

Dealing with Conflicts – Changing Perspectives

Learning from the Experiences of Local Players in Conflict Situations



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Peace – development – justice

The nexus of 'peace, development and justice' is central to church development cooperation. The reasoning behind this was explained as follows by the Council of Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) in its 1973 memorandum entitled 'The Churches' Development Service – a Contribution to Peace and Justice in the World': "Injustice on a national and international level poses a constant threat to peace. Accordingly, peace efforts must also seek to bring about a greater degree of justice and to actively ease social tensions as part of global development programmes. The commitment to development, advocacy for justice and lasting peace are therefore inextricably linked" (Section 14). These three elements established themselves as a guiding principle in the churches' development service because they remain true from all angles: not only is peace threatened by injustice and poverty, but war and violence also hinder the work of development projects, repeatedly undoing the progress made in combating hunger and poverty. This context explains the mission of EED (Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst– Church Development Service) to work together with local development organisations, to combat poverty and to establish justice and peace.

This is why EED also sees conflict-related activities as being an integral part of its mission: the ability to transform conflicts, to settle conflicts peacefully and to provide support after violent conflicts and to prevent crises. This approach avoids the mistake of reducing conflict management to the curbing of violence in the short term. It requires extensive analyses and procedures as well as critical reflection on what has been achieved and what has not gone according to plan. This is an ongoing necessity – after all, even interventions with the best of intentions do not always reach their goal.

Risks associated with development projects

Peace work is based on assumptions as to how peace can be established. Organisations that are involved in providing emergency aid and development cooperation, or that are involved in peace work against the backdrop of violent conflicts, derive their concepts and actions from these assumptions. Fundamentally speaking, a distinction can be made between two types of approaches. The first of these focuses on providing direct assistance for victims of wars and conflicts – for instance by helping to provide medical care in war zones. The second aims primarily to influence the way in which conflicts are settled, to allow these to be settled in a constructive way and to eliminate the causes of violence in the long term. This means, for example, mediating between conflicting parties or exploring ways to address the causes of social conflicts.

EED and its partner organisations follow both approaches. However, a systematic evaluation of experiences undertaking development work and emergency aid in war zones over the last 15 years has clearly shown that both approaches have an influence on the dynamics of a conflict.

Organisations that are primarily concerned with helping refugees, war victims and communities affected by violence and giving them a chance of survival do not wish to unintentionally make the conflict situation worse. In the mid-1990s, an intensive debate began among aid organisations regarding ways to tackle the problem of aid measures having unintentional negative effects. The devastating events in Somalia following the collapse of the regime in December 1991 and in Rwanda and East Congo following the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 revealed with horrific clarity how benevolent aid and development work was systematically

calculated by the perpetrators of violence and exploited as part of their aggressive strategies. Aid organisations were forced to acknowledge that their actions and methods had directly contributed to the escalation of the violence.

As can be seen from the list above, it is quite possible for interventions to have negative effects on peace. This can further drive the wedge between the conflict parties and lead to an increase in open and structural violence.

People who are involved in peace work in their own countries are put in a dangerous situation. Growing cynicism and despondency remains. Rather than promoting peace, time, effort and scarce resources are wasted on the wrong activi-

ties. As a result, international organisations, including EED, examined the correlation between development projects and conflict dynamics as far back as the mid-1990s. This international and cooperative learning process gave rise to the 'Do No Harm' principle. Since then, this principle has been recognised in non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and state development cooperations as a conflict-sensitive method for planning projects and as a guideline for how to act in conflict regions. The 'Do No Harm' principle has raised the awareness of unintended inflammatory side effects in project environments. As well as this, it offers a method for recognising and reducing these.¹

How aid and development projects influence conflicts

- Aid or cooperation always implies a transfer of resources. This can be of a material nature (food, construction materials, medical supplies and money) or a non-material nature (training, contacts). This transfer of resources can influence – via projects – the way the conflict develops.
- The violent parties often misappropriate some of the resources and use them for their own purposes.
- The availability of resources affects the local market, as it has a bearing on wages, prices and profits. In this way, assistance can be an incentive for continuing violence rather than for promoting peace.
- Aid projects have distributive effects in that they benefit certain groups but not others. If a project is only geared towards one subgroup within a conflict (even if this is the group most in need of assistance), it can cause envy and tension to build up between groups.
- Resources transferred via aid projects can replace local means. If some of these means are 'released', they can end up being used in the conflict.
- Projects can have the effect of legitimising certain groups and delegitimising others. If one conflict party and its actions are legitimised, this can intensify existing conflicts.

¹ Anderson, Mary B.: Do No Harm. How Aid Can Support Peace – or War, London 1999

Do No Harm

Aid organisations providing emergency and development aid in conflict areas frequently have the experience that these are abused by the warring parties for their own ends. However, this cannot result in a decision to discontinue aid measures. Because of this, a group of international aid organisations decided in 1994 to systematically examine the experiences of local and international aid organisations in war zones with a view to determining the degree of interaction between project measures and the dynamics of the conflicts in question. The main objective was to determine how aid measures must be organised in such a way that negative effects on the conflict settlement are minimised, i.e. that no harm is done. However, the parties involved also hoped to determine how aid measures would have to be organised so that they would have the effect of promoting peace. Collaborative for Development Action (CDA), a US-based NGO providing consulting services, was commissioned with the task of conducting the Local Capacities for Peace Project (LCPP). The Protestant Association for Cooperation in Development (EZE – a predecessor of EED), was among the group of organisations who initiated this study project with CDA in 1994.

CDA and the organisations involved began by conducting 15 field studies in 14 war zones and crisis regions in Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America. This research examined aid measures provided by commissioning organisations in order to determine the effects that these had on the conflict constellations and the development of the conflict. In this way, two interacting sets of mechanisms were identified. Firstly, there are the effects that arise from the transfer of resources: aid measures primarily take the form of transfers of material and non-material resources in conflict situations. These can arouse envy among warring parties. Secondly, there may be interaction between a project and the conflict context because all action taken conveys an ‘implicit ethical message’ and therefore never comes across as being wholly neutral in a conflict. Based on the identified impact mechanisms, the project participants developed a project planning instrument. The ‘Framework for Considering the Impact of Aid on Conflict’ was presented for the first time in 1996. From 1997 to 2000, the new instrument was tested by 12 organisations from the fields of humanitarian aid and development work. At the final consultation in September 2000, all organisations involved in the test confirmed that the instrument was both effective and practicable.

Since then, this project planning instrument has been ‘on the market’. In 2001, it was presented to over 120 local and international aid organisations, governments and state development services, many of which decided to integrate the instrument in their own project planning. To date, EED has presented the Do No Harm approach in two focus regions. The first of these was in Asia in the North East Indian state of Manipur (UNMM) and, since 2004, also in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and India. The second was in the Horn of Africa in Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Kenya and Uganda beginning in 2001.²

² Since 2007, a number of civil society organisations in the South Caucasus have also taken a great interest in the Do No Harm approach.

What constitutes success in peace work?

Peace work is full of incalculable elements. Attempts to reduce uncertainties by means of increasingly detailed planning are only successful to a limited extent. There are no simple benchmarks for success and failure. Sometimes peace work has a successful outcome precisely because it was sustained doggedly for years without any visible accomplishment. For example, since

than the negotiating table and do not guarantee any kind of lasting peace process with all parties involved. For example, since the collapse of Siad Barre's regime in 1991, the people in Somalia have seen a total of 14 peace conferences and four 'extensive' peace agreements, but the war still continues. Declaring peace is easier than implementing it. Put into practice, peace means a change process towards alternative means of

Reflecting on Peace Practice

The methodical procedure and the resulting outcome of the Do No Harm process (Local Capacities for Peace Project) met with great interest among international peace organisations, who commissioned CDA with the task of organising a similar learning process for them as well. The resulting Reflecting on Peace Practice process aimed to develop criteria that could be used to gauge the impact of peace work more effectively. The main focus was on measures undertaken by external players who worked together with local project partners in an increasing number of conflict situations. The aim was to find out how the activities of external players could help to establish peace and also how they could be used to make peace work more effective and end violent conflicts.

In the second project phase, over 500 peace workers in 16 countries discussed the findings from the case studies. This involved determining whether the case study findings were confirmed – and supplemented – by the experiences of other peace workers. However, as it was only possible to attain useful information by involving local peace workers, roughly half of participants were representatives of local peace initiatives and organisations.

The current phase of the project involves examining findings provided to date by peace initiatives and organisations in several conflict regions (for example relating to strategy development, effectiveness, impact assessment). This process is being systematically monitored and documented to ensure that it leads to well-grounded information.

the early 1990s, the churches in Sudan have attempted through a variety of initiatives and activities at different levels to bring about a peaceful solution to the conflict. When the peace treaty for Southern Sudan was eventually signed, even the representatives of the conflict parties emphasised the importance of this perseverance in establishing peace.

What appears to be a failure at the time may, at a much later stage, prove to be necessary in laying the foundations for a breakthrough towards lasting peace.³ The opposite is also true: Some 'peace breakthroughs' go no further

solving conflicts. Those who wish for peace must reflect constantly and consciously on their own actions. This calls for a willingness to learn from experiences and to put what is learnt into practice.

Accordingly, EED co-financed a further international learning process ('Reflecting on Peace Practice' project)⁴ and was involved in implementing it. In a total of 26 case studies, peace workers examined the effectiveness of peace projects and discussed the findings in several rounds of consultations. One central conclusion was that peace is not merely the sum of activities

³ Anderson, Mary B.: Do No Harm. How Aid Can Support Peace, London 1999

⁴ Anderson, Mary B., Olsen L.: CDA: Confronting War- Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners, Handbook, Boston 2003

and projects. Rather, it requires strategic and conscious links between different activities and players in order to influence conflict dynamics constructively.

How can progress be made with peace processes? This is a question that has occupied people and organisations all over the world. Social and development organisations ask themselves whether their actions add to or take away from the ability of a society to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence. And which role can and should they assume in order for their work to further the cause of peace? How can peace be created? This is a question with which EED also concerns itself in its work with partner organisations in the South and East, in international and cooperative networks and in educational and lobby work here in Germany.

Peace politics in changing times

At the beginning of the 1990s, the end of the East-West conflict nurtured hopes that this would also bring about a 'peace dividend', i.e. generate a new geopolitical dynamic and free up resources for peace and development. A change in perspective was on the horizon, as the notion of change through rapprochement (Egon Bahr, Willy Brandt) proved its worth in resolving the Cold War. The concept of common security and the notion of a 'step-by-step policy' (Wilhelm Wolfgang Schütz) appeared to have a genuine chance of asserting itself in international peace politics. This would have meant understanding that global security invariably referred exclusively to the security of all people and not the protection of one group from the aggression of another group. Allied to this is the understanding that peace-building can only be thought of as a process in which structures can be created step by step and in which the foundations can be laid for communications which in turn can be used to resolve conflicts in societies without the use of violence.

By the mid-1990s, the unchecked genocide in Rwanda and the failed UN peace mission in Somalia had already shattered this hope: not

only was there a lack of political motivation to use the newly released funds for furthering peace and development, but also a lack of suitable mechanisms for internal conflicts with which the conflict regulation mechanisms of the international community of states were powerless to deal.

Furthermore, political and social discussion and international politics were heading in a new direction. A new wave of interventionism – in some cases with military means – could be seen to emerge. These operations were still undertaken within a peacekeeping context, for example within the scope of the United Nations. In the Kosovo War of 1999, the international community of states departed from this framework for the first time – in the name of human rights. In the following years, another new trend was even more visible: development policy instruments for dealing with conflict were used more and more for the purposes of following up interventions. This meant that international troops carried out so-called development projects while the main priority was to increase the safety of troops and to lend legitimacy to the presence of military units. The question remains as to whether 11 September 2001 – as is often claimed – really marked a turning point in international politics, or whether it was just that the events of that day dramatically sped up trends that were already on the distant horizon.

The future and survival of the poor versus the 'security of Europe'

The basic points of reference for the European Union's relationship with the rest of the world are changing, according to a study conducted in 2005 by APRODEV (Association of World Council of Churches Related Development Organisations in Europe).⁵ The EU lays emphasis on 'foreign policy and security policy', and the general public's understanding of security is increasingly geared towards detecting threats. This leads to strategies that are primarily geared towards defence. Other political objectives are dwindling in importance: be it the commitment to peace still emphasised in the draft

⁵ Association of World Council of Churches related Development Organisations in Europe (APRODEV): Whose Security? Integration and Integrity in EU Policies for Security and Development. (Author: Robinson, Clive). Brussels 2005

EU constitution; or the long-term poverty alleviation measures to which the United Nations committed itself in its Millennium Goals in 2000.⁶ In summarising the findings of the study, Clive Robinson stated that the “future and survival of the poor [...] are being sacrificed for the alleged ‘security’ of Europe”.⁷

The threat of global terror has meant that the security concerns of the Northern world have taken centre stage, edging the reality of people in the South and East from the minds of Northern decision-makers. There is little doubt that the poor, who are exposed to insecurity on a daily basis, would often define security in wholly different terms. For instance, a ‘weak state’ is often not the main problem for them, because they have all too often had the experience that insecurity and threats can also come from a ‘strong state’. And women and children, who are particularly exposed to violence in conflicts, would also have a different definition of security than men.

The narrower concept of security does not do justice to people in the North either. Church development agencies Misereor, Bread for the World and EED stress that: “Security is indivisible. Neither North nor South and East nor individual states can secure it and keep it for themselves alone without granting it to the majority of people and of nations. It is comprehensive and must invariably also include economic and social security, an important good for all people. Making security a reality calls for a global balancing of interests, which would require substantial concessions and changes on the part of the North.”⁸ “The churches’ development agencies work in the “hope for a fairer and peaceful world, shaped in responsibility before God”. Development therefore remains a “process of eliminating hunger, poverty, sickness and suppression” with the aim of “helping the poor and marginalised to restore their dignity and rights”.⁹

A similar direction is taken by ‘human security’ concepts which are widely known largely thanks to UN initiatives. These also link human security with considerations relating to human development and their implementation also requires a change in global political thinking. All of these approaches differ fundamentally from a definition of security that focuses solely on fending off dangers: “We are not moved by fear but rather by the conviction that another world is possible – and that it is necessary to create it.”¹⁰

On a political level, however, trends in the North are tending in another direction. There is an increasing tendency for security concepts to view humanitarian, political and military elements in the same light and to link them more closely together. This means that the independent nature of emergency aid can be endangered. As well as this, it gives the impression that military interventions are capable of establishing peace. “Are we to resign ourselves to cleaning up and rebuilding after military force has been used?” ask the churches’ development agencies provocatively.¹¹

Security is directly related to the reduction of economic disparity and a fair distribution of survival chances, respect for human rights, strengthening of constitutional and democratic structures and the protection of resources that are essential for existence. The priority in the long term is to analyse and eliminate the causes of conflicts. Back in 1994, the EKD stated that this “cannot be replaced by short-term military crisis management of symptoms.”¹² It is international organisations and international law that provide protection from unlawful violence and that promote a culture of dealing with minorities and people of other ethnic origins that counters intolerance and nationalistic tendencies.”¹³

⁶ In 2000, the United Nations agreed on eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including the reduction of the number of the world’s poor by half by 2015.

⁷ APRODEV 2005, page 6

⁸ Misereor, Bread for the World, EED: Development Policy in the Slipstream of Military Interventions? 2003, page 2

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² EKD: Steps on the Way to Peace, EKD texts 48, Hanover 1994, page 14

¹³ EKD 1994, page 12

At best, military invention succeeds in silencing the guns

Not only the notion of security is in danger of being drastically oversimplified but also concepts relating to managing conflicts. Discourses in the North are now narrowing down the complex questions relating to foreign intervention in the crises of other countries to the aspect of 'military peace missions' and the attendant co-operation between civilian and military players. Even Germany today is once again clearly open to the notion of resorting to military options as a political instrument. Although civil conflict management has priority in theory, it is less important in practice – as is the long-term outlook for peace. EED, Bread for the World and Misereor stress that: "At best, military invention [...] succeeds in silencing the guns. The painstaking task of balancing interests fairly, of achieving reconciliation and of establishing political and social structures that are conducive to peace can, however, only be undertaken by political means and must for the most part be carried out by the society in question. Peace must grow 'from within'."¹⁴

What consequences does the North's changed outlook have for the South and East? Our partners report that the scope for dealing with conflict has shrunk in their countries. It is now easier than before for Southern governments to silence critical voices from society by intimidating them, muzzling them or accusing them of terrorism. In Southern countries, the 'war on terror' has worsened conditions for internal players working to resolve conflicts.

