium or long-range predictive models on conflict dynamics and concrete policy recommendations to mitigate crisis risk.

UNDP early warning projects with civil society in South East Europe³⁶ aim to strengthen national capacities for the provision of early warning to policy makers and to facilitate sustainable processes for the transformation of analysis into adequate responses.

II. Role of civil society in early warning on conflict

Perhaps one of the best-known involvements of NGOs in early warning is in the collection of data on environmental disasters or food shortages. Environmental early warning systems, such as the Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture run by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO),³⁷ have long relied on networks of local monitors to

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³⁵ This paper is based on a chapter written by Tony Verheijen and Lisa Smirl for the UNDP publication *Thinking the Unthinkable. The Role of Think Tanks in Shaping Government Strategies. Experiences from Central and Eastern Europe* (Bratislava: UNDP, 2003). It was edited and updated for this publication by Katrin Kinzelbach, Eva Riečanska and Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, with additional contributions from Virtyt Gacafer, Mytaher Haskuka, Emiliana Zhivkova, Maya Nyagolova and Dan Dionisie.

³⁶ A wide range of countries are involved in the South East Europe early warning network, from European Union accession States such as Bulgaria and Romania to international protectorates such as Kosovo.

³⁷ The Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture is a monitoring system run by FAO, which provides early warning primarily for developments which may impact upon agricultural

identify potential risks. In these cases, data is assembled and analysed at a centralized level, not necessarily by those who are collecting and monitoring micro level data.

UNDP support for developing sustainable crisis management capacity in civil society in South East Europe is an endeavour that seeks to move beyond a partnership model where NGOs primarily function as cost-efficient implementing partners to one where they take a lead role in shaping policy directives related to conflict prevention. Civil society representatives involved in the UNDP-supported South East Europe early warning network are responsible both for information gathering (including identifying what type of data needs to be gathered and how) and its analysis. The analysis is published through regular early warning reports.

Conflict scholars consider the involvement of civil society actors in early warning as a way to overcome problems related to timely, reliable and accurate intelligence gathering and its analysis. They posit that “having access to as many eyes and ears could, in practice, surmount the two...hurdles. The inclusion of NGOs in the information-gathering process could potentially overcome faulty analysis of the likelihood of diffusion and/or escalation of a conflict or complex emergency.”³⁸

A key advantage is the long-term and in-depth knowledge of local conditions that civil society actors can bring to the identification and management of conflict, allowing for a better analytical understanding of the underlying issues, as well as of the ways in which to address them.³⁹ There is the additional benefit of building capacity in conflict analysis within civil society, providing a nationally-based resource for policy makers.

III. The project model

Conditions in the countries in South East Europe call for an early warning system tailored to the specific needs of the region. Crises in recent years have been prompted by multiple factors, such as the poor management of unstable economies, the breakdown of the Communist social control system, and the inability of transition governments to divide resources equitably among various ethnic groups. What was therefore needed in the region was a multi-pronged approach to deal with the full complexity of transformation of the nation, state and society after communism.

In the summer of 1997, in response to the 1996-97 socio-economic crisis in Bulgaria that led to significant socio-economic destabilization of the country, the Department of International Relations Association at Sofia University of National and World Economy and the Association for International Relations, an NGO-based social analysis think tank, were approached by UNDP to develop the concept for an early warning system. The proposed system responded to a specific typology of crisis. Its task was to monitor the political, social and economic events and trends with special attention to policies and actions likely to precipitate the onset of crises and high-risk situations. It was intended to respond to four distinct needs, common to the countries of the region:

- a) The need for *informed decision-making*, based on policy analysis, and guided by the trends monitoring of main challenges.
- b) The need for *timely policy analysis* in potentially critical situations.
- c) The need to address potential risks created by *policy failures* and by inadequate performance of public institutions.

production. It relies mainly upon a network of field monitors to provide information on local conditions. For more information, please see <http://www.fao.org/WAICENT/faoinfo/economic/giews/english/index.htm>.

³⁸ David Carment and Frank Harvey, *Using Force to Prevent Ethnic Conflict: an Evaluation of Theory and Evidence* (Westport, Connecticut, London: Praeger, 2001), pp.20-21.

