

# wfd



## *Daring to Build Peace ...*

Ways of Overcoming Violence –  
Seven Years of the Civil Peace Service







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## Foreword

by  
**The Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation  
and Development, Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul**



Around 40 wars and armed conflicts are still devastating many of our partner countries – and yet inter-state conflict is on the decline. Intra-state conflict is now the dominant model of violent conflict, with far-reaching implications both for those directly affected and for development cooperation.

Up to 90 percent of the casualties of intra-state conflicts are civilians, mainly women and children. Civil wars make millions of people into refugees and inflict physical and psychological damage on the population. Schools are wrecked, children are abducted and forcibly recruited as soldiers, local communities are often destroyed and social networks torn apart. Civil war increases poverty and illiteracy and encourages the proliferation of small arms, wiping out years of development in the affected countries.

The causes of these conflicts are complex, and numerous actors are involved. Military “solutions” are often no solution at all. In order to bring about a lasting and non-violent settlement to these conflicts and safeguard security for the people in the affected countries, we must focus on civil and preventive approaches. Development cooperation has a key role to play here.

Democratic institution-building, the dismantling of political oppression, human rights protection and the development of civil conflict management methods all play a pivotal role alongside poverty reduction. Peace must be built; it cannot be imposed by force. Recognizing this reality, the German Government responded to initiatives launched by civil society organizations and, in 1999, established the Civil Peace Service (CPS). This network of government and civil society organizations has become a model of best

practice, deploying peace experts who work with local partners to strengthen peacebuilding capacities at local level, build bridges between hostile groups, and support the reconstruction process. Of course, the CPS cannot achieve all the outlined objectives on its own. It is one of the building blocks in the German Government’s development policy, which is now giving greater priority to crisis prevention.

As this report shows, over the last seven years, the peace experts deployed by the CPS have made tangible contributions to reconciliation and dialogue processes worldwide. The report offers a good overview of the many different approaches and fields of action in civil conflict management. The spectrum ranges from the search for peaceful and just solutions to the issue of resource access, lobby work aimed at reducing and controlling small arms, engagement for multiethnic cooperation, support for human rights work and the establishment of peace committees at district level, to community-based reconciliation and reintegration of ex-combatants and child soldiers.

The CPS has achieved much in recent years and has become an important instrument in civil crisis prevention and conflict management. We now face new challenges: for example, how can we strengthen the functionality of state institutions in crisis-torn countries? And how can we deploy the CPS to even greater strategic effect in future?

I would like to thank the women and men who are currently working to promote peace and reconciliation within the framework of the CPS and its local partner organizations. I hope that this report will help to further increase the public’s awareness of their contribution to the cause of peace.

*Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul*

## ***Joint Message***

**Bishop Wolfgang Huber, Chairman of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany and  
Karl Cardinal Lehmann, Chairman of the German Bishops' Conference**



Violent conflicts and wars still dominate the lives of millions of people. According to cautious estimates, the wars that have occurred during the last ten years alone – many of which are still ongoing – have so far claimed the lives of more than seven million people and have maimed many more, most of them civilians. Other victims of violent conflict include more than 60 million refugees and displaced persons.

Many of these wars go largely unnoticed in Europe because the violence has become routine. However, the attacks of 11 September 2001 and the subsequent bombings in Europe and other parts of the world have confronted us directly with this violence, revealing how much our lives have become interconnected, through our political and economic actions, with the fate of other countries and supposedly distant conflicts in our one world. The Churches have proclaimed the first decade of this new century “the Decade to Overcome Violence“. It is an expression of a great but still unfulfilled hope.

Given the all-pervasiveness of war and terror and the attempts to bestow a supposed religious legitimacy on violence, but especially for all those who are suffering as a result of war and violence, one of the Churches' most important tasks today is to bear witness to the message of peace proclaimed in the Gospels and to work actively for peace and reconciliation. Through their development and disaster relief services, the Churches are contributing to the efforts to defuse conflicts, alleviate suffering and open up new prospects for peaceful social relations in many countries. In doing so, we stand together in a spirit of ecumenism.

The Civil Peace Service is an important element of the Churches' effective commitment to peace and reconciliation. Peace and justice go hand in hand. Active engagement for non-military forms of conflict resolution is an indispensable part of the Churches' witness for peace. The Churches in Germany thus played a key role, in 1997, in forming a consortium to promote the launch of a Civil Peace Service in which secular and church organizations work together with government agencies.

We would like to thank everyone for their commitment, especially the peace experts and the local partner organizations working for peace and reconciliation. They have done much, over the last few years, to establish the Civil Peace Service as an indispensable and successful element of the Churches' work for peace, justice and the integrity of creation.

Lasting peace cannot simply be imposed from outside; it must grow from within. Nor can peace be safeguarded by military means alone: it must be underpinned by a political framework. Aware that these are the prerequisites for peace, peace experts working with local partner organizations can help to reduce or prevent violence and its impacts. They can foster understanding and thus contribute to a just and lasting peace. We are grateful for all the initiatives launched in the past and encourage everyone to continue along this course in future. We ask for God's blessing for every endeavour which aims to avert violence and thus build peace.

*Wolfgang Huber + Karl Kard. Lehmann*



## ***Civil Society, State and New Conflicts – Expectations and Challenges for the Civil Peace Service***

**Jochen Hippler (Institute for Development and Peace (INEF), University of Duisburg-Essen)**

Political violence continues to pose one of the gravest problems for human society. The 20th century, with its world wars and hundreds of other conflicts, was especially bloody: besides the many millions of war-dead, people were murdered in unimaginable numbers by governments for political reasons outside the parameters of war – in massacres, genocides and political repression. It is estimated that from the start of the 20th century to the end of the 1980s, such actions claimed between 170 million and 350 million lives – in addition, it should be noted, to all the casualties of war. Even after the end of the Cold War, the violence has continued at a high level, as the genocides in Rwanda and Burundi, the Balkans and elsewhere, international terrorism and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrate.

And yet over recent decades, the nature of violent conflict has changed dramatically. Although inter-state wars have not vanished altogether, it is the intra-societal conflicts that have proved to be especially bloody and destructive. Civil wars, “ethnic cleansing” and massacres as well as intractable conflicts arising in the context of state failure and fragmenting societies are responsible for the vast majority of casualties today. The causes of intra-societal violence are therefore becoming an increasingly urgent issue: what role is played by economic or political conflicts over the distribution of resources or power? How significant are ethnic or religious identities as triggers or reinforcers of violence? What

are the impacts of state centralization or disintegration processes? What is the relationship between internal and external factors in terms of how they influence conflict? Is the absence of the rule of law, human rights or democracy ultimately responsible for intra-societal violence? Or are political/economic “markets of violence” (i.e. the economic greed of “warlords” and the collapse of state structures) the key conflict mechanism? Anyone seeking to prevent or constructively manage violent conflict, reduce the number of casualties or deliver post-conflict assistance in the interests of a durable peace must find answers to these and numerous other questions.

The new situation has strongly influenced the political debate on how we should be responding to intra-state wars or humanitarian disasters such as expulsion or genocide. Many different solutions have been proposed. In today’s post-Cold War world, humanitarian, ostensibly humanitarian and imperialist military interventions are more readily available as options than before and now form part of the standard repertoire of international politics. The benefits of “humanitarian protectorates” are also being discussed in this context. Different forms of protectorate are being experimented with in Bosnia, Kosovo and, under different conditions, in Afghanistan and Iraq, with very mixed success, the main focus often being on state-building and nation-building by external actors.

Another strand of the debate explores the options afforded by conflict prevention, as reflected, for example, in the German Government's Action Plan "Civilian Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Peace-Building". Different models of activity have emerged from within civil society too: at domestic level, they include peace movements which attempt to counter wars and violence through public protest (such as the mass demonstrations in London, Madrid, Rome and elsewhere before the Iraq war) and exert other forms of influence, while efforts with an international focus include the initiative to launch a Civil Peace Service which was put on the agenda at the behest, not least, of the Churches. This initiative has now been taken up by the German Government, and since 1999 is being implemented as a collaborative effort between government and civil society.

The emphasis on a stronger role for civil society in conflict transformation is clearly in line with an international trend. 2004, for example, saw the launch of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), a worldwide civil society network established in response to a suggestion by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. In July 2005, the GPPAC drafted proposals to increase the role of non-governmental organizations in conflict prevention and future action by the UN in this area.

The Civil Peace Service (CPS) is a response to the need to move away from violence as a solution to intra-societal conflicts in particular, and towards utilizing and strengthening non-violent conflict transformation options. In this context, the emphasis is on exerting influence before violence erupts and providing post-conflict assistance; civilian approaches to conflict transformation and efforts by the Civil Peace Service will inevitably be less successful and far more difficult to implement in situations of escalated violence. The CPS thus seeks to address the grassroots or middle level of at-risk societies, e.g. by linking in with reconciliation and dialogue processes or contributing through mediation and self-reflection mechanisms. The CPS is a new instrument in the field of development cooperation. Its primary purpose is to deploy trained peace experts – akin to development workers – to work with local partners (generally non-government organizations) with the aim of strengthening peace capacities in the country

concerned, although many civil society actors view their role primarily as being peace policy-, rather than development-oriented.

One challenge which often still arises in this context, however, is establishing a clearer conceptual link between the resources deployed and the general objectives. What exactly is "reconciliation"? How – and under which conditions – can it be fostered? When, why and under which conditions do inter-ethnic dialogues contribute to peace processes (and when are they irrelevant, or perhaps even harmful?). These issues need to be explored in more detail. Both the Civil Peace Service actors and the academic community still have a great deal of theoretical work to do here.

Another question which inevitably arises is this: how successful and effective is this type of grassroots engagement likely to be? Can a relatively small number of "peace experts" really prevent or constructively manage the extreme violence such as that witnessed in the Balkans, West Africa, the Great Lakes or the Middle East and bring these conflicts back into the frame for civil resolution? Posing the question in these terms does not do justice to the Civil Peace Service's mission and potential. No one should assume that the deployment of a modest number of staff and resources could avert or overcome disasters like the genocide in Rwanda, the Balkan wars, or the war and civil war in Iraq – such unrealistic expectations would simply



condemn the project to failure from the outset. The Civil Peace Service – like development policy – can make a contribution, but it cannot achieve its objectives on its own. Achieving a "critical mass" of personnel and funding is also essential to make the CPS effective, as called for by the experts involved in the evaluation of the CPS's start-up phase back in 2002.