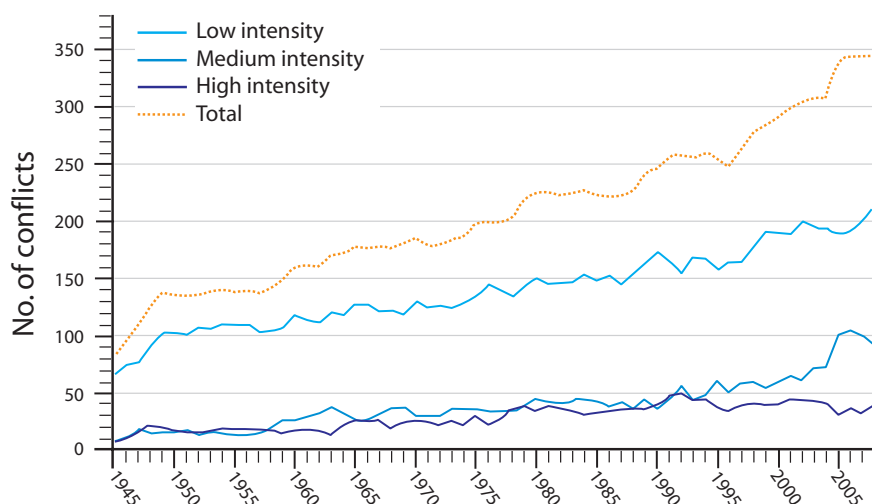
Previously important criteria such as respect for human rights have to take a back seat. As church development agencies Misereor, Bread for the World and EED stated in 2003: "Should we welcome the fact that even governments who violate human rights, subjugate their own people and engage in corrupt practices suddenly become beneficiaries of development aid in the hope that this will lead to a reduction in the threat potential in their countries?"¹⁵ Important ground has been lost and it will take a great effort to win it back.

Conflict, violence and war in changing times

According to the Human Security Report, the number of armed conflicts has fallen by a total of 40 percent since the end of the East-West conflict.¹⁶ Within this overall trend, however, there are significant fluctuations in the number of wars and intense violent conflicts. The Conflict Barometer of the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK) states that the number of wars and major armed conflicts was at its highest in 1992 (42) and at its lowest in 2005 (28). In 2006, this figure increased to 35 and is at 31 in 2007.¹⁷

The research institutes cite the end of the East-West conflict, the work of the United Nations and the extensive peace work activities as the main reasons for this decline. Other reasons include balanced economic growth, the establish-

Conflicts of low, medium and high intensity worldwide from 1945 to 2007



¹⁴ Misereor, Bread for the World, EED, 2003, page 3

¹⁵ *ibid.* page 1

¹⁶ See Human Security Report. War and Peace in the 21st Century, Human Security Centre 2005; (<http://www.human-securityreport.info>). This trend is also confirmed by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI – www.sipri.org) and the AKUF war archive (www.sozialwiss.uni-hamburg.de).

¹⁷ See Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK): Conflict Barometer 2007. 16th Annual Conflict Analysis (<http://www.hiik.de/de/konfliktbarometer/index.html>)

ment of democratic systems of government that guarantee that all sections of the population are represented, and the growing competence of state bodies as regards transparent and responsible governance. Nonetheless, research institutes indicated that, in many cases, armed conflicts are also suppressed and closed off without the underlying reasons being investigated or resolved. This means that these remain a threat to future peace.

The face of armed and violent activities has also changed. The term 'new wars' describes the current conflicts that fall outside the definitions of conventional interstate or civil wars.¹⁸ The perpetrators of violence are 'entrepreneurs' and 'pistoleros' who can conduct their business best in an insecure and violent environment. It is not a question of overthrowing dictators or gaining power but rather of profits and market control. Increasingly brutal methods are used as the lines between conflict and criminality become increasingly blurred. Civilians rather than other soldiers are frequently the targets of their operations.¹⁹

'Armed conflicts' over profits and market control

For the most part, the 'new wars' are waged in Africa. In the first years of the 21st century, more people died there than in all other regions of the world put together. Widespread poverty, disintegrating traditional structures that once offered mutual support, poor infrastructure and weak public administration combine with the surplus of cheap guns and other arms. Because of this, conflicts in Africa are especially difficult to resolve, contain or end peacefully. On the contrary, there is a seemingly unending spiral of recurring violence.

Civil society enters the picture as a peace work force

In view also of this new threat to the security of civilians, the instruments employed by the international state system are gradually showing their limitations. As a result, state players such as the UN, the EU and national governments are increasingly encouraging non-state organisations to assume an active role in existing armed conflicts and to get involved in peace talks – something they previously endeavoured to prevent. This means that civil society players are now recognised within the scope of state concepts for crisis prevention.

This change in perspective has two effects. Firstly, the state institutions recognise that local players have been involved in transforming conflicts for years, both at a local and international level. And secondly, this has prompted the organisations in question to review their experiences systematically with a view to improving their skills, instruments and approaches.

Back in the mid-1990s, development organisations (primarily in the South and East) had already begun to examine the correlation between violent conflicts and opportunities presented by their development work. When local warlords are increasingly integrated in the global system of production and distribution of natural resources – for instance through illegal dealings with companies extracting oil or other natural resources or through illegal trade with materials such as coltan or diamonds – the destructive effects of local conflicts have an enormous influence on any attempt to combat poverty and to improve conditions for the local population.

¹⁸ Mary Kaldor coined the term 'new wars' in 1999; Kaldor, Mary: *Neue und alte Kriege* [New and Old Wars], Frankfurt/Main 1999

¹⁹ Grävingholt, Jörn; Hofmann, Claudia; Klingebiel, Stephan: *Entwicklungszusammenarbeit im Umgang mit nichtstaatlichen Gewaltakteuren* [Development Cooperation in Dealing with Non-State Perpetrators of Violence], German Development Institute (DIE) studies 24, Bonn 2007

However, merely examining violent conflicts is not sufficient because it does not help to understand the full reality of conflicts as experienced by organisations in many countries. Over-shadowed by wars and massive organised violence, the vast majority of violent conflict situations take place beyond media coverage and most research activities. According to the Conflict Barometer 2006, violence is only occasionally used in 243 of 278 conflicts, i.e. the vast majority occur without violence.²⁰

In its development work, it has been repeatedly the experience of EED that organisations working to improve conditions in conflict zones are confronted with violence and repression on a daily basis, as well as with structural injustice and the systematic exclusion of certain sections of the population from political, economic and social participation. For this reason, they also see their work as conflict management. They work to ensure that critical phases in the development of their country remain free of violence, for example by combating violence against women, undertaking educational work prior to elections or organising election monitoring. Work such as this that is undertaken to prevent violence – from individual constituencies to involvement in state commissions – often remains unseen by the outside world and is not recognised as dealing with conflict. On the contrary, the power elites in question – and not only they – often criticise this work as being an inadmissible politicisation of development cooperation and interference.

Exterior and interior perception in conflict situations

However, this work in particular is of great importance for lasting peace. Local development organisations that work to establish democratic structures, demand codetermination and develop non-violent solutions to conflicts succeed in the long term in preventing smouldering conflicts and violence from escalating. If the situation has already escalated, the involvement of local

organisations increases the chances of a successful outcome for peace processes. This is because it has become clear that ‘peace must grow from within’. This was the title and main theme of a workshop report produced in 1999 by six church development agencies (AGKED).²¹ The report outlined the experiences of partner organisations from Africa, Asia and Latin America that were unable to continue their project work as planned owing to internal crises and violence. Nonetheless, they did not give up their development work. Nor were they content just to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population brought on by these crises. They got involved in the conflicts. They deliberately addressed the political and social tensions in their society and the violent escalation of these. They changed their approach to their work and contributed to reducing violence in the project area. And they worked to ensure that the hostile groups would be able to live together again. Since then, the EED partner organisations have garnered further experience working in violent conflicts. They analysed these experiences and further enhanced their approaches and methods. The results of this process are summarised in this publication.

“Peace [can] be promoted through external intervention but cannot be created by these means”.²² A comparison of the experiences garnered in various projects and countries reveals surprising parallels. The experience of many EED partner organisations suggests that effective conflict management and violence prevention activities are often carried out to address problems between social groups without the entire country being perceived by foreign organisations or by the media as a crisis zone. A continual, practical, process-oriented form of support increases the sphere of action of local organisations in crisis countries in a direct and sustainable way and is therefore essential. However, questions regarding ‘justice and peace’ cannot be answered from the Northern perspective alone. The greatest potential in making peace processes a success lies in the

^{20, 21} Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIC): Conflict Barometer 2006, page 1

²² EKD: Richte unsere Füße auf den Weg des Friedens [Guide our feet into the way of peace: Violent conflicts and civil intervention with examples from Africa – challenges to church action] a study by the Chamber for Development and Environment of the Protestant Church of Germany (ed), EKD texts 72, Hanover 2002, page 55

societies experiencing violent political and social conflicts themselves. On a declamatory level, this is not disputed. This looks different on a conceptual level, in discourses relating to peace work and development in Europe and the United States, and on a financing level. People from the global North think up solutions for problems which affect or will affect people in the global South for the most part.²³

A different approach is taken by church-based development cooperation. This is derived from the information and experience garnered from years of development policy work together with

partners: measures that aim to have an effect on social transformation, political reforms and economic participation can be effective in the long term when they are supported and 'owned' by the local population. The aim of EED peace work is therefore to actively address analyses, descriptions and evaluations of people and organisations in conflict situations, to support them in developing and implementing their own solutions and strategies and to bring 'voices from the South and East' into the political, social and expert discussions in their own country and internationally.

The international dimension of local conflicts

In 2000, the POLE Institute, an EED partner organisation based in Goma, Congo, conducted a study on the mining of coltan ore²⁴ and the consequences for conflict dynamics in the Congo. EED published this report in German. The study gives a voice to those affected. The authors write: "This adds a local dimension to the international discussion which otherwise remains overlooked in the debate about the exploitation of the natural resources of the Congo." In doing so, the authors of POLE also aim to encourage their own people to become involved in shaping the situation themselves. "Only when the Congo is shaped by the Congolese will it be possible to put an end to the historical pattern whereby the country's resources are exploited by domestic and foreign forces without the involvement of the local population."²⁵ Such a historic pattern of interpreting conflicts based primarily on outside perceptions is not unique to the Congo and the exploitation of its natural resources. It affects most countries and regions of the South and East where violent conflicts are occurring and therefore much of the discourse about peace work and security.²⁶ Debates about forms of interventionism, about security, peace and peace work, which stimulate intellects and regulate funds in the North come through as concrete opportunities for or limitations of action in the South and East. They open up possibilities or harbour risks and growing uncertainty.

23 Auga, Michèle: *Krisen und Kriege in einer entgrenzten Welt*. [Crises and Wars in a Boundary-Less World] Requirements of German Peace Politics, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Berlin 2007.

24 Crude coltan ore is the abbreviation for columbite-tantalite. Coltan is used primarily to make the rare and precious metal tantalum (Ta). Tantalum is used in chemical plant engineering, in the space industry and in computer and communications technology (e.g. in mobile telephones). The US Department of Defence (Pentagon) classified tantalum as a 'strategic resource'.

25 EED: *Coltanfieber*. [Coltan Fever.] How a rare metal changed life in the war-torn east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Authors: Johnson, Dominic; Kayser, Christiane; Tegera, Aloys, EED, Bonn 2002).

26 This was also the experience of the network of Catholic development organisations (CIDSE) in 2005: *Study on Security and Development*. A CIDSE Reflection Paper, Brussels, January 2006.

Partiality, impartiality and omnipartiality

The discussion about the role of civil society players focuses to a great degree on the specific roles assumed by the various players. Local civil society players are frequently told that they are more a part of the problem than part of the solution. This is because civil society organisations have also contributed to the escalation of many conflict situations into violence. For the churches and their works, the genocide in Rwanda in particular was a traumatic event in this regard. Not only did the organisers of the genocides make use of church documentation but also received support, be it openly or secretly, from individual members of the church or even from church institutions.²⁷

But does this mean that local players must always be partial and therefore more of a part of the problem than of the solution? Or that intervening players from abroad can play a more impartial role? Local players are always tied to diverse loyalties. These include family relationships, membership of religious communities, common history (e.g. attended the same schools and educational facilities) and – not least – political and ideological beliefs. Aware of these ties to the conflict situation, civil society players organised themselves into networks and alliances. It is conspicuously often the case that organisations and players with very different orientations end up working together. “Working together in networks forces us to discuss our own convictions and to come to terms with other viewpoints. In this way, we can find better solutions and strategies and have a broad support base. It also offers us protection – after all, unity is strength”, explains a partner in Southern Sudan.

Peace workers intervening from outside are not able to play an impartial role from the outset. As illustrated by the above example, local conflicts invariably affect national, regional and international interests as well. This link is known to the population affected by violence,

as they suffer every day on account of it. Because of this, external players need to rely on a well-established and broad basis of trust before intervening with a view to de-escalating violence and promoting peace. EED’s experience has been that church-based peace work was able to make an effective contribution where development policy cooperation was continued even under extremely difficult conditions and in spite of major problems.

Bias towards Northern interpretation

Interstate development cooperation involves drawing up lists of countries in which the risk of violent conflict is perceived as being high. Once the need for preventative measures is determined in this way, development cooperation with the country in question should be sensitive to conflict.²⁸ It is therefore the interpretations of Northern experts that are instrumental in deciding whether, when and – above all – in which countries conflict management is required and development aid should be focused. However, the examples outlined in this publication – e.g. from India or Kenya – show how important this work is, even in societies in which conflict potential is classified by warning lists as being low. The work undertaken by church aid agencies with their partners is on a long-term basis and involves a continual, joint examination of work and of changes in their environment. In very many cases, this allows tensions to be recognised in the social fabric and addressed before they escalate. This means that, above and beyond their programmes, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can make important contributions to conflict situations that emerge ‘from below’, thereby addressing their society’s structural problems at an early stage. This reduces the long-term risk of violence as a result of smouldering conflicts. Once problems have escalated, they frequently have access to influential elements or connections in the society which can help to reduce the violent dynamics or the social, economic, political or cultural factors that trigger

²⁷ McCullum, Hugh: *The Angels Have Left Us: The Rwanda Tragedy and the Churches*. Published by the World Council of Churches (new edition), Geneva 2005

²⁸ The BMZ (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) prepares a crisis early warning system of this nature (<http://www.bmz.de/de/themen/frieden/index.html>): Every year, it commissions the German Institute for Global and Area Studies in Hamburg with the task of measuring crisis indicators and of classifying countries with regard to conflict situations (www.giga-hamburg.de).

them. Even if, from this perspective, it appears to be advisable to involve local organisations in peace processes, opinion is divided among Western development and peace organisations.

Non-governmental organisations whose work is reported on in this publication

EED's work abroad is with non-state organisations that are established and legally registered in their respective countries. These vary widely in their objectives, organisational form, social background, size, activities, approaches and levels of action. Some of the organisations are specialist departments within national churches; others combine different Christian denominations in a single association or for a social purpose (e.g. health, education or human rights). These include non-governmental organisations involved in social and development work, women's groups and networks that bring together many different players for a common purpose. The common factor among all of these is that their original development work is increasingly geared towards a conflict-sensitive, if not expressly peace-building orientation.

Church organisations

The Church of South India (CSI) was founded by several Protestant churches in the four Southern Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu in 1947. Its development activities are bundled in the 'Board of Diaconical Ministries'.

In 1913, a total of 26 churches and 16 associated members – free churches and 'African churches' – from all over Kenya joined together to form the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK).

The Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC) is an ecumenical organisation in which Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox churches in Uganda have come together for joint activities since 1963.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Réseau d'Innovation Organisationnelle (RIO) is the development office of the Eglise du Christ au Congo (ECC) in the province of South Kivu.

The Service Ecuménique pour la Paix (SEP) is a non-governmental organisation established by the Reverend Luc Norbert Kenne in 1995 with members of different churches in Cameroon devoted to peace and socio-political issues.

Founded on the Christian faith, this organisation works for non-violent social change to create a society that allows participation on the basis of peace, justice and reconciliation.

Women's organisations

Olakh, the Feminist Documentation, Resource and Counselling Centre, is a place of refuge, documentation centre and advice centre all in one. Founded in a 1993 conflict to provide a means of communication and support for women, it was the first women's centre in the Indian state of Gujarat. Olakh means 'identity' and refers to the diversity of people as women and men and their other sexual, religious and social identities.