³⁹ Douglas E. Lute, *Improving National Capacity to Respond to Complex Emergencies: the US Experience. A Report to the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict* (New York: Carnegie Corporation, 1998), p.31.

- d) The need to institutionalize a *regular exchange of information and a policy debate* of main issues between civil society policy centres and governments.

The considerable attention the project received in Bulgaria created the impetus to engage in this type of activity in other parts of South East Europe, including in Albania, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Each of these reports monitors four to five thematic areas. In the case of Macedonia, they include political and institutional stability, socio-economic situation, inter-ethnic relations, personal and public security, and regional security. The methodology is a combination of indicator-based and event-based approaches.⁴⁰ One Macedonia report (March-June 2005) states, for example, that the level of public confidence in the Government showed a slight improvement in comparison to the previous reporting period, while the level of public confidence in the president and the parliament showed substantive improvement. In addition to data gathered through opinion polling, the report also analyses important events, such as local elections.⁴¹

However, the balance and weight of indicator- and event-based approaches vary by country. As civil society capacity increases, the willingness to experiment with different forms of monitoring, and to adapt existing models to current conditions also grows. Over time, different types of relations and partnerships between UNDP and civil society actors have developed. These include joint programming with established local think-tanks and NGOs (e.g. in Bulgaria, Romania, Kosovo, Albania) but also cooperation with individual members of the academic community, brought together by UNDP (e.g. in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia).

Country example: Romania

In Romania, the early warning system was set up in 1999 as part of a UNDP project called “National Preventive Action System for Romania”. During the first two years of its existence, the project was coordinated and mostly funded by UNDP, in partnership with the policy think-tank, the Romanian Academic Society, which assumed responsibility for data collection and analysis. The project design was based on the model developed in Bulgaria, but it underwent a significant transformation. The Romanian early warning report is organized thematically and offers a forward-looking analysis by focusing on the potential consequences of suggested or impending legislation and policies. The project also convenes focus groups to discuss select issues and key challenges facing the country.

Reports have generated extensive coverage and debate in national media. They have also proven to be influential in the political realm: in 2002, one of the reports was on the agenda at a Government meeting on the decline of public confidence in the central cabinet, and one of the authors was invited to address a working group of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A 2003 report proposed reforming the central government by reducing the number of ministries, streamlining their functions, and improving coordination among different sectors. The prime minister of Romania subsequently requested UNDP and the World Bank to do a comparative analysis of structures of cabinets in other countries. In 2004, some measures were taken to strengthen the office of the prime minister and three new positions of deputy prime minister with multi-sectoral portfolios were created.

However, collaboration was not always easy. Given the nature of analysis and recommendations, the reports also raised political sensitivities. In light of this, it was decided that the Romanian Academic Society would assume full responsibility for the continuation of the project to ensure the independence of the report. Since 2004, the society has published independent policy warning

⁴⁰ Using an indicator-based approach, risks are assessed by determining the speed and degree of change in a set of pre-selected indicators, with reference to a risk threshold. Event-based approaches monitor specific events and the regularity of their occurrence to identify aberrations or potential triggers.

⁴¹ The full report can be viewed at:

http://www.undp.org.mk/datacenter/publications/documents/NAVREMENO_ANG.pdf

reports. The project is now funded by multiple sources to ensure that no donor comes under pressure from the Government.

The Romanian experience suggests that to be effective, an early warning project has to be critical of the situation in the country. The Romanian report has been seen as credible because it never tried to avoid or placate political sensitivities, even if they raised concerns and tensions, as was the case with some Government members. Good relations and mutual trust between UNDP and the project's main Government counterpart (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) helped overcome such situations. As the independent continuation of the project by the Romanian Academic Society demonstrates, the UNDP project succeeded in supporting indigenous analytical capacity within the local NGO partner, and in enhancing the dialogue between civil society and governmental actors on policies and their alternatives. The Romanian experience suggests that the sustainability and long-term impact of national early warning systems can be achieved only if UNDP support eventually phases out and the civil society partner assumes full leadership.