Violent conflicts are usually extremely complex. Their dynamics depend on numerous factors which are often outside the influence of individual non-government organizations and certainly their external workers in the field. A war which is being waged to secure control of the strategically important oil region in the Persian Gulf, international terrorism (such as the massacre in New York on 11 September 2001) or a war economy based around the trafficking of drugs, other resources or arms cannot be prevented by the deployment of a handful of peace experts, nor can the underlying causes of conflict be addressed so easily. But this is not the purpose of the Civil Peace Service anyway. If the CPS is to be successful, it must not only be oriented towards the overarching goal of peace; it must also be constantly mindful of its own limitations and constraints. Anyone who ignores the limits to their own capacities will often fail to achieve objectives which are actually within reach.

Intra-societal violent conflicts are primarily the expression of political crises, but they often have important economic, social or psycho-cultural dimensions as well. The political rivalry between different social elites, for example, may be radicalized if these elites' share of the available resources diminishes, and this radicalization may be expressed in ethnic or religious terms. However, economic modernization or stagnation processes which fall into the "normal" range can also exacerbate such polarization or fragmentation trends. Clearly, in such cases, preventive or remedial policies must address the causes of conflict, such as the economic situation's escalation into crisis. If the world market for a country's sole export product collapses, thereby intensifying the distribution conflicts between socio-political groups, it is certainly useful to organize hopefully integrative discourses in some sections of society's grassroots, but this is unlikely to solve the problem. Most Civil Peace Service actors are aware of these parameters to their work but rarely have any influence over them. In some situations, on the other hand, political elites may allow a conflict to escalate to the brink of violence or beyond in the expectation that this will benefit their social position. A disruption to or lack of communication between social or ethno-religious groups, prejudices

and misconceptions can also be major factors reinforcing the dynamic of violence. In such cases, the local media, faith communities or civil society can play an exacerbating or ameliorating role – especially if such activities do not take place in isolation but are linked with political and economic measures to combat the causes of conflict. There is important potential for the Civil Peace Service here: not as the primary instrument of – or even an substitute for – peacebuilding at macro level, but as an element of an integrated concept which combines macroeconomic, foreign, development, and security policy and, of course, civil society measures. Better export opportunities, land reform, the enforcement of the rule of law and legal stability, and development policy measures can be key factors in

transforming the dynamics of a conflict or at least guiding it into peaceful channels. However, such approaches must be accepted by society and the opportunities they afford must be utilized. This is precisely where the Civil Peace Service can make a contribution.

A society's potential for peaceful conflict transformation may also depend on whether the state apparatus at local level integrates all social groups fairly, whether it functions effectively, and whether it can perform its core functions (i.e.

security for all citizens, participation, education, health and transport infrastructure, meeting basic needs, etc.) at all, and if so, on an equitable basis. If the state is viewed primarily as an instrument of power wielded by specific social, ethnic or religious groups, especially in crisis situations, if it appears to be corrupt and incompetent, the threshold for violence is lowered. Here, civil society – including the Civil Peace Service – can in some circumstances exert pressure to improve the situation, but cannot solve the problems itself. Cooperation with foreign, development, external trade, agricultural and security policy may still be difficult, especially since there is little coordination between these individual policy areas and civil society actors guard their autonomy with good reason. Nonetheless, such cooperation is a key to improving the effectiveness of the CPS, and especially the parameters in which it operates.

Now that the CPS appears to have passed through its difficult start-up phase successfully and its instruments







are evolving satisfactorily, the CPS agencies would be well-advised to give more consideration to two specific aspects:

Firstly, for the reasons outlined above, it would be helpful to focus more intensively on the state apparatus and political processes in the host countries. While (strengthening) civil society in these countries is important, the state is still a key factor when it comes to non-violent conflict management or the escalation of violence. It would undoubtedly be beneficial to give greater consideration to ways of exerting influence in this strategic area.

But secondly, there is also scope to consider whether and how the CPS agencies could utilize their experience to a greater extent in Europe. Precisely because the parameters for their work in the field are largely determined by the prevailing political and international conditions, notably in foreign, security and development policy, it is essential to exert greater influence over these policy areas in Europe (and the USA). Anyone seeking to reduce violence and promote peace in the Third

World should certainly engage as a civil society actor in the host countries, but should not ignore the fact that key factors relating to violence and its prevention are strongly influenced by the international conditions – and it is these conditions which determine the scope for action and the success prospects of peace policy and the Civil Peace Service. It would therefore be appropriate to consider stepping up media work and lobbying in Europe in order to have a greater impact on the overall parameters influencing policies for peace.

The Civil Peace Service was launched in 1998 and started work in 1999/2000. So far, 236 peace experts have been deployed and, after a few teething troubles, have made valuable contributions to strengthening peace capacities in numerous potential and actual conflict countries. These approaches must be further expanded, and a clear awareness of the opportunities and limits to the CPS's work must be developed in this context. This does not mean neglecting the strengths that the CPS has built up so far, but it would be helpful to embed them more deeply in an overall political framework beyond individual project level.



## Ways of Overcoming Violence – Experience with the Civil Peace Service

**Bodo von Borries (representative of the Civil Peace Service Group  
in the Working Group on Development and Peace)**

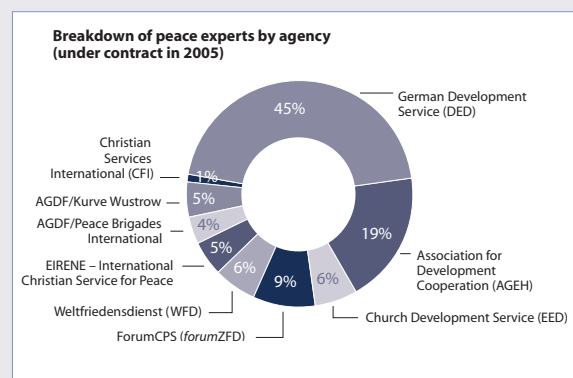
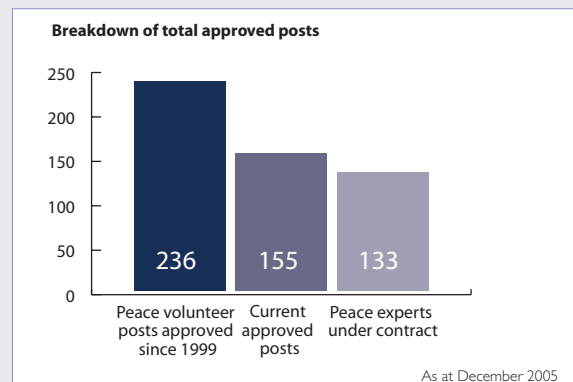
The idea of the Civil Peace Service (CPS) was born in response to the wars in the former Yugoslavia. The key issue was how violence can be reduced and society's peace capacities strengthened without recourse to military intervention. Peace organizations, the Evangelical and Catholic Churches and development agencies took up the issue and developed the concept for a new instrument – the CPS. The CPS was integrated into the framework of development cooperation in 1999 and, since then, has evolved into a successful new instrument for civil society-based peacebuilding. Civil society and government organizations work together within the CPS. They develop the projects in cooperation with local non-government partner organizations, generally in response to an initiative from these organizations, and submit an application for funding to the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Once the application has been approved, peace experts are selected, trained and seconded to the local partner organizations.

The goal of the CPS is to reduce or prevent violence, foster understanding and contribute towards sustainable and just peace in cooperation with local partners in conflict regions.

### ZFD – mouse or elephant?

So far, 236 peace volunteer posts have been approved in 39 countries, with spending totalling around 66.4 million euros from the launch of the programme in late

1999 to 2005. The breakdown of total approved posts, ongoing projects and peace experts deployed at local level is as follows:



Each of the CPS agencies sets different regional and thematic priorities.

### What does the CPS actually do?

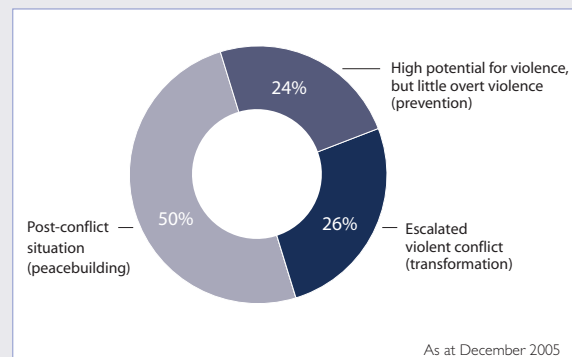
The armed conflicts of the last 20 years have rarely been inter-state wars. In more than 90 percent of cases, they are protracted intra-societal conflicts which have impacted severely on the civilian population and caused long-term damage to the affected country's economic and social development. The Civil Peace Service operates in many different conflict situations, e.g. in countries where regional groups are resisting a (repressive) central authority and society is deeply divided, or in countries where political conflicts of interest are being fought out as ethnic wars. The CPS also operates in countries where the state is not present in all regions and cannot perform even the most basic social functions. The CPS thus adopts a wide variety of approaches.

The following fields of action have proved especially important:

- Developing structures for cooperation and dialogue across the lines of conflict: e.g. strengthening traditional arbitration bodies such as councils of elders, supporting peace committees to resolve land disputes, promoting umbrella organizations for the joint political representation of disadvantaged interest groups.
- Strengthening information and communication structures: e.g. supporting the provision of information for returning civil war refugees, raising journalists' awareness of their positive and negative role in conflict situations, establishing local radio or other media, promoting information campaigns on small arms, etc.
- Reintegration and rehabilitation of groups particularly affected by violence: supporting the organization of victims' groups and the provision of psycho-social counselling, reintegration of refugees or displaced persons into a hostile or unwelcoming environment, developing strategies for the social reintegration of child soldiers or adult ex-combatants.
- Peace education and training in civil conflict management methods: advising social organizations and community representatives on concepts and instruments of civil conflict management; training facilitators as trainers in methods of non-violent conflict management; integrating peace education elements into curricula, e.g. to dismantle enemy stereotypes, strengthen a sense of own identity, etc.
- Strengthening the rule of law at local level, e.g. monitoring the human rights situation, protection against human rights violations, local institution-building.