Sahr Waru – Women's Action and Resource Unit (founded in 1997, also in Gujarat) is the regional branch of the 'National Alliance of Women', to which women's organisations from 12 Indian states belong.

Non-governmental organisations and networks

The Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC) is a human rights organisation in Nepal which was founded in 1988. In 75 districts of the country, INSEC works together with volunteers and local NGOs who observe human rights situations and are active in human rights education and lobbying activities.

Founded in 1978, the Sierra Leone Adult Education Association (SLADEA) consists of organisations from all of the country's provinces that are active in the field of adult education.

The Institute for Social Democracy (ISD) is based in New Delhi, India. Since 2004, this organisation has advised grassroot groups and development organisations on dealing with fanaticism in their environment and with the resulting tensions between people of different religious and cultural traditions.

Founded in 1999, the Hill Tracts NGO Forum (HTNF) in Bangladesh is an association of 63 locally based non-governmental organisations of indigenous minorities based in Chittagong Hill Tracts. Since the state of Bangladesh was founded, these minorities have suffered under the systematic settlement policy of the Bangladesh-dominated government.

In the remote North Indian state of Manipur, which has been affected by violence for decades, multiethnic NGOs with different fields of specialisation joined together to form the United NGO Mission in Manipur (UNMM) in 1995; today there are over 100 member organisations.

The South Asia Forum for Human Rights (SAFHR), which was founded in 1992, is a worldwide network. Based in Kathmandu, Nepal, this human rights forum aims to co-ordinate activities, facilitate interaction and provide training to 35 human rights organisations from Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal.



On the path to dealing with conflict

On the path to dealing with conflict

These organisations and networks are not traditional peace organisations. Most have been involved in development work for many years and have seen this as a way of contributing to the promotion of justice and peace in their respective societies. Actively seeking out constructive solutions for conflicts required a conscious shift from indirect to direct peace work. This was invariably triggered by conflicts coming to a head in previous work environments and by the risk of violence. Or a civil war situation made it impossible to continue previous development activities in the same form.

In its work with its partners, EED has frequently observed that local organisations cannot ignore conflicts and the escalation potential which stems from their work. When, for example, the work involved helping the poor to organise themselves, leading them to demand a greater role in social decision-making processes, this perception of rights soon clashed with existing power structures. Once these correlations became clear, it was necessary to find ways to regulate conflicts or address them by political means without causing violence to erupt. Structural factors concealed behind the surface of the conflict were to be taken into account along with the willingness to resolve tensions peacefully or to react without violence to the power of others.

Within the context of their work, peace organisations perceive the state as an all-powerful force that assumes numerous and conflicting roles. Governments, public authorities and the social elites who control the state machinery are often seen as a central source of insecurity in society. At the same time, there are very often individual institutions or people within the state machinery who work to settle conflicts by means of civilian mechanisms or to find constructive solutions for reducing violence. Partner organisations must constantly strike a balance between cooperating with state offices

and – without falling within their influence – forcing them to meet their responsibility for good governance and accountability to their citizens. These partner organisations often find that they are eyed with distrust by their state counterparts rather than as valued partners in the search for ways of resolving social tensions.

Conscious decisions for development-oriented peace work were also taken by organisations – like the Sierra Leone Adult Education Association (SLADEA) – in countries whose conflicts can be classified as ‘new wars’. In lengthy, furious conflicts, driven by a mixture of political, economic and criminal motives, they attempt to establish conditions for a dependable, just and lasting peace structure. And they work towards reconciling people who have experienced or caused suffering. Although the conflicts varied widely, their roots were generally in similar causes: resources being controlled and exploited, the population being deprived of rights and access, violence being committed by patriarchal powers, or poor government.

The following chapter outlines – in interviews and brief reports – the work of the 13 non-governmental organisations. Who they are, how they work, what experiences they have garnered and what learning processes they have undergone. This serves to illustrate how the role of local organisations, their strategies and their positioning in their societies have changed. The examples demonstrate how and why the scope of action of local organisations has increased to international level. The sheer variety of problems and challenges show the different conflict constellations in which the organisations are active. Do they operate on a local level or on a national level? Do they work in war zones, in post-war situations or endeavour to prevent violence? Is there common ground – even if organisations are active in different conflict situations, have different religious backgrounds and completely different profiles? The examples beg a number of questions.

What lessons can be learnt from these similarities and used to render international peace work more effective? What are the limitations to what can be achieved by civil society players? And where does the responsibility lie with other players?

How peace grows from within – the experiences of organisations in conflict regions

For many civil society organisations, working to establish peace and to find constructive solutions for new conflicts constitutes a new and frequently risky challenge. In order to ensure long-term peace in conflict-ridden regions, the local people must be in a position to explore new paths, to establish structures for peaceful conflict solution, to demand participation in political matters and to be capable of doing so. They must find ways of raising public awareness of the political and economic interests that frequently sustain regional conflicts. In this regard, they can and must be supported by international state organisations and by state and non-state development organisations. Accordingly, the project partners benefit from a variety of activities such as training in strategic planning, PR activities, conflict management methods or organisational development. Many projects would not be possible in the first place without financial support from abroad. Nonetheless, EED believes that the opinions and objectives of the civilian population and the expertise of committed activists from the conflict region should constitute the focal point of all peace and development work. In this way, both EED and the local organisations are completely aware of the risks.

Because of this, for example, the eight Southern Asian organisations presented in the previous chapter have been dealing with the following question extensively since 2004: how is the development work of partner organisations in the region correlated with factors from the conflict contexts in which they work? The conclusions and recommendations derived from

this were published by EED in September 2006 in 'People Building Peace'. In October 2005, the experiences of the Asian organisations were also drawn upon for a workshop entitled 'Development in a Troubled World – Dealing with Conflict in Constructive Ways'. Here, EED's Desk for Peace and Conflict Management Issues, the Working Group on Development and Peace (FriEnt)²⁹ and the Regional Desks for Africa and Asia invited participants from Asia and Africa to take part in a joint learning process about constructive ways to resolve conflicts. They combined the workshop with a public specialist talk in Bonn which also featured other German NGOs and ministerial representatives. In this way, the event offered both a chance for participants to subject their own work to critical review and to undertake lobby work in Germany. This publication presents to a wider audience the experiences, reflections and findings shared and discussed by the representatives of the various organisations in Bonn. Herewith, EED declares its support for the promotion of peace by supporting initiatives 'from the bottom', for the understanding of peace work as a process and for responsible action at an international level. The latter becomes especially necessary where economic and political interests extend far beyond the local conflict and hinder stable change.

²⁹ www.eed.de/frieden; http://www.friente.de/downloads/Relief_and_Development_Assistance.pdf; <http://www.friente.de/en/members/eed.asp>

Local communities know what peace means for them

In the same way as EED makes the case for using the knowledge, contacts and experiences of local actors when shaping peace processes and working closely together with them when planning projects, it has also been the experience of EED's partner organisations that their beneficiaries have very specific ideas about the conflicts that exist. Local people are well aware of their situation and how the conflict affects them. They know the players who have pointed the way ahead or who are capable of doing so. They understand their interests and know the forces that can fuel violence. What is more: the local communities know what peace means for them. They may lack the courage to get actively involved for fear of retaliation from the aggressors. They may lack the means to bring about genuine change. Nonetheless, they know what a difference peace makes in their surroundings and how it can be achieved.

"Local communities know what to do and how to do it" – this is stressed by EED's various partners again and again, calling for the opportunity to reinforce activities 'from below'. Because of this, the challenge for peace workers is to pay close attention and to develop peace work approaches based on the knowledge obtained from the local communities and to give them the opportunity to assume responsibility

Mediation in a refugee camp

Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC), Uganda

Canon Grace Kaisso (General Secretary): "In a refugee camp in Northern Uganda, there were violent clashes between various Sudanese refugee groups and between the groups and the camp management, leading to a number of deaths. We were asked to help prevent revenge attacks and resolve the conflict. As UJCC representatives, the first thing we did was to talk to those responsible for each individual community. We wanted to find the people in each group who could help us to end the violence. Together with them, we then organised an event in which all those concerned were charged with the task of developing a way out of the conflict.

Men, women, young people, religious and cultural opinion-leaders – around 60 people in all – came together during this five-day meeting. UJCC mediators with experience in conflict transformation headed the meeting, which was held in a university far away from the refugee camp. The event included spiritual reflections and an opportunity for participants to express and share their feelings on the incidents and the factors causing the problems associated with living together in the camp. The participants worked together to identify the situation and considered possibilities for resolving it. They developed a plan to be implemented and learnt from the UJCC mediators a number of techniques for mediating between groups and for ensuring peaceful conflict transformation.

The meeting had begun with an angry exchange between the groups. Gradually, however, the participants calmed down and found constructive ways to communicate with one another. They agreed on a framework designed to allow good relations between the tribes in



future. This included an 'advisory committee of elders' consisting of spiritual leaders, holders of traditional tribal positions and the commandant of the refugee camp. This committee was to be called upon in the event of any disputes. In addition, an 'observation committee' was formed, consisting of the commandant, representatives of women and young people and representatives of religious groups. This ensured that any emerging disputes could be detected early on and brought before the advisory committee.

The participants also decided that the tribes in question should be informed immediately about the conditions agreed by the meeting. Next, tribe leaders were to meet to request reconciliation with one another. The 60 huts that were burnt during the clashes were to be rebuilt by all parties together. We of the UJCC took responsibility for helping the tribes to carry out the agreed steps. We helped to procure and transport materials for the huts. Once the huts were rebuilt, the communities had a large reconciliation celebration.

What were the key factors behind our effective intervention in this conflict? For us UJCC representatives, four points are of importance:

- The geographic distance between the meeting and the camp
- The willingness of the state commander to get involved in resolving the conflict and to accept new structures
- Our ability as UJCC representatives to respond quickly to the request before the conflict could escalate further
- Our respectful attitude towards the respective community leaders, all of which (or as many as possible) were made jointly responsible for the negotiation process and for implementing the agreed steps.

It was also important that we helped the groups to analyse and develop a practicable plan that set out clear regulations for future conflicts and provided early warning of emerging disputes. We were seen by participants as mediators and as capable of providing assistance with the negotiation process and in implementing the steps that were agreed upon. We did not merely establish short-term harmony but rather paved the way for a better future together and the refugees confirmed this goal symbolically by means of a celebration.”³⁰

for helping to establish peace. A prime example in this respect is the experience of the Christian Council in Uganda.

The various partners of EED are all in agreement that the elements that constitute peace are defined in the conflict areas themselves. External peace workers should leave aside their own concepts of what peace means in the context in question. Rather than this, they should be sensitive to what peace means for those affected. In most cases, peace work means that there are also direct questions of survival to be addressed. Peace develops where social justice is alive and well – or, in the words of a local Kenyan leader with whom NCCCK's Peter Gunja worked: “You can't eat peace!”

It must also be observed how the priorities of those affected change in the course of time. The women's network Women's Action and Resource Unit (Sahr Waru) has provided ongoing support to the survivors of the genocide in the Indian state of Gujarat through a number of different phases since 2002.



³⁰ EED workshop with partners from Southern Asia and Africa: Development in a Troubled World – Dealing with Conflict and Violence in Constructive Ways; Workshop Documentation for Participants, compiled by Hagen Berndt; Bonn 2006.

Fighting for justice

Sahr Waru – Women’s Action and Resource Unit, Gujarat, India

Sheba George, Director of Sahr Waru: “At the end of February 2002, a carriage of the Sabarmati fast train went up in flames in the city of Godhra in the Indian state of Gujarat. 59 people died. Following this, the situation in Gujarat deteriorated quickly. Although the reasons for the fire remain unclear to this day, the government of Gujarat and its closely associated press were in immediate agreement that Muslim ‘terrorists’ were responsible for this attack on the Hindu population. In the following days, Muslims were systematically attacked all over Gujarat. Shops and houses were set alight, Muslim and Hindu places of worship destroyed and between 1,000 and 2,000 people killed. Even years later, the exact number of dead is not clear, as many families did not receive death certificates for the fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters or children they lost.

This conflict saw women being the victim of violence on a greater scale than ever before. A newspaper report after the train accident claimed that Hindu women had been abducted from the burning train, raped, mutilated and killed. To us at Sahr Waru, it was immediately clear that men would feel obliged to defend the women of their community and to exact revenge. The report legitimised a wave of sexual violence against and murders of Muslim women. As the general attitude in India is that women are objects that ‘belong’ to their husbands, violence against the women of the other religious community was therefore a demonstration of power vis-à-vis the ‘other’ men. However, even women played an active role in the conflict, with Hindu and Dalit women directly taking part in the murders in Gujarat.

A few months later, we – an organisation of women from different religious groups – began to work in the city of Ahmedabad. We collected statements from Muslim women about their situation as members of a religious minority and as women. We presented the results in a hearing at which the victims of the genocide spoke in public for the first time. In this way, we gained the trust of the local groups who had been persecuted extensively since 2002. We organised emergency aid and provided trauma and legal counselling for victims. Since then, Sahr Waru has worked with survivors to come to terms with the past. Direct contact with the survivors of the genocide, aid following the displacement and close cooperation during difficult weeks – all of this increased our credibility in the eyes of the survivors. In this way, Sahr Waru became the mouthpiece for their concerns. While the government in Gujarat is now propagating ‘reconciliation’ and wants to forget what has happened, we are insisting that, before any reconciliation can take place, there must be public acknowledgement of responsibility for the violence and new, fair social structures must be established.

As a women’s organisation, it was also important to us to be able to include men and boys affected by the violence in parts of our trauma counselling. It appears to be important to include men in strategies against violence, but it took a long time to acquire the necessary level of trust.”³¹



³¹ Oral report by Sahr Waru Director Sheba George during the EED workshop in Bonn in 2006

Contexts and levels of peace work

Local-level conflicts

Conflicts sometimes arise between or within villages or different sections of the population. In some places, EED partner organisations help communities to resolve conflicts about access to and use of resources such as water, land, pasture, etc. For example, the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) is active at community level and helps women's groups, elders and local officials to deal with conflicts between farmers and pastoralists or between pastoral tribes. In other situations, violent con-

flicts stem from issues relating to religious and cultural identity. In India, the Institute for Social Democracy (ISD) enables initiatives and activists to raise awareness among people that their own identity and their different religious and ethnic communities are characterised by a 'composite cultural heritage'. And this heritage can be further developed together and with respect for diversity. In Cameroon, the Service Ecuménique pour la Paix (SEP) enhanced the ability of local communities – who had been involved in violent conflicts over the usage of land for many years – to work together constructively.



From confrontation to cooperation

Service Ecuménique pour la Paix (SEP), Cameroon

Dupleix Kuenzob and Ndi Richard Tanto (SEP employees): "We were faced with a difficult situation in the Galim sub-district of Western Cameroon. For over 25 years, five villages had been fighting about the borders between their localities. This repeatedly led to violence, particularly when certain politicians played the inhabitants off against one another. As SEP representatives, we travelled to the villages to find out if they were interested in resolving the conflict peacefully. We spoke with the religious leaders, the heads of farmer organisations and members of traditional groups about how they viewed the conflict and how they envisaged resolving it.

This resulted in initially separate workshops with village representatives. In group discussions with men and women separately and with young people we collated additional information and collected ideas. Each village discussed the conflict, the risk of escalation and the possible ways of resolving it. In a joint workshop, representatives from all villages and public administration then undertook a joint analysis. Peace committees were formed and began to organise a regular exchange between the localities.

An important indicator of the extent to which our work was accepted was the level of involvement of women from the different villages. One of the localities had no women representatives. We then undertook activities with women from the church communities expressly with a view to determining the reasons for this and to including these and the other women of the village in the peace process.

Since mid-2004, we have observed that cultural and sporting events had been held together. Markets that had rarely been visited by all parties before were now growing in importance. A federation of farmers from all localities was formed. Land on the borders between the locality was built on and houses that had been burnt down in the past were rebuilt.

Controversial issues such as the demarcation of borders or the establishment of schools continued to exist between the villages. Rather than letting these disputes escalate into violence, it is now seen as the responsibility of the public authorities to settle them for once and for all. We at SEP documented the development of the peace process and are now actively lobbying the authorities so that they will finally take action in their area of responsibility.”³²

Open wars and wars of low intensity

EED also provides support to non-governmental organisations that carry out peace work and conflict transformation during wars in their respective societies. One such organisation is Réseau d’Innovation Organisationnelle (RIO), the development office of the Eglise du Christ au Congo (ECC) in the province of South Kivu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. RIO combines direct efforts to reduce violence with other activities designed to boost long-term expertise among the population and administration so that the region can determine its own development.

