Vision of the Civil Peace Service Network – Cameroon

In a socio-political context in Africa, branded not only by armed conflict, oppression and injustice, but also marked by the desire to create a culture of security, stability and fulfillment, it is urgent to develop strategies to promote a just and sustainable peace in Cameroon.

The peace of God is the fruit of justice and it grows from within in every society. Unity, tolerance and love are its foundations. To this end God calls on each and every one of us to live through commitment, solidarity and prayer.

The youth find their place in Cameroonian society, they contribute to stability and take part in decision making concerning the country's future.

Cameroon's natural resources and its entrepreneurial potential are recognised and used for the advancement of the country and a better life for its citizens.

Valorising the socio-cultural, legal and political status of women and young girls is considered by all a precondition for social justice.

Elections are a duty for all citizens and are held in a transparent, peaceful and participative way. To ensure good governance, decision makers at all levels of society are held accountable.

Fundamentalism and radicalism are overcome through intercultural and interregional dialogue on one hand, and respect of cultural and religious diversity on the other.

Thus we shall reinforce human welfare and contribute together to sustainable development, a just peace and improvement of people's living conditions in Cameroon.

Kribi, May 19th 2011

Building Peace

EED (Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst – Church Development Service)
AGEH (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Entwicklungshilfe e.V. –
Personnel Agency of the German Catholics for International Cooperation)
Financed by the BMZ (Bundesministerium für
Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit – German Federal
Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)

Peace work in Cameroon

EED (Church Development Service, an Association
of the Protestant Churches of Germany)
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and Development, Bundesministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit)

Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Entwicklungshilfe e.V.
Personnel Agency of the German Catholics for International Cooperation

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Introduction

In 2010, AGEH and EED began to accompany and support the efforts of their respective partners in Cameroon as part of the Civil Peace Service (CPS/ZFD) funded by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The CPS network in Cameroon was launched in May 2011. A shared vision for peace and stability in the country was drawn up by 35 representatives, women and men, from 18 organisations and institutions in civil society in Cameroon. You will find this vision described on page 1.

But why do peace work in a country that is not at war? How exactly do we want to define peace work and all it encompasses?

In this publication you will find some theoretical and concrete answers to this question and also examples of the rich diversity of work carried out by the various actors in favour of a more just and more stable society.

For us, peace is indeed much more than just the absence of war. And we are convinced it should grow from within a society. The strategic paper jointly written by AGEH and EED on how they understand non-violent civil peace work from a Christian point of view was one of the bases for discussion at the workshop (see page 82).

Working with young people who represent more than half the population of Cameroon and yet feel marginalised and deprived of a future, supporting the efforts of young girls and women for a better future, as well as reinforcing grassroots communities to allow them to develop and fully take part in the national public debate are deeply anchored in the CPS network. The members of the network come from the four cor-

ners of the country, represent a variety of religious and ethnic communities and work towards civic dialogue, gender equality, human rights, justice and peace.

Explore the many different facets of this work through this joint booklet.

Any feedback and suggestions from you will be most welcome.

Flaubert Djateng
Christiane Kayser
Frank Wiegandt
Bafoussam, Goma, Yaoundé, October 2011

CPS workshop in Kribi in May 2011

Cultural evening, Sketch: *Preconceived ideas about the different ethnic groups in Cameroon*

EED/AGEH/CPS Workshop, May 2011, Kribi

By Mathieu Foka and Stephanie Knott

Introduction

A European lady has just arrived in Cameroon, and she is very curious to find out more about the country's various ethnic groups. She is already aware of the stereotypes and prejudice associated with some of these communities. She meets a young Cameroonian and decides to make use of the stereotypes she has heard about to find out what ethnic community he belongs to.

The European, with her typical accent: Good day Sir, I have just arrived in Cameroon and I would like to know what ethnic community you belong to. I see you are counting a lot of money, and so I'm sure you are Bamileke. Is that so?

The young Cameroonian, somewhat startled and in an increasingly aggressive tone of voice: No, not me! I'm not Bamileke. It's true they do say the Bamileke are too fond of money. But even if that's true, it's not necessarily a bad thing because they help to build cities like Douala and Yaoundé with their tall buildings sprouting up all over the place. And if they are all in retail as they say, that's not a bad thing either because it is the springboard of the country's economic growth. Moreover, if they are always trying to bring money into the family, it's to encourage internal growth and prevent currency flight. Is that a bad thing?

Even among the Bamileke, they say the Bangangte are too boastful, talkative and lazy; that the Baham are mean and calculating; that the Mbouda are all witch doctors and that the Dschang all love pork. Whether it's true or not, I don't know oh!

The European, taking a step back: You are very aggressive! So you're Bassa?

The Cameroonian: No! I'm not Bassa. Do you see me carrying a postage stamp? They say the Bassa are aggressive, very warlike, always carry a postage stamp around with them and are ready to make a complaint. This is normal; you have to be able to defend your rights.

The European: You mention rights, so you must be Bamenda? I've heard they are called the "According to the law…". Is that so?

The Cameroonian: No! I'm neither Bamenda, nor Anglophone! It's true they say they can't utter a sentence without saying: "According to the law…". It is also said that they are all leftwing and that they have strange taste in colour for their clothes. Whether it's true or not, I don't know oh!

The European: You're speaking with a Haoussa accent, I bet you're carrying a knife, is that right?

The Cameroonian: No! I'm not Wadjo. They say they don't like to go to school and they all work with oxen! They also say they always carry a knife and when they take it out, they can't keep it in their hand without drawing blood!

The European: You are well-dressed, I suppose you are Douala. Is that so?

The Cameroonian: No, that is not so! I'm not Douala. It's true they say the Douala show off too much and they're always boasting. They call them the "Whites" of Cameroon. They always carry a mirror with them, even when they go to the toilet. They are naturally good singers and dancers.

The European: You're Batanga then. They say the Batanga lead a double life: In water and on land. Is that so?

The Cameroonian: I'm not Batanga! Do I look like I have a mermaid's

tail? It's true they say the Batanga are all "Mami Watas"! Whether it's true or not, I don't know. But they are the ones that hold back the sea to prevent it from flooding the land!

The European: In that case it's certain you must be Bamoun! They say they are two-headed serpents! Is that so?

The Cameroonian: No, I'm not Bamoun. It's true they say they are two-headed serpents and that they're very hypocritical. Even if it were true, there would be no harm in it, that's the backbone of the country's intelligence service! They also say they all drive taxis without a driving licence because their brother is the Transport Minister. Even if it is true, how would we get around without them?

The European: So you're Bafia then? They say they're scared of the turtle! Is that so?

The Cameroonian: I'm not Bafia! Besides, I'm not afraid of turtles! If someone were to serve me a dish of turtle, I'd eat it heartily!

The European: In that case, you must be Beti! They say they'd sell their land for a glass of wine! Is that so?

The Cameroonian: No, I'm not Beti! It's true people say they all sold their land to the Bamileke and then had to pay them rent! That they live day to day and don't worry about tomorrow. Even if it were true, is that a bad thing? Doesn't the New Testament say "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof!"

The European: So where are you from?

The Cameroonian: I'm quite simply from Cameroon! I am the way I am and I actively champion a Cameroon that is united in difference!

Peace work and forums for citizenship exchanges

By Christiane Kayser,
CPS/EED mobile team

Conflicts are a form of human interaction that constitutes a driving force for development and change. Discussions of ideas, competition among programmes and decision making involving choices are all forms of conflict that are part of our daily lives. It is when they turn violent and deadly that they pose real problems.

In the case of conflicts of interests, one party is often dominant and stronger and can easily ignore or eliminate the other. Rebellions, as witnessed in Latin America, for instance, or in the "Arab spring", or even the less violent form of *"los indignados"* protests in several European countries, or again the recent unrest against President Wade in Senegal are all signs that people have had enough and have no other way of expressing this. Violent protests are often related to the fact that a group — in this case a large part of the population — cannot articulate or defend its interests against an overwhelming power. Until the day the injustices become unbearable and the situation explodes… It is reassuring to see that the movements in several Arab countries are trying to build something new for their nations. Young Africans — who form a large majority of the population in their respective countries — have taken up the torch here and there to express their anger and indignation at a situation that deprives them of their proper place in society and their prospects for the future. In some countries, faced with the

leaders' impenetrable shell, young people have quite simply withdrawn altogether from political life as actors. They are used only as extras to cheer and play the role of the crowd. This alienation constitutes a permanent threat though, for they can change their minds at the drop of a hat and express their state of mind and their pain sometimes violently, as happened in Cameroon in February 2008. They take to the streets and blind destruction becomes their means of expression. Unfortunately these — mostly justified — explosions do not always find constructive channels and they can be used and manipulated by individuals or groups for their own profit.

It can only be regretted that the cultures of negotiating interests and transforming conflicts that existed in most of the traditional African societies are disappearing in favour of vague imported concepts that are not appropriated by the populations, such as democratisation and good governance, etc.

In our global world dominated by the logic of the North we are witnessing identity crises and violent conflicts driven by hatred and exclusion, as in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and DRC to mention only a few examples. These conflicts are related to land ownership issues, power struggles, shows of "democratisation" and election processes for the benefit of the donors. They play out against a background of increasing pauperisation of the majority of the population and generalised bad governance. Rumours and manipulation thrive. People no longer have control over their own destiny but feel they are the victims of an obscure "invisible hand".

To ensure sustainable peace it is therefore essential to reinvent the mechanisms of non-violent negotiation of interests between communities, between regions, between decision-makers and their constituents, between elected officers and voters, etc.

And in so doing, we must not wait till violent conflicts or wars break out, but give priority to stabilisation and peace work setting to the task as soon as possible. Now, this work does not consist in covering up claims

or stifling rebellions in the face of injustices. Rather it can be summarised as the fostering of the emergence of a culture of dialogue and "constructive rebellion"[1].

A first step consists in listening to what the population has to say and giving a voice to the voiceless. Effective methods include radio broadcasts, publications and television programmes in which not only the "experts" and analysts can express their opinion but where the grievances and preoccupations of women, young people, farmers and city dwellers are quite simply heard.

Then it is a question of capacity building for analysing the key stakeholders' political, economic and cultural context.[2]

After that, we can implement or revitalise forums for exchange and for putting on the table the interests and problems of different groups in view of negotiation and dialogue. People then have a chance to listen to each other, to look each other in the eye and seek solutions together. If we leave behind the logic of finding the scapegoat and follow a logic of seeking compromises and solutions, then it becomes possible to combat the rumours and manipulations and make headway.

Of course, we must find appropriate systems for legitimacy and representation of the different communities and groups in society, as well as invent or reinstate appropriate accountability mechanisms.

The legitimacy and accountability systems imported with democratisation remain empty shells as long as they have not been appropriated by the citizens concerned. Today, the loyalties of these citizens only rarely lie with the modern State, perceived as nothing more than a corrupt, exploitative system whose laws are often not even worth the paper they are printed on.