### Are CPS projects also undertaken in escalated conflicts?

CPS projects are undertaken before the eruption of violence, in situations of overt violence, and after the conclusion of peace agreements, for example. The most difficult projects are those taking place in regions with escalated violence. In many cases, the project outcomes are reversed by the conflict and both the project partners and peace experts are threatened. But in practice, the individual phases of the conflict are very difficult to differentiate. In countries with acute violent conflicts, such as Colombia, Uganda, Sudan or Afghanistan, some regions are affected by overt and ubiquitous violence, while others are relatively stable. Here, hopes often rest on a dynamic "from below" and the spread of successful resistance by civil society initiatives against violent actors. At the same time, the priority is to prevent any expansion of violence and maintain scope for civil society action and social pressure for a negotiated solution.



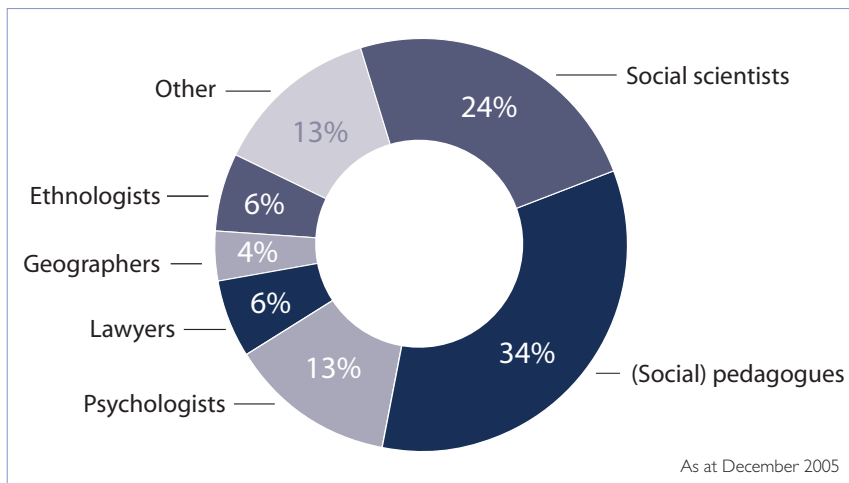
### Who are the peace experts?

Peace experts are selected according to the specific requirements of a given conflict situation and the particular needs of the partner organization. The selection criteria relate to three areas: firstly, general criteria, such as relevant professional experience, minimum age and active engagement in civil society, which must always be met by persons wishing to work with the CPS; secondly, the social and personal skills needed for all projects; and finally, specific skills and qualifications which are weighted according to the project or programme concerned.

Social and personal skills, sound expertise in conflict management and an awareness of regional codes of conduct have proved especially important. The necessary project-specific qualifications can be developed further during the preparation process. To date, more than 60 percent of the peace experts deployed have been women. Many of the candidates are social scientists, pedagogues and psychologists.

Many candidates have experience in development cooperation, peace activism or international human rights work, or have worked as trainers. Very often, occupational groups with a specific qualification profile are sought as newcomers to the CPS's fields of activity: they include psychologists with experience in psychosocial work (trauma counselling), or lawyers with knowledge of human rights instruments, public law and administrative procedures.

credibility and create new scope for encounter. In more symmetrical ethnic conflicts, the peace experts can act as a neutral third party, supporting discussion processes on both sides and encouraging communication between them. As well as providing human and financial resources, they can also draw on their international contacts and, in political terms, can be used as a channel for advocacy work in Germany on the conflict situation. In some conflicts, the presence of foreign experts offers important protection to local organizations.



Compared with other specialized personnel involved in international peace missions, the CPS peace experts are known for the longer-term focus of their work, their engagement and their good local knowledge. As a reliable source of neutral information at local level, often from inaccessible regions, the peace experts offer an important source of supplementary information alongside the officially sanctioned information provided by the media. In their intercultural cooperation with local partners, the peace experts' knowledge, but also their personality and style of work, are very important. The result is a mutual learning process which also facilitates an awareness of both sides' strengths and weaknesses.

The peace experts encounter particular stresses and risks in their project work which are not limited to CPS work but arise more frequently there. This means that the CPS organizations have a special responsibility to provide preventive, supportive and if necessary remedial counselling and training services. Every CPS organization has developed procedures and instruments to deal with this responsibility. They include modules on security and on dealing with stressful situations and traumatized persons, various forms of supervision for the peace experts, and a debriefing after their return.

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### What can external peace experts achieve that local experts could not?

In many conflict countries in the South, there are now many well-qualified local experts. Nonetheless, civil conflict management is still a relatively new field in many cultures. Civil society organizations have not needed to deal with these issues until now, and their first task is therefore to position themselves vis-à-vis new challenges such as violent conflict. An external peace expert can contribute specialist knowledge, propose methods and raise issues in the dialogue with local experts, adapting them to fit local requirements and experience. An external peace expert who is not directly involved in the conflict can make a useful contribution to a shared analysis of the conflict, can offer

### What can the CPS achieve?

On its own, the CPS cannot resolve violent social conflicts, but it can improve the conditions within the projects' local and regional environment to facilitate non-violent conflict management. At the grassroots and middle level of society, the CPS develops structures such as networks and committees or strengthens those which already exist. In the long term, the aim is to influence structural changes such as new administrative regulations or legislation. The CPS can thus improve the conditions for successful political and diplomatic negotiations, safeguard what has already been achieved, and help reduce the likelihood of a new outbreak of violence. The examples in this brochure show how the CPS exerts its impact:

- The local partner organizations/cooperation partners are strengthened in terms of their institutional capacity, qualifications, networking, scope for action, political significance, and motivation, with a view to engaging in constructive conflict management.

- The partner organizations/cooperation partners assume a visible role in the search for non-violent solutions.
- Target groups become more willing to cooperate with others.
- There is an increased awareness of prejudices among population groups in the project region, and these prejudices are reduced.
- Local players are better equipped to resist provocative attempts to make them resort to violence, and/or learn about non-violent methods of resistance and social/political change.
- The debate about ways of dealing with past injustice has been launched and society's willingness to embark on reconciliation processes has increased.
- The population's actual and perceived security has been enhanced.
- The process stimulated by the peace experts is pursued further on an independent basis.

### **You can't eat peace**

Networking and cooperation are both the end and the means of civil conflict management. They are relevant for all fields of CPS activity. Conflict management requires the integration (consideration) of economic development activities. For many people, economic survival is the key priority once the violence ends. Cooperation with former enemies is not yet desired and is not supported politically. In this situation, topics such as job creation, adult education or social services can open up access to peace-related issues and thus encourage peaceful social relations, remembrance and reconciliation.

The CPS responds to these requirements. For example, some CPS organizations are already deploying trainers in "classic" development projects. In general, the peace

experts are keen to engage in dialogue with development agencies, e.g. in related discussions at the German Embassy or in other regional platforms. Together with the local partners, the CPS organizations are attempting to develop joint strategies at country level in a process which draws on the contributions of other actors and aims to intensify the dialogue with German institutions in advance of project planning.

To facilitate more intensive networking at local level among the peace experts from the different organizations, the CPS is developing new media such as an Internet-based dialogue forum. The exchange of experience is intended to support the peace experts in their work in the field and help network the partner organizations. As a supplementary measure to promote South-South dialogue about civil conflict management approaches, meetings of the regional partners are organized in Germany or in the country concerned.

### **New challenges**

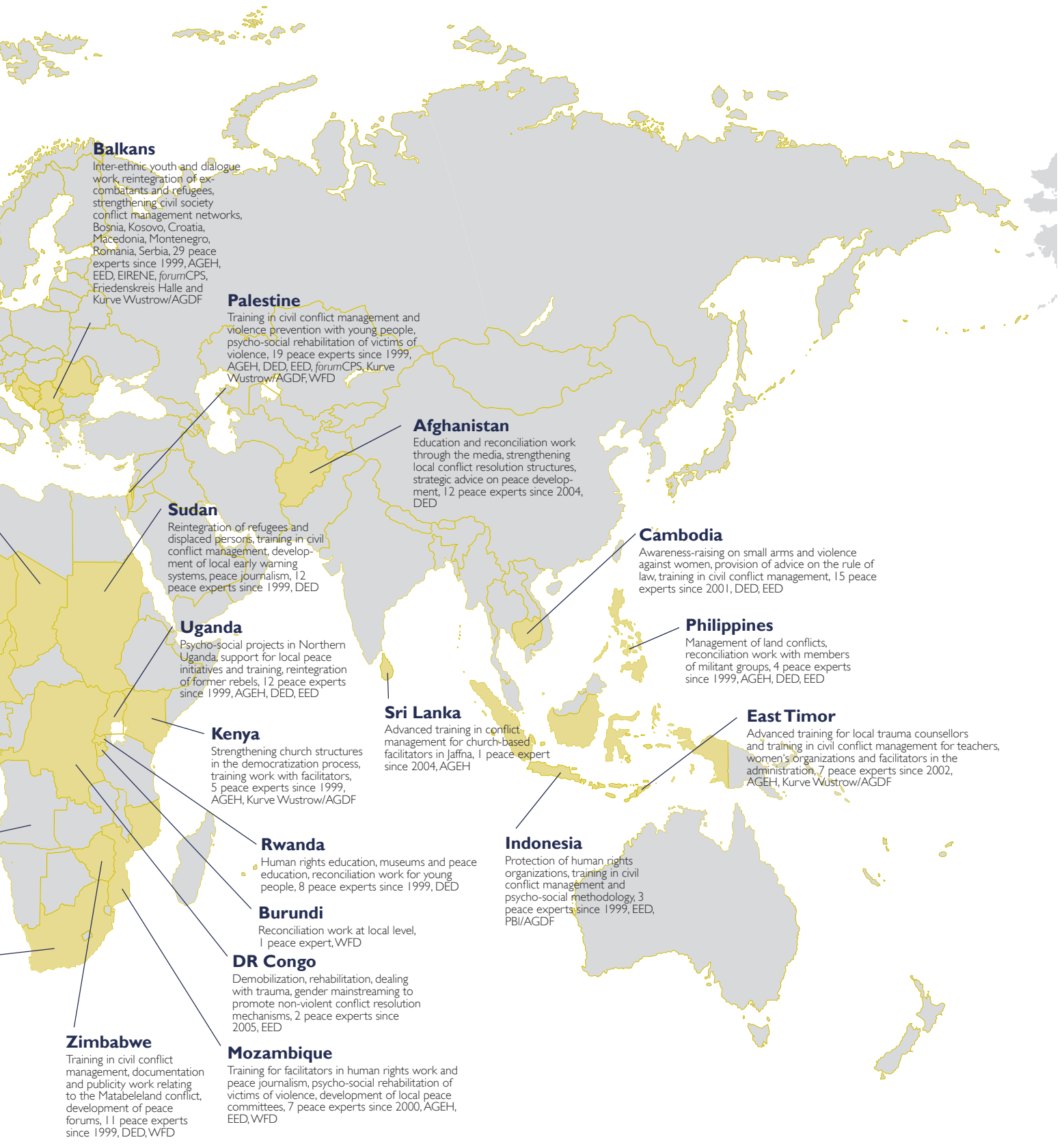
With 39 countries and an average of three peace experts at local level, the CPS can only make intermittent contributions to peacebuilding. Reflecting the amount of funding available, i.e. around 14 million euros per annum, the number of peace experts has stabilized at around 120. This means that besides more intensive networking and integration in development cooperation, there is also still a lack of a "critical mass", as called for in the "500 Experts for Peace" campaign and supported by politicians from various parties.