A war of low intensity has been fought for years between the army and various armed underground movements in North East India. Here, in the state of Manipur, the local network United NGO Mission in Manipur (UNMM) works at a local level to help people to understand the political, economic and social aspects of the conflict that is affecting their lives. The aim is for them to develop creative, non-violent strategies to resolve problems that repeatedly lead to violent clashes. This is a difficult undertaking, as it requires them to develop trust with one another even in the face of ethnic prejudices and animosities that have grown over decades. Today, the network has some 200 member organisations in all districts of Manipur, including 50 women’s organisations. It is seen in Southern Asia as an example of democratic structures being developed across ethnic, religious and gender frontiers, and is recognised both in the region and internationally for its peace work.

Post-war situations

“The challenge is to transform a ‘bureaucratic peace’ into a ‘peace of the people’”, says Sheku Mansaray from Sierra Leone. The organisations that work together with EED are often active in countries in which open war has only just come to an end, in most cases following negotiations. As long as the results of a peace treaty are not generally recognised and are not identified with by the communities in question, it is very unlikely that lasting peace will ensue. One of the partner organisations in such a situation is the Sierra Leone Adult Education Association (SLADEA). This association aids the national peace and reconciliation process by bringing together victims and aggressors at a local level and helping them to come to terms with the past. This in turn gives rise to new forms of social interaction.

Preventing escalation

Economic, social and political change tends to bring conflict and tension between various groups to light. Most societies are able to settle these conflicts constructively without resorting to violence. However, processes such as these can also lead to precarious situations. Because of this, civil society groups and organisations in many countries work to actively prevent disputes from escalating into violence. A prime example of this is the work of the National Council of Churches of Kenya.

³² Tanto, Ndi Richard: Monographic study of Galim Sub Division: A conflict perspective, Bamenda, April 2004; Tanto, Ndi Richard: From Conflict to Post Conflict Peacebuilding: A Narration of the Processes and Strategies used by Ecumenical Service for Peace to Establish the Basis for the Formation of the Balikumbat Sub Divisional Integrated Farmers Federation, April 2000-May 2004, Bamenda, June 2004



Persevering for peaceful change

National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK), Kenya: Educating citizens and monitoring elections

“In the 1980s, the one-party system that existed in Kenya vested power in a very small number of hands. This served to worsen the conflicts over the allocation of public resources between regions and ethnic groups. We – the NCCK – were among the first to demand a new constitution in order to counter a further escalation of conflicts and destabilisation of the state. When international fund providers also demanded a multi-party system from the Kenyan government, changes began to take effect. However, there was an almost palpable risk that the transition process would lead to violence owing to political confrontations or to economic or social conflicts of interest.

Together with other national religious communities, we began a long-term programme. Politicians, the ruling party and many civil society players active at all levels of society played their part in shaping a multiparty democracy in a peaceful manner. We at the NCCK mediated between political groups, organised educational events for citizens and – as Kenya is an extremely religious country – ensured that the churches supported the processes locally and helped to reduce confrontations in connection with ethno-religious polarisations. We are still very much committed to our responsibility as a voice of peaceful change. During the elections in 2002, almost 30,000 observers monitored polling stations. This was organised by the Kenya Domestic Observation Programme which, in addition to the NCCK and the Commission for Justice and Peace of the Catholic Church, also involved two non-governmental organisations: the Hindu Council and the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims.”

Local peace work – Community Peace-Building and Development Project (CPBD)

In response to violent clashes between different ethnic groups in Western Kenya, the NCCK initiated the Community Peace-Building and Development Project in 1992, initially as an impromptu solution for helping the victims of violent displacement.

This became the starting point for the Rural Women Peace Link, a network of women’s organisations that is actively engaged in peace work and reconciliation.

The project was also a decisive breakthrough for reviving interaction between the ethnic groups. It established an understanding of the conflicts at local level and enabled conflicts to be controlled more effectively by local players.

National Peace Agenda and Peace Programme

The NCCK expanded its peace work to all of Kenya and established the National Peace Agenda in 2000. The aim of this organisation was to identify and address the causes for conflicts in the entire country. In 2003, the NCCK Peace Programme (NPP) was created, integrating the local and national levels. It aims to encourage communities all over Kenya to work for peace, reconstruction, reconciliation and stability.”³³

³³ Summarisation of Mutava, Musyimi: Multi Party Politics and Civic Education, Nairobi 2006; talk by Gunja, Peter, at the EED specialist talks. ‘Peace Must Grow From Within’, Bonn, 25 October 2005; see also: Kisaka, Oliver: Civil Society Is Of Central Importance To Change: Reform partnership with Africa. Documentation on the International GKKE Conference before the G8 Summit 2007; Joint Conference – Church and Development, Berlin/Bonn 2007, page 18

Change in organisations

In its work with local NGOs, EED repeatedly notes that these organisations also change through their work in conflicts within their respective societies. In some cases, they have experienced far-reaching changes, including in their internal structure and positioning. The organisations have become more ‘political’ and are also perceived as such. The more they assume the role of mediator, the more important it is for their objectives and mission to be aligned with practical activities. For example, while an organisation still defined itself as an agricultural development organisation, its employees had already proceeded to work as conflict mediators and to negotiate with state officials about questions relating to land law. This means that objectives may be adapted if this is necessitated by conflict dynamics. When organisations get involved in issues such as human rights, peace work and justice, the risk for their employees increases. Questions of personal security become of central importance, as does the question of acquiring motivated staff. Networking is important, not only on a local level with like-minded organisations, but also at an international level. The organisations analyse underlying political conditions with greater precision and regularity. The relationship with the government must be observed carefully, regardless of whether it remains constructive or becomes confrontational. ‘Inclusiveness’, i.e. the inclusion of all players, even those with other positions, has become a primary focus of activities. A pragmatic approach is to determine which possibilities exist for exerting a political influence on the conflict dynamics while, at the same time, remaining true to the vision of ‘development, justice and peace’.

How EED supports peace work in the National Council of Churches of Kenya

When the NCCK began its peace work in Kenya, it received financial support from the Protestant Association for Cooperation in Development (EZE), which has been part of EED since 1999. It soon became apparent that the international donor states had a different perception of democratisation than the Kenyan churches and civil society players. In order to make German decision-makers aware of the ideas of the Council of Churches, the then AGKED working group organised an event to be held over several days in Bonn.

Here, representatives of Kenyan partners presented their conceptions of democratisation and discussed their expectations of donor states with representatives of German ministries and the German Parliament (Bundestag).

Since 1992, EED has – at the request of the Kenyan churches – provided a group of German election observers for the country’s elections. These, together with observers from Kenyan churches, monitor voter registration and voting events and are present on election day and during the vote-counting process. The presence of international observers is also intended to protect local observers. On returning home, the observers then present their observations and findings during talks with parliamentary and ministerial representatives.

EED representatives are repeatedly required to accompany representatives of Kenyan churches and German church leaders for interventions at the offices of the German government or the European Union. This is because there have, in the past, been violent clashes and attacks by Kenyan security organs on the population or on opposition party candidates in connection with elections.



Alliances and networks

Development organisations that are also devoted to managing conflicts frequently emphasise to EED the importance of alliances and networks in peace work. They see their own role mainly in 'empowering' communities and people to protect their own interests and in moderating these processes. Both of these call for a good working relationship with players from the local conflict parties who will play an active role

in subsequent events. This is exactly how the Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC) saw its role in the refugee camp: helping the communities to deal with their own problems in a reasonable, rational way. The first important alliance for this was with people in the camp who were interested in bringing about an end to the violence.

Empowerment

Empowerment, meaning 'giving power to', is a generic term encompassing interventions and change processes designed to help people to gain more control of their lives. Empowerment has been a key concept for the international feminist movement since the Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985, but is also used in the overall context of development cooperation, social work and in disciplines ranging from psychology to educational and management theory. DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era), a network of women from the South, presented empowerment at the 1985 conference as a 'bottom-up strategy for furthering women's rights'. This strategy is based on the hierarchical understanding of social relationships, particularly male-female relationships. As far back as 1946, Saul Alinsky had formulated similar approaches for the workers' and trade union movement in Chicago in his 'Reveille for Radicals'.

In a development cooperation context, empowerment describes an approach to working and thinking that aims to allow disadvantaged groups – particularly women – to make an active contribution to shaping political processes. Empowerment is the 'ability to participate politically' that helps groups to organise themselves, thereby enabling them to represent their interests – for example by securing control of and access to resources, by joining forces against violence or by playing an active role in dealing with conflict processes.

UN Resolution 1325

This resolution was passed unanimously by the United Nations Security Council on 31 October 2000. With Resolution 1325, the UN Security Council urges member states to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict (Art.1). Resolution 1325 emphasises the responsibility of all states to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, particularly those relating to sexual violence against women (Art.11). Article 8 of the Resolution calls on the states to adopt a gender perspective with regard to three central aspects of peace processes. These are:

- Repatriation, resettlement and post-conflict reconstruction
- The involvement of women's organisations in peace-building processes
- Measures that ensure the protection of the human rights of women and girls as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary.

UN Resolution 1325 is an important milestone for feminist peace politics. For the first time in the history of the United Nations, the UN Security Council passed a resolution bound by international law that involves women in decisions regarding war and peace and that takes into account the gender perspective.

Wording of the Resolution: <http://www.peacewomen.org/un/sc/res1325.pdf>

The members of the United NGO Mission in Manipur (UNMM) view their role in much the same way. Their aim is to increase the ability of people within the civil society to deal with conflicting parties and with the causes of conflicts. Accordingly, the UNMM consists of a variety of civil society organisations of different ethnic and religious backgrounds and also includes women's organisations. The diverse identities within the network gives the UNMM access to many outside groups and institutions, even to ethnic hardliners if these are from the

same group. Owing to the common ethnic and religious background, it is also possible to reach people working in administration and members of parliament. In describing the underlying challenge of the UNMM's work, General Secretary Nobokishore Singh declared: "We must enable people to engage in non-violent protest". However, this is a challenge which must be taken up by society as a whole.

How EED supports peace work in Manipur

EED has provided constant support to the United NGO Mission Manipur (UNMM), a multiethnic network of NGOs in Manipur, in expanding its capacity for direct, concrete peace work. To this end, EED has worked systematically over the last twelve years to enable methodical training to be provided to UNMM employees in conflict-sensitive development and conflict transformation work. EED gave grants and organised multiplier training on location with qualified consultants.

In order to boost the network's international lobby work, EED put it in contact with one of its international partners, the Tebtebba Foundation. This international organisation of indigenous peoples trains UNMM employees and helps them to understand and make use of the mechanisms and structures of the UN system and provides assistance in preparing human rights reports. In March 2007, the UNMM subsequently submitted a report on the effects of the Indian emergency legislation AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Powers Act) to the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in Geneva. Following this report, the UN Committee requested an official response from the Indian government, which it has yet to provide to date.

In 2008, the UN Committee will address the Indian government once again and – if no response is forthcoming – will initiate further measures. The UNMM is continuing its commitment to the CERD committee. In 2008, the UNMM also approached other UN committees: the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and – within the scope of the new Universal Periodic Review mechanism – the UN Human Rights Council.



The National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) emphasises the importance of stability when forming alliances. Peter Gunja, who is in charge of the NCCCK's Peace Programme, stresses that it is essential to form structures that are capable of existing independently and in which people can assume responsibility. Another factor is that networking increases the available resources. Networks form what the NCCCK terms 'protective rings' around the individual organisations. Individuals and groups who resist the violence or who refuse to take part in violent escalations are often put under pressure by the conflict parties or are openly threatened. Nepal also has a history of threats and attacks against peace activists. In order to raise the profile of peace work, Nepalese civil society organisations became involved in alliances and networks at national and international level: for example, the Interreligious Council, the Civil Solidarity for Peace and the International Nepal Solidarity Network. At the very least, this international support affords the peace initiatives a certain degree of protection.

Protection is also offered by the media, who are capable of mobilising effective national and – crucially – international awareness. By overcoming communication barriers and even national borders they can play a constructive role. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, one European government assumed the role of mobilising international media to focus attention on the Réseau d'Innovation Organisationnelle (RIO) peace initiative. This in turn encouraged the communities in the East Congo to put their weight behind the initiative as well and to come together in great numbers to work for peace. However, the media can also be used to intensify and entrench conflict. A prime example of this is the conflict in Gujarat in 2001, where the influential media had close ties to the ruling party, which was the main instigator of the violence.

As NCCCK's Peter Gunja sums up: "Peace work means long-term intervention". It requires approaches that exclude no one. "Supporting peace also means that we have to repeatedly

question the values, views and conduct of people to one another. And that begins with me and you!"³⁴ Peace is not developed or cultivated elsewhere, but is sought out and secured in one's own surroundings. This includes involving the various conflict parties with great tenacity and formulating viewpoints clearly. If the government itself is a party to the conflict, peace workers must be willing to perform the delicate balancing act of working with the government and with affected local communities at the same time.

In order to ensure that all players are included, the NCCCK promotes the setting up and development of organisations such as women's groups and youth clubs. In its own workshops and educational programmes, it addresses the relevant peace workers: community elders, politicians, security officials, religious opinion leaders, teachers, women, young people – and also the conflict parties. The NCCCK actively seeks to network with other players with a view to developing stable partnerships and regional alliances such as with the association of Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox churches in Uganda. This gives the NCCCK the power to get involved in examining the constitution and to contribute to reformulating political concepts and to practical questions such as dealing with fire-arms and non-violent conflict management.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, RIO – the regional development office of the Eglise du Christ au Congo (ECC) – has established a far-reaching network with 'friendly' players. "You don't have to agree about everything", says Odile Bulabula of RIO, "as long as you agree on non-violent means, you have a basis for working together". This formed the basis of the cooperation. Even isolated conflicting parties were reached by the message and were persuaded to join the dialogue.

³⁴ Peter Gunja, speech at EED specialist talks 'Peace Must Grow From Within', Bonn, 25 October 2005, documentation by Hagen Berndt, Bonn 2005, page 9.

Dialogue with warring parties

Réseau d'Innovation Organisationnelle (RIO), development office of the Eglise du Christ au Congo (ECC), South Kivu, Congo

In both Kivu provinces in the East Congo, armed conflicts have raged for years. Even following peace talks for the Congo in 2003, local militia terrorised the population, fighting the armies of neighbouring states with the support of Rwandan and Burundi rebel groups. An end to the conflict is not in sight as public institutions are crumbling, hostilities between ethnic groups continue and raw materials (diamonds, coltan, gold) make it profitable to continue the violent conflict.

Odile Bulabula from RIO reports: "In 2001, an international peace symposium was held by Eglise du Christ au Congo (South Kivu), the archbishopric of Bukavu and the rural coordinators of civil society organisations. The aim of this was to generate international attention and to direct it to the urgent problems of war and peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Preparations in Bukavu were well underway when the government in South Kivu banned the meeting. Following this, the Eglise du Christ au Congo (North Kivu), the archbishopric in Butembo and the civil society organisations based in North Kivu convened the meetings to Butembo in North Kivu. And so the speakers made their way to North Kivu: traditional tribal chiefs (the 'Muami'), representatives of all denominations, delegates from NGOs and universities and women's rights advocates. Some 3,000 people came together there, including a strong delegation of 300 from European Union countries. This had the effect of raising public awareness of peace issues in the Congo.

The event ended with the founding of a committee in which delegates from South and North Kivu, the eastern province, Katanga and Maniema came together. We made a list with demands that the population in the east of the country brought up at the 'Inter-Congolese Dialogue'. It was important that Jean-Pierre Bemba, the then Vice President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and former rebel chief of the MLC (Movement for the Liberation of Congo) should take part in the symposium and apologise to the Congolese people for all they had suffered.

Since the beginning of the inter-Congolese negotiations, there had been no further indications of a rebellion of the East against the West. Through the inter-Congolese dialogue, a transitional government and institutions for supporting democracy were established and an interim constitution drawn up." ³⁵



³⁵ Odile Bulabula, RIO, report at EED specialist talks 'Peace Must Grow From Within', Bonn, 25 October 2005

Strengthening partners and promoting multicultural networks: the EED concept of peace work in the DR Congo.