Responsible citizenship education regarding legitimate representa-

1 This key concept was developed as part of the Pole Institute in DRC's "garden of change", Bustani ya Mabadiliko, (www.pole-institute.org)

2 For more details, see: Djateng/Kayser, ed.: Mapinduzi Journal 1, Context analysis: a strategic basis for social transformation, Bafoussam/Berlin 2010, www.eed.de

tion and accountability beyond communities and religious confessions is a fourth essential component for sustainable peace.

Peace demands a minimum of justice and social communication to be sustainable. It can only grow from within a society or a region.[3] This is why one of the Civil Peace Service's aims is to strengthen the organisations and institutions within the countries.

As you will notice in this publication, the Civil Peace Service's partners in Cameroon work in a variety of different, complementary ways to give voice to those with no voice and create forums for non violent civil dialogue.

What, then, is the role of EED and AGEH, and of the peace workers placed at the disposal of our CPS partners, in particular?

We consider the aim of the supporting partners such as EED and AGEH, as well as the people they send as peace workers, to be essentially a reinforcement of the local partners.

To do this, they bring a variety of skills and an outside point of view which can sometimes help gain a clearer vision or place people who do not normally come together around the same table. They can also improve the visibility of the work of the partners at national and especially international level and contribute to networking. All this is only possible if they are well integrated into the teams and if the intercultural challenges are seen and managed. This is one of the reasons why EED set up a CPS mobile team. The various CPS networks also aim to reinforce the alliances between organisations, regions and countries.

The publications and reports produced under the aegis of the CPS give visibility to and share the experience of the various groups.

In sensitive political situations such as during election campaigns or rebellions, obviously the external colleagues should keep a low profile

3 For more details, see: Djateng, Kayser, Mavinga (ed.) Building Peace: Our contribution to peace: a patchwork of complementary actions, Bafoussam, Berlin, Kinshasa 2009, www.peaceworkafrica.net

and stay out of the internal affairs of the country concerned. But experience has also shown that when mutual trust is established they can become an asset and a valuable source of support for their local colleagues.

In a global world, the situation of one group, one community, one country has repercussions on what happens in other groups, communities and countries. Keeping the peace and transforming conflicts can thus only be achieved through a combination of the local and the international. It is urgent for us to join forces and work together.

Goma, October 2011

CPS workshop in Kribi in May 2011

A just peace and the civilizational hexagon

By Frank Wiegandt

A term frequently used in the run up to the elections in Cameroon is "peace" which, for most of the political players, mainly refers to the absence of war or violent conflicts.

The political discourse in Cameroon sanctifies the option of peace and likes to observe that "Cameroon is a haven of peace and stability".

Peace as the "absence of war" is an integral part of the definition of a just peace, positive peace, but it is not in itself sufficient. Also required is an institutional environment at the centre of which freedom has pride of place. Peace is not simply the opposite of war. It is an inner balance in people, an inner balance in each nation, and a balance between nations. It is related to the values of justice, democracy, tolerance, human rights and the rights of peoples.

Biblical sources mention two imperative criteria that the peace God wants should meet and guide us, as Christians, in our commitment to establish peace: justice and non-violence. Independently of cultural specificities, the principles of justice and non-violence are criteria applicable on a global scale that unite people within ecclesiastic organisations in their efforts to secure peace.

There is no peace without justice. Preaching peace while at the same time creating, tolerating or denying blatant injustices is, by definition, contradictory. Nor can long term peace establish itself outside of an institutional framework based on law.

The desire to reify the concept of peace or make it an absolute, by reducing it to the absence of war or large scale violent conflicts and ignoring the necessary link with justice, is tantamount to advocating the status quo.

The distinction made by the Greek philosopher Aristotle between corrective justice and distributive justice remains just as meaningful today. The former (corrective justice) consists in treating everyone the same way, for example, before the courts. The latter (distributive justice) aims at equity; individuals receive according to their needs.

At the heart of the notion of justice is that of equality (in terms of rights and dignity). The arbitrary is not equitable. In an identical situation, people should behave and be treated in the same way. The quintessence of this principle of equity lies in the famous "Golden Rule" of reciprocity: "Do as you would be done by". (Matthew 7:12). The same key idea appears in the double commandment "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Mark 12:28–31). The "Golden Rule" is an ethical landmark in most of the major religions and philosophies.

In his "Civilizational Hexagon", German political scientist Dieter Senghaas identifies six elements that in his opinion constitute the fundamental building blocks for a stable maintenance of peace. These building blocks are:

1. The de-privatisation of force, so that the State has the legitimate monopoly on its use;
2. This monopoly is necessarily controlled by the rule of law, that is to say based on the principle of the hierarchy of standards and constitutional checks;
3. Increasing control over emotional states through mutual interaction;
4. Democratic participation;
5. Social justice;
6. A constructive conflict culture to provide the foundations for the disagreements inherent to a pluralistic society to be resolved in a constructive, peaceful way.

The first condition for building this Civilizational Hexagon resides in the State possessing a monopoly on the use of force. This condition is underpinned by the necessity for the rule of law. The rule of law neces-

Educative dialogue at Collège Vogt in Yaoundé

sarily controls the use of the monopoly of force and consolidates the normative foundations. The role and independence of justice are crucial in this respect. Justice protects the citizen from the State.

But disarming citizens and instilling their trust in their institutions can only be achieved without interdependence and by controlling emotions. This notion is demanding because it implies not only a prohibition of privatised violence but also a culture of tolerance and compromise. As people are bound to the society in which they live, their interdependence with each other is really what allows the control of emotion. For Auguste Comte as for Emile Durkheim, altruism is the real binding force of social life, more than the law.

The fourth building block could be considered as a consequence or a factor interdependent with the first three: democratic participation. A true rule of law does not exist without this condition. It is easier to

control emotions when individuals are citizens. According to Senghaas, democratic participation has three functions: It is important in itself because it allows the interests of all parties to be expressed and consolidates the chances of internal peace; for the control of power it implies; and for the legitimacy of leaders. As Rousseau demonstrated in The Social Contract, force only becomes legitimate in the long term if it is subject to the law.

Social justice, by preventing excessive inequalities, takes account of a rule of pluralistic politics: it tends to offer equal opportunity.

Lastly, the sixth and last block resides in a positive political culture of conflict resolution. In a society with multiple interests and identities, the potential for conflict is high. The practice of conflict resolution must therefore be sustainably anchored in mediation, arbitration, in short, in a culture where conflicts do not lead to more violence but tend to be resolved peacefully and in a positive way.

These six factors, as Senghaas never ceased to stress, must be considered as a whole and cannot be taken in isolation. In addition, he regularly reasserts that peace is not a state but a process and regression always remains a possibility.

These six factors can be used as a reference point for describing a State or a society as more or less advanced in the peace process.

In Cameroon, the formal semblance of the rule of law, which is expressed through the number of international instruments ratified for preserving human rights, is in stark contrast to the common denial of such rights, as witnessed in particular by NGO reports on the protection of Human Rights.

Corruption, the inflation of which is manifest in the administrative and commercial services in the cities of Cameroon, necessarily goes hand in hand with violence. Corruption is in itself a form of violence as it transgresses the standards in force and violates human rights, because through its cynicism it prevents the free enjoyment of the public service.

The generalised resort to cheating, the absence of public spirit, the

multiplication of incivility and the spread of a culture of approximation and impunity which affects all levels of society, but particularly the dominant levels, are so many signs of a society that is opportunist, of a deviation that involves the entire social fabric.

Many of these encroachments on the social order can be attributed to the growing poverty and insecurity in urban areas and to betrayal by the elites; another cause lies in the deficiencies in the exercise of public authority.

During his visit to Brazil in 1980, Pope Jean Paul II said: *"A society that is not socially just and does not strive to be so, puts its own future at risk"*.

While acknowledging the inestimable benefits of the absence of war and large scale violent conflicts, let us strive to examine the social and political reality of Cameroon through a critical reading which comprises the six parameters of Senghaas' Civilizational Hexagon.

Yaoundé, 10 October 2011

Yaoundé CDJP team

Building peace in Cameroon: the fundamental requirements

Proposals from the International Circle for the promotion of Creation (CIPCRE)

By Kä Mana

Regarding peace in contemporary Cameroon society, three types of discourse are deployed, each expressing a vision and perception of the country to which we should be attentive if we wish to conceive and organise the building of a profoundly peaceful social order in Cameroon.

The three types of discourse of a country seeking the true path to peace

The first type of discourse expresses a feeling of radiant self-congratulation in certain political milieus always prompt to present Cameroon as a model of stability and security in Africa. A society people like to describe as having been spared, over the course of the past three decades, major disruptions and catastrophic shake-ups that could have plunged it into a destructive war or into irreversible chaos. Compared to countries like Somalia, Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire and the Maghreb nations whose Arab Spring has been in the headlines recently, Cameroon projects an image of a calm, tranquil, serene society, evident signs of a peace that is valued by the population, run by a public authority highly satisfied with

this peaceful situation that it presents as the fruit of wise governance. In the public meetings organised by the party in power, people celebrate this Cameroonian peace with song and dance and enthusiasm for and glorification of the regime in power. Everything is modulated to pretend that the country has no problems and that it is firmly progressing towards its "new frontier" fixed by the President of the Republic: to make Cameroon an emergent country around 2035. According to a certain type of discourse deployed by the ruling power, Cameroon is doing well, very well, in fact, and has no problems that could threaten its magnificent and resplendent peace.

In contrast to this self-congratulatory discourse specific to the spheres of power, an entirely different story is being told amongst the political opposition. Here, the peace in Cameroon is presented as a decoy and a vast lie. It is an illusion to believe that a country is enjoying peace just because the guns are silent. It is a lie to affirm that there are no large scale social conflicts and that the major social battles for changes in the reigning political order are a sign that everything is beautiful in the land of milk and honey. In reality, peace is measured by parameters that have no real concrete manifestation in Cameroonian society, according to the opponents to the powers in place. The indicators of the population's satisfaction with their situation are disastrous: poverty is rife, corruption is rotting the social fabric, inequalities are ever more terrifying, the basic human rights situation is deteriorating, job prospects for the growing generations are pessimistic, education is shaky, the agricultural policy is off-course, drinking water and electricity are becoming a luxury for a minority, and the populations' health needs are not taken care of. Given such a list of recriminations brandished by the opposition, it is the idea of peace as the absence of war that is called into question, in favour of a global vision of peace experienced as a condition for deep satisfaction in terms of human rights, the capacity for economic creativity, the power to ensure viable conditions of food, sanitation and education as well as the potential to build truly sustainable development for a people content with their country and the way they are governed.

Between the self-congratulation of the reigning power and the disaster scenario described by the opposition, a more realistic and more lucid discourse paints another picture of peace in Cameroon. This discourse is heard in the domain of civil society and in certain international milieus which analyse the actual state of the country, without ideological blinkers. There is an image which expresses the situation forcefully: Cameroon is a volcano and no-one knows when it will erupt. From time to time it can be heard rumbling and small eruptions announce disaster to come, as in 2008, when young people rioted in protest against food prices. Certain separatist threats symbolise a possible implosion. Even if they are still minimised by their small amplitude, the fact remains that they show deep-rooted agitations, the magnitude of which could one day reach unexpected proportions, especially when we consider the weight of ethnic divisions in the administration of power in the country. These divisions could even flare up into deadly identity conflicts if nothing is done to break the momentum of the monopolisation of power and the economic advantages it confers on certain ethnic groups. In addition, to the extent that true peace is synonymous with development, we may fear that the desperation of certain categories of society crushed by chronic poverty and of young people unable to find gainful employment may one day lead to social explosions that are today unthinkable and unimaginable. Political regimes which believed they dominated their populations in an eternal winter were startled to see a popular spring rising that swept them away in a matter of days. Countries unaware that destructive rebellions could trouble their sleepy tranquillity awoke to tsunamic nightmares and no longer recognised themselves in their own violence. Like the calm before the storm, peace in Cameroun may be nothing more than the kind of tranquillity that should be considered suspect when you live near a volcano.