Country example: Kosovo

In Kosovo, the UNDP has set up an early warning system with Riinvest Institute, a local think tank that provides opinion poll services and a pool of analysts. Riinvest Institute was selected in 2001 because it had substantial analytical capacities (mainly on economic issues), solid facilities to engage independent local analysts in teamwork, and proven experience in opinion polling and survey research. The NGO was deemed to be credible, both in the eyes of civil society and the Government. However, there was a need to further develop the skills of Riinvest analysts in early warning and preventive measures, and in the use of opinion polling and statistical methods in conflict-related analysis. To address this need, UNDP in Kosovo organized several workshops with support from the UNDP Regional Centre for Europe and CIS. At the same time, a needs assessment was conducted among stakeholders, including the Provisional Institutions of Self Government (PISG), the UN mission UNMIK, municipalities, donors and civil society organizations in order to identify demand for conflict-related information. Local workshops focused on substantive analysis and the editorial process.

In the Kosovar environment, where a UN mission administers the territory, the involvement of a local institution contributed to the report's credibility among the PISG and the public. Nonetheless, the report had to compete for public attention, due to the fact that there was no shortage of conflict analysis and policy advice put forward by the international community. The report had a limited impact initially, but won appreciation after the crisis in March 2004 when Kosovo was hit by a wave of popular protest that created destabilization and left behind victims and the demolition of property. A national TV broadcaster ran a piece with quotes from the report published just a few weeks before the riots. Consequently, the Government and other institutions began to show more interest.

The project's profile was also raised when the report started to be quoted by the international think tank, International Crisis Group. Through a new outreach strategy designed in late 2004, UNDP and Riinvest are now trying to bring the reports to the attention of decision-makers more systematically, linking the early warning reports to early action. The new outreach strategy includes regular meetings with decision-makers. The Kosovar case suggests that, while national ownership and good analysis are crucial, much of the reports' impact depends not only on the accuracy and timeliness of their analysis but also on a well-crafted follow-up and dissemination strategy that solicits policy debate and response.

IV. Triggering response

As stated in the Secretary General's Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict, civil society plays an important role in conflict prevention, but the primary responsibility rests with governments.⁴²

⁴²Report of the Secretary-General on Prevention of Armed Conflict, UN Doc. A/55/985-S/2001/574, Executive Summary.

Supporting civil society in early warning and conflict analysis therefore requires that attention be paid to the interface between the early warning activities of civil society, on the one hand, and governmental action, on the other. The experiences of UNDP-supported early warning projects in South East Europe with regard to governmental cooperation are mixed. Willingness to act on early warning differs between national and local levels: the experience of working with municipalities and local authorities has been more positive.

At a regional meeting of practitioners involved in early warning projects held in Albania in November 2004, participants agreed that the political and institutional culture of the region made it difficult to influence national policy-making. Government offices, in most countries of South East Europe, still mainly provide technical support to the policy coordination and law-making system, with only limited capacities, if any, devoted to providing substantive professional advice to the Government on strategic issues. Core decision-making government units often appear to function at a great remove from societal concerns, and are thus likely to be taken by surprise by an emerging issue. It has proven extremely difficult to convince the political leadership that the development of professional capacities in strategic conflict analysis and timely response is a necessity – and not a luxury or a threat. As a consequence, governments rarely heed early warning signals on conflict; nor do they feel the need to involve other partners in strategic planning and decision-making processes.

When domestic institutions lack principles of good governance, there is the risk that information gathered will not be used to the benefit of the country and its people because there are few incentives for governments to spend resources without the prospect of immediate or significant benefit to them. In South East Europe, government instability has been the cause of much of the conflict over the past decade. Early warning has little relevance to actors who pursue their own agendas at the expense of their constituents.

Although democratically elected governments are now in power in virtually all countries of South Eastern Europe, the increased formal levels of democracy have not always brought about real openness in policy processes. Continuous efforts are required to facilitate the provision of strategic inputs from civil society and think tanks to governmental policy making processes.