By training and preparing peace experts, the CPS in Germany is making a visible contribution to the qualification of experts in civil conflict management, thereby helping to equip social workers, pedagogues and other occupational groups with the skills to deal with new social conflicts in Germany too. One challenge which will arise in future is to incorporate the experience gained by returning peace experts more fully into work being undertaken in Germany, e.g. the integration of immigrants.

# The Civil Peace Service worldwide – an overview

For further information on the CPS and individual projects, please visit our website [www.ziviler-friedensdienst.org](http://www.ziviler-friedensdienst.org)





**Balkans**

Inter-ethnic youth and dialogue work, reintegration of ex-combatants and refugees, strengthening civil society conflict management networks, Bosnia, Kosovo, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, 29 peace experts since 1999, AGEH, EED, EIRENE, forumCPS, Friedenskreis Halle and Kurve Wustrow/AGDF

**Palestine**

Training in civil conflict management and violence prevention with young people, psycho-social rehabilitation of victims of violence, 19 peace experts since 1999, AGEH, DED, EED, forumCPS, Kurve Wustrow/AGDF, WFD

**Afghanistan**

Education and reconciliation work through the media, strengthening local conflict resolution structures, strategic advice on peace development, 12 peace experts since 2004, DED

**Cambodia**

Awareness-raising on small arms and violence against women, provision of advice on the rule of law, training in civil conflict management, 15 peace experts since 2001, DED, EED

**Philippines**

Management of land conflicts, reconciliation work with members of militant groups, 4 peace experts since 1999, AGEH, DED, EED

**East Timor**

Advanced training for local trauma counsellors and training in civil conflict management for teachers, women's organizations and facilitators in the administration, 7 peace experts since 2002, AGEH, Kurve Wustrow/AGDF

**Indonesia**

Protection of human rights organizations, training in civil conflict management and psycho-social methodology, 3 peace experts since 1999, EED, PBI/AGDF

**Rwanda**

Human rights education, museums and peace education, reconciliation work for young people, 8 peace experts since 1999, DED

**Burundi**

Reconciliation work at local level, 1 peace expert, WFD

**DR Congo**

Demobilization, rehabilitation, dealing with trauma, gender mainstreaming to promote non-violent conflict resolution mechanisms, 2 peace experts since 2005, EED

**Mozambique**

Training for facilitators in human rights work and peace journalism, psycho-social rehabilitation of victims of violence, development of local peace committees, 7 peace experts since 2000, AGEH, EED, WFD

**Zimbabwe**

Training in civil conflict management, documentation and publicity work relating to the Matabeleland conflict, development of peace forums, 11 peace experts since 1999, DED, WFD

**Sudan**

Reintegration of refugees and displaced persons, training in civil conflict management, development of local early warning systems, peace journalism, 12 peace experts since 1999, DED

**Uganda**

Psycho-social projects in Northern Uganda, support for local peace initiatives and training, reintegration of former rebels, 12 peace experts since 1999, AGEH, DED, EED

**Kenya**

Strengthening church structures in the democratization process, training work with facilitators, 5 peace experts since 1999, AGEH, Kurve Wustrow/AGDF

**Sri Lanka**

Advanced training in conflict management for church-based facilitators in Jaffna, 1 peace expert since 2004, AGEH



# NIGER

## ***Education in Non-Violent Conflict Management***

Around 800 people and thousands of animals used the Maitalokia well in south-western Niger. Without the water from the well, survival in this extremely arid region would be impossible. Besides cattle farmers from the Tuareg and Peul ethnic groups, newly settled Maori arable farmers also drew their water from the well. Thanks to their good contacts with one of the ministries, they managed to obtain an official permit to use the well.

After some time, the intensively-used well was at risk of sanding up. A development project assisted the cattle farmers to repair the well and attempted to establish clear rules on its future use and maintenance to prevent it sanding up again. However, the Maori farmers refused to accept the new rules, claiming that the well belonged to them since they had paid the government for it. The dispute started to escalate, and violent clashes occurred.

At first sight, Niger is a relatively peaceful country. In its 45-year history, it has never experienced civil war. Nonetheless, the CPS has launched several conflict prevention projects in Niger which focus on the management of resource-related conflicts.

In this West African country, farmland, water and forests are scarce resources.

They are also the most important basis of life for rural communities, which account for 80 percent of the total population. Due to massive population growth, droughts and the ongoing process of desertification, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the rural communities to make a living from the remaining resources. The disputes over rights of use are becoming increasingly intense.

As yet, none of these disputes has led to armed conflict or war-type scenarios – unlike the situation in several other African countries. The disputes generally remain localized and rarely erupt into open violence.



A trainer trained by GENOVICO presents the results of a working group



Nonetheless, they are all-pervasive and cause immeasurable economic damage – for while they last, the resources at the heart of the dispute usually remain unused. The direct result is the impoverishment of the affected communities.

Various groups – such as the forestry authorities, the local traditional chiefs, the administration, the mayors, elected for the first time in 2004, and the local councils, the land rights commissions and development projects working at local level – play a role in the disputes over resource use. The various stakeholders bear some of the responsibility for the frequent escalation of apparently minor disputes into complex and highly politicized conflicts – for in Niger as elsewhere, land ownership is the most important power base of the political elites. These conflicts can therefore easily be manipulated politically to fit ethnically oriented ideologies. The uncertain legal situation – with the systems of traditional and modern law clashing, but nonetheless enjoying equal status – also makes it more difficult to achieve solutions to the conflicts.

### **Conflict resolution skills at local level**

A study on conflicts in Niger, commissioned by EIRENE in 1998, revealed that many disputes remain unresolved due to a lack of skills in non-violent conflict resolution at local level. EIRENE, together with KARKARA, a local NGO in Niger, therefore launched a CPS project known as GENOVICO (GESTion NON-Violente de CONflits, i.e. Non-Violent Conflict Resolution in Niger) and is now building a network of conflict resolution experts in Niger. The network provides advice and support to a wide range of local stakeholders throughout the country (chiefs, projects, land rights commissions, the municipalities, cattle farmers' organizations, etc.) in relation to non-violent conflict management.



In the Sahel countries, there are numerous conflicts over water

In January 2002, Günter Schöneegg, a graduate pedagogue from Southern Germany and the father of two children, started work as a CPS peace expert. When he joined the CPS, he could already look back on ten years of experience as a trainer in non-violent conflict management. Over the first three years, and with the help of Illa Almadjir, the project coordinator in Niger, he began by identifying potential members of the network and then trained them as “trainers in non-violent conflict management”. The new experts were monitored as they undertook their first training and conflict mediation projects, which helped to embed their newly acquired knowledge. In addition, peace education materials and training modules were developed for various target groups in French and in the six main national languages, and for persons without literacy skills. In parallel, GENOVICO members were provided with advice and support on an ongoing basis, and work continued on developing the network and on publicity and lobbying. For the training for trainers, the two CPS peace experts selected 35 women and men from all regions of the Republic of Niger, including lawyers, agricultural engineers, sociologists, pedagogues, human rights



At a forum chaired by RE-GENOVICO, traditional chiefs think about new ways of managing conflict

activists, cattle farmers' representatives and women's rights activists. The key criterion for selection was a professional connection with resource-related conflicts. The training consisted of a two-week basic course (providing elementary skills in non-violent conflict resolution), three further training sessions (in adult education, non-violent communication, and mediation) and practical activities (studies, training sessions, etc.). From 2003 onwards, the network members formed regional groups and defined the functions and drafted the statutes for the national network at a series of workshops. In September 2004, the Niger Network of Trainers in Non-Violent Conflict Resolution (called RE-GENOVICO, based on the CPS project name) was formally established and launched. By the end of 2004,

countries, are showing interest in the services offered by RE-GENOVICO. The network's services form the basis for the establishment of non-violent conflict resolution as a standard instrument in development cooperation in Niger. In particular, relating conflict analysis and transformation methodologies to the problems arising from disputes over resource use, which are commonly encountered in development work, is the key to GENOVICO's success. The project is therefore a model of best practice for the CPS's preventive approach.

### So what happened in Maitalokia?

Early on, one of the advisers from the project involved in repairing the well participated in a GENOVICO "training for trainers" course in non-violent conflict management.

As the course progressed, he realised that fair and equitable solutions to the issue of access rights could be found which would satisfy all stakeholders. In addition, however, various human and social problems – mistrust between people from the different groups, conflicting views, perceptions and values, and above all, a lack of communication structures – had to be resolved. The adviser used his newly acquired knowledge and skills directly in order to mediate, encourage positive measures, and facilitate trust-building. After many meetings, the groups agreed on rules to guarantee access to water for all users.

To achieve more of these success stories, the network members are planning to expand their skills and capacities during the second GENOVICO project phase (2005 – 2008) and make the project autonomous in both financial and organizational terms. The experiences

gained during the first years of the project have shown that there is an immense need for training, advice and mediation in the field of conflict resolution. And not only in Niger: in neighbouring Mali, GENOVICO is assisting a partner organization to develop similar structures for non-violent conflict management.