Peace can only grow 'from within'. Because of this, EED is engaged in building and strengthening networks between partner organisations on a regional, national and international level for a wide range of peace-related efforts. The Civil Peace Service programme now brings together partner organisations from West and East Congo who are involved in peace education, detraumatisation, local government and lobby work. The EED-supported and now internationally recognised Pole Institute, which is based in Goma, has for years been researching and publicising burning issues such as the relationship between resource plundering and conflict (coltan, cassiterite, gold, etc.).

Through development-related educational work in Germany and Europe, it was possible to create awareness of the link between wars in Africa and the economic usage interests of European and German companies relating to critical raw materials. At the same time, a new route to fairer and peace-compatible regional trade was sought by networking state and entrepreneurial initiatives.

The central thread of the EED-supported peace work in the DR Congo consists in eliminating prejudices between different ethnic, regional and religious groups. Marginalisation and fragmentation of Congolese society are the most serious obstacles to lasting peace.

Distance and mistrust – 'state' and civil society

In many countries in which peace and development organisations work in an environment plagued by violent conflicts, the 'state' itself is one of the conflict parties. From the perspective of local organisations, however, it is misleading and overly simplistic to speak of the 'state' per se. The conflicts have grown in complexity and require an in-depth analysis in order to understand the players, their interests and the various agendas. Khurshid Anwar from the Institute for Social Democracy (ISD) uses the example

of the genocide in Gujarat in 2002 to illustrate the complex interaction of the international climate, the mobilisation of people on account of their religious identity and the way in which the state encouraged violent excesses through its non-action. "The violence in Gujarat was related to international events to a certain extent. The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001, the attacks on the parliament of Jammu and Kashmir, the bomb attacks on the Indian parliament and the border disputes with Pakistan – all of this gave the Hindu fundamentalists ammunition to instigate violence and murder." The violent excesses in Gujarat included a number of additional aspects about which Khurshid Anwar reported at an event: "A Member of Parliament from the opposition party was surrounded and brutally murdered on the same day even though he had informed high-ranking politicians in the parliament about the threat. The police did nothing to protect the victim. Women were actively involved in the killing. Even the secular congress party only condemned the murder after four days as they were afraid of losing votes."³⁶

"It was important to see how the political situation had changed", concluded Deputy Coordinator Mamta Baxi from the Feminist Documentation, Resource and Counselling Centre (Olakh) in Gujarat, "and that the state had organised the violence in advance. It was not spontaneous."

Where politicians, police and frequently also the military form such an unholy alliance, there is little chance for due process of law. Olakh's objective had been to attain justice for the victims and it was forced to acknowledge that it was making little headway even in obtaining redress for the state-perpetrated violence via the legal system. Nimisha Desai, Coordinator of Olakh, says: "Justice has yet to be done. Legal steps have been taken and the case has gone to the highest Court of Justice. It is hard to say how we can begin with reconciliation work under circumstances such as these." Nimisha Desai also felt that dealing with the state was a considerable challenge for the women's organisation: "We need international

³⁶ Khurshid Anwar, speech at the APRODEV congress 'Whose Security? Human Security Seen from a Gender and Southern Perspective' Brussels, 27 October 2005

support to be able to demand justice and to put pressure on the state.” Olakh received funds from abroad but the financing was increasingly controlled by the state. “As activists, we feel alienated in Gujarat and do not receive enough support. We must learn how people in other countries deal with situations like this.”³⁷

In the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh, the core problem for members of the indigenous population is gaining access to land for settling and farming. The problem was worsened by the fact that the indigenous population was systematically displaced by a state settlement policy. Since the 1970s, Muslim settlers were recruited – assisted by the national government in the region – to ‘bring peace’ to the region. They were used strategically by the military to drive the indigenous population from their land. Even today, ten years after the signing of the peace agreement and after the return of the refugees from neighbouring India, both old and newly arrived settlers are protected by military units and armed for the purposes of ‘self-defence’. The refugees have not been rehabilitated to date. In many cases, attacks by Muslim settlers on the indigenous population go unpunished and are tolerated or even actively aided by the military. Local administrations are dominated by interest groups representing settlers and the military. Local organisations emphasise that only the regional council for the indigenous population set up in the wake of the peace agreement works for their interests, but only with limited political influence.

The United NGO Mission (UNMM) had a similar experience in Manipur. Military units, accountable only to the state, often used the extenuating circumstances that granted them immunity from prosecution to engineer violence through arbitrary arrests, torture and murder of suspects. However, some members of government institutions supported efforts to end the violence when shown how this could be done.

How EED supports peace work in Bangladesh

On account of the sluggish implementation of the peace treaty in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh, the human rights situation there and the looming threat of a new civil war, EED began a continuous political dialogue with state officials in Germany and at European level. In 2006 and 2008, the Bangladesh Forum, of which EED is also a member, organised political symposia on the human rights situation and on the plight of the extremely poor and minorities in Bangladesh. At the invitation of EED, representatives from the Hill Tracts NGO Forum took part in these conferences in Berlin and Brussels.



Access to state players

Local initiatives and organisations have developed the means and skills necessary to understand the interests and concerns of the various players at regional level. They have procedures to address the groups and individuals in government offices who are interested in establishing lasting peace in the society. In all cases that are outlined, EED partner organisations had access to important players such as these within the state apparatus.

³⁷ Discussions with Nimisha Desai, EED workshop: ‘Development in a Troubled World. Dealing with Conflict and Violence in Constructive Ways’. Bonn, 19 to 22 October 2005

However, the experience of local activists has been that governments do not trust civil society representatives an inch. They do not see organisations as playing an independent and constructive role in social, economic and political development and frequently treat them with condescension or perceive them as mere hired hands. In many countries, governments pursue strategies of 'divide and conquer' and of intimidation once it is evident that civil society players cannot be of use for the ruling group. The general consensus is that the relationship between civil society and governments is characterised by distance and mutual distrust.

"In 1998, the NCKK was declared subversive", describes Peter Gunja. "What kept it going during this time was the support from the community and a firm belief in our principles and in the words of the Bible: 'The truth will set you free'. We had ties with a number of civil servants in the government and we were able to activate them. We contacted them and gave them information. We listened to them. But we felt the pressure. Later we established a kind of working relationship with the government." The NCKK also received support for its peace activities from abroad which, for example, enabled it to train staff abroad. This support was not subject to conditions. "Sometimes it is difficult because fund providers follow a hidden agenda of their own and, when things get difficult, refuse help or bring programmes to a halt."³⁸

Differences between South, East and North

In the North, relationships between state institutions and non-governmental organisations evolved differently and are characterised more by a willingness for dialogue and cooperation. In most Western European countries, there have been intensive discussions over the last five to ten years about how to develop a closer working relationship. However, the everyday experiences of citizens in most African, Asian and Latin American countries are completely different. For generations, most people in these countries have not perceived the state as a framework for social integration and security. Quite the opposite. Governments and ruling elites were – and in many cases still are – the main source

of insecurity and misappropriation of public resources. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, similarly corrupt state systems have emerged in the East within the diversity of succession states, coupled with intense nationalism. Over the past two decades, the people living there have experienced the rapid change in political structures. Up until the end of the Soviet Union, there was no such thing as a civil society. Today, the civil society players are still seeking out their role vis-à-vis the state. The state is often an instigator of violence. In many countries, sexual violence against women is common practice by armed forces. The distance in the relationships between the civil society and state players in the South and East results from the experience of generations. It will take time to change that.

In the westernised North, it is seen that conflict escalations can be caused by representatives of state power, but this is then attributed to the problem of fragile statehood. Local NGOs feel that this viewpoint is too short-sighted. For them, problems are not only caused when states are failing, but also by fully operational states when these violate the rights of specific sections of the population. They also criticise the increasing worldwide militarisation which goes hand-in-hand with the patriarchal and predominantly male understanding of a powerful nation state. The militarised security discourse promotes structural violence in which it weakens the role of the welfare state and its rights regarding food, healthcare and social security.

Another aspect of statehood concerns the rights that are associated with citizenship. In the history of European nations, this process is combined with the successful struggle for rights and entitlements. In other parts of the world, the situation is very different. The model of the nation state (as an ethnic or political nation such as France or the USA) was used as a model for decolonisation. Today, the notion of the nation state is used by governments to deny rights. Tapan Bose from the cross-border Southern Asian human rights network South Asia Forum for Human Rights (SAFHR) observes: "If you are not a citizen, you don't

³⁸ Peter Gunja, EED specialist talks 'Peace Must Grow From Within', Bonn, 25 October 2005

have any rights at all. The core problem is that the policy is based on exclusion. This is manifested in very violent forms of exclusion. In India, the government denies the existence of indigenous peoples and therefore treats them like internal colonies. The state does not guarantee human rights. Human rights are universal and cannot be limited by frontiers, religion or communities. (...) Today, we have no institution other than the state. The general term is 'nation state'. That is a problem in the South and East. In Europe, rights are a legal concept derived from the state because the state guarantees the rights. In the South and East, however, the state is one of the parties abusing rights. The notion of being entitled to something has not reached the South and East. Which is why there is a chasm between the rights themselves and how the state administers them."³⁹

Advocates of a legitimate statehood

Civil society organisations accept the 'state' as a framework of social organisation although some have had bad experiences with the 'state' over a number of generations. Their fundamental question is rather how legitimate governance can be established and secured. In this connection, development organisations in the South are critical of their governments but are certainly of assistance to them. In Kenya, for instance, the NCKK was very much involved in working to establish a democratic, multi-party political system. The church in Kenya views the state as something that belongs to the citizens of Kenya. Because of this, they must also take responsibility for the transition to democracy. Accordingly, the churches have been involved in setting up the state (e.g. in the constitutional reform commission) and also worked with the parties. Prior to the first multiparty elections in 1992, they organised public discussions about grassroots democracy, change and political activities. The debate between government representatives and church leaders on the definition of politics alone was enough to strengthen the national discussion

on democracy. Based on the same understanding of democracy, the NCKK was involved in observing elections in 1997: "Our concern was quite simple and honest: We wanted to help ensure that free and fair elections could take place. We [...] also wanted to instil trust and security in the electorate."⁴⁰

Civil society players in different countries have developed visions for their respective societies. They set out criteria for good government and accountability, such as in Kenya, India or Nepal. However, even the strategies for good government in Southern countries are almost exclusively developed in the countries of the North. This fails to take into account key resources and expertise. After all, it is civil society organisations in the South and East who are expected to work within a state structure that is based on Northern models. And it is they who have the relevant experience to know which structures hindered democratic discussions most in the past.

How can pluralistic, democratic values be strengthened within a society that is often deeply fragmented? And how can the formation of a democratic, secular identity be encouraged in this way? An identity that makes people immune to attempts to play them off against one another based on their ethnic or religious identity. Here, the Institute for Social Democracy (ISD) works to strengthen composite heritage in Southern Asia.

In local Southern Asian communities, different collective identities – religious, linguistic, ethnic, etc. – co-exist, often in very close quarters. Their similarities should be reinforced and room should be made for them. These are for example common musical and literature traditions, forms of spirituality or shrines that are visited by the different religious communities together. In this way, the common cultural roots are recognised and valued rather than being dismissed and excluded, as is increasingly the case as globalisation takes a greater hold.

³⁹ Tapan Bose, speech at EED specialist talks 'Peace Must Grow From Within', Bonn, 25 October 2005

⁴⁰ Institute for Education in Democracy, IED, Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, National Council of Churches of Kenya: Report on the 1997 General Elections in Kenya 29-30 December, Nairobi 1998, http://www.iedafrica.org/documents/1997_report.pdf

In all of Southern Asia – and not just since the attacks by Muslim extremists in New York on 11 September – organisations have been aiming to make use of the identity, and especially the religious identity, of the sections of the population for the purposes of political mobilisation. Many of these extremist organisations demand a religious Muslim or Hindu state and have no qualms about extending violence to members of other communities or to liberal, pluralistic members of their own religious communities. These self-appointed ‘guardians of tradition’

attempt to define the communities according to their differences, to divide them into different, incompatible identities for their own political purposes. Superficially spontaneous acts of violence take place above all in the cities, against those who are allegedly ‘responsible’ for the malaise. This violence is carefully orchestrated by those who wish to secure more power for themselves. And the violence is actually carried out by those who believe that they are fighting for their own interests.



Strengthening the composite heritage

Institute for Social Democracy (ISD), India

Khurshid Anwar from the ISD reports: “We use three approaches to implement the concept of ‘composite heritage’. In a series of meetings, those groups and organisations who feel committed to democracy and the separation of religion and state, discover and explore their ‘composite heritage’ and undertake to preserve and enrich it. Through training, research and PR activities, cultural sources in literature, history, music and theatre will be examined for common cultural ground that can be revealed and defended. This will bring to light the secular, pluralistic and democratic values that are rooted in common traditions. The findings of the workshops and studies are translated into simple and easily accessible materials for educational work and for public mobilisation, with the main focus on target groups in rural communities.”⁴¹

Advocates for survivors of violence and mediators between conflicting sides

Local non-governmental organisations can use a number of different approaches when it comes to negotiating. On the one hand, they have their roots in the local population and are familiar with their concerns. On the other hand, their institutionalised status allows them to seek out

dialogue with perpetrators of violence. Women’s organisations in particular are accepted by the perpetrators of violence as advocates of the population at large; this is because they are perceived by aggressors as ‘less of a threat’. Women can play an important role in mediating between the various parties, particularly at the beginning of negotiation processes when the

⁴¹ EED: People Building Peace, (Author: Hagen Berndt) Bonn 2007, pages 80-82

main priority is to establish communication and trust. In doing so, women's organisations can draw on their traditional role as wives and mothers. A villager from Jotsoma in Nagaland reported: "When the Indian army advanced, it was the women who stepped in between the soldiers and the village population – only women are able to intervene. We constantly sought out dialogue with the military. As mothers, we visited the camps of all warring parties and asked them not to kill each other and to leave the village population alone. We women cannot keep silent."⁴²

On the one hand, the local population with which non-governmental organisations work together know the perpetrators of violence very well, and often on a one-to-one basis. On the other hand, some people who work in non-governmental organisations have contact with perpetrators of violence. Both of these factors provide access that can be used for the purposes of de-escalation or even conflict transformation.

The third force

Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC), Nepal

Subodh Pyakurel, Chairman of INSEC, reports: "INSEC began its work with awareness-building, literacy and empowerment, i.e. strengthening the negotiation power and the influence of the cart-pullers in the Kathmandu Valley who originate from remote villages. Since then, INSEC has established itself as a human rights organisation and enjoys wide recognition among the general public and among politicians. Human rights observation and education, campaigns for the disadvantaged, conflict transformation and peace work through empowerment, and advocacy with regard to the protection and promotion of human rights and social justice in the country – these are the areas in which INSEC is active. We maintain a regular public profile by means of a yearbook chronicling the state of human rights. This yearbook is the main source of public debates on the question of human rights in Nepal.

Before the violent Maoist uprising began, INSEC had already appealed to the government to resolve this conflict peacefully through dialogue. We also helped to negotiate the release of abducted people. We regularly monitored the human rights situation during the civil war and organised peace rallies and seminars. INSEC denounced atrocities committed by both the government and the rebels and urged the conflict parties by means of petitions to adhere to humanitarian norms.

INSEC established a relationship with both conflict parties through a combination of personal connections with high-level politicians and practical work. This meant that we were able to work in areas controlled by rebels without having to register officially with the 'people's government', which generally meant paying taxes to the Maoists. By not accepting the system, we set an example that encouraged other NGOs to recommence their development activities in these areas.

From 2002 onwards, INSEC operated a model project for peace work in various districts, thereby establishing village development committees at local level. These committees consisted of those most affected by the violence: women, children, elderly people and traditional leaders. In training sessions, they were afforded the necessary support to be



⁴² Quotation from a resident of the village of Jotsoma in Nagaland, India, cited by Rita Manchanda: *We Do More Because We Can – Naga Women in the Peace Process*, South Asia Forum for Human Rights, Kathmandu, 2004

able to demand of both conflict parties that human rights and international humanitarian law be respected. A number of committees also initiated community activities such as peace rallies in which they campaigned for their rights to be restored. In other places, local fora were convened in order to discuss development work priorities with all interested parties. At community level, infrastructure measures were implemented for drinking water, modern toilets, irrigation, transport, schooling, etc. INSEC helps people to gain access to programmes run by government institutions and development organisations.