Peace must be invented in Cameroon, but how?

In these three types of discourse we hear today, the International Circle for the Promotion of Creation (CIPCRE) perceives the underlying issues its research and action must be based on to be able to build a peaceful social order in the country. Founded at the beginning of the 1990s, during a time of simmering discontent that pushed Cameroon to the brink of civil war and political collapse, CIPCRE has always sought to position peace at the forefront of the battle for sustainable development. A battle that demands that the nation's problems be apprehended globally. With all their political, economic, social, cultural, ecological and religious dimensions, with our eyes wide open and our spirits keen.

When we choose the option of this perspective, we cannot content ourselves with any kind of self-congratulatory discourse on peace in Cameroon, as a certain fraction of men currently in power have a tendency to do. "Development is the new name for peace", to use a phrase coined by Pope Paul VI, which does not permit the belief that everything is for the best in the best of all possible worlds in Cameroonian society. This is not a question of discourse, but a demand for action to satisfy the basic needs of the population by developing the creative powers of the people themselves. It is also a question of developing the potential for political commitment at every level of society, to create an order with the values of democracy, freedom and justice, built through fruitful governance whose security and sustainability will be guaranteed by the public authorities. Lastly, it is a question of a society of shared joy, in a culture of responsible solidarity, the flourishing of collective *joie de vivre*, in the dynamics of the ethical and spiritual commitments that build a certain mindset capable of changing the destiny of the nation.

In these conditions, the disaster scenario, the discourse of a certain political opposition that is defeatist, pessimistic and fatalistic, is no longer a valid description of the peace situation in Cameroon. Like

many other countries in the world, Cameroon is confronted with enormous problems of every kind. But these problems are challenges to be met, that must be considered as such and it is imperative to organise the nation's vital forces to struggle together to build another Cameroon. The battle here is to build an imagination to combat all the temptations of despair. A combat based on action values to change the society and open up new perspectives of peace: peace as the new name for full, sustainable development for a life of plenty, according to a beautiful biblical image. Such a life of plenty does not appear out of the blue. It depends on the capacity of a people to organise themselves, invent their tools and strategies for action, hew their path out of the rock of problems and overcome all the obstacles, inertia and resistance that prevent it from advancing towards a favourable horizon.

When this is understood, we can no longer restrict ourselves to the simple, lucid vision of a Cameroon which is deplorably a volcano, or a peaceful seaside resort before the tidal wave. When we live under a volcano or in a country at risk from tidal waves, we adapt a way of life that anticipates disaster. With all the mental strength, moral firmness, vital courage and creative capacity this demands to face adversity and organise a space that can resist attack from misfortunes. We become a people that are creative, organised and combative, which, through its intelligence and thirst to live happily, builds a world that corresponds to its dreams, expectations and determination.

In a context like this, peace has to be invented, built, organised, defended and maintained through in-depth work in education and commitment to action in solidarity.

At CIPCRE, we consider education and commitment to action in solidarity to achieve social transformation and sustainable development the driving forces for building peace in Cameroon.

We should act towards each other in a spirit of brotherhood, as UNESCO states. We should also lead people to act to set up the social structures that guarantee peace through the building of a life of plenty, a social order in which happiness is shared.

For two decades already, we have understood that the problems confronting Cameroon for building peace can become assets, if we take them as the basis for educating the population, particularly the upcoming generations.

When we speak of education, we are not only aiming at public campaigns such as civil society organisations have a tendency to deploy across the entire national territory. We are speaking of the whole of the education system in all its instances: the family, school, religious communities, social action movements, etc. Considering that these are the places that forge mindsets and the values in the minds of the people, action for peace in Cameroon can only be a vast educational dynamic to be promoted.

But such an education is only meaningful if it is an education on the action of peace building: actions for development in the full sense of the word. Actions of commitment to solidarity projects for social transformation, thanks to economic power networks, political commitment, social action, socio-cultural action and spiritual conversion. As long as individual Cameroonian citizens have not understood that it is their involvement in concrete projects of peace building and full development that really counts, we will remain on the surface of things and peace will be a precarious reality, even in the absence of armed conflict.

Lastly, peace as the dynamics of full human development requires solid institutions to allow men and women to free their creative powers in every domain. When the institutions are shaky or lose the values by virtue of which the population believes in their power, peace will always be threatened. Hence the importance of the struggle for fair and stable political institutions, reliable economic institutions and fertile moral and spiritual institutions in their capacities to express and transmit standards.

Building a peaceful society in Cameroon should go in this direction, far from the conventional discourses that today occupy the public stage and do not help the country solve its fundamental problems properly.

Let us say it even more abruptly: Cameroon needs Men of peace and institutions of peace, people and institutions for holistic and sustainable development. Educating these People and the edification of these institutions is the task in hand, that must be embraced to make the future worthy of the great Cameroonian dream.

Bafoussam, October 2011

Prospective voters in Bafoussam

Networking at the service of peace

By Flaubert Djateng and Christiane Kayser,
CPS/EED mobile team

The stock-in-trade of the election campaign in Cameroon was "peace". Now the elections are over, we can take a closer look at the threats to peace and stability in Cameroon. This will allow us to work from a medium and long-term perspective.

The population is increasingly resigned, disinterested, and disappointed by everything related to politics.

The economic situation is worsening and is pushing many people into insecurity. Social services are becoming increasingly unaffordable and the basic needs of a vast number of Cameroonians are no longer being met. Young people see no future for themselves in the country; they try to emigrate by any possible means, often with the support of the whole family.

Fear as the basis for decision-making and as the driving force behind initiatives is taking over an ever larger place in society.

Insecurity is experienced by the individual and by the community but is perceived, interpreted and analysed through the regional and ethnic prism, with the central theme of finding a scapegoat. Politicians from all sides reinforce these tendencies. We have the impression they are not aware of how serious such sectarianism is — as we have seen in Côte d'Ivoire, it can plunge a country into civil war.

Civil society is also affected by this situation. It is not united and has often allowed itself to be manipulated. However, for the past two years, more awareness has been observed and efforts have been made to play

a constructive role towards defending common interests. This being said, much remains to be done.

In view of the dangers of sectarianism and conflicts between generations, communities or regions, networking seems to us to be a form of action and organisation which can be used for rallying people and for effective advocacy.

There are several forms of networking. To name but a few examples:

- The social networks on the internet which are hugely successful all over the world and which, in countries such as Egypt and Tunisia, made decisive contributions to change. They have the great advantage of rallying people quickly and strongly with the support of technology, but they do not set up an organisation that could manage the resulting situation.
- Formal and informal business networks that can be used to recruit customers, sell products and develop brand loyalty.
- The citizen networks that are growing as part of civil society with common goals towards transforming society.

We are interested here in this third type of network.

Consulting electoral lists in Bafoussam

Consulting electoral lists in Bafoussam

The principles of networking

It is important that such a network grows and is experienced as a network and not as an NGO under another label.

1. The energy should reside with the members and not with Coordination or the Permanent Secretariat.
2. Coordination or the permanent Secretariat should avoid being in competition with the members.
3. The Mission or Goal of the network should require more than one member organisation to be accomplished. A single organisation cannot accomplish it alone.
4. Capacity building of members should take into account the individ-

ual capacities of people working within the member organisations and also the institutional capacities of the organisation
5. The roles of members and those of Coordination or the permanent Secretariat must be complementary
6. There should be a clear distinction between the activities of Coordination and the permanent Secretariat on one hand and the activities of the members on the other
7. The coordination or the permanent Secretariat exists through and draws its force from the strength and capacities of the members.

How can this type of network sustain peace work?

Networking around a topic or a common interest makes it easier to define a strategy for several players working towards the same goal. The first act of our newborn Civil Peace Service network in Cameroon has been to develop the common vision which you find in this publication. The 24 members of the Zenü Network based in the West of Cameroon have developed common advocacy for the supply of water and electricity to the population in their areas of intervention.

The members of a network can divide up operational, strategic, representative and developmental roles in a complementary way, taking into account the individual strengths of the different members. Coordination or the secretariat play a special role by stressing the combined power of this alliance that is the network. In the CPS network, catholic and protestant organisations, working with young people, women, rural dwellers and urbanites in the four corners of the country, pool their efforts for peace and stability. We also have a country coordinator from AGEH and a mobile team from EED who promote the achievements and the issues raised by the members of the network.

Within a network, the members produce information and analyses about a topic, while at the same time mutually encouraging each other and building their capacities. Capacity building becomes a regular, col-

lective activity oriented towards achieving common goals. Our networking workshops in the CPS network and the meetings of the Zenü network are examples of this.

The links between the members of the network create a group dynamic that gives a new quality and strengthens cohesion while at the same time preserving individual differences. Within the framework of the Zenü Network the work with young people aims to allow them to find answers to their fundamental, existential questions and explore alternatives to their situation. The groups of young people working with the Zenü now know each other, help and strengthen each other mutually.

A network made up of members from a variety of different backgrounds, religions and regions allows us to overcome prejudices by gaining a better knowledge of difference. The network can establish mutual trust between the members even if they do not hold the same opinion. The possibilities of such a network, in particular in terms of advocacy, far exceed those of a single member organisation.

In a country where the majority of people, that is to say, the young people, see no future for themselves, are discouraged, frustrated and may resort to violence as in February 2008, working with them for example in the Zenü Network or the CPS network allows us to cover topics that really interest them (jobs and corruption, for instance), boost their energy, put them in touch with other young people, give them a framework while at the same time leaving them freedom of association and individual creativity.

Advocacy based on shared interests and joint claims is only efficient as part of a network or alliance, for in this way the members are better protected and the decision-makers are more easily forced to lend an ear.

Working in a network is therefore an efficient, fruitful way of building and maintaining peace.

Bafoussam/Goma, October 2011

Generational conflict – a challenge for peace in Cameroon

By Christian Tanyi, *Lukmef*

Often we think of ourselves as old or young in the broader sense referring to age. In Cameroon, though we may choose to segment the population into any direction, two broad segments can easily be found and identified — the active old (1945–1950) and the young generations (1970–2000).