The situation in South East Europe allows for a larger degree of civil society activity than other regions of Eastern Europe and the CIS, for example, Central Asia. Still, the relationship with governments must be handled with care. Inopportune release of reports can result in government repudiation of the analysis. Not surprisingly, criticism of national policies creates tensions between those responsible for the policies and the early warning teams. Ways need to be found to facilitate constructive cooperation between civil society and government counterparts. One option is to develop a strong partnership with at least one government office/ ministry that is willing to champion the early warning reports. Another is to use the process of developing the reports as an opportunity to directly build consensus among key stakeholders (including governments) on key issues and required strategies.

V. Lessons learned

Capacity development has been a key objective for UNDP projects and also one of the main challenges. Analyzing conflict from within is an extremely difficult task. This difficulty is compounded by the “politicization of objectivity” within divided societies. In other words, in the presence of corrupt or dysfunctional institutions, displaying neutrality may be perceived as implicit support for the status quo. What this means in practice is that the identification of civil society partners who are competent and objective has proven to be a challenge.

Objectivity: In almost all countries, there have been problems with the objectivity of the early warning reports. These took the following two forms: either the NGO in charge of producing the report supported a particular political agenda and was insistent upon using the reports as a vehicle for its views and opinions, or, just as commonly, a descriptive, narrative style of reporting undermined

the presentation of a neutral perspective. There are also concerns regarding a lack of objectivity in the data collection process; however, this is generally the result of a lack of methodological rigour, rather than intentionally biased research agendas.

Finally, there is the possibility that the observed bias is, at least partially, the result of poor translation. Governments, for their part, sometimes also try to influence the findings of reports. In this context, it is noteworthy that UNDP regulations usually require that projects are agreed upon in consultation with government counterparts. Especially in countries where conflict analysis and early warning activities are not viewed positively by governments, the relationship must be handled with care to avoid censorship and to ensure the independence of early warning reports.

Ownership: The success and sustainability of NGO-led early warning projects depends primarily, if not solely, on the initiative and ownership by the NGO. If the NGO does not adopt responsibility for the project, and perceives it as a “client-donor” relationship with UNDP commissioning a product from them, the report loses sustainability and impact. The unwillingness of some NGOs to critically examine the project or the research agenda is also a problem. Where NGO teams moved beyond a “client-donor” relationship, and took ownership of the reports, the research typically built on previous interests of their experts. A key challenge in the relationship relates to funding. Producing the report for UNDP is a source of income for the NGO, and this often reduces the incentive to assume full ownership.

Impact: The goal of early warning is not simply the publication of timely analysis, but triggering early response. The difficulty for civil society is how to ensure that its strategic recommendations are not dismissed or ignored by government. The answer to this is twofold:

- *Through process.* If the process of conflict analysis and early warning provides a key role for governments in a transparent and open context, the likelihood of government pressure or non-involvement may be lessened. In the short to medium term, government partners can be prominently involved in a strategic roundtable, which brings together key stakeholders to address the recommendations and provide feedback.
- *Through format.* The specific needs of governments should be reflected in the delivery of the product. For example, time constraints of policy makers must be considered when providing advice. Strategies, options and scenarios must be presented in a format, which is quickly read and applicable. Time may also affect the mode of delivery: is a report necessarily the most effective format? Would electronic updates or circulars be more appropriate in some circumstances? A second dimension of time constraints relates to the natural tendency of government to prioritize short-term over long-term goals. As elected governments are bound to a three to five year term, a small window of opportunity is open for substantive long-term change.

Any initiative to develop civil society early warning capacities should therefore also work on the sensitization of governments, both in developing their own policy-making and response capacities, and showing openness towards inputs from civil society organizations and think tanks.

“The processes of conflict transformation”

Sunila Abeyssekera has been involved in women’s rights and human rights activism since the 1970s in Sri Lanka and the south Asian region, and globally. In recent years, her work has focused on human rights in conflict situations. In 1998, Ms. Abeyssekera was one of five persons awarded the United Nations Human Rights Prize at the 50th anniversary celebrations of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. She is a member of the Executive Committee of the Asia Forum for Human Rights and Development (Forum-Asia), based in Thailand, and the co-chairperson of Women’s Human Rights Net. She is Executive Director of Inform, Human Rights Documentation Centre in Sri Lanka.

What are the key issues that need to be addressed in conflict prevention?