Pragmatic solutions were called for in the areas over which the conflict parties were fighting. Following our intervention, the Maoists refrained from destroying the infrastructure and reconstruction work in some areas, even if this had been achieved with the aid of state agencies. This enabled schools to be rebuilt and drinking water facilities to be re-established; medical services were set up and commenced work again. In order to attain negotiation objectives such as these, INSEC pursued a 'yes-but' strategy. None of the warring parties should ever be confronted with a 'no', which would allow them to maintain a contrary position. Rather, INSEC showed that it understood their viewpoint without actually subscribing to it. In the later stages of negotiations, we at INSEC specified the interests of the community and attempted to reach compromises. This practical approach, which used the basic requirements of victims as a starting point, was a successful one. INSEC was able to persuade both conflict parties either to take part themselves in activities that would improve living conditions for the population or – the very least – not to obstruct or sabotage them.

In this highly polarised situation, INSEC was therefore able to position itself as the 'third party', because it took a clear stand on human rights issues but remained impartial with regard to the confrontation itself. Local players on both sides were urged by us to adhere to their self-proclaimed objectives and principles and to respect international standards. The trust that INSEC won among both conflict parties was used for negotiations, for example regarding the release of prisoners. For cases such as these, INSEC was a name with credibility that offered 'good services'.⁴³

Gender: Opportunities and challenges

Asian, African and European societies are patriarchal in nature. They confirm an imbalance of power between men and women. This imbalance is evident at a personal, structural and normative level. This is why women feel that gender relations are restrictive and oppressive. Gender is a key identity factor in any social system. Gender relations are of great significance in understanding the dynamics that take violent forms.

The course of conflicts is often described in stages. An escalation phase in which conflict

parties formulate their positions and take steps to protect their interests is frequently followed by an openly violent conflict. This in turn is followed by a de-escalation stage. The experience of women contradicts this concept of conflict stages. Olakh and Sahr Waru, the women's organisations from Gujarat in India, described the experience of women as follows: violence is seen as a continuum that pervades both so-called peace times and stages of violent conflicts. In the eyes of women, patriarchal society structures are inherently violent. This manifests itself not only in domestic sexual violence against women, but also and above all in structural

⁴³ Subodh Pyakurel of INSEC, Nepal, at EED specialist talks 'Peace Must Grow From Within', Bonn, 25.10.2005

violence, i.e. structural discrimination against women in society, political and economic life. Managing conflicts must therefore mean including the various levels of everyday violence.

Women's organisations feel that it is important to create a forum for women to exchange and reflect on their experiences. Here, women can develop their own approaches to conflict transformation or can subject existing approaches to critical examination. They can develop their own discourses which directly benefit peace processes. A forum devoted to women offers them the opportunity to conduct specific analyses and to develop strategies. As well as this, it offers a sanctuary providing emotional support in extreme situations. However, activities undertaken in protected fora such as these must be linked within strategic coalitions with men, who can take the dialogue beyond the women's forum and into society where, together with women, they channel it into the social context.

The gender perspective makes it possible to perceive male and female players in a conflict context in different ways. Partner organisations report to EED again and again that women are frequently not involved in formal peace processes. In peace talks – for example the peace talks in Bangladesh regarding the Chittagong Hill Tracts in 1997 – the main players are those who bear arms. Representatives of the militia, the government and frequently the military decide on the future of the people. This is even harder to believe when one considers the extent to which women's organisations and groups are actively involved in peace processes. This was already documented by Resolution 1325 of the United Nations Security Council in 2000. The time is ripe to view this resolution as an important initiative to increase the influence of women in official peace processes.

UN Resolution 1325

This resolution was passed unanimously by the United Nations Security Council on 31 October 2000. With Resolution 1325, the UN Security Council urges member states to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict (Art. 1). Resolution 1325 emphasises the responsibility of all states to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, particularly those relating to sexual violence against women (Art. 11). Article 8 of the Resolution calls on the states to adopt a gender perspective with regard to three central aspects of peace processes. These are:

- Repatriation, resettlement and post-conflict reconstruction
- The involvement of women's organisations in peace-building processes
- Measures that ensure the protection of the human rights of women and girls as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary.

UN Resolution 1325 is an important milestone for feminist peace politics. For the first time in the history of the United Nations, the UN Security Council passed a resolution bound by international law that involves women in decisions regarding war and peace and that takes into account the gender perspective.⁴⁴



⁴⁴ <http://www.peacewomen.org/un/sc/res1325.pdf>

Women's organisations assume traditional mother and carer roles, for example in north-east India when they negotiated with militias or the military as part of 'kitchen talks', like those carried out in Nagaland: they cook for the militias and discuss their peace concerns over a shared meal.⁴⁵ As they are seen as being unarmed, it is easier for them to gain access than for men, as documented by the South Asia Forum for Human Rights.⁴⁶

Sahr Waru organised trauma counselling in Gujarat. In doing so, it also succeeded in reaching men who had become victims of sexual violence, thereby also uncovering a socially taboo dimension of the violence in Gujarat. In Manipur, there was a legendary protest by older women who demonstrated naked in front of military units in protest against the rape of women by security forces. Women deliberately break with traditional roles in order to bring about change. Also in Manipur, women left the protection of their walled surroundings and organised night watches in public at district level. Particularly in view of their high active presence in local peace movements, it is inconceivable that women's organisations should continue to be largely excluded from formal peace processes.

Even in the NGO networks described in this brochure, a long process was necessary before women's organisations were able to secure their place in peace work activities. At the UNMM in Manipur, the women made their case for five whole years until they were able to convince the members that women's organisations could establish their own structure of women's committees within the UNMM and until they were able to send (women) representatives to the forum committees and had their own budget with programme funds. It is only since this structure has been set up and resources provided that women have made an active contribution to shaping the policies of the forum.

Negative experiences can bring people together and give rise to new perspectives. This was recognised by the ISD when it was preparing educational material designed to strengthen the composite cultural heritage in Southern Asia. It transpired that, from a gender perspective, all Southern Asian cultures had a composite cultural heritage in that all experienced oppression and marginalisation. This was the case with women in Southern Asian societies regardless of their religion. Their religious identity divided the women into Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and Buddhists; their experience of oppression brought them together.

The role of women as seismographs for violence

It is often the case that women's organisations have early indications of increasing violence in a country: violence against women becomes an early warning system. The women's organisations in the Hill Tracts NGO Forum (HTNF) in Bangladesh report that sexual violence against women from the indigenous civil population by the military in Bangladesh is increasing substantially. This leads them to categorise the current situation no longer as a de-escalation following a peace treaty, but rather as an escalating conflict. The experiences of these women's organisations were incorporated in the Forum's formal conflict analysis and were instrumental in influencing the way the conflict was understood and also the way in which strategy and measures were developed. For the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK), the establishment of the Rural Women Peace Link not only helped to create a forum for women to express themselves, but also helped to change the balance of power between women and men. It became clearer and clearer that, in conflict situations, women have specific options that are not available to men.

⁴⁵ Manchanda Rita: *We Do More Because We Can – Naga Women in the Peace Process*, South Asia Forum for Human Rights, Kathmandu 2004

⁴⁶ Manchanda Rita, Bandita Sijapati, Rebecca Gang: *Women Making Peace, Strengthening Women's Role in Peace Processes*, South Asia Forum of Human Rights, Kathmandu 2001

Widening the scope

Rural Women Peace Link, Kenya

The Rural Women Peace Link was founded in 1999. Violent clashes in the Western Kenyan Rift Valley in the 1990s meant that women were faced with particular problems. There were bloody battles between farmers and pastoral tribes, between different groups of nomads or at political events. This results in dozens of deaths and thousands of displaced families. Many women and children suffered dreadfully. Reports of a woman who, following an attack on her village, killed her five children and then attempted to kill herself, gave the impetus to take action. The Peace Link aimed to give women a forum to talk about their suffering and about incidents that occurred in their village communities. Soon, however, the women had set their sights on higher objectives: they wanted to be seen and be heard. An association of 14 regional women's networks was set up. The women worked to promote peace in their communities. They want to protect women and girls from domestic violence, forced marriage and genital mutilation. Girls and women from all age groups and tribes learned how to use and expand their traditional roles in promoting peace.

There were a number of obstacles to be overcome. Women required permission from men to meet in their own forum. Selline Korir, the initiator of the NCCK, approached the 'elders' – the traditional authorities – with this matter. With the women who were able to attend, she began projects for generating income and invited the elders to take part. The gradual success of the project was the best possible advertisement.

As the power elites benefited from a climate dominated by violence and mistrust, the government attempted to prevent the women from meeting, in so far as they crossed local borders. Selline Korir negotiated directly with the government, explained her programme and created a basis of trust. The authorities relaxed the rules, even allowing women to cross the district borders for the purposes of their activities. They expanded their activities to include young and old people. This is because it is young people who raid and attack at the behest of the elders. When young people were included in peace committees, the violence let up. More women were persuaded to join in the peace work. Their husbands were invited too. This led to an increase in the number and size of the groups, which included both men and women.

It is traditionally up to women to begin the dialogue. Interethnic women's groups often discuss everyday issues before turning their attention to controversial issues. Women's needs are still a matter of urgency. For instance, the groups train midwives who are urgently needed in remote rural areas far from medical care. As they provide the same assistance to all ethnic groups, they are also ambassadors of peace. The women found that they could even negotiate with cattle thieves. They approached young men with violent tendencies and talked to them. Because of the respect traditionally afforded to women, they can do this more effectively than men.

The women of the Rural Women Peace Link want to increase the latitude afforded to women by their culture. In cases where women are not yet allowed to own land, means are mobilised to purchase land for common income-generating projects. Whereas women did not receive any training before, they are now trained as legal assistants, as 'women who know the law'. The Rural Women Peace Link is not restricted to local work, but

holds regular conferences in the region to reflect upon the situation. In 2002, the main focus was on issues relating to government. In 2005, the theme was 'Women – Peace – Security' with speakers focusing on the grassroots implementation of UN Resolution 1325. A total of 70 women and men came together. Universities were represented, as were political decision-makers, grassroots groups, administration institutions, civil society organisations, programme planners from Western Kenya and the Presidential Office. This shows the success of the network in using the expertise of women regarding conflicts in their region, ensuring that they are heard by top authorities and even compelling the government to assume its share of responsibilities. This can be seen from the standing ovations afforded to a conference participant for her speech: "This is not the first time that we have attended a peace meeting. Some of our young people are still caught up in violence. We spoke to them at a peace meeting. Now they are changing. But when they are told to hand in their weapons without being offered anything to occupy them instead, they ask us women what they should do with all the time on their hands. And now we women are asking the government: what can we offer our young people? Should we let them return to their familiar lifestyle?"⁴⁷

Images of masculinity and femininity

Gender is a social category that ascribes roles to individual women and men. These roles are emphasised through individual and collective actions and repeatedly reinforced. These create often black-and-white images of masculinity and femininity. In violent conflicts, many organisations have seen that the images of masculinity and femininity are very rigidly and stereotypi-

cally defined: To be masculine is therefore to be active. According to the stereotype, men are active 'protectors' or 'attackers', use force and carry weapons. Femininity stands for the passive role: women are victims, unarmed and vulnerable. Men and women base themselves on these images, but their real identities are frequently quite the opposite.



⁴⁷ Summarisation of Beghtol, DeEtte, Wald: Powerful Rural Women in Turkana, Kenya, in: University for Peace; peace and conflict monitor, special report, 2004, http://www.monitor.upeace.org/archive.cfm?id_article=216 ; Rural Women's Peace Link, RWPL: Reflective Conference 2005, pages 2,4; <http://www.peacewomen.org/resources/1325/PDF/RWPLconference.pdf>

Violence affects men too

Sahr Waru reports that, for a long time, the organisation had worked exclusively with female trauma victims. However, these women told of male relatives who were traumatised themselves and who carried out sexual violence after the sudden conflict. Only then did the organisation realise how many men had become victims of sexual violence during the pogroms in Gujarat. The spectrum of violence against men is very broad. Even sexual violence against men directly is not infrequently used as a means of destroying their male identity. For many men who have experienced violence such as this, it is impossible to accept that they themselves are victims and to seek trauma counselling, as this would mean that they no longer fit with the idealised image of masculinity. This applies in the same way to men who committed the violence but who are not able to deal with the experience and whose trauma is fed by their own acts of violence. Many withdraw into auto-aggressive behaviour, practise violence as soldiers or militia or are violent towards members of their family. This explains why, in the case of many armed conflicts, domestic violence rises significantly during 'post-conflict stages'. However, there are very few options available for the small number of men who rise above the hegemonic understanding of masculinity and accept that they are victims and seek counselling. The institutions and initiatives in the field of trauma counselling are dominated by the conventional gender stereotypes and focus mainly on programmes for women. This prompted Sahr Waru to begin working specifically with traumatised men.

Active role for survivors in peace work

Another key to breaking out of the stereotypical 'masculinity = aggressor and femininity = victim' mentality comes from the women's movement: in violent conflict situations, it is also possible for the victims of violence to assume an active role rather than remaining a passive victim. This applies to both women and men in equal measure. Tamil refugees who had been victims of brutal violence in Sri Lanka were among the first to assist the traumatised victims of the tsunami in Southern India at the end of 2005. Owing to their own experiences with war trauma, they were in a position to

understand and support the victims. Based on this experience, they developed peace work activities. In this way, they mobilise active roles other than that of perpetrators. At the same time, they suspend the polarizing perception about perpetrators and victims that equates a peace potential only with the passive role of victims.

Gender analysis

The discussion about gender has made it clear that societies are not monolithic. Rather, they are characterised by social power structures that should be recognised and analysed. In this way, local internal players are not idealised but rather can be perceived in their full complexity.

Power is at the centre of gender analysis; power is the most significant factor in conflict analysis. This being the case, it stands to reason that findings from both approaches should be used. We deal with people who have multiple identities: in addition to their gender identity they have identities based on their class, religion, ethnic group, level of education, etc. They not only

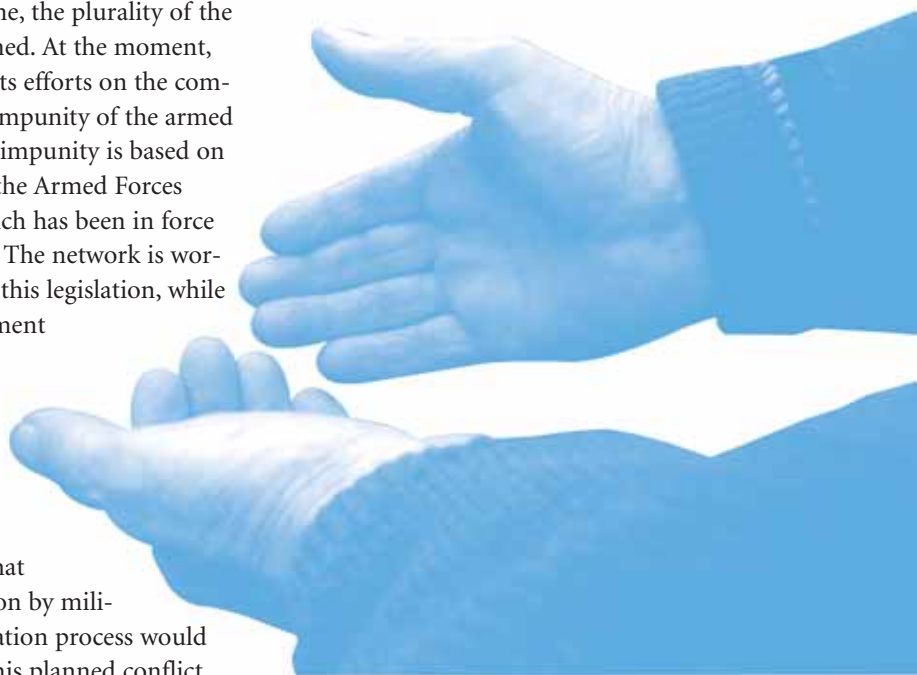


shape the personal identity but are also associated with different levels of power. When gender analysis does not stop at masculinity and femininity, but rather sheds light on different power distribution dynamics in local societies, this makes it possible to analyse the conflict in a differentiated form. The following two examples illustrate how this analysis deals with power dynamics.

The work of the Church of South India focuses mainly on the caste system and the marginalisation of the Dalits.⁴⁸ In many dioceses, church social workers and pastors are working to weaken the strict separation of communities at village level, which invariably involves massive discriminations against Dalits. Normative codices relating to 'purity' are questioned, for instance when young people from different castes prepare and eat food together with Dalits or use the same well.