A comprehensive analysis of the interests and needs of the conflict actors is a prerequisite for non-violent conflict management

the network members had held a total of 36 training and conflict mediation courses. The most important target groups were chiefs, local councils and project workers.

The outcomes are extremely satisfactory. More and more organizations, authorities and development projects, including several from other West African



## ZIMBABWE

### *From National Trauma to the Dream of a Peaceful Future*

Adane Ghebremeskel is originally from Eritrea but is an Austrian citizen. After studying political science, he graduated from the International Advanced Peace Studies programme at the European Peace University and is now a peace expert in Zimbabwe.

On 18 April 2005, Zimbabwe celebrated 25 years of independence – albeit without attracting much international attention. Indeed, many organizations which were initially sympathetic to Zimbabwe's post-1980 course have been critical of its political development in recent years. The circumstances surrounding the parliamentary elections in March 2005, from which the ruling party ZANU PF emerged with a two-thirds majority, further fuelled the criticism. Vote-buying by the ruling party, threats by the secret service against members of the opposition, and conflicts within ZANU PF itself all meant that these latest elections – like others before them – cannot be classed as free and fair.

As early as the 1980s, Mugabe and his government revealed their lack of peaceful and democratic understanding when they used force against so-called "dissidents" in Matabeleland in the south of the country; among other things, they ordered the destruction of entire villages in order to crush the supposed popular support for their political opponents. As many as 20,000 civilians lost their lives as a result – a national trauma from which the Zimbabwean people are finding it hard to recover; for overt violence is still routine in

Zimbabwean politics. ZANU PF and the government frequently deploy the police, the army and the secret service, as well as uniformed and armed youth brigades, to carry out political "persuasion".

Since the 1990s, more and more people in Zimbabwe have been subjected to political repression. The Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust (Zimcet), with support from *Weltfriedensdienst e.V.* (WFD), has therefore set up peace forums in three provinces of Zimbabwe.

Large sections of the population feel cheated by the government: not only of economic and social welfare but of peaceful and democratic social relations. According to Zimcet, people feel compelled to signal their commitment to ZANU PF, fearing that otherwise, they will miss out on food aid, jobs, contracts or state benefits. What the Zimbabwean people want is to live together without fear; to express themselves freely, and engage in social, cultural and economic activity.

#### **Peace committees: serving the public's interests**

With support from peace experts like Adane Ghebremeskel, the Zimcet-CPS project helps people in the districts and villages to formulate and articulate their interests more effectively. In his work in Zimbabwe, Adane Ghebremeskel focusses especially on involving a wide range of political and social stakeholders in the programme: representatives of ZANU PF but also the major opposition party, MDC (Movement for

Democratic Change), representatives of the Churches and women's organizations, and war veterans – a group which has often been exploited by the Mugabe government.

At each of their meetings, the peace committees operating at district level focus on a different municipality within the county and discuss peace and human rights, democracy and non-violence with the local people. Local peace activists (facilitators) support this work and liaise with the committees, but they often approach the community directly as well. Besides undertaking education work and demonstrating clearly that political opponents can work together constructively in Zimbabwe too, the peace committees take action whenever there is a threat of politically motivated violence, for example at election campaign events or when specific services are denied to people for political reasons. For instance, the government withdrew some families' food aid because they supported the opposition party. The peace committee intervened and persuaded those responsible that the food aid should continue. Another case involved the family of a child who had been raped; the family was determined to inflict their own brand of justice on the rapist and vowed to kill him. Members of the peace committee managed to persuade the family to adopt a non-violent approach. They ensured that the victim received medical treatment and brought the perpetrator to trial.



Zimcet initiates and coordinates this type of activity. However, a great deal of lobbying work in the political parties' executive bodies is needed simply to set up the peace committees. The organization constantly has to ensure that these political safeguards are in place to enable the committees to exert growing influence over local peace processes. Ultimately, the committees' work depends on members and facilitators being trained and equipped with skills in civil conflict management and democracy-building.

Back to Adane Ghebremeskel: his main task is to provide conceptual support for the project. First of all, he developed the training modules, but he has also worked as a trainer himself and provided important impetus for the support and monitoring of the work in the committees. Over the last four years, a Zimbabwean colleague who knows the region very well has headed the project and runs training sessions at village level. The purpose of this measure is to strengthen non-violence, constructive conflict management and democracy at grassroots level too. In parallel, Adane Ghebremeskel develops the concepts further on an ongoing basis and provides support for "training for trainers" workshops for new facilitators and trainers.

### **More dialogue, less violence**

In the project area, ongoing approaches for dialogue between the two major political rivals and joint peacebuilding can be observed. A further success is that in the March 2005 elections, despite the shortcomings described above, there was the lowest incidence of overt violence in any election for a long time. In the past,



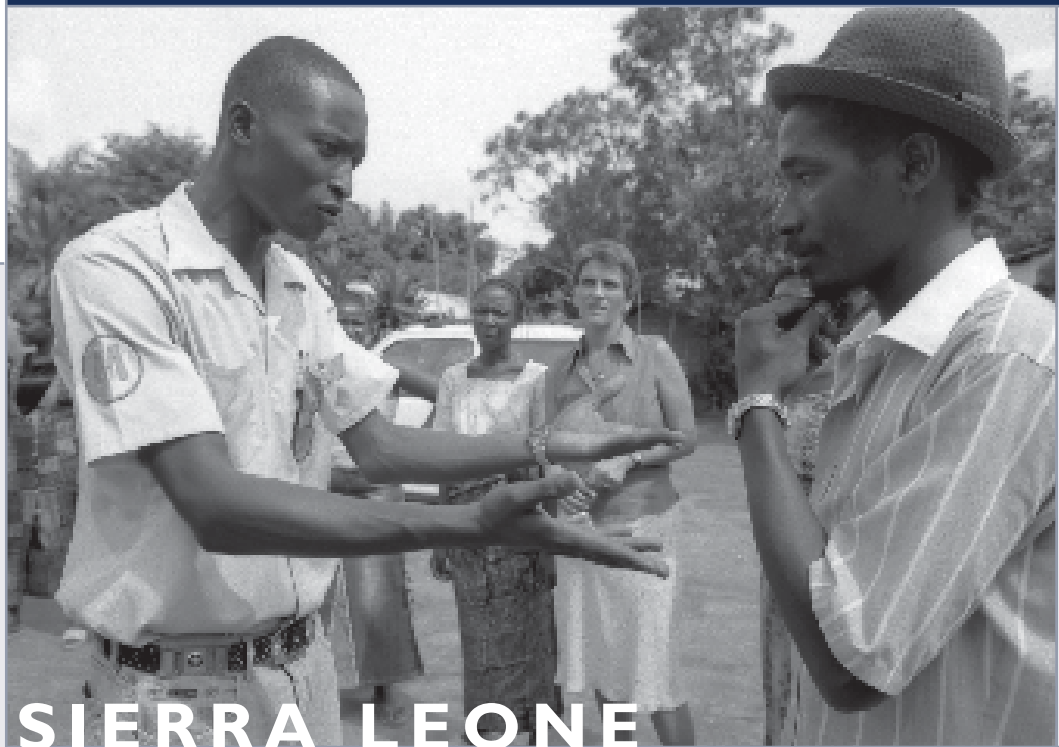


Zimcet workshops teach the local community about the principles of tolerance, democracy and a non-violent balance of interests

ZANU PF and MDC officials have been responsible for inciting the violence, but now many of them belong to the peace committees and thus advocate a non-violent solution to political conflicts.

If this positive development is to continue, the new attitudes and behaviour at the (lower) levels of power must be maintained. The basis for a peaceful future is a social climate in which violence is delegitimized as a means of enforcing political goals. The project's prospects of continued success depend both on political developments in Zimbabwe and on Zimcet's opportunities to further implement its community-based approach.

As assessments of the policies being pursued by Mugabe and ZANU PF vary very widely, it is impossible to predict with any certainty whether the newly acquired two-thirds majority in Parliament will lead to a more relaxed approach to civil society and civil liberties, or whether this majority will be used to further entrench authoritarian rule. In recent months, no further threats have been levelled against Zimcet, unlike the situation in previous years. This can be viewed as a hopeful sign for the project's powers of persuasion. Zimcet – a NGO committed to civil rights and peace – will continue without fail to pursue its community-oriented approach with the support of professional peace experts.



## SIERRA LEONE

### *Reconciliation Work: Building the Future*

From 1991 to 2002, Sierra Leone was ravaged by a civil war which claimed more than 50,000 lives, drove more than two million people from their homes and inflicted physical and psychological damage on most of the population. The situation which led to the outbreak of civil war in 1991 was characterized by an extremely high level of unemployment. Drug abuse, illiteracy and militarization – including the widespread availability of small arms – steadily increased. Those in power took the view that education was not a right but a privilege. The sense of frustration among disadvantaged social groups increased, with young people in particular lacking any prospects or direction. This created a climate which encouraged the outbreak of war. Young people proved especially willing to take up arms and join the rebel forces.

During the eleven years of civil war, education institutions became a frequent target of the hostilities. Schools were looted and destroyed, and teachers and pupils were forced to leave their institutions. Children were abducted and forcibly recruited as soldiers. Almost all the education programmes fell victim to this climate of fear and insecurity. Today, the post-war situation in Sierra Leone is highly complex. Many people who have been scarred by the war are still in the process of healing their wounds and rebuilding their self-esteem in order to cope, at least to some extent, with normal life. It is estimated that one third of the (former) population has been displaced internally or has fled abroad. Large areas of the country are still

depopulated, whereas Freetown and the west of Sierra Leone have been completely overwhelmed by the influx of refugees.

#### **Creating new prospects**

For the government as well as non-governmental organizations working in education, the situation presents an immense challenge. They not only have to offer young people (economic) prospects through formal and informal education; they also have to develop a system of norms and values as a viable basis for peaceful social relations in Sierra Leone. Values such as sharing and helping others are just as important as an awareness of one's own past and traditions, an understanding of the causes of the war, and knowledge of democracy and human rights.

The Sierra Leone Adult Education Association (SLADEA), known and recognized throughout the country for its extensive promotion of literacy, is addressing these issues in its various community-based education and training programmes (which focus, for example, on environmental and resource protection, basic education and professional skills). SLADEA deliberately targets its services towards ex-combatants and former child soldiers as well. However, it does not provide separate services for this target group but integrates them into its programmes alongside other social groups. SLADEA was established in 1978 and never fully ceased its operations even during the civil war.