A review focusing on this generational issue, revealed several things. First, there does seem to be a difference in values between the two generations. Second, as a result of this they do seem to be on a collision course. The critical question is "Are the active old, who are holding the top policy-making positions in most organizations, communities and government in Cameroon creating teams for the new generation, according to old values, thereby courting the young generation's disinterest or rebellion, rather than the collaborative spirit sought?" The answer, in many cases, is "Yes". In Cameroon, the Young Generation is significantly more individualistic and significantly more team-oriented than the old generation thereby suggesting that team building has to continue to be a priority for most organizations. It turns out that team structures meet the needs of the current generation as much as, or even more than they have for the preceding one. The paradox is that we must now start developing teams for highly individualistic persons with a different set of values. This requires a different Peace-building paradigm than the community-based one that is currently in vogue.

The current mainstream paradigm is called the Traditional model. It is community-based and holds that effective teams are based on common ground and similar interests. The alternative paradigm is the

authentic individual-based model that insists that the most important element in team building is how each contributing member is uniquely different from all other members. The Authentic model makes different assumptions about what is necessary to reach group effectiveness and offers a clear contrast to the Traditional view. Both approaches aspire to the same end, that is, to have highly effective task teams that work well together. Where they differ is on how this end state is best achieved.

Based on this, the way an individual perceives Peace or violence must be studied based on the authentic model thereby avoiding the generalization of individual actions or behaviors to whole groups or communities based on the ties of such individuals to the community. Though group or community values may influence individual actions, lasting peace must be constructed on individual actions rather than attacking communities or generational values.

Ethnic structures and values in Cameroon follow the traditional model and thus have contributed to conflicts between ethnic communities and villages being handed down to generations. The new generation that is more individualistic provides an excellent opportunity to break the cycle and conduct peace building activities based on its value to the individual as the principal beneficiary and the community as the secondary beneficiary. Though not strictly in the truest sense of it, the individualization and community measure of benefits of peace as primary or secondary remains a critical strategy in achieving lasting peace between ethnic communities in Cameroon.

Human behavior is subject to certain "laws" of group dynamics and/or specific directions. These laws and directions are normative, being better than others, and are distinctly preferred to those that go in the opposite direction; for example, Theory Y is far better than Theory X (McGregor, 1957) or democracy is a superior form of leadership to autocracy as advocated by Likert's (1961) principle of supportive relationships and so forth.

With these assumptions, it is possible to clearly define categories of

behavior and thus to assign individuals to these categories in order to deal with them more easily, for example.

A typical Traditional team puts a lot of emphasis on common values and objectives. There is a norm for getting along well and maintaining a high degree of openness, trust, and shared feelings. Emphasis is placed on everyone participating on all issues confronting the group. Conflict is honored, and there is an attempt to resolve it as quickly and effectively as possible. Group cohesion is an important value, and maintaining supportive interpersonal relationships may be as important as accomplishing the team objective. In most cases, a standard for effective team behavior is established, and current behavior is measured against it.

For the last many years or so, the state has been using and involving this model of team development. It has been successful, to a large degree, because it is built upon and is consistent with the values of the older generation who make up the largest composition of government as discussed earlier.

Gestalt mandates that individuals be more self-supportive and in control of their own lives. It maintains that personal growth is a matter of individuals being aware of where they are in the present, where they would like to be in the future, and how they are stopping themselves from making the transition from here to there (Perls 1973). The concept is well understood among the younger generation in Cameroon but who generally think that they are being stopped by the old ideologies.

Conflict is seen and valued as a natural and constructive force in a healthy group. While specific issues need to be settled, conflict itself is managed, rather than resolved. The assumption is that people are always going to see things differently, and those varying perspectives must be managed effectively.

The challenges of the above situation remain in most part the constant interference of state and older traditional leaders and the elites in determining the direction of inter ethnic peace and stability in reference to their selfish political and economic interested than on the hidden argument that such conflicts are generational in form and origin.

Active differentiation of such factors and denunciation of such individuals are a key starting point in peace building in Cameroon. This is not however as easy based on the high level of poverty, low level of education of some of the traditional leaders and then the very powerful financial and political influence of the elites (the older generation).

Traditional musicans

The relationship between universities and peace work: the case of the Faculty of Social Sciences and International Relations at the Protestant University of Central Africa

By Célestin Tagou[1]

Any reference to "the relationship between universities and peace work" inevitably evokes questions about the contribution tertiary education should (feel obliged to) make to the eternal process of building and promoting peace in human society in general. If we are to examine the case of Cameroon in particular, this raises a certain number of questions: why and how is peace work necessary in Cameroon, a country which is not at war? And if this work is undertaken, what are we trying to prevent? In the precise case of tertiary education, the Protestant University of Central Africa (UPAC) turns out to be a judicious choice since the Faculty of Social Science and International Relations (FSSRI) offers a full cycle of study there (LMD), highly specialised training on the questions of Peace and Development, and welcomes students from several African countries. Before we return to the contribution and experience of the FSSRI at UPAC to peace work in Cameroon, it is important to consider why, in the 21st century, not only Cameroon, but the sub-region as a whole and in fact the entire African continent has more than a need for the kind of peace work the Civil Peace Service has been carrying out for a number of years.

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I. The necessity for Peace Work in Cameroon

To broach these questions that comprise multiple dimensions and cut across sectors, a look at Johan Galtung's[2] typology of conflicts, which systematically frames the occupation of mediator in praxis, confirms the fact that the peace work the Civil Peace Corps carries out all over Africa is more than indispensable in the long term. This work, in combination with that of Bercovitch[3], adequately demonstrates that the work of the mediator or peace worker oscillates between micro- meso- macro and mega- conflict. In other words, the two epistemologists of peace questions show, in their various analyses, that Peace Work as performed so effectively by the Civil Peace Service[4] in a more practical than theoretical manner, must be organised according to a rational typology that reflects reality. Taking this typology as a basis, it is easy to draw up the inventory of the situation in Cameroon that justifies the necessity for continuous peace work. For in the case of Cameroon, and consequently, of Africa in general, it must be said that the country represents the very prototype of the conflict typology defined by Galtung and Bercovitch.

Beyond the micro conflicts which are conflicts among and between people, that is to say the contradictions and opposing goals within and between individuals, in Cameroon we find conflicts at every level opposing social clusters, Cameroon's ethnic groups, against each other. The 20 types of conflicts identified in Cameroon by Charly Gabriel Mbock[5]

2 Cf.: Galtung, Johan: Transcend and transform: an Introduction to conflict work, French translation by Célestin Tagou, PUPA, Yaoundé 2010. Professor Galtung is one of the principal founders of the discipline of Peace studies in tertiary education, that is to say at University level. The scientific world is beholden to him for the concepts of Positive Peace and Negative Peace. Johan Galtung's categorisation identifies 12 types of conflict which may be simple, structural or complex and may take place at four different levels — micro, meso, macro and mega.

3 Cf.: Bercovitch, Jacob & al.: Regional Guide to International Conflict and Management from 1945 to 2003, CQPress 2003

4 Cf.: Djateng, Flaubert & al.: Construire la Paix, SCP-Grand Lacs/EED, Kinshasa, Bafoussam, Berlin, 2009

5 Mbock, Charly Gabriel & al.: Les Conflits ethniques au Cameroun, Quelles sources, quelles solutions? Editions Saagraph, Yaoundé 2000, p.55

constitute the different kinds of meso-conflicts opposing the population groups in Cameroon: **identity and economic conflicts** (Nyokon-Bamiléké and Makénéné, Bamiléké-Bakossi and Tombel, Sawa-others and Douala, the Grassfields — the Bakweri and Bakossi and Limbé, Kumba, etc., Arabe Choa Kotoko and Kousseri, Balikumbat-Bambalang in the North-West); **ethnic land conflicts** (Bassa-Eton, Bamiléké-Boulou against Sangmélima and Ebolowa, the Anglo/Bami-the Beti in Central Cameroon, in the South and East, Kirdi -Foulbé in Adamaoua, the North and Far north) and the **ethno-political conflicts**[6] opposing the 1+7 strategic conflictual groups identified by Tagou[7] who are fighting to monopolise or gain control of political power in Cameroon. These are the **Pahouin** (socio-politically known as the Bulu/Beti) in the Centre, Southern and Eastern parts of Cameroon; the **Bamiléké** (also known as the Grassfield) in the West; the **Fulbé or Haoussa** (known as the Northerners) in Adamaoua, the North and Far North, the **Douala (or the Sawa)** on the coast; the **Bassa** on the Coast and in the Centre; the **Bamoun** in the West; the **Kirdi** in the Far North; the **Anglophones** (who account for the 1 in the 1+7 formula) in the North West and South West.[8] Transient alliances are formed among the 8 groups against a background of political nepotism[9] which links the peripheral (conflictual) groups and the centre (strategic) groups.

Regarding macro-conflicts, that is to say the conflicts between States and Nations, we may say that apart from the territorial dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria over the question of sovereignty over the Bakassi

6 Cf.: Buyinga, Elenga in: Tribalisme et Problème national en Afrique Noire. Le cas du Kamerun. L'Harmattan 1989.

7 Cf.: Tagou, Célestin in: Demokratisches Rotationsprinzip Eine Lösung für politische Integration in Kamerun zwischen Nationsbildung und Ethnizität, Cuvillier Verlag, Göttingen 2006. The strategic group is the group in power which does everything possible to monopolise it. Conflictual groups are those not in power who have recourse to potential threats to obtain power.

8 Cf.: Nyamnjoh, Francis: Cameroon: A country united by ethnic ambition and difference, in: African Affairs, (1999), p.109

9 Cf.: Mehler, Andreas: Cameroon and the politics of patronage, in: David Birmingham/Phyllis M. Martin (Hrsg.): History of Central Africa. The contemporary years since 1960, London/New York 1998, S. 48

peninsula and the sudden escalations of xenophobic violence in Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and the Central African Republic, Cameroon lives peacefully with all its neighbouring countries in the sub region.

The meso-conflicts identified above are also articulated in Cameroon in terms of mega-conflicts, that is to say conflicts between civilisations and regions. There are the Southerners (pejoratively called "Ngadamayo" meaning foreigners) especially those from the "Organising Country"[10] who maintain a political climate of suspicion and mistrust vis-à-vis the Northerners. The latter have never forgiven the former for what happened between 1982 and 1984 and have the ambition to take back the political power they gave to the Southerners in 1982[11]. Without wishing to generalise, we can note that this latent political conflict between the Northerners and the Southerners manifests itself in certain milieus in Cameroon as a conflict between Muslims from the North and Christians from the South. Fortunately to date the dialogue between religions and the fact that Cameroon has a lay state have allowed the two major religious communities to live and cohabit in a spirit of religious tolerance, which makes Cameroon a textbook case and prompts Johan Galtung to say that: "Cameroon is more than a country. Cameroon is a message, a very positive message."[12] The materialisation of this tolerance is best observed in the Briqueterie district of the administrative capital Yaoundé. Here it is completely normal to see Muslims kneeling on their mats to pray, while Christians peacefully drink beer at a bar right next to the prayer sites improvised by Muslims not only from northern Cameroon, but also from countries such as Niger, Nigeria and Chad, etc. In the three northern regions of Cameroon the

10 Cf.: Ateba Eyene, Charles: Les parodoxes du "Pays organisateur", Elites produtrices ou prédatrices: le cas de la province du Sud-Cameroun à l'ère de Biya (1982–2007), Editions Saint-Paul, Yaoundé, June 2008

11 Cf.: Melher, Andreas: Kamerun in der Ära Biya: Bedingungen, erste Schritte und Blockaden einer demokratischen Transition. Institut für Afrika-Kunde, 1993

12 Galtung, Johan: The intrinsic linkage between Conflict, Development, Civilization and Peace in the 21st Century in: Tagou, Célestin: The Dynamic of Conflict, Peace and Development in African Societies, from local to international. PUPA/AIPCD, Yaoundé 2010 p.17

Kirdi Christians also cohabit with the Muslim Fula even though the former are subject to and denounce the cross-sector domination of the latter. Despite the significant risk of escalation, the situation is nothing like that of Nigeria where the Islamist sect Boko Haram spreads fear and terror that pushes the Muslim and Christian Nigerians to massacre each other.