For the UNMM network in Manipur, the cohesion of its members is a constant challenge, consisting as it does of organisations from various ethnic groups. For many aspects of the conflict and possible solutions for resolving it, there is no common stance as yet. The position of each member organisation is based on the prevailing viewpoint and interests of its own ethnic group. After the members of the network have gained several years of experience applying the Do No Harm ethic in their projects, they are no longer content with just carrying out development work in conflict situations, but also wish to make a direct contribution to conflict transformation. This presents two challenges for the network to work on: the internal gender-related power asymmetries and the ethnic identity conflicts. At the same time, the plurality of the network should be retained. At the moment, the network is focusing its efforts on the common goal of ending the impunity of the armed forces in its region. This impunity is based on emergency legislation – the Armed Forces Special Powers Act – which has been in force in the region since 1958. The network is working for the abolition of this legislation, while calling upon the government to offer peace talks to all ethnically organised underground groups. At the same time, they are using their means to convince the armed movements that the conflict cannot be won by military means and a negotiation process would offer better prospects. This planned conflict

transformation process is based on a carefully developed consensus within the network. In the long term, the scope of this consensus is to be extended. This means subjecting existing power interests and power balances to repeated analysis and agreeing on one common strategic procedure.



⁴⁸ The word Dalit (literally 'broken' or 'downtrodden') is used to describe the descendants of the Indian aboriginal inhabitants, which as 'untouchables' are still excluded from the Indian caste system to this day.

Conclusions

'Peace theories' inform the actions of those working 'on the conflict'.

Experiences garnered working directly 'on the conflict' have also been subjected to systematic empirical analysis with the 'Reflecting on Peace Practice Project'.⁴⁹ One important finding of this study was that all work 'on the conflict' is informed by theories about how peace is established and maintained. There are many theories. They can be divided into four groups. There are two questions at the outset, each of which has two possible answers.

Question One is: Who must change in order for peace to take hold?

Answer A: As many people as possible

Answer B: (A small number of) key players

Question Two is: What must be changed in order for peace to take hold?

Answer C: Attitudes, values, people's norms and actions

Answer D: Socio-political structures in society

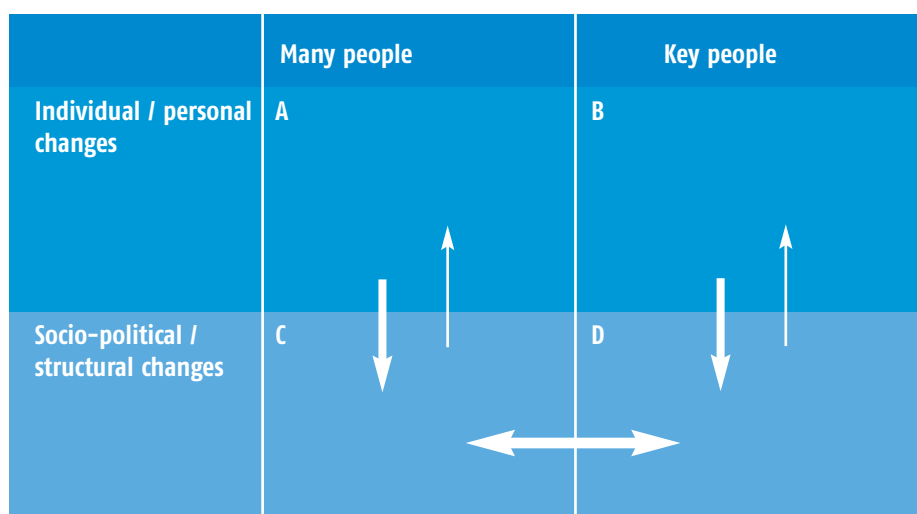
Initiatives in Field A are geared towards inducing as many people as possible to change their attitudes and behaviour. This is done by means of peace education, mobilisation for public protests, peace demonstrations, etc.

Players in Field B believe that key people must be induced to cease their violent activities. This is done by means of insight and changing outlooks through dialogue, meetings, trust-building measures or through international pressure, sanctions and threat of punishment.

Other initiatives that are located in Field C are based on the assumption that changes in a society's socio-political structures and institutions must be implemented by mobilising and organising large numbers of people. By observing

elections, educating the electorate and setting up youth and women's organisations, trade unions, human rights organisation and networks, they aim to create institutions and structures through which conflicts can be resolved constructively.

Finally, Field D contains activities geared towards bringing about socio-political changes via key players, for example truth commissions, public administration reforms and security reforms.



Systematisation of theories about how peace is established and maintained.⁵⁰

The 'Reflecting on Peace Practice' process made it clear that measures in the individual fields had an effective impact on the overall dynamics of the conflict when linked with measures in other fields. This does not mean that players must be active in all fields. Rather, individual players should use their expertise in their specific fields of action. At the same time, however, they should attempt to forge strategic links with other players in other fields.

⁴⁹ Anderson, Mary B. and Lara Olson: *Confronting War: Critical Lessons For Peace Practitioners*. Collaborative for Development Action, Cambridge, MA; 2003; www.cdainc.com

⁵⁰ Based on: Anderson, Mary B. and Lara Olson: *Confronting War: Critical Lessons For Peace Practitioners*. Cambridge, MA, 2003

Strategic links

These strategic links between different activities in peace work help to increase the scope of individual activities. This is because peace is not automatically the sum of the individual projects – and it is not necessarily true that every little helps. Quite the opposite, in fact. There are examples of different peace activities obstructing each other. In North Uganda, for instance, local and international peace initiatives spent years working on negotiations between the government and the Lord's Resistance Army, which above all was waging a war of terror against the population. At the same time, other players were pushing for the war crimes that were committed to be pursued in the courts. Mary B. Anderson summarised the challenge of peace activities as follows: "... an organisation that pursues one of the approaches to achieving

peace and fails to link its activities with work in other fields will not achieve the goal of peace work. Effective peace organisations cannot work in isolation".⁵¹

Peace work is built on processes

Based on their own experiences, partner organisations stress the importance of continuity in peace work, as conflicts are subject to different periods of time than project cycles. A long-term and cautious approach is essential in order to include all key conflict parties in an inclusive peace process. This means that it is not only necessary to ask whether change is coming quickly enough but also whether the peace process is going slowly enough to really achieve the level of inclusiveness it requires. This, too, is a challenge for peace work that is 'stuck in a rut'. It is possible that the previously defined time frames are not sufficient to reach the desired results.

Questions are also to be asked about the depth of analysis. A meticulous analysis of the situation is necessary, as it can be vital to understand the hidden agendas of the conflict parties. The aim should certainly be to bring about as comprehensive an understanding of the situation as possible. However, organisations that are actively engaged in peace projects in their own countries have expressed doubts as to whether it would ever be possible to gain a comprehensive picture of the conflict.



⁵¹ Anderson, Mary B.: Experiences with Impact Assessment: Can We Know What Good We Do? Handbook for Conflict Transformation, Berlin 2004, page 12; <http://www.berghof-handbook.net>.

EED peace work – Mission Statement and new challenges

Seeking peace and justice

The Bible sees justice and peace as being inextricably linked: “And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever”, promises the Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 32.17). The destabilisation of societies and the violent conflicts that take place within them are always related to disregard for God’s will to do justice to all. The Old Testament prophets impressed upon their fellow people that the injustice inflicted upon the poor and defenceless would be the downfall of the entire nation: “Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel [...] You pluck off their skin from off [my people], and their flesh from off their bones, and flay their skin from off them [...] and eat the flesh of my people ... you build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity ... Therefore shall Zion for your sake be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps ...” (extracts from Micah 3.1-12). The Bible envisages a world which has only reached its goal “when justice and peace [...] have kissed” (Psalm 85.11) – a gift from God but an incentive for the social orders to base themselves upon it. Because of this, the EKD (Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland – Evangelical Church in Germany) bases its reflections on Christian peace ethics on the concept of “Living in God’s Peace – Working for Just Peace”⁵². A desire for peace requires us to think in terms of ‘just peace’.

This is why the Church’s development work is geared towards eliminating social and economic inequality worldwide. This work aims to allow people to exercise their rights without fear of

retaliation and to take responsibility for shaping their own lives. Church-based development work aims to “stamp out poverty and hunger in the world and its causes”⁵³ – in today’s terminology ‘poverty alleviation’. It aims to ensure “an adequate standard of living ... including the right to adequate food, clothing and shelter”⁵⁴. It also aims to attain the “highest possible standard of physical and mental health”⁵⁵ and to enforce the right to education for all. In practice, development cooperation has shown that the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights must go hand-in-hand with efforts to ensure political and civil rights.

The fruit of justice will be peace

In 1966, the World Conference on Church and Society in Geneva ascertained that justice and peace were not only “tasks for the national societies in question but also for the relationship between industrialised and developing nations”⁵⁶. This describes an area of joint responsibility that goes far beyond debates on intervention: interdependence is the key word. Since the World Church Conference in 1968, “justice and peace in an interdependent world” have become the main theme of the churches’ development cooperation: “As we are aware of the plight of people all over the world and also have the means to combat it, there is no excuse any more. It is just one world and the dreadful inequalities that exist between the people of different nations and different continents are as inexcusable as the chasms that exist within individual countries.”⁵⁷ Here, the correlation between peace and justice was formulated in concrete terms: “These efforts that are made to promote justice all over the world are, at the same time, making

⁵² EKD: Aus Gottes Frieden leben – für gerechten Frieden sorgen (Live from God’s Peace- Care for Just Peace, A Memorandum of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany), Gütersloh 2007

⁵³ EKD Synod: “The Future of the Church and the Future of the World” (Die Zukunft der Kirche und die Zukunft der Welt), Munich 1968

⁵⁴ Art. 11.1 UN Convention on economic, social and cultural rights from 16 December 1966

⁵⁵ Art. 12.1 UN Convention on economic, social and cultural rights from 16 December 1966

⁵⁶ EKD: The Church Development Service – a Contribution to Peace and Justice in the World. A memorandum from the Chamber of the Protestant Church for Church Development Service (ed), Gütersloh 1973, page 16

⁵⁷ ibid. page 17

an effective contribution to peace. In the comprehensive biblical sense – and, indeed, in political reality – peace means more than laying down weapons or even the precariously balanced relationship between heavily armed powers. Injustice on a national and international level poses a constant threat to peace. Accordingly, peace efforts must also seek to bring about a greater degree of justice and to actively ease social tensions as part of global development programmes. Responsibility for development, speaking out for justice and lasting peace are therefore inextricably linked.”⁵⁸

This understanding of justice ties in closely with the notions of distributive justice and equal access, aspects that are often forced to take a back seat in peace processes.

Injustice is a threat to peace

Nonetheless, the global conflict constellation of the East-West conflict up until the end of the 1980s did not give much scope for addressing this key issue. All too often, the stalemate between the superpowers blocked the independent and justice-oriented development processes and the conflicts related to them. Still, the church development cooperation’s fight against “poverty and hunger in the world and its causes” – as defined by the resolution of the EKD Synod in 1968 – saw its approaches and main areas of focus evolving continuously with new points of focus. The main emphasis went from acute emergency aid at the outset to support for self-help initiatives and the observation of human rights. The churches’ development service focused its efforts on those who were “downtrodden and helped by no one”. This was emphasised by the EKD Synod in 1973: “As the concept of development includes freedom from racial and social discrimination, ...[Christians are] ... called upon to play an active role in expanding and specifying human rights in view of the development and racial problems in the world of today”.⁵⁹

With the end of the East-West conflict, free-enterprise development and economic growth took centre stage in the prevailing discussion on development. The assumption that strict free-enterprise concepts would lead to fair development and reduced poverty was misplaced for the most part. On the contrary, it brought about new and far-reaching injustices on both a national and international level. The public awareness of global correlations brought about by the effects of climate change and by the recent experiences of the financial crisis in 2008 has given rise to a new, problem-conscious wave of thought about global responsibility, injustices and the conflict dynamics that these trigger off. This represents an opportunity to come to a new understanding and active implementation of justice-oriented cooperation in a global context. However, it also harbours risks: if these global developments are mainly perceived as threats to be countered, it can culminate in a confrontational or even high-grade military approach, as can be seen, for example, in the way Europe is shutting out poverty refugees from Africa in the Mediterranean region.

⁵⁸ *ibid.* page 18

⁵⁹ *ibid.* page 30

Peace and conflict skills

The Protestant Church indicated at a very early stage that development processes can fail “because small privileged groups have a monopoly on all key power positions and use them to exploit the majority of the population. This can also include multinational companies who sometimes wield more power than a whole country. Lastly, the current global economic system perpetuates the dependency that is rooted in political and economic colonialism.”⁶⁰ Local peace and development organisations are confronted with these conflict lines. Church-based development cooperation players have positioned themselves alongside them. They expressly welcome the conflicts that arise from this position. “In the formation of welfare and social work, political disputes are deliberately sought out. This is the case at both national and international level in equal measure. It gives rise to tension and conflicts that must be resolved. It is not infrequently the case that conflicts need to be intensified before a more socially equitable and dignified form of cohabitation can be achieved.”⁶¹ This wholly positive view of conflicts has changed since the end of the East-West conflict with the advent of the ‘new wars’ in the 1990s. The brutality of the ‘new wars’, in which the ‘old’ rules of war carry less and less weight and in which conflicts are seen to have a negative dynamic, led to specific certainties being called into question. These were replaced by new roles and a new focus on the ability to resolve conflicts.

Non-violence is the basis for successful conflict management

The workshop report from 1999 addresses the churches’ view of their work alongside their partners in the South. It poses a critical question: “Does this mean that those engaged in church-based development cooperation become ‘combatants’? Does this in turn mean that the Christian virtue of building peace is lost?” The report goes on to ask: “Who brings the hostile parties to the negotiation table? Who settles conflicts? Who reconciles victims and aggressors?”⁶² The focus was shifted onto the type of con-

flict, the large-scale violence and destruction, the suffering of the people. The conflict itself was not the problem, but rather the way it was carried out. It was not a question of shrinking from conflicts about justice: “Both state and non-state development cooperation work is fundamentally concerned with preventing the large-scale violence with which conflicts are carried out. And church-based development cooperation work in particular ‘fights’ not only on the side of the poor but also invests the same energy in promoting non-violence. This non-violence begins long before the outbreak of conflicts; it analyses conflicts as a matter of priority when planning development projects and processes; it is already firmly established in development projects that exacerbate conflicts (if necessary more effectively than before); and it leads to special conflict management measures during and after the conflict”.⁶³



⁶⁰ *ibid.* page 23

⁶¹ *ibid.* page 55f

⁶² AGKED (ed), 1999, page 66

⁶³ *ibid.* page 67

Promoting peace: one of EED's core activities

What does this mean for EED in concrete terms? What significance should be attributed to peace-building and dealing with conflict in future? The workshop report from 1999 threw open the discussion of these questions in EED committees. In 2003, EED then approved a Mission Statement. This formulated the objective for the international EED cooperation, but also for activities in Germany, for educational, lobby and PR work. In its mission statement, EED expressly cites the promotion of peace and the elimination of violence as objectives of its development work.

These objectives are linked with four further dimensions: eradicating poverty, hunger and its causes; establishing just societies; preserving creation; and overcoming the effects of globalisation that perpetuate injustice and inequality.⁶⁴

By linking the objectives in this way, EED underlined the value of peace work very clearly. It also indicates that working for just development is tantamount to working for social change. And this calls for a conscious approach to dealing with conflicts. On the other hand, it points to the necessity of finding ways to do so even in situations where brutal violence reigns, where resources and power are unfairly distributed and where human dignity is abused.

In this connection, the postulate that peace can only grow from within is of relevance on a number of different levels. People must be genuinely willing to work actively to resolve conflicts peacefully and not to 'wait and see' or to look the other way when social tensions escalate. Peace must come from within: from the society that is experiencing political and social conflict. What has the strongest potential to curb violence and make peace processes a success? It is the efforts and tenacity of the people who no longer wish for their lives to be marred by lawless violence. Peace means far more than just the silencing of guns or the results of successful crisis management. It is a process involving all players, a process during which violent dy-

namics are reduced, the causes of a conflict are remedied and a sound basis for social cohabitation is created. It is a road that is made up of small, frequently painstaking steps and many paths and which widens from within. Peace is established where a democratic, capable state grows in tandem with social justice, gender justice and a social culture which shuns despotism, thereby facilitating a constructive approach to dealing with conflicts and transforming them.