The aim of the CPS programme is to reinforce SLADEA's community-oriented reconciliation work. During the first phase, Katharina Schilling, a social economist from Hamburg and a CPS peace expert, mainly supported SLADEA in implementing non-formal education and environmental programmes. Once she had settled into her role and gained the confidence of the organization and the target groups, she was able to focus on peace work in a narrower sense; for example, she ran training courses on sensitive issues such as conflict resolution strategies, reconciliation and mediation, and worked with facilitators who shared the learned strategies with community members and school students. Today, the main focus of her activities is to develop and implement programmes which deal specifically with the post-war situation and conflict prevention, e.g. by providing further training for members of all the SLADEA branches in non-violent communication, mediation skills and reconciliation work. Together with local colleagues, she has also produced teaching materials in the fields of peace education and health, notably "SLADEA's Handbook for Mediation". Non-violent communication is now an integral element of SLADEA's adult education curriculum.

### **Stabilizing the fragile peace**

Peace movements and organizations have used the advice and training services provided by Katharina Schilling intensively. To date, SLADEA has trained more than 50 people in non-violent conflict management and they in turn are now running training courses in various parts of the country. As facilitators, they have reached more than 600 participants. The notion that solutions to conflicts must always bring benefits to both sides was unfamiliar. SLADEA's director reports that his compatriots were shocked to discover that no sharp distinction would be made between good and evil, and that revenge was considered pointless. Now, more and more people are convinced, having worked with the project, that non-violent conflict resolution offers the only opportunity to establish peaceful social relations in Sierra Leone. Katharina Schilling persuades people with her clear vision and her sensitive but determined approach.

Even in situations involving the police, many communities are now inviting trainers who have acquired skills in non-violent communication with SLADEA to intervene in local disputes. When a new chief was elected in Kabala, a small town in the north of the country, major tensions flared up between the

families and supporters of the various candidates. The losing candidate was unwilling to accept defeat and the dispute threatened to engulf the entire community. When one of the trainers explored the reasons for the dispute with the two putative chiefs, it transpired that the conflict was not about power but was caused by a longstanding family feud. The trainer helped the rivals



to resolve their differences and the losing candidate was able to recognize his opponent's election victory. There are signs that violent conflicts are breaking out less frequently in affected communities and that families and married couples are also adopting a different attitude towards violence. The aim is to give future generations in Sierra Leone the opportunity to learn from the problems of the past and develop their own perspectives. As part of this process, young people as well as ex-combatants and victims not only require psycho-social support; they must also have the chance to earn a living. One of the successes achieved by SLADEA and Katharina Schilling is that as well as providing training in non-violent communication and conflict management, they are placing people in projects which provide skills training, thus equipping them to enter the workforce. In future, for example, young people in Waterloo, a town around 20 km from Freetown, will have the chance not only to acquire literacy and numeracy skills but will also receive training in ceramics and be able to sell their products. The idea came from the young people themselves. They can thus use their newly acquired conflict management skills in the workplace. This linking of training, psycho-social support and economic prospects makes a key contribution to stabilizing the fragile peace in Sierra Leone.



## MEXICO

### ***Accompanying Human Rights Defenders under Threat***

When Kula, the 5-year-old daughter of Otilia Eugenia Manuel, plays with her toy farm outside her house, she quite naturally calls the green plastic figures “guachos” – soldiers. This is how the military is referred to in the region of La Montaña, Guerrero. Kula’s mother is a human rights defender for the Organisation of the Indigenous Me’Phaa People (OPIM). At a conference on the rights of Mexico’s indigenous peoples in December 2004, she reported on the rape of two Me’Phaa women by members of the military in 2002. Five days later, she received a letter threatening her and her family: “You’ll be resting in peace very soon ... Enough of your stupid lies about the rapes of Valentina and Inés ... By the time we’re done with you, the worms in the ground will be happy; they’re working up an appetite for you”. Otilia Eugenia Manuel reported being subjected to more intimidation attempts during the following weeks. She was also being watched. She was too scared to leave her house in Ayutla, and had to give up working in the remote indigenous communities as the strong military presence in these areas posed too much of a threat.

Otilia contacted Peace Brigades International (PBI) and asked for protective accompaniment. Since February 2005, peace volunteers from PBI have provided Otilia with accompaniment whenever she goes to Ayutla or travels round the country. Since March 2005, Alexander Blessing, a 35-year-old nurse and graduate in Latin American Regional Studies from Cologne, has been one of three PBI peace volunteers in the Civil Peace Service. He is part of an international presence set up in Mexico since 2001 in response to the steady increase in

the number of requests from Mexican human rights defenders.

#### **Mexico – an OECD country with a worrying human rights situation**

The human rights situation in Mexico is dichotomous. On the one hand, President Vicente Fox’s government has signed up to a number of important human rights conventions and describes human rights protection as a political priority. On the other hand, human rights – especially in Mexico’s southern states – are still not adequately protected. In marginalized areas in particular, such as the states of Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero, civil society organizations are coming under increasingly strong pressure from the state. Politically motivated murders, torture, rapes, illegal arrests, racist discrimination and massive intimidation attempts are routine occurrences in the general climate of impunity.

#### **Preventing violence through international monitoring and accompaniment**

The presence of peace volunteers like Alexander Blessing gives Otilia Eugenia Manuel the security she needs to be able to continue her work despite the threats. In April 2005, she was able to participate in a workshop in El Camalote again. In this remote community, she works with women who are subjected to the military’s arbitrary actions in the villages and while working in the maize fields. OPIM works closely with the traditional authorities at local level.

Besides supporting rural development projects, a key focus of the work is on strengthening the rights of this



largely ignored ethnic group. It is very likely that without the commitment of women such as Obtilia Eugenia Manuel, the appalling situation of indigenous women would rarely come to light. However, the difficulties in gaining access to the region, the lack of a functioning legal system and a high degree of militarization mean that they face considerable risks. OPIM's work in the villages is a first step in breaking the vicious cycle of violence, marginalization and constant injustice. As Obtilia Eugenia Manuel says herself: "I want accompaniment from PBI because it helps me a lot to know that I am not alone ... with your accompaniment, I feel safer. I can do more of the things I want to do. The truth is that I am worried something will happen to me or my family or a member of my organization. But we are not going to be stopped, even if they want to kill me. I have decided to do this for the organizations and for my family. I want justice to be done."

Accompaniment by PBI peace volunteers, who do not get involved in the local organizations' substantive work, is an important part of the moral and practical support for human rights defenders and is intended to broaden the political space available to them. Since 2002, PBI's protection for around 20 Mexican organizations and their staff has successfully averted further violent attacks, while international monitoring and information work have raised stakeholders' awareness of the problematical human rights situation in Mexico. It goes without saying that this type of accompaniment, which is designed to protect persons under threat, requires a risk and conflict analysis – also to ensure the safety of the peace volunteer – which often takes several months to prepare and must be constantly updated.



In conversation – peace volunteer Mona Bricke meets German Ambassador Arne Wolf



Alexander Blessing with Obtilia Eugenia Manuel on the way to El Camalote

### **No protection without international support networks**

Nonetheless, the international presence of peace volunteers at local level would have no protective effect if it were not backed by a broad network of national and international contacts. This is the only way for the peace volunteers to demonstrate their credibility and gain the confidence of participants. It is also the only way for them to exert political pressure on potential violent actors. The quiet power of sanctions has an impact because the violent actors know that the political costs of a violent assault on accompanied human rights defenders far outweigh any perceived benefits. The local representatives of government institutions, the representatives of the federal state of Guerrero and of Mexico's federal level are informed on an ongoing basis about the worrying situation of the accompanied persons and the work of the peace volunteers. In the Mexican Federal District, visits by foreign delegations are a regular occurrence for the peace volunteers. Mona Bricke, a 38-year-old bilingual secretary from Berlin, has been a peace volunteer with the Civil Peace Service in Mexico since early 2004. One of her tasks is to brief German Ambassador Arne Wolf about the project. She informs him which regions PBI is currently working in, who is being accompanied, and about the local situation. She also maintains contacts with international organizations and the UN Special Rapporteur in order to safeguard the work at local level and broaden the political space available to the human rights defenders. In Germany, PBI has a support network which can be mobilized if Obtilia Eugenia Manuel or other Mexican human rights defenders are threatened. Its members include around 40 Members of the German Bundestag from all parties as well as many other public figures. On its own, the work of the PBI volunteers cannot bring peace to Mexico – only its people can do that. But with the principles of non-partisanship, non-intervention and non-violence, peace volunteers can provide effective and conflict-sensitive support for the Mexican efforts to establish a dignified peace.



## COLOMBIA

### *Training Facilitators in Non-Violent Conflict Management*

On the morning of 7 February 2004, Jesús María Almeida Benítez (59) and his son Pablo Almeida Ruiz (26) went out to their field to sow melons. The two farmers from Agua Colorada, a small rural community in eastern Colombia, were at work when soldiers from the “Caldas” battalion appeared without warning and opened fire, seriously wounding Jesús. Pablo Almeida Ruiz tried to rush to his father’s aid. He approached the soldiers with his hands up, calling to them that he was a farmer and asking them to let him help his father. The soldiers told him to come closer. When he was just 6 m away from them, they opened fire on him. Like his father, Pablo was seriously wounded. When family members rushed to the scene, the commander of the battalion forbade them to help the two injured men. By the time the soldiers finally allowed the two farmers to be taken to hospital, Jesús María Almeida Benítez had bled to death. His son died on the way to hospital. Later, the military leadership issued a statement claiming that the two farmers had been shot because they were members of a paramilitary group. But the entire village testified that Pablo and Jesús had never belonged to any armed group (paramilitaries or guerrillas) and had spent their entire lives in Agua Colorado.

In Colombia, an undeclared war has been waged between the government, the paramilitaries and guerrilla groups for more than 40 years, with the public caught between the fronts. 44 million people live in Colombia, and 2.5 million of them are “internally

displaced persons” who have been forced to flee their homes but remain within the country’s borders. 57 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. The social deprivation and unjust distribution of property and land are the background to the war between the various violent actors in which the drug trade plays a key role.