This brief inventory shows that despite the fact that Cameroon appears to be a model of peace in Central Africa and on the continent as a whole, the risk of an escalation in these latent conflicts is not negligible. Cameroon may not be at war; and war is definitely not to be wished for, because like a monster once awakened it is difficult to predict when it will stop, not to mention the horrors and indelible scars it leaves in the collective memory; but we must note that the peace the country is experiencing corresponds to what in Peace Studies is called Negative Peace. That is to say a situation from which war is absent but which contains the presence of intentional and unintentional structural violence which manifests as the failure to satisfy the basic needs of the population and is aggravated by the lack of social justice in the redistribution of the Nation's wealth and resources.

The work of the Civil Peace Service in this country is therefore a necessity in terms of preventing the escalation of multiple forms of violence and building Positive Peace. This form of peace is not just an absence of war or open conflict, but also presupposes living conditions that allow the population the possibility to thrive on every level in harmony with the ecological environment. Here, the link between Peace and Development is clear. Development is in fact what Galtung calls Positive Peace. In the light of this observation, we now turn to the question of the link between peace work and the University. In other words, in what capacity and how can the University contribute or does it contribute to the kind of Peace Work carried out by the Civil Peace Service virtually all over Africa?

II. The contribution of the FSSRI at UPAC to Peace work in Cameroon and the sub-region.

To build Peace, it is important to take account of the level of society conflict is taking place at, how many players in conflict we are faced with, what their respective objectives are, how to overcome their inhibitions to make them more apprehensible and lastly what are the qualities required of a mediator, a peace worker, to lead the parties to the conflict to arrive at their own solutions appropriate to what is opposing them. The need for training for mediators and development promoters or engineers therefore imposes itself. The work of Peace and Development becomes a profession requiring epistemological and practical tools.

This is the level on which the FSSRI at UPAC has intervened since it was set up in 2006. It fills a long-observed gap in the French-speaking scientific sphere: Peace Studies. In this instance, it is more a question of studying war because he who desires Peace prepares for War. It has also been observed that several Western, particularly English-speaking universities have, for some time, been offering teaching curricula concerning different analytical perspectives on the problematic of Peace and Development. It is in these specific academic programmes and on the margins of the major classical diplomacy schools that numerous volunteers are trained for working in developing countries within the framework of international cooperation for development and for preventing and resolving conflicts and maintaining Peace.

Such has not, however, been the case in African countries, with the exception of South Africa, Senegal, and Burundi etc. And up till now, the vast majority of these institutions offer tailor-made training programmes for occupational Masters Degrees with no real intention of fundamental research[13]. The FSSRI at UPAC provides a solution through its Peace and Development courses that run from Bachelor's degree

13 Cf.: African Leadership Centre: Workshop on the Mapping of Peace and Security Studies, in Africa's Tertiary Institutions, Nairobi, June 24th, 2010.

(Licence) to Master I and II and in the near future will include a PhD; at the same time it reconciles the disciplines around Peace and Development issues. The African Institute for Peace Communication and Development (AIPCD) completes the faculty courses on offer through a series of short vocational training courses. A Center for Alternative Dispute Resolution has also been opened within the AIPCD operates as a platform for Practical Conflict Resolution at all levels of the society.

Moreover, the curricula proposed by Western universities are still strongly focused on concepts that are the fad of the moment or on the prevailing development rhetoric and the referral programmes and projects that are eligible for funding from the sponsors and NGOs in the North: Human rights, non violent conflict resolution, the protection of the environment and biodiversity, gender issues, demographics, the campaign against HIV/AIDS, participatory democracy, good governance and public sector reform, civil society and human capacity building, decentralisation, community and rural development, street children and the disabled, etc. Today, climate change with global warming and the food crisis are the main topics which, because they are sporadically in fashion, focus the attention of players in the North and South in isolation and intermittently.

However, Peace and Development issues, which are incontestably interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral, not only need to be broached globally in order to establish the causal and interdependency links that exist between the different analysis perspectives and the areas of action, but also and above all must be subject to continuous academic concern completely divorced from the prevailing fads. This academic research is the contribution of the university milieu in providing international Development cooperation actors, especially those in the South, with a clear vision of the theoretical and ideological foundations that underpin Development strategies and policies as well as all the methods for preventing and resolving conflicts which have marked and still orient North South dialogue today regarding how to combat under-development, further and maintain peace in Africa in particular and in the world in general.

On the strength of this conviction, the Faculty of Social Science and International Relations at the Protestant University of Central Africa has opened a whole department whose main concern is to analyse Peace and Development issues from a global historical, theoretical, conceptual, practical and operational point of view, diachronically and synchronically. The "Master of Peace and Development" (MPD) and Peace Journalism courses are therefore a part of this global approach.

The first objective of the course is to lead young Africans, whether experts and development workers or not, to seek and trace clearly, beyond the multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral nature, the theoretical and ideological continuity or discontinuity, as well as the points of convergence to be found scattered in scientific discourse or the major theories, development strategies and policies since the invention of the concept of under-development in 1949 by American President Harry Truman until today.

The second objective of the course is to allow African development and conflict prevention and resolution experts and agents to gain an understanding of the fact that on the African continent questions of Peace are closely linked to Development issues and vice versa. On completion of the course, the students will have a better understanding not only of the history and the major issues at stake in international development cooperation with countries of the North and with the international institutions and the NGOs from the North, but they will also be familiar with the instruments, stakeholders and terminology in the sphere of international development cooperation in general and the maintaining of peace and security, two critical objectives of the United Nations.

The third aspect is that, once armed with this knowledge and beyond the fact that they then constitute a highly qualified labour force ready to be used by the international organisations and NGOs, the students who have completed the course will have the necessary theoretical and practical tools to help to rethink and reorient development and peace keeping strategies to match them to the reality in Africa or to reinvent new

strategies and new paradigms for reading the situation according to what is specific to African societies. Power sharing has shown its limits, as witnessed by the conflicts in Kenya, Zimbabwe, DRC and Côte d'Ivoire.

The fourth objective is to offer Services to the community (Outreach programmes), training courses leading to a qualification, and of short duration, to reinforce peace workers and the promoters of development already active in the field.

The philosophy underlying the overall vision of the teaching at UPAC is that without Peace, there can be no sustainable development and development is the best guarantee for maintaining Perpetual Positive Peace.

In 2009, we were reassured of the wisdom of our academic and scientific choices and the choice of short term courses when the founding father of Peace Studies declared: "The place is right: Cameroon…. The organization is right: combining theology, philosophy, social sciences and peace practices like mediation. At home in the worlds of spirituality, concepts and theories, empirical studies and peace practice, … you combine what in Europe and the USA is often uncombinable. The four are kept apart by divisions inside faculties and universities, and between town and gown, practice and academia".[14] And he went on to specify: "there is probably no other place in the world where theological spirituality, philosophical conceptual analysis, social science empiricism and mediation practice go together so well as at the Université Protestante d'Afrique Centrale in Yaoundé (the political capital (Douala being the economic capital)). In the West, these four think they have nothing to learn from the other three, a loss to them all."[15]

Among the first students to gain Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the FSSRI at UPAC since 2009, many have found work in international organisations and in the INGOs. Some have passed the entrance exams to the top-ranking higher education establishments in Camer-

14 Galtung, Johan in: op.cit. 2010, p.17

15 Ibid.: http://www.TMSTRANSCENDMediaService.mht 13 April 2009.

oon such as the International Relations Institute of Cameroon (IRIC). This will permit them to combine the master of Peace and Development issues with the traditional practice of Diplomacy. Those who have gone to foreign universities, in Britain or France, for example, are giving very encouraging feedback. On a more practical level one case of self-employment is that of a Master's graduate who has set up a commercial interest group in the spirit of the Rio 92 and Johannesburg 2002 conferences. Guiding Hope won the United Nations Fair Trade award. The award was presented at the United States Embassy here in Yaoundé, followed by a visit to New York in June. The group employs around twenty people, including a fellow student, who is Executive Secretary of Guiding Hope[16]. A number of Master's research papers have already been devoted to meso, macro and mega conflicts in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC and Chad and to Development issues, therefore Positive Peace in several other countries in the continent.

The entire process of training and transforming the future generation of Africans and civil society players as Peace and Development workers would not have been possible without the financial, staff and infrastructure support of the Evangelical Development Service (EED) in Bonn in the Federal Republic of Germany.[17] It is a combination of these efforts, that will permit Cameroon and Africa to derive the greatest benefit for building peace and promoting Positive Peace (development) on a continent severely affected by wars and extreme poverty.

16 Cf.: http://www.seedinit.org/award-winners/2008-winners-overview.html July 2008

17 Since 2006 EED has sponsored three experts in questions of Peace and Development for the FSSRI: Prof. Cage Banseka, Jr.Prof. Célestin Tagou and Dr. Etienne Fopa. The construction of two academic and administrative buildings and the organisation of an international colloquium in 2009 have also been possible through EED funding.

Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission Bamenda

Our work for peace and stability

By Laura Anyola Ngwa and Elphie Galland

In recent years, many inter-ethnic conflicts have hit the North-West Region of Cameroon. These conflicts have caused a lot of human and material loss in all the communities concerned. The majority of these conflicts have been recurring since the 1950's. It is for this reason that the Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Bamenda is engaged in projects on conflict management and peace building within the territory of the Archdiocese of Bamenda which covers 5 out of the 7 divisions of the North West Region sharing boundaries with the South West and West Regions of Cameroon.

The North West Region is made up of highly centralized chiefdoms/ Fondoms which form well organized ethnic groups with defined boundaries, leading to high feeling of independence by these groups. The native population comprises a va1iety of ethno-linguistic groups. Traditionally, these Fondoms are headed by the Fon and closely assisted by a body of Fon/law makers widely known as the "Kwifon" or "Nwerong". The Fons are enthroned as living representatives of the ancestors. Officially they are considered as "auxiliary of the administration" as they are the link between the administration and the population they are said to govern. Paradoxically at certain times some of them appear to be more influential in their ethnic communities, than the administrative authorities and their decisions are often more respected than the decisions from the administration, leaving the administration seemingly powerless in the face of all these.