This postulate has an extremely far-reaching impact on EED's work. This is because it means that peace work must jettison the notion of project-based thinking. Projects are tied to a pre-defined period of time; they require a clearly defined target and a systematic series of measures to reach this target. However, this approach does not do justice to the sheer complexity and process-oriented nature of peace development. In conflict situations, it is important to proceed with many small steps while remaining open for the dynamics of the conflict and for new developments. In this case, taking things 'step-by-step' means precisely that: that the situation must be analysed carefully with each new step, then taking the next step, assessing and evaluating the outcome right away and then and only then planning further steps. Only in this way is it possible to ensure the flexibility necessary to work on existing conflict situations individually and to establish lasting mechanisms for peaceful conflict management in the society.

The ability to resolve conflicts constructively and to prevent violence calls for a suitable social culture and political structures, institutions and procedures. This means that EED's focus is not on the 'hot spots' that determine media agendas or foreign policy. EED peace work is founded on trust-based partnerships with local organisations; it is shaped by everyday work in development projects. It frequently concerns disputes over land, access to water or control of resources that allow a secure existence. In other cases, it concerns political conflicts within or between individual states which have an impact on the lives of local people and which civil society players aim to resolve by constructive

⁶⁴ EED Mission Statement, Bonn 2003

means. Or it concerns conflicts that arise when traditional customs and roles are called into question.

Peace work bears fruit in intensive, long-term partnerships

EED aims to provide partner-like support without being patronising or paternalistic. Trust is developed by means of intensive dialogue with partners and long-term partnerships. Trust makes it possible to shape joint processes at national and international level and to gear them towards the situation in question. In some cases, this can mean encouraging the formation of networks. In other cases, it can mean expanding capacity. It can also mean encouraging the establishment of capable organisations, e.g. women's organisations, human rights organisations, organisations for indigenous people, survivors of violence, Dalits, etc. It can also mean international lobby organisations. The decisive factor is whether the procedure is, in the joint estimation of the local organisations and EED, in a position to improve the situation. It is also crucial to maintain flexibility in order to be able to react appropriately to changing situations.

For EED, peace work consists of two things. Firstly, EED supports its partners' programmes or projects by providing funds, personnel or training measures. Secondly, it works together with partners to improve the underlying conditions for peaceful development.

The spectrum of approaches based on direct cooperation is deliberately wide. It is founded on the experience that there is no universal recipe for promoting peace. This being the case, EED puts its weight behind organisations that undertake preventative work. In this area, for example, women's organisations are of great importance.

To overcome factors that have triggered off violence in a region or at a nationwide level, it can be important to contribute to the 'de-escalation' process and to address a conflict again by civil and/or political means. Post-war situations often require programmes that establish (or re-establish) law, truth and reconciliation, thereby preventing conflicts from flaring up

again soon afterwards. At the same time, development programmes such as effective social services and educational institutions, income-generating activities and food security measures are of very great significance in promoting peace in post-war situations. For this reason, it is important to make them 'conflict-sensitive', i.e. in line with the Do No Harm ethic.

All conflicts are different. Resolving them constructively can require people or groups to change their attitude to a problem or to other members of society; it can mean that hostile groups must seek out new forms of social and political interaction or must try out new behavioural patterns and limit the potential for violence.

When major tensions within a state are to be addressed, the extent of structural violence must also be taken into account. This results from an unfair balance of power in politics, business or in gender relations. What is deemed by an EED partner to be necessary and feasible is determined by its expertise and its socio-political identity. It also depends on the degree of freedom that exists within the civil society. In societies in which the population is allowed to take part in political decisions and in which human rights are respected, it is easier for conflicts to be resolved and for peace to 'grow from within'. Where this is less the case, the opportunities for civil society players are limited. This means that their scope for action would tend to be at local level. To give a concrete example, they can lessen the effects of violence on the population, increase expertise in non-violent conflict resolution and remove structural factors that lead to tension or violence. The outside support offered by EED increases the scope of local organisations to determine and to help actively shape development and peace processes in their own societies.

EED supports local peace work

The support offered by EED to its partners takes a variety of forms. EED uses church and public funds to provide financial support to partner programmes, thereby expanding or adding weight to existing initiatives. It deploys peace experts to partners in Africa, Asia, Latin America and South East Europe. The experts train local staff, provide ongoing assistance to peace processes or pass on new findings, procedures and organisational methods. EED promotes measures that allow partners to network with one another on a national, regional and international level and to reflect upon their work together. This interaction between partners gives rise to new knowledge regarding concepts and activities. EED promotes the training and further education of staff in partner organisations and provides support to partners in their international lobby and advocacy work.

The Civil Peace Service

Justice and peace work have always been central to Christian development cooperation work. In the 1990s, the specialist peace service programme area evolved from a number of individual secondments, thereby laying the foundations for EED's participation in the Civil Peace Service programme.

The Civil Peace Service (Ziviler Friedensdienst, ZFD) was set up in 1999 by the German federal government together with peace and development organisations as a form of personnel co-operation. In addition to deploying personnel, ZFD made funds available for supporting partner organisations. The conditions of the Civil Peace Service – relating to content and organisational structure – were specified with input from project partners.

The German federal government supports the Civil Peace Service as part of its focus on activities in the field of crisis prevention and civil conflict management. Through its involvement in the Civil Peace Service, EED established an additional instrument for personnel support. Its goal is to support local partner organisations in crisis regions who are attempting to prevent the outbreak of violent conflicts (crisis prevention), who are working to help establish the basis

for peaceful conflict management and resolution (reduction of violence), and who are helping to secure long-term peace by setting up suitable structures (post-conflict activities). Key concerns for EED in this respect are to fortify the potential for local peace in their work towards reconciliation and reconstruction, in improving the human rights and democracy situation, and in carrying out trust-building measures between members of conflict parties or between conflict parties, interest groups, ethnic groups or religions.

When making use of the Civil Peace Service, EED focuses on personnel deployment measures which can stand alone as flagship projects and which frequently generate synergy effects when combined with other development policy measures undertaken by partners. It is not a question of developing a strategy here in Germany and implementing it. Rather, EED works to enable local organisations to position themselves strategically and to take effective action. Rather than being a precondition for support, strategy development is part of and frequently the result of this support. This is because, as outlined above, peace processes require a cautious, step-by-step approach.

Lobbying and advocacy work

In many conflict zones, foreign players are partially responsible for the causes and the course of disputes. Because of this, EED represents the interests of its partner organisations at an international level as well. It is currently devoting much attention to the interaction between Northern and Southern players. For example, it is involved in the Ecumenical Peace Service for Palestine/Israel, assisting the peace process in Sudan and is participating in a Christian-Muslim, German-Egyptian dialogue on the role of religions in the state and in society. EED provides ongoing support to processes of social change at international level. In this way, it aims to reinforce measures designed to reduce violence and to have a positive effect on factors that worsen conflicts.

Peace work and civil conflict management are also focal points of EED's training and lobby work in Germany. The spectrum of these acti-

vities ranges from supporting informational activities in church communities to the involvement of EED in discussions shaping German development and peace policy.

Removing the Northern privilege of interpretation

The practical nature of EED support is derived from the notion of 'ownership'⁶⁵ of activities by local players. Since being established, the Churches' Development Service has aimed to respect and promote the dignity of people as free individuals. Collaborating with organisations in the South and East is therefore a constitutive feature of church development work. It does not import alleged solutions from outside, but rather supports local organisations in their development work. Because of this, EED supports local organisations and their projects and sees itself as a partner that contributes financial support and expertise to the development and peace work of existing organisations.

At the same time, this collaboration initiated learning processes among German churches and agencies, ushering in a change in the understanding of peace here. The intensive dialogue with local organisations facilitates learning processes for both sides. Only in this way was it possible to discuss the form that should be taken by church development work in crisis and conflict zones in order to avoid unintentionally fomenting violence but rather to increase the ability of a society to resolve conflicts constructively. EED is partner to a variety of civil society organisations, churches, NGOs, grassroots groups, women's organisations, networks and associations in over 80 countries worldwide. This allows it to initiate learning processes across national borders and in different continents. The great potential of such processes for developing new concepts and methods that are of practical relevance has been clearly illustrated by the Local Capacities for Peace (LCP) process and the Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) project.

Nonetheless, the debate on development work issues and, subsequently, the practical imple-

mentation of this in Germany, Europe and the United States continue to reflect the Northern interpretational bias. The majority of publications that are relevant in this connection are produced in Europe and the USA.

International discussions are dominated by the estimations and analyses of state and non-state institutions from Europe and the USA. The Northern interpretational bias is even more apparent in the analysis and evaluation of conflicts. Since September 2001, the Northern viewpoint has set the tone of discussions about the relationship between security and development. This shifts the focus onto escalating conflicts and transforms peace policy into crisis policy to a greater and greater extent. This causes other activities to be neglected, such as prevention, long-term work on conflicts, the creation of cultures that are capable of dealing with conflict, and the establishment of political structures, institutions and procedures.

Making the voice to local peace organisations heard

This is why EED has for some years been focusing much of its support on the lobby and advocacy work of its partner organisations. One example of this is the Peace in South Asia (PISA) programme, for which EED has also made significant resources available. With PISA, the Southern Asia team of EED's Asia-Pacific Desk has, since 2003, focused on training partner organisations in civil conflict transformation, with activities centring on Southern Asia and the North.

As well as this, however, EED specifically supports the establishment of international networks of peace activists. To this end, for instance, it organises congresses and expert talks, thereby promoting direct interaction between German and European experts on the experiences and expectations of local peace initiatives in the field of international development and peace policy. Direct contact is also made by means of talks with parliamentary and ministerial representatives.

In October 2005, for example, EED collaborated with APRODEV in organising a congress in Brussels for the discussion of gender and conflict

⁶⁵ People are said to 'own' an activity or process in that they are responsible for and identify with it.

issues at EU level. There, partners presented cases from Sudan and Gujarat, India (OLAKH). This event produced a declaration on the subject of gender and conflict that is vital for decision-makers in the European Commission and in European non-governmental organisations.

In June 2008, human rights and peace activists from Pakistan, India, Nepal and China were invited by EED to attend talks in Berlin, Bonn and Geneva. As part of the one-week information trip, the activists presented their concerns at a meeting of representatives from politics and civil society, informed the Committee for Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid about their concerns and held talks in Geneva with representatives of the Human Rights Council of the United Nations.

As well as promoting direct contact between European decision-makers and local peace organisations, EED also contributes to the change of perspective in Germany and Europe by publishing the findings of workshops and case studies.

There is a great deal of interest in this form of information: in 2006, EED published 'People Building Peace' (in English). The eight case studies deal with the correlation between the development work of partner organisations and factors relating to the conflict contexts in which they work, while also deriving conclusions and recommendations. The demand in Southern Asia and Germany was so great that a second edition has since been published. This publication here also aims to help change perspectives. Accordingly, it summarises the findings of the workshop organised by EED in 2005 – 'Development in a Troubled World: Dealing with Conflict in Constructive Ways' – and the subsequent public specialist talk with other German NGOs and ministerial representatives.

Not least, fact-finding trips by politicians can also help to broaden their understanding and change their outlook. Because of this, EED repeatedly uses the opportunity to get involved in organising trips for members of parliament or government officials and, in some cases,

accompanying them – for example to Bangladesh and Nepal in March/April 2008. In the future, fact-finding missions will remain an important part of EED's lobby and advocacy work.

Incorporating gender dimensions

Women's organisations worldwide have demonstrated their skill in transforming violent conflicts. Countless contributions to early warning and to informal peace processes are attributable to the initiative of women. The role of women's organisations within civil society and vis-à-vis state offices must also be recognised in church-based development and peace work. It must also be backed and formalised as set out in Resolution 1325 of the United Nations Security Council.

Violent conflict situations have a significant impact on gender roles and on perceptions of masculinity and femininity. In war situations, women are expected to assume the role that is otherwise deemed masculine: the role of breadwinner and head of the household. At the same time and completely inconsistent with this reality, social norms are stereotyped with regard to the 'real' man or the 'typical' woman, which leaves little or no room for divergence. Here, the norm is for the male to be the soldier/aggressor and for the female to be the soldier's mother/victim.

It is necessary to recognise the changing gender roles in civil society work and to address the needs and challenges that result from these. At the same time, a major challenge facing peace work is the need to actively call into question the heavily stereotyped gender norms that exist. These may not be seen as a given when implementing peace measures. The churches' development service must question this situation and turn the spotlight onto those people who suffer from these stereotypes. In particular, men should not be perceived only as aggressors but also as victims and as peace workers. It is of equal importance not to view women as passive victims but rather of active players and, at the same time, not to turn a blind eye to the role of women as aggressors themselves.

Peace work challenges gender norms

If the prevailing stereotypical image of masculinity in a society is that of an aggressive, potentially violent 'hero', a normative context develops in which political questions are solved by patriarchal, militaristic strategies. However, these strategies frequently make the violent situations worse. Because of this, it is important to look for ways – based on a gender analysis – in which the political and economic context can be influenced in such a way that the patriarchal, hierarchical logic is weakened and that civil, non-authoritarian solutions can be developed.

In addition, the gender analysis enhances the methodology used for conflict analysis, in which it exposes power asymmetries at all levels, including those within the civil society. Civil society should not be idealised as a monolithic category. The varying interests and the ensuing conflicts within civil society that are not just observed between gender groups can be identified and used constructively through gender analysis. The more consciously and self-critically a society deals with questions relating to equality between men and women, the more capable it is of promoting lasting peace in conflict transformations.

Recognising the possibilities and limitations of civil society

In recent years, the notion of 'strengthening civil society' has been put forward as a panacea for problems of all kinds. This has also made it a focus of Northern donor policies. The experience of partners – even those in Northern states – has been to rethink this practice. Particularly where the development of statehood is not progressing, civil society cannot make up for shortcomings. This invariably leads to frustration and to the discrediting of civil society.

The notion that social players could compensate by assuming state functions stems from a political experience that views civil society and the democratic state as 'very complementary to one another, even to the point of being interdependent'.

This is true insofar as the state guarantees due process of law and attends to the needs of the population. However, as the experiences of partners from the South show, this is not the role that the state plays in reality. For many generations, people in the South and East have tended to see the state as a threat to their personal freedom and security rather than a guarantor of it. They are trying to ensure that the state fulfils its basic functions and that state organs conduct themselves in such a way that the state can be recognised as legitimate.

States must take their share of responsibilities

If efforts are to be directed towards strengthening civil society, then it should be in the sense that it serves as a critical counterpoint to state authorities that can put pressure on these with a view to ensuring rule of law and good governance. However, under no circumstances should the international community be allowed to release ruling elites from their obligations to their citizens. The report entitled 'The Responsibility to Protect' published in December 2001⁶⁶ describes the responsibilities of state organs clearly. In the various contexts of partner organisations, the dominant players remain the state authorities together with interstate or multilateral organisations and businesses. Here, international players must take their share of responsibilities. Where conflicts escalate into violence owing to external intervention by state or private players, the international community must meet its responsibility to prevent lawless violence and to protect lives.

In many Southern countries, state players see non-governmental organisations solely as a means of legitimising their own agenda. However, civil society has the intrinsic potential to implement not only constructive processes but also destructive ones. This being the case, the challenge is to identify 'authentic agents of change' and to help them in their efforts to play an independent, constructive role in their society, as a counterpart to a responsible state. As the EKD

⁶⁶ The Responsibility to Protect. Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. December 2001; <http://www.iciss.ca/report2-en.asp>

memorandum from 1973 stated, these people should “want a structural reorganisation in favour of the disadvantaged section of the population and be in a position to act as authentic spokespeople for their countries and their people.”⁶⁷



⁶⁷ EKD, 1973, page 25

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Further literature and information on peace and civil conflict management can be found on the EED website: <http://www.eed.de/peace>

Dealing with Conflicts – Changing Perspectives

Learning from the Experiences of Local Players in Conflict Situations

The assumption that development work automatically has the effect of promoting peace has proven to be a mistaken one. There are many cases where aggressors have, after careful planning, abused the work of aid organisations for their own ends. Local and international organisations that are primarily concerned with helping refugees, war victims and communities affected by violence and giving them a chance of survival must be aware of the unintended repercussions of emergency and development aid. However, development organisations have also learnt how emergency and development aid can be used to enable communities to resolve conflicts constructively, i.e. without resorting to violence. These organisations have developed approaches and methods designed to de-escalate violence in a planned and systematic way and to promote peace work.

This publication describes the experiences gained by EED and its partners in carrying out development work in violent conflict situations and how they have used – and still use – these experiences to modify their work and working methods continually with a view to meeting new challenges.