The armed actors in this war are the military, paramilitary units and several originally left-wing guerrilla groups. Although the guerrillas call for structural change in the country in their propaganda, they still resort to violence – terrorist attacks, hostage-taking and murder – to achieve their ends. The right-wing paramilitaries and the guerrillas vie for control of entire regions, sometimes with the tacit agreement of the military, at the expense of the civilian population. In both groups, minors bear arms, and hundreds of thousands of children are the victims of internal displacement.

The human rights situation has been catastrophic for decades: in recent years, the annual murder rate has stood at around 30,000 on average, with more than 3000 of these murders being politically motivated. Organizations, groups and individuals who attempt to improve the socio-economic conditions of the poor find themselves in conflict with the drug mafia, the guerrillas, the paramilitaries and the military. As a result, trade union activists, farmers’ leaders, human rights

workers, teachers and journalists are being threatened, abducted, tortured and murdered.

The present government under President Alvaro Uribe is relying on a dual strategy to curb the internal conflict. Firstly, it aims to assert the state's monopoly of force ("iron hand policy"). Among other things, this entails military offensives which also result in human rights violations, with the civilian population caught in the crossfire between the conflicting parties. Secondly, the government is carrying out various reform programmes and is offering the illegal violent groups the chance to negotiate. Legislation passed in 2005 requires all illegally armed groups and brigades to be dissolved and ex-combatants to be reintegrated into society. However, in the view of human rights organizations, this legislation does not comply with international legal standards of truth, justice and compensation for victims.

### Violence is routine

The fate of Jesús María Almeida Benítez and Pablo Almeida Ruiz and their family is not an isolated case; on the contrary, it is symptomatic of the human rights violations being perpetrated across the country, also by paramilitary brigades and guerrillas. In many cases, these human rights violations destroy the social structure, often forcing the affected individuals off their land.

The displaced families – some 2.5 million people in total – face a critical situation. Even among those who are not directly affected by displacement, the willingness to resort to violence is steadily increasing. After decades of violence on a massive scale, violence is becoming an increasingly automatic response to more minor conflicts as well – even within the family.

In this situation, many non-government organizations (NGOs) and social welfare organizations have recognised the key importance of non-violent conflict resolution strategies if Colombia is to embark on the road to peace.

### Peace schools

The Bogotá-based NGO Fundación PODION – an advisory and training organization with links to the Church – works in adult education and provides advice and training for 95 programmes across the country. For several years, PODION has been engaged in capacity-building for non-violent conflict resolution, i.e. personnel and organizational development which triggers change processes towards more democracy. PODION also researches and facilitates non-violent methods of resistance for various church-based and civil society initiatives, groups and organizations. The Association for Development Cooperation (AGEH) has worked closely with this non-government organization for many years. Since 2002, PODION has run a training and facilitation programme in non-violent conflict management, peace and democracy-building known as "Escuelas para Formadores en Democracia y Paz". It is run in cooperation with institutions in eleven regions of Colombia, enabling PODION to reach about one-third of the country with its work. PODION is supported by two peace experts from the Civil Peace Service, both of whom can draw on a wealth of experience in conflict management in Latin America. Social worker Christof Wünsch has many years of experience as a street worker in Guatemala, where he helped establish a national community organization, and pedagogue Gisela Butsch can draw on her 20 years of experience working in special schools in Germany

and her work in a special school in Ecuador. The two peace experts are involved in curriculum development, run training sessions, and provide advice and supervision. As part of the two-year training and development programme, the trainers – working with Gisela Butsch and Christof Wünsch – have trained 54 facilitators in total. Teams of 4-5 of these facilitators work at local level with NGOs and in the "Pastoral Social" (pastoral care teams) in various dioceses. Each team provides support for at least one and usually several local "Escuelas de Paz" which provide further training for around 25 persons – usually local people in



Participants in training for facilitators at a seminar in Cali

leadership positions – each year. At present, the peace experts are providing support for 24 peace schools around the country. As well as offering training, they support the tutor teams by facilitating the practical application of training content.

### Visible successes

The content of the facilitators' training and the "Escuelas de Paz" focusses particularly on the themes of non-violent conflict management, human rights and psycho-social impacts of violence. For example, the seminars address issues such as "What is a conflict?", explain the phases of mediation or illustrate the forms that non-violent action can take. In addition, PODION has run three seminars on pedagogy, citizenship and reconciliation for all 54 tutors.

Numerous enquiries have also been received from other regions of the country – for example, from social institutions, small farmers' organizations or training centres, which are frequently confronted in their daily work with the armed social and political conflict in Colombia and require systematic training. PODION, together with Christof Wünsch and Gisela Butsch, has therefore steadily expanded its range of services since early 2005. The aim is to train at least 39 extra facilitators and establish at least 12 more "Escuelas de Paz" by 2007. The greatest momentum for the future is generated by PODION's tangible success: interviews with people who have attended the peace schools have shown that participants have been able to consolidate their social skills and intensify their work in their leadership roles within their communities or



Creative training methods are used in the specialized course on trauma counselling as well

organizations. The training has also empowered some teams of facilitators to launch legal proceedings against the state in order to protect human rights.

This has happened in the case of Jesús and Pablo from Agua Colorado. The facilitators Edelmira Hernandez and Isabel Barón, who were trained at the peace schools, are providing care and support for the two victims' dependants through their work in the pastoral care team of Málaga-Soata diocese. They are helping them work through the psycho-social consequences of the crime and advising them on legal issues so that those responsible for the two murders are brought to justice before a civil court. The work of the peace schools and the trained pastoral care teams has also empowered the entire village community from Agua Colorado not to be intimidated but to join together and take practical action to support the families of the two farmers, assert the rights of victims and publicize human rights violations in their local area.



## CAMBODIA

### *Small Arms as a Status Symbol in Conflicts*

“One night, when I was sleeping peacefully, two men came to my house. They shot my father dead and beat my mother with their AK59s. My sister was screaming, which woke me and I jumped out of bed. She quickly handed me a long knife and then she ran off to fetch the village chief to help us. But no one came. Everyone was scared because the attackers were armed. All of a sudden, I saw the men run off. They didn't take our motorbike, but they took my mother's gold chain“.

*(Recounted by an 18-year-old from Banteay Meanchey, recorded by the Working Group for Weapons Reduction – WGWR)*

This type of violence is a daily occurrence in Cambodia. It bears witness to one of the major problems facing the country: the frequent misuse of small arms. According to an estimate made in July 2004, between 400,000 and 900,000 small arms are in circulation in Cambodia. No one knows the precise figure. Many weapons are owned illegally. In this south-east Asian country, which experienced 30 years of internal armed conflict, in which the dispersed remnants of the Khmer Rouge continued to operate until 1997 and which has yet to deal with its genocidal past, political, social and criminal violence is routine. The general security situation is precarious, and the non-functioning legal system, extremely high level of corruption and widening gap between rich and poor exacerbate this situation.

A study published by international and Cambodian non-

government organizations (NGOs) in January 1998 shed light on the problem of small arms and possible responses for the first time. It revealed that very many illegal weapons are used by the civilian population and officials, but also by soldiers, the police and the military police. And a further finding: small arms are the fourth most common cause of death and injury in Cambodia, even ahead of landmines.

#### **Traditional conflict resolution is dying out**

Cambodia's civilian population increasingly views guns as an appropriate means of resolving conflicts. Today's older generation was especially affected by the Khmer Rouge's brutal regime. As a result, very few older people are familiar with the country's traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.

Guns are also increasingly viewed as a status symbol. In the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh, they are readily accessible at very low cost. In some parts of the country, one household in three owns a gun.

As a response to this situation, in their study, the non-government organizations recommended the launch of a campaign aimed at reducing the number of small arms in circulation and promoting the use of alternative problem-solving mechanisms. Local and international organizations therefore set up an informal working group in August 1998, known as the Working

Group for Weapons Reduction (WGWR). It became operational in 1999. The WGWR, which gained official NGO status in June 2002, is the first civil society initiative in Cambodia – and one of the few NGOs in South-East Asia to campaign for the reduction and control of small arms. The project activities are intended to raise awareness of issues relating to gun ownership and non-violent conflict management in Cambodia, to develop a system of public gun control, and to support the disarmament process initiated by the Royal Government of Cambodia.

**Peace education and publicity**

Two peace experts from the DED have provided support for the WGWR since early 2002. Their cooperation with the WGWR over the last three years has achieved a great deal. In the field of peace education, Marcos Smith has developed a curriculum for schools. Teachers and NGO staff can participate in peace education workshops run by the WGWR. Children and teenagers have access to books about small arms reduction.

The information and publicity work is making progress as well: the WGWR launched a media campaign focussing on gun ownership, weapons control and disarmament. Gabi Otterstetter and her successor Sofia Hedlund have produced a range of materials for press and publicity work, and the ensuing publicity forced the

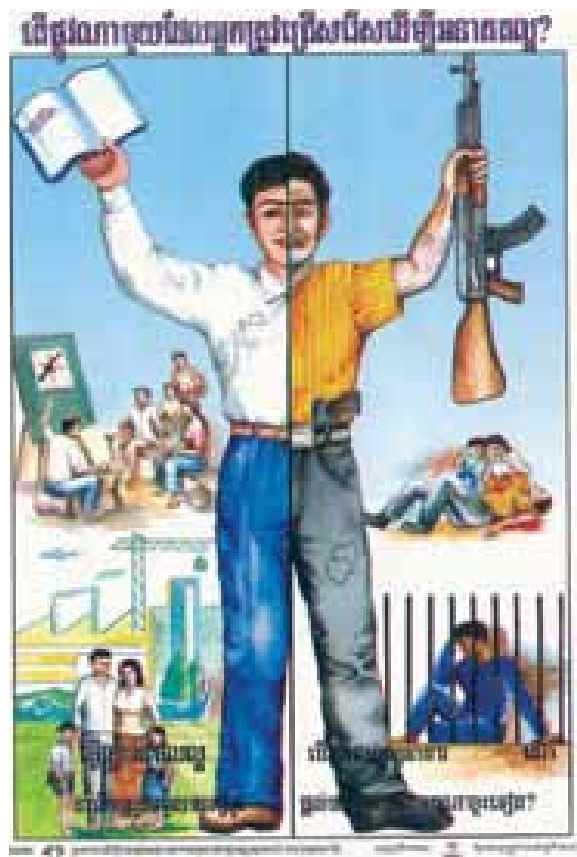
government to address the issue of small arms and security in a pro-active and committed way.