Commendable efforts of mediation and negotiation have been undertaken by the administration and civil society organizations to address these conflicts, but they continue to resurge in the same areas over and over. The major reason that underlines the resurgence of these conflicts is land related. In most villages the borders are either not well carved out or still denied by one side. In addition, there is the issue of hierarchical classification of Fondoms; the classification which gives room for some of the Fons to tend to lord it over those who rank below. This sort of power display makes an already bad situation worse. A very practical example is the case of the Bali v. Bawock in 2007. Balis are classified as a First Class Fondom while the Bawock are a Second Class Fondom. The former expects the later to pay allegiance to them by observing the days set aside for traditional sacrifice. The latter logically resisted this with the claim that they are people with their own rights who by no means, should be subjected under the dictates of another Fon. This resulted in a violent conflict that left more than 3,000 persons internally displaced with their homes all destroyed. The Justice and Peace Commission played a very prominent role in assisting the community to resettle in their village and is still tracing a peace process with both communities. There are many communities with similar encounters and others which are potential conflict areas.

In order to be able to mediate peaceful agreements and to implement adequate peace building activities in the villages, the JPC is conducting research on the root causes of conflicts in the North West Region. To this aim, the JPC began to carry out interviews in the communities with identified resource persons.

The JPC also published a Peace education curriculum for schools, and has already started a Peace education program in Mbesa, a village which has experienced conflict for many years with its neighbouring village Oku and the very recent one in 2007, classified as the most destructive. Mbessa serves as a pilot village for this project. This peace education program is to instill the culture of peace within the youth. Indeed, peace values have to be taught to nurture the seeds of peace

considering that the community had undergone a series of violent conflicts. It will officially take place from September 2011 in all the schools of Mbesa.

In relation to this, a training of teachers for primary and secondary schools has been organized in April 2011 in Mbesa. Around 20 teachers from the village participated and all the schools of the village were represented. The training lasted 3 days in which many matters from the manual were viewed such as techniques of teaching, communication skills, interview skills, different types of resolution of conflicts, definition of conflict and peace, Human rights….

On another note, the JPC is also working with women's groups in some villages to include them in the peace process and taking in account their recommendations concerning useful peace building projects. A good example is the project of installing a peace symbol between the village of Bali and Bawock which will be a grinding mill. This mill is intended to serve both communities and will also create a space for communication and experience sharing.

Taking into consideration the role of traditional rulers in conflict management, they have also been targeted in this project for training on Interactive leadership programmes and especially on the rights and duties of Fons in ways that are gender sensitive, participatory and democratic, in short using a human rights based approach in management.

The peace work potential of women and girls in the regions of North Cameroon

By Viviane Tassi Bela
(EED Peace worker/Gender Advisor at Saare Tabitha)

For decades and still today, many African societies have simply been considering peace as "absence of war".

This highly wrong conception is very often aimed at ignoring the numerous social conflicts and inequalities that exist in African communities. Moreover, our societies tend to place value only on men's contributions, the former bold warriors and the current defenders of peace, which has the unfortunate merit of neglecting the role played by girls and women.

Visit in the field

Sidaouta and child with Viviane Tassi Bela

In the North of Cameroon, the traditional parades of men carrying spears and arrows, a determined, sometimes threatening look on their faces, are doubtlessly reminiscent for the crowd that has formed at random, of the numerous battles fought in the past in this region of Cameroon. A region where keeping peace has been and still seems today to be the prerogative of men.

However, girls and women in the North of Cameroon, despite the forced silence they are very often reduced to, have always been instruments of peace keeping.

Frequently victims of arranged or even forced marriages with the sole aim of perpetuating peaceful relationships between clans, serving as indispensable mediators between traditional communities in conflict and assuming increasingly alone the traditional role of educator to which they are very often reduced, girls and women in this region of Cameroon are more than ever key actors in the peace process.

Sidaouta

For Sidaouta, a young woman of around twenty years old from North Cameroon, the situation was desperate. After becoming pregnant without being married the young woman found herself chased out of her village by her family and had to leave her community.

This meant a dramatic change in her life. She found herself in a hut, living with a friend who took her in temporarily for the first 8 months of her pregnancy. She was unable to have a prenatal check-up with a doctor during that period.

Her right to reproductive health was therefore ignored and violated. She found psychological and human right support at Saare Tabitha, a Women's Social Centre of the Cameroon Baptist Church (UEBC). Through numerous, very difficult mediation efforts, the team of both male and female social workers from Saare Tabitha, in partnership with the Cameroon Ministry for Social Affairs (MINAS), were able to convince the baby's biological father to pay child support and to take specific steps to allow Sidaouta to return to her family and her community. The baby in her arms, its father at her side and surrounded by her family, Sidaouta is now facing a better future full of hope. This result was obtained also thanks to the commitment of Viviane Tassi Bela, EED peace worker who strengthens the work of the social workers at Saare Tabitha in North Cameroon.

Rebecca

My name is Rebecca Ayome and I was born on the 13/02/1991.

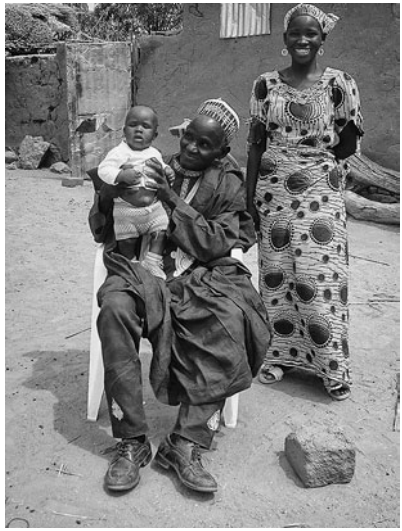
I'm a former student at Saare Tabitha and I finished my vocational training in 2008. I have been married since January 2010 and I have a five month-old child.

Since the end of my training, I haven't spoken to my father. He "rejected" me because I married without his consent. My family did not recognise the marriage and my father excluded me from the family structure I was a part of. I became withdrawn, and suffered psychologically from the lack of dialogue between my father and I for more than a year.

My dressmaking work slowed down and I ended up becoming financially dependent on my husband, although I did not want this.

The Team of Saare Tabitha met and established dialogue with Rebecca's father, a man around sixty, with sad eyes and weather beaten face, which allowed us to seek together and find the origins of the conflict between Rebecca and her father.

A second meeting took place on 09 April 2011 with Rebecca's husband, in order to include him in the resolution process of this conflict. After interviews, dialogue and mediation sessions, Rebecca at last has a smile on her face and has found her place in her family again after a year of exclusion!



Rebecca with her father

Rebecca with her husband

Their social and intellectual potential for managing, in difficult and often unprestigious conditions, an informal economy that is nonetheless a source of jobs and the socio-economic growth of their communities, for running almost 70% of the agricultural sector necessary for the feeding and survival of an increasing population, even though they are often not the owners of the land they farm, makes them crucial human foundations for peace in Cameroon. A fair and sustainable peace is achieved as much through development as through fair access to and non-violent management of available subsistence resources.

Their vital role in the social, economic and political stability of this region of Cameroon has been illustrated many times over in an area where they represent almost 50% of the population. Their active involvement in the colourful markets in Maroua for instance or in the dressmaking workshops and social organisations in place, as a result of a long process of social change, constitutes an asset that no one can afford to ignore.

In spite of this, women and girls still remain highly marginalised in the decision-making spheres and are given little consideration by the existing socio-political and legal bodies. They must struggle peacefully to exist and see their intellectual potential appreciated.

One woman out of two is still illiterate and deprived of her fundamental human rights by the traditional conservative system in place. For these women, progressing towards a fairer future has become a daily challenge to be met alongside the organisations that promote women, such as Saare Tabitha.

Education and vocational training aimed at building their social and intellectual potential become their only legitimate, non-violent weapons to achieve sustainable peace and a fair social existence in the northern regions of Cameroon.

Sidaouta and her child

Archdiocese of Garoua
Diocesan "Justice and Peace" Programme

Contribution of justice and peace to managing land conflicts in rural areas

By Dona Moula

1 Presentation of the programme and background

"Justice and Peace" is one of the 7 target areas (called programmes) of the Diocesan Committee for the development of Social Activities and Caritas (Codas Caritas), the central body for social ministry in the Archdiocese of Garoua.

This programme is specifically responsible for implementing actions that work towards preserving peace, promoting social justice and protecting Human Rights, with a special emphasis on legal and judicial support to the most vulnerable, particularly people living in rural areas.

We in fact cover an area (the administrative Region of North Cameroon) that is deeply affected by land issues, with the prevalence of agriculture and livestock breeding. These essentially complementary activities are at the core of cohabitation problems, marked by social relations that are often conflictual, and exacerbated by an uncoordinated influx of immigrant populations.

1 The 7 programmes of the Codas are: Health, Agriculture, Village hydraulics, Promotion of women and the family, Action against Disability, Education and Justice and Peace, all of which are coordinated by a General Secretariat.

This is the detrimental environment that Justice and Peace has been tackling for more than three years, directing its actions more towards preventing land conflicts in the districts of Lagdo, Tchéboa and Touroua (Department of La Bénoué), with the participation of the traditional local authorities.

2 Actions envisaged

To do this, we first carried out an exhaustive diagnostic study in the form of a tripartite meeting between farmers, livestock breeders and the various authorities (administrative, traditional, technical and municipal). This allowed us to gain an understanding of the causes of the conflicts and draw the following conclusion: competition for natural resources (water, pastureland and agricultural land) due to progressive desertification, coupled with demographic pressure are the factors underlying the conflicts in the southern valley of La Bénoué.

This study also allowed us to make certain observations and understand why many land mediation initiatives have met with mixed fates; most seem to have failed because of the following obstacles:

- Lack of co-operation between the local technical services or the Ministries of the sectors affected by the agropastoral and land questions
- The absence of an appropriate conflict resolution strategy, with ad hoc settling of disputes being the rule;
- Lack of implication of the main stakeholders in finding solutions to their differences;
- The malfunction of local dispute settlement commissions due to inadequate operating resources, which sometimes makes the members dependent on the parties to the conflict, and gives free reign to corruption (the conflict settlement commission works differently from one district to another, whether in terms of composition or the way it operates.)

- The absence of mechanisms to perpetuate project achievements and the measures taken to implement conflict solutions.

Starting from these observations and proposals from the different stakeholders, we decided to consider the search for long-term solutions to conflicts in this zone as part of a set of coordinated interventions, the success of which should:

- Build the capacities of the stakeholders in terms of non violent conflict handling methods and techniques;
- Promote traditional conflict resolution experience, combining this with modern methods and techniques to enhance effectiveness;
- Promote good local governance by producing explanations of the relevant legislation and anti-corruption efforts;
- Advocate in favour of adapting the national land use plan to changes in the context.

Ultimately, it was decided that ongoing dialogue between the players would best be preserved by setting up local conflict prevention committees.

3 Intervention approaches

With a concern for promoting peace, we agreed to accompany the process of changing mindsets through a new vision of local development based on the dynamics and realism of self-governing farmers' organisations. These groups are freedom-loving and give priority to non-violent conflict management as well as the search for consensus solutions to environmental problems and access to natural resources.

The principal objective selected is to create the conditions for the peaceful cohabitation of the different communities and livelihood groups, by setting up Local Committees for the Prevention and Management of agropastoral Conflicts (CLPGC) in the rural communities,

and build the capacity of the Commission on Agropastoral Dispute Resolution in the various districts.