There needs to be much more focus on training communities, especially youth and children, in methods of non-violent conflict and dispute resolution. This is a long-term investment that countries and international agencies have to make. Programmes that promote democratic governance, for example, or participatory decision-making at every level, should have an integral component of conflict resolution built into them. Building cultures of tolerance and co-existence are also critical for conflict prevention. In the short term, when conflict has flared, the emphasis should be on processes of intervention and mediation from civil society groups and communities that have demonstrated their commitment to peace and tolerance.

In Sri Lanka, as in other parts of the world, mothers and wives of people who have “disappeared” or gone missing in the conflict have reached across ethnic and religious barriers and created a public space for talking about bringing an end to the war and creating a peaceful society. Also, the Sri Lankan peace talks point to the value of “outsiders” facilitating dialogue between parties embroiled in conflict.

What role do CSOs play?

Civil society organizations play a very critical role in conflict prevention, both in exposing conflict and resolving it. Throughout the world, you see that identity-based activism

based on religion, language, or ethnic and tribal differences often emerges out of civil society as a response to discrimination, oppression and marginalization, and provides a way to affirm cultural practices that communities feel are being suppressed or threatened. When the leaders of these communities (most often male) fall prey to political machinations, communities may resort to violence as a means of achieving their political goals. In the same way, voices of sanity and tolerance also emerge from civil society, sometimes the only ones with integrity, and can act as catalysts for mobilization against conflict.

What do you see as key challenges for CSOs?

Two key challenges for civil society organizations working to prevent conflict are in the political and financial arenas. At the political level, because the conflicts are based on real and perceived notions of difference and discrimination, one needs sophisticated leadership to move beyond the conflict toward a process of conflict transformation. For this, capacities to analyze one’s experiences and practices, as well as courage and vision, are required. Developing these skills and capacities is a great challenge. While outside actors, including international NGOs can provide spaces and opportunities for skills and capacity development, ownership of the processes of conflict transformation must be indigenous. In particular, exposure to similar situations in other countries, as well as to research into processes of peace building and conflict transformation could be very beneficial.

Civil society organizations often also need outside funding. Financial support from external actors may however create tensions, when donors have their own priorities and agendas determined by forces outside the particular society or community. For example, in Sri Lanka, there have been tensions over donor-driven initiatives that seek to mount large-scale national events that get wide media coverage at the cost of supporting small initiatives at the community level. At the same

time, being perceived as recipients of outside funding can undermine the integrity of social movements and community-based organizations. Facing these challenges and creating partnerships between communities seeking peace and donors wishing to support peace initiatives is an issue that we all confront in our daily work.

What is the UNDP role in this area?

UNDP can play a role at the national and international levels to support the work of CSOs engaged in conflict prevention and peace building in a variety of ways. At the most basic level, it can provide funding, although it is important to ensure that UNDP support goes to smaller community-based initiatives, which may not be able to obtain larger grants or bigger donors. In addition, UNDP support can be critical to smaller organizations that do not focus on service delivery, but on changing people's attitudes regarding discrimination and violent methods of conflict resolution. In Sri Lanka, the way in which UNDP support can be most critical is in forums for CSOs to voice their views. This is a role that cannot be played by any other organization. UNDP is perceived to be impartial and is therefore in a position to provide a safe space in which all opinions can be voiced and debated.

What are your experiences with UNDP engagement?

My experiences with UNDP are varied. Because of my involvement with the UNDP CSO Advisory Committee, I have gained access to some arenas that may otherwise have not been open to me personally, nor to the human rights issues that I defend. During the years of the conflict in Sri Lanka, the UNDP office provided a space for sharing information and ideas on the situation in conflict-hit areas; this was a rare opportunity for groups working in the affected regions to meet and exchange thoughts with Colombo-based organizations. However, UNDP has been rather lax in defending the spaces available for civil society at the district and provincial levels to participate in discussions on the peace process. This is a pity since, in a country like Sri Lanka, only UNDP has the


credibility and capacity to create spaces for dialogue and to facilitate the processes of consultation and participation that are essential for conflict prevention.

In your view, what does the notion of “partnerships” mean?