These first steps paved the way for more intensive lobbying and advocacy on small arms reduction. In workshops, conferences and campaigns, the WGWR organized a dialogue between the civilian population and the government. Sofia Hedlund played a key role in planning and organizing these events. With advice from the peace experts, the Working Group set up a small arms database for Cambodia. By monitoring the local media coverage and conducting surveys in local communities, they were able to monitor gun-related incidents on a daily basis. In parallel, research work undertaken by the WGWR revealed the negative impacts of small arms on women and children, urban security and livelihoods.

These documentation and research activities on small arms have provided the first reliable information about the proliferation, background and negative effects of small arms ownership and misuse in Cambodia. These findings can be used as arguments to underpin the advocacy work on small arms reduction at all levels: with the government, security services, and civil society. The lobbying and campaign work and, not least, the peace education element have raised public awareness of the negative effects of “gun misuse”. For the government’s part, the campaign has helped



create a greater willingness to engage more actively for weapons reduction and control. A National Commission for Weapons Management and Reform (NC) and a committee at provincial level have been established and have started to collect and destroy weapons – a development which is undoubtedly due to the work undertaken by the WGWR. By the end of 2005, around 180,000 weapons had been destroyed. Assuming that between 400,000 and 900,000 guns are in circulation, as stated above, this is a remarkable beginning. At the end of April 2005, the government adopted a new arms law – a successful outcome to the WGWR's publicity work and lobbying, monitoring and advocacy over two years. The workshops and conferences have greatly enhanced the dialogue between civil society, government and the security forces about security and the problem of small arms at national and local level. Both formal and informal meetings, discussions and talks are being initiated not only by the WGWR but also by the authorities themselves. Indeed, the National Commission for Weapons Management and Reform (NC) sent an endorsement letter to the WGWR confirming its support and cooperation with the WGWR – an NGO – in the implementation of activities related to small arms and light weapons in Cambodia. Such formal involvement of an NGO is unusual in Cambodia and is a major tribute to the WGWR's work. The WGWR's campaign for peace thus stands a good chance not only of being approved but actually being supported by official bodies.



Education instead of small arms

### Changing behaviour is a long process

Despite these positive developments, gun-related violence still plays a major role in conflict resolution in Cambodia. The WGWR's monitoring activities have revealed that gun misuse noticeably increased in the first quarter of 2005 compared with the same period the previous year. The WGWR therefore plans to intensify its efforts to promote peaceful conflict resolution and problem-solving mechanisms among the rural population through peace and disarmament education in schools and through information campaigns together with other NGO networks. The aim is to reach illiterate people and women, a group especially affected by gun-related violence. The WGWR also plans to further intensify and make permanent its campaign against illegal gun ownership, which is a punishable offence.

The WGWR also intends to step up its advocacy work towards the government and civil society. The aim is to ensure that the National Action Plan which has now been initiated on security and small arms reduction is further developed and actually implemented. The first information events have already taken place. In addition, the WGWR is working to ensure that Cambodia participates more fully in the campaign against illegal arms trafficking in South-East Asia.



A public discussion on the issue of small arms



## KOSOVO

### ***When Withdrawal means Success – Local Peace Networks take on Responsibility***

After five years, peace expert Silke Maier-Witt is handing over her CPS project in Kosovo to Nehari Sharri, who has been the German peace experts' local co-worker for many years. Through his commitment, Silke's successor will continue to provide support to *forumCPS's* Regional Coordinator for South-East Europe, who is based in Belgrade. "The handover of responsibility and the office to local workers was a very positive experience for me", says Silke Maier-Witt. "Although it marks the end of my contract, I have been working for the last five years to empower the people here in the region to take over the CPS's work themselves and develop it further".

The escalation of the conflict between the ethnic Albanian community and the Serbian state in Kosovo began, at the latest, in 1989, when Milosevic exploited the tense situation in the province to shore up public support for his policies. When the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) launched a campaign of violence, it was suppressed by the Serbian security forces, and the willingness to engage in dialogue reached an all-time low. After NATO's military intervention, the province was placed under UN administration (UNMIK). The ethnic Albanians returned, but many Serbs had left the region or were living as refugees in enclaves, guarded by KFOR. Even the Bosniaks living in Kosovo felt insecure and tried not to draw attention to themselves by speaking their own language in public, for example. Despite

the international community's efforts to bring peace to Kosovo and encourage refugees to return, serious outbreaks of violence against the Serb population erupted in March 2004. Even today, the conflicts are continuing, with expulsions, human rights violations and war crimes being key issues in this context. The lines of conflict are now drawn not only between the various ethnic groups and governments but also between refugees, displaced persons and the local population; between victims of human rights violations and war criminals; and between the respective governments' institutions.

The ethnocentric party-political landscape, weak civil society and devastated economy make it more difficult to resolve the numerous problems facing the province, which is still under UN administration. Furthermore, there are no structures to facilitate a collective process aimed at dealing with the past or naming the injustices committed during the war. The large number of missing persons on both sides also makes it difficult to look to the future, although talks are due to begin soon on Kosovo's future status.

#### **Reconstruction along the lines of conflict**

*forumCPS* has opened an office in Prizren, Kosovo's third largest city. As facilitators, the peace experts – especially at the start – were able to assume the role of a neutral third party and establish valuable contacts between advocates of peace on all sides. From the outset,



local staff supported the work of the CPS peace experts and played a key role in ensuring that local and cultural conditions were fully understood.

The aim of all CPS activities is to strengthen local groups and individuals who are working for peaceful change in Kosovo. At the start of the project, the provision of basic skills and training in non-violent conflict management were the priority: this involved mutual trust-building, facilitating dialogue, and mediation to help the conflict parties find their own solutions.

This has been successful in the case of the Blagica and Hysnije families, for example. After the war ended in 1999, the Blagicas – like many other Serb families – were forced to leave their home in Prizren. They found accommodation in a camp in Bresovic/Bresovica in Serbia. The Hysnije family, who are ethnic Albanians, had to leave Kosovo during the war and seek temporary refuge in Albania. When they returned, they found that their house in Radost had been destroyed, but they had no way of rebuilding it. They went to Prizren in search of accommodation and found the Blagicas' flat. They have been living there ever since. The Hysnijos know that the flat does not belong to them. They do not know its owners – they simply know the name "Blagica", as it still appears on the telephone bill. Mediation averted what appeared to be an unavoidable conflict between these displaced persons. Local staff, trained by Silke Maier-Witt, reached



Interview with peace expert Silke Maier-Witt in Prizren

an agreement with the two families: the Hysnijos agreed to vacate the Blagicas' property as soon as suitable accommodation could be found for them, and the Blagicas are prepared to delay their return until the Hysnijos can be rehoused. Both families undertook to work with the local mediators in order to find a solution which is satisfactory to both sides.

### Strategic advice

The *forumCPS* office is facing a growing demand for strategic advice for groups engaged in appraising the conflict and promoting multiethnic cooperation. Recognizing when the time is right for new initiatives, establishing clear goals, identifying potential sources of support, and anticipating the likely difficulties associated with the planned campaigns – all these issues feature in the advisory talks with target groups such as the Kosovo Organisation for New Initiatives (KONI), the "Fisniket" youth group, or the women's organization "Dora-Dores". These organizations have all evolved as a direct result of the peace experts' work. Through individual talks, round tables, discussions, members' meetings, supervision and coaching, the peace experts provide support to various NGOs, empowering them to implement their projects on an independent basis and enhancing their skills through training in civil conflict management.



Burning houses. Children's fears. A cry for help

### **An apology denotes success**

Silke Maier-Witt identifies one of the main reasons why more and more organizations are asking for support from *forumCPS*: "After an implementation period, when we established contact with various local initiatives, word quickly got round that through the CPS approach, we do more to respond to local people's needs in Kosovo than other organizations. From the outset, our goal was to work with them and develop projects jointly; we didn't leave them standing on the sidelines watching what the "internationals" were up to." The exchange of experience and information with international actors, especially the donor community, is therefore a key element of the CPS's work and aims to increase donors' conflict sensitivity. Silke Maier-Witt sums up: "The major success which we have achieved through our work is to have brought the groups to a point where they can pursue the CPS objectives themselves. They are looking for ways of encouraging more people to resist provocation and violence and to work actively for constructive and non-violent solutions". Nehari Sharri adds: "Most of the groups and individuals who have been working with our peace experts – and there are now eight of these experts in total in various regions of Kosovo – were not involved in the violence in March 2004." After the unrest in March 2004, for example, women from the local partner organization Hareja, accompanied by peace experts from *forumCPS*, went to visit Serb women and apologized to them.

Since March 2005, under Nehari Sharri's leadership, one of the two project offices has entered a new phase. The transfer of responsibility for the project into local hands is one example of long-term local capacity-building. The aim is to help ensure that local peace organizations



The physical evidence of violence: getting used to the unavoidable?

become a strong and resonant voice in Kosovar society. This will encourage more people to ignore family pressure and prevailing opinion and – with other like-minded people – approach the other ethnic group in order to find ways of living together in peace.

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## Civil Peace Service organizations



Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden e.V. (AGDF)  
(Action Committee Service for Peace)  
[www.friedensdienst.de](http://www.friedensdienst.de)



Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Entwicklungshilfe e.V. (AGEH)  
(Association for Development Cooperation)  
[www.ageh.de](http://www.ageh.de)



Christliche Fachkräfte International e.V. (CFI)  
(Christian Services International)  
[www.christliche-fachkraefte.de](http://www.christliche-fachkraefte.de)



Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst GmbH  
(German Development Service)  
[www.ded.de](http://www.ded.de)



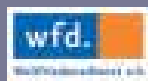
Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED)  
(Church Development Service)  
[www.eed.de](http://www.eed.de)



EIRENE – Internationaler Christlicher Friedensdienst e.V.  
(EIRENE – International Christian Service for Peace)  
[www.eirene.org](http://www.eirene.org)



Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst e.V. (*forumZFD*)  
(*forumCPS*)  
[www.forumZFD.de](http://www.forumZFD.de)



Weltfriedensdienst e.V. (WFD)  
(World Peace Services)  
[www.wfd.de](http://www.wfd.de)



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