The priority is to train the members of these organisations in the field of conflict prevention and consensus resolution and in drafting the collective agreements indispensable for managing natural resources, the access to which is often the main cause of most of these conflicts. To this end, a guide was devised that briefly describes the facilitation methods chosen for setting up dynamic CLPGCs capable of handling the prevention and peaceful management of agropastoral conflicts. It also compiles the technical topics and relevant tools for helping the supervisors to run the non violent conflict management training workshops.

This choice aims to:

- Lead the social stakeholders and all the population groups involved to become aware of the negative impacts conflicts have on their daily lives and on the development process. This awareness raising is done as part of the mass communication sessions often called "village assemblies". Often benefiting from ecumenical or interfaith gatherings, these sessions bring together villages that share the same natural resources which are often the source of conflicts. This basic planning unit is called "common ground" *(terroir commun)* in our context.
- Build the capacity of the leaders and representatives of the different livelihood groups to allow them to analyse, understand and peacefully manage (within a framework of consensus and proximity) the natural resources in their immediate environment, as well as any conflicts and problems that arise regarding access to or the use of such resources.

This approach, which draws inspiration from the Church's social ministry, makes use of certain elements of the Participatory Research Method (MARP) and goal-based project planning (PIPO). Several tools for analysing conflicts and drawing up collective agreements have been taken

from the reports from the various workshops organised by Mr Erwin (Consultant with Misereor), from the GENOVICO guide, the Malian PACT (GTZ-DED) and the IUCN document, Granier: Environmental policy and law, paper No. 65.

More simply, it is a question of:

a) Conducting participatory diagnostics in the rural communities to identify the different types of conflicts encountered and report to the population on the causes and consequences of these conflicts;
b) Raise the awareness of the population about the negative effects of such conflicts;
c) Convince farmers and livestock breeders to commit to a process for changing mindsets to achieve new behaviour patterns characterised by acceptance and minimal adherence to their complementarity.

Traditional authority has a strong grip on the population in our geographic area, and we make sure our interventions are shared by them by involving them in the whole process, in the same way as interfaith celebrations, one of which produced the following powerful declaration:

REY-BOUBA INTERFAITH GATHERING
(10 December 2009)

JOINT DECLARATION

In the year two thousand and nine, on the tenth of December,
We, representatives of the religions designated below:

Catholic Church, Protestant Churches and Islam,
United at Rey Bouba, declare the following, on our own behalf and on behalf of the faithful of our respective faiths:

1. Our presence in this place, on the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, means that we wish to peacefully share a portion of our national territory.
   – We acknowledge the fact that our human destiny is linked to this shared geographic area of Mayo-Rey;
   – We wish to seek the advancement of Mayo-Rey together;
   – We wish to protect the environment of Mayo-Rey together, to make this area a setting where we can all enjoy life.

2. Together, we wish to promote dialogue between the religious faiths in Mayo-Rey to seek justice and peace in a spirit of mutual trust and reciprocal support, avoiding all forms of religious and other intolerance and violence.

3. We undertake to encourage religious freedom and freedom of worship so that each individual citizen can worship God according to their deepest convictions, respecting the legitimate rights of individuals of all faiths.

4. We firmly resolve, in the event that disputes arise, to give priority to the open, consensus approach and the spirit of cooperation, to examine the problems objectively and achieve reconciliation.

Signed in Rey Bouba, on the 10th of December 2009 by the following signatories:
Monsignor **Antoine Ntalou**, Archbishop of Garoua,
Reverend Pasteur **Alphonse Teyabe**, Secretary General of the Council of Protestant Churches (CEPCA),
His Majesty **Aboubakary Abdoulaye**, Lamido of Rey Bouba.

The 3 Religious leaders with the Sub-Prefect of the district of Tchéboa (10-12-2010)

Women in Cameroon: an enormous potential for peace

By Stephanie Knott, Henriette Mbatchou and Maximin Tapoko

The Christian Women's Union Department of the Evangelical Church of Cameroon

The Christian Women's Union Department (DUFC) is a part of the Evangelical Church of Cameroon (EEC) which unites women around the shared ideal of personal realisation in general and women's development in particular, as well as the promotion of the family.

Present in the 10 regions of the country through the 18 synod regions of the Evangelical Church of Cameroon, it is run by a National Bureau with 9 members elected for a renewable term of office of 5 years. Members are unpaid volunteers working on behalf of their Christian faith. A peace worker joined this modest team in October 2010. She was sent by EED within the framework of the CPS/ZFD programme. Under the direction of the current National President, Mrs Henriette Mbatchou, whose perseverance and loyalty are highly appreciated by the team, the DUFC continues to strive towards the goal it has expressed as follows:

"To unite, organise, inform and train all women to allow them to bear witness, innovate, act, transform mindsets and change behaviour patterns for more justice, love, peace, and social, economic, cultural and spiritual well-being."

Pig farming

In order to achieve this goal, the DUFC has developed a showcase work which is the Social Education Centre commonly known as the "Women's Foyer" located in Njo Njo street in the Bonapriso neighbourhood of Douala. The CPS/ZFD partnership gave the DUFC new impetus to facilitate movement towards the valorisation of the socio-cultural, legal and political status of women and girls in an environment that had become unstable under the combined effects of poverty and social injustice.

The DUFC's micro-projects: a step towards financial self-sufficiency for women in Cameroon

The aim of the cooperation between the EEC's DUFC and the CPS/ZFD Cameroon is to promote the development of women in Cameroon by helping them to achieve financial independence. Financial independ-

Gender and development workshop Bonaberie, December 2010

ence would not only allow women to share in the living costs of the household, but would also give them a stronger role within the family unit by increasing their self-confidence. However, it is not a question of women becoming feminists and ignoring the existence of their husbands, but rather of having the possibility of a balanced, peaceful relationship with their husband without losing dignity though lack of financial means. The corollary of women's financial independence is a reduction in the poverty in the country which would lower the crime rate, an important factor for the building of sustainable peace in Cameroon.

To achieve this goal, the DUFC has set up a number of branches across the country to accompany women in gaining their financial autonomy. One of the strategies used is capacity building, in particular through the annual national seminar organised by the DUFC's Development Commission in favour of women. This seminar is a place for mutual learning, for women to exchange experience and knowhow in small-scale revenue-generating activities such as dyeing, cooking, jewellery making and millinery, etc. This same development commission provides support for the promotion and sale of such products, by mak-

DUFC national assembly

ing use of the opportunities afforded by large Church-organised events such as synods, consecration ceremonies, assemblies, congresses, worship services and celebrations, etc.

Another strategy for achieving financial autonomy is the granting of micro-loans. The DUFC has in fact just launched a caravan for the funding of women's micro-projects in the 18 synod regions of the EEC in Cameroon with the backing of partners such as the MEU (Mission Evangélique Unie) and the CEVAA. The purpose of the caravan is to support a collective local initiative developed by women from the DUFC of each region in response to a specific need related to their realities and opportunities. These needs generally vary greatly from one region to another due to Cameroon's considerable geographic, cultural and ethnic diversity, for the country is in fact sometimes thought of as a "Miniature Africa". In the far north, for example, the women have decided to take up pig farming and the storage and sale of maize. The women in the Sanaga Maritime and Ocean areas, on the other hand, have requested funding to invest in motorbikes, not only to get around, but especially to generate revenue through a lease management business. Once the women have defined and expressed their need, the DUFC not only

places the funds at their disposal to launch the project, but also organises project management training sessions to help the women conduct their project professionally.

In addition to funding collective micro-projects, the DUFC has set up a support system for individual women's initiatives by creating a women's mutual society, the Mutuelle du Département de l'Union des Femmes Chrétiennes (MUDUFC). It is a group of approximately 25 women members of the DUFC who have set up a solidarity fund financed by the members, who pay in at least 10,000 CFA Francs (approximately € 15.20) per month. This money is lent to individual women, either to start a small business, or to consolidate an existing one. The loans vary between 150,000 (approximately € 229) and 300,000 CFA Francs (approximately € 457) with an interest rate of 1.5% and a repayment term that cannot exceed 12 months. The interest generated by investments is subsequently cashed in and shared by the savers who reserve the right to redeem their money or re-invest it in the savings fund to help other women in need. Compared to other similar micro-projects in Cameroon, the MUDUFC has the advantage of offering a reliable repayment guarantee system based on the parish ministers and the faithful, who act as guarantors for the sums committed. "Since it was created in 2009, just one woman, who was given a loan of 150,000 CFA Francs, only paid back 120,000 CFA Francs" explains Mrs Georgette Nkoptcheu, the MUDUFC coordinator. She also remarked that the MUDUFC is neither an osusu nor a bank, and these should not be confused. To date, loans have been granted for "call boxes" (public mobile phone booths in Cameroon), dressmaking, the sale of iced water, doughnuts and various items, etc.

Mrs Christine Alice Ntentie, 36, first took advantage of the MUDUFC's services in 2009, at a time when she was in deep despair, having lost her only livelihood. Christine's house in Ndokoti (a commercial area of Douala) where she lived and which at the same time served as a restaurant to meet the needs of her three children and her younger brother, had been destroyed by the Urban Community because

it was situated in the State's public domain. Thanks to the MUDUFC, she was able to save her situation. She heard about the MUDUFC for the first time in her parish of "New-Bell Aviation", and decided straight away to ask for a loan of 150,000 CFA Francs to start selling doughnuts, which are very popular in Cameroon for breakfast and dinner. Since then, with the help of her children, she has been making and selling doughnuts every afternoon till around 10 pm in front of the house she now rents in another part of Douala. At the end of 2010, she was able to pay back her loan, which allowed her to take out another, higher loan for 300,000 CFA Francs, to expand her business. With this she was able to buy thermos flasks, plates, dishes, ladles and other items to start up a second business: selling Njapché couscous (a traditional Bamoun dish) every Sunday in front of her church. Not only has she already succeeded in selling about forty meals every Sunday, but she also occasionally receives special orders for important events, from the National Bureau of the DUFC, for example. With all this, Christine admits today she is no longer short of food for her children and asserts that she is now able to pay for their schooling and the rent for her house. From the dark despair she was in recently, Christine is now proud of her prospects of a brighter future and the social and economic status she hopes to achieve through her business venture. She is already planning to apply for a further loan next year, this time to start selling cloth which she intends to buy in Douala and sell in Foumbot, the village she grew up in. "With all the connections I have there, I won't even have to buy a shop. And when I'm away from home, my children will be able to take care of my other businesses." When she compares how she used to live with the small restaurant she ran and her present lifestyle, she admits the gap is still very wide. "At the moment I'm just starting out", she says serenely, which is a way of saying that she expects the best is still to come.

The DUFC becomes involved in promoting gender-related issues for sustainable peace within the church and the wider community

Alongside the revenue generating micro-projects, the DUFC is conducting an EED-funded programme aimed at improving the status of women in the Church and in the wider community.

This programme consists in training and equipping women for more involvement and action in social life and has witnessed the organisation of several activities, in particular the training workshop-seminar attended by 33 people (29 women and 4 men) on the question of gender and development. It has in fact been observed that although women outnumber men in the Church and in society as a whole (53%), they play and continue to play secondary roles despite their skills, qualifications and exceptional qualities for participating in and contributing to development.