Partnership is a much abused term. It is often used by donor agencies to mask the power differentials between donors and recipients. We have often argued against the double standards of accountability and transparency that donors impose on civil society, especially when they call on us to honour them but do not necessarily apply these principles to themselves. Partnership however remains the best basis of a relationship between individuals and organizations that have differing skills and capacities, but are committed to the same goals. When used and practised from this perspective, partnership can provide the space for mutual support and enrichment, as well as a strong collective public face to the issues that form its basis. Strong partnerships are usually those that can gain the most out of lobbying and advocacy initiatives, for example.

What do you understand by “national ownership”?

National ownership is a difficult term to define. From a narrow perspective, it may refer to a nation state, and to the ownership by the nation state and the various institutions that define it (e.g. the Constitution and the legal system and the government and its institutions). In bilateral matters, which define negotiations between two nation states, there is usually no inclusion of citizens, civilians – ordinary people of every country and society who make up the larger “nation”. However, “national ownership” can also be defined as ownership by the people. This is especially true, when it comes to forms of cultural and artistic expression. In other cases, for example in Sri Lanka, processes of “nationalization” have meant transferring ownership from private owners to some form of collective or state ownership, in the understanding that the state represents the people.



Can you identify issues that tend to be neglected?

Conflicts that emerge at the national level, such as the ones affecting national security, tend to be given highest priority. While understandable in crisis situations, the fact is that, in every society, many other flashpoints based on social tensions coexist and should be given some focus, as they have the potential to turn violent in the future. At the same time, discrimination and violence against certain sectors of society (e.g. women, persons with disabilities, sex workers, people living with HIV and AIDS, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons) tends to be sidelined, neglected and often even silenced.

What observations would you like to share on the Global Conference?

The Global Conference is an event that has been planned for many years. As such, it has

the potential to bring to the surface many of the complex factors that underlie conflicts in modern societies, and to initiate a discussion on issues of justice and redress. In conflict prevention, the knowledge that actions that violate people's rights can be subject to judicial proceedings and other methods of redress can play a key preventative role. In this sense, challenging the impunity of both state and non-state actors must be a critical part of the discussion.

At the same time, it is important to focus on ways in which the legal definitions and procedures put in place with the establishment of the International Criminal Court can be incorporated into national laws, including the creation of special procedures to deal with violence and human rights abuses in situations of riot or communal strife where normal legal processes collapse.

Ways forward

This report is an initial inquiry into how CSOs and UNDP can engage more effectively in preventing violent conflict and sustaining peace. As UNDP seeks to codify its knowledge in this area, this joint BRSP and BCPR publication serves to improve learning and practice in conflict prevention and peace building. The report is a work in progress and will continue to incorporate additional experiences.

Among the key findings that emerge is the critical role that UNDP can play as a facilitator and convener in situations of crisis and post conflict. Fostering an enabling environment for engagement with CSOs is an essential component for peace building. Strengthening and developing capacity of partners from the local to the national level is an area UNDP is also called upon to support.

The case studies provide some key recommendations for enhancing partnerships between UNDP and CSOs. Emphasized throughout the report is the importance of scaling up local initiatives to the national level, the added value of working at the grass roots level, and ensuring that mechanisms for multi-stakeholder dialogue are built and strengthened. The experiences demonstrate the need for a change in UNDP institutional culture that facilitates greater partnerships with CSOs at the local, country and regional levels. Simpler UNDP procedures for partnering with CSOs, as identified in the Nepal example, are part and parcel of that process. Worth highlighting is the impact that a small grants programme can have in creating an incentive for CSO partnership and in strengthening existing country level programmes. Regional initiatives are also significant particularly as countries benefit from the exchange of experience and knowledge.

Finally, partnerships across UNDP bureaux serve to reinforce work in areas that otherwise would not be targeted in an integrated and comprehensive fashion. In the long term the organization's activities on the ground benefit from complementary and multi-dimensional efforts in conflict prevention and peace building. As an impartial interlocutor, UNDP can provide critical support to CSOs to voice their views in crisis settings. This capacity to create safe spaces for dialogue, consultation and participation is key to preventing conflict.

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