When interviewed on the question of her impressions after the training session, Mrs Lydie Motchoum from the Koung khi Synod Region acknowledged that this gender seminar allowed her to build her capacity and that she had learned things she could use to manage conflict situations among the women in the chieftaincy. She undertook to work towards resolving these conflicts, which was achieved by bringing the king's spouses together around a table in order to restore peace and cooperation. As they were all the spouses of one and the same person, there was no reason for them to fight as if they were enemies. Better that they join forces and fight together to approach an improvement in the situation of women and the safeguarding of women's rights in Cameroon and in their chieftaincy in particular.

And so they were able to bury the hatchet and opt for solidarity and serenity, the key to the development of women and the family and a necessary condition for an effective fight against poverty and the keeping of the peace in Cameroon society.

The church promotes the human rights of prisoners

By Edmond Atemengue *(Legal counsel of CDJP Yaoundé)*
and Frank Wiegandt, *CPS/AGEH coordinator Cameroon*

Initially set up on 12 January 1969, the Yaoundé Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission (CDJP), as a service of the Church, the commission's pastoral role is to help to promote the protection of human rights and involve the population in providing more concrete solutions to the problems of "Justice and Peace" that affect people directly.

The Yaoundé CDJP's global aim is to help promote justice, build peace and work towards the holistic development of the people by defending dignity and the fundamental rights of the individual.

The CDJP anchors its action in mobilising support and sees itself as a practical instrument at the service of the population by encouraging the blossoming of a civil society capable of "guaranteeing" peace in favour of the protection of human rights and human dignity. Its actions are therefore considered an indispensable link for the advent of democracy in Cameroon.

In compliance with Pope Jean Paul II's "Ecclesia in Africa" Apostolic exhortation and considering that flagrant violations of human dignity and human rights are perpetrated in a large number of African countries, particularly in the prisons, the CDJP has committed to promoting the protection of human rights, more specifically in a custodial environment.

The Church has traditionally been attentive to the fate of prisoners and intervenes in prisons. The Archbishop of Yaoundé, Mgr. Tonye Bakot, recently appointed a prison chaplain who works in close cooperation with the CDJP.

The public authorities are also increasingly preoccupied with the situation in prisons, as evidenced by the setting up of a new sector plan for justice, the strategy to encourage security and the creation of new courts and prisons.

The prisoners in the Central and Principal prisons of Yaoundé are nonetheless still living in conditions of detention that are difficult and often violate their human rights and dignity.

Certain problems are structural and related to the inadequacy of a legal and penitentiary system that is under-financed and under-equipped, ill-prepared to manage an increasing influx of people into custody in accordance with the basic rights of the individual. Other problems are related to the prevailing culture of secrecy and dissimulation in prisons among all the stakeholders. This culture prevents the circulation of information and transparency and often transforms prisons into a lawless place where the human rights and the dignity of prisoners are trampled on.

The problems that plague the legal and penitentiary system include the following:

- The run-down state and cramped conditions of the Central Prison (built in 1968)
- The rise in petty and serious crimes mainly due to increasing social inequalities that contribute to prison overcrowding
- The inadequacy of financial resources and the lack of political will in the past to build other, more suitable prisons
- The slowness of the legal system and the denial of justice

The overall aim of the CDJP's detention project is to help to humanise the prisons by placing human rights and access to justice at the heart of its action.

The CDJP's approach consists in promoting dialogue between all the stakeholders (prisoners, their families, magistrates and the prison authorities) to improve information levels, make file processing more rigorous and efficient and to ensure the defence of the prisoners.

The CDJP intervenes in the Central and Principal Prisons of Yaoundé among approximately 4,000 prisoners.

The direct beneficiaries of the project are the prisoners; the indirect beneficiaries are the prisoners' families, the magistrates and other members of the prison administration system.

The CDJP is particularly attentive to the needs and rights of those in custody, pregnant women prisoners, women prisoners with babies, children, old people and the most vulnerable members of the prison population.

The methodology CDJP uses in its project of helping to humanise the prison environment consists of an approach that includes 6 criteria:

- Establishing a climate of trust and partnership between the CDJP and all the stakeholders, including the prison authorities
- Identifying the needs of the prisoners
- Active listening and long term support for prisoners
- The use of committed volunteers among the Catholic community, as well as permanent workers to provide prisoner support and for relations with the prison authorities
- Recourse to lawyers for the processing of files and following procedures
- Monitoring of prisoners with a view to their reintegration

This approach has already produced results, among which we may mention:

- The prisoners have access to legal information and legal services
- The monitoring of files has been improved
- The rate of daily releases has improved
- The number of days in visiting rights has increased
- The processing of files has been accelerated
- Releases take place on schedule
- The prisoners receive more visits from their entourage
- The health and nutritional conditions of prisoners has been improved.

In conclusion, we are able to relate a spectacular success of the CDJP's commitment in the detention environment:

- Mr T.[1] recently came to the offices of the CDJP to thank the team for their commitment at his side over a period of more than ten years to obtain his release from prison. According to Mr T., it is thanks to the CDJP that he has finally been freed.
- Mr T. was imprisoned on 4 June 1971 for theft and other offences. He was supposed to serve a 15 month sentence and be released on 5 October 1972.
- He escaped on 11 November 1971, spent 1 month and 9 days free and was re-arrested on 20 December 1971.
- When re-arrested, he was given a further prison sentence of 8 months.
- The clerk then added the time of his escape, 1 month and 9 days, to the scheduled release date from his first offence, then added a further 8 months, which gave a new probable release date of 14 July 1973.
- He escaped again on 10 January 1972, was arrested once more on 15 June 1972 and given a new sentence of 4 years. Using the same calculation method, the clerk scheduled a new probable release date of 14 December 1977.
- The freedom-loving Mr T. escaped a total of 8 times and committed petty theft and other minor offences before he was recaptured. Every time he was re-arrested, he was given a new sentence and the clerk who wrote the expected release date on the file added this to the previous sentence without omitting to add the duration of the escape.

1 The name of the former prisoner cannot be divulged to protect his anonymity

- However, article 51 paragraph 1 of the code of criminal law stipulates the obligation for sentences to be served concurrently, as pronounced either on the date of judgement, or by the Magistrate in charge of the enforcement of sentences. Article 52 paragraph 1 also excludes the arithmetical addition of sentences. Each sentence that deprives the individual of liberty has a very precise start and end date independent of other sentences.
- Thus, the method used by the clerk employs arithmetical addition which led to arbitrary detention.
- Since its initial contact with Mr T., the CDJP unceasingly pleaded in his favour to the legal and penitentiary authorities to have them correct the obvious error committed in calculating the duration of the sentences.
- Malfunctions, the lack of availability of prisoner situation reports, and the Prosecutor's inadequate implication and control over the Clerk led to serious and unbearable injustices and errors.
- Mr T. was 20 when he was imprisoned for the first time. Detained since 4 June 1971, following the series of successive sentences given consecutive to his escapes, Mr T. supposedly had a sentence of 47 years 2 months and 26 days to serve.
- The date of his release as scheduled by the penitentiary authority was 30 April 2018. He was finally freed on 25 November 2010 thanks to the Commission's incessant efforts since 1997 to prove that the law had been wrongly interpreted.
- He spent two thirds of his life in jail for what was basically a petty offence.
- Without the CDJP, he would still be in prison.

Peace work – The challenge of working towards the same objective with eleven different Churches

By Agnes Sander,
peace worker with the CEPCA in Yaoundé

The Council of Protestant Churches of Cameroon (CEPCA) is a network of 11 member Churches and several associate Churches. The CEPCA's aim is to bring together the Churches and Christian organisations to speak with a single voice against injustice, to combat the organisations, practices and attitudes that deprive human beings of their dignity, and to offer new perspectives based on their interpretation of the Gospel. Among other things, the CEPCA has undertaken to work for sustainable peace within and beyond the Churches. It feels responsibility towards Cameroon society and wishes to contribute to the development of this African country.

Why is peace work necessary today? Cameroon is not a country at war, but it is a country with an economic, political and social situation that could possibly or even very probably lead to major upheavals and violent conflicts. Young people in Cameroon are especially in need of a fundamental change in their difficult situation. We are referring to the youth of Cameroon which accounts for almost half the population but which has no prospects due to unemployment, financial and social insecurity (health, education, etc.) and which as a consequence also suffers from a lack of vision and goals. The youth of Cameroon may be a destabilising and destructive factor, whereas better qualified young

people, proud of themselves and with prospects for the future could be a force for peace and development.

The CEPCA is an important, respected organisation which can - in theory — reach a very wide audience. A large proportion of the population in Cameroon attend Church and devote their time and even their material resources to the Christian community and the objectives that unite it.

The 11 CEPCA member Churches cover the whole national territory of Cameroon. And each member Church has its own youth organisation. With a network of 11 Churches it should be easy to carry out peace work that reaches a large number of the young people.

But just as a large organisation offers many possibilities it also confronts us with the challenges related to its complexity.

My task as a peace worker is to help unite the youth movements in the CEPCA network and discover their needs in terms of peace education. The greatest challenge was posed from the start: who should we communicate with? Who are the people really at the heart of the different movements who can provide me with reliable information on the situation of young people in the Churches? At times I have the impression that I would first have to write a doctoral thesis on the eleven Churches to really understand how they operate and how I can approach them to obtain information. I would like to offer the different youth groups in the different Churches workshops, seminars and exchanges which can reassure them of their ability to be agents for peace in their society.

But what does the Evangelical Church of Cameroon expect from an agent for peace? How does the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Cameroon understand peace?

What are the wishes of the Presbyterian Church in terms of conflict resolution? And in the opinion of the African Protestant Church, where does a conflict start and when can it be considered resolved? I would like to become very close to the Churches to understand them and witness the daily challenges youth faces, but this proximity seems difficult

to achieve in a very short time and in organisations that are all Protestant Churches, but which are at the same time individual bodies with their own logic. And how can I identify the key people I can work with? To this end; the main role of good communication becomes increasingly evident.

We all want to work together for peace. But a deep peace accepted by all the partners (the Churches) is not something that can be shaped in a matter of days or over a period of a few weeks. It is not enough to take part in a workshop on conflict prevention and management to be an expert on peace in Cameroon. Therefore, through the CEPCA we must make use of the advantages of networking. In a network, each member supplies a different skill from the others. A network should be capable of seeing the deficiencies within the large structure and identify the advantages networking offers. Something new can emerge from within the network which would exceed the potential of a single Church.

A network would create extremely rich professional exchanges regarding the current situation in Cameroon and a skills database for conflict prevention and management.

The number one challenge remains communication. Each member of the network should clearly communicate their skills but also their needs, wishes and fears.

The second challenge is openness. Working towards peace and resolving conflicts is demanding work which should be based on honest communication. All the Churches in Cameroon have their own history and internal rules. In order to work together, the Churches should not all become the same, but it would be to their advantage to communicate frankly about their strengths and weaknesses to create synergies and complement each other.

The members of the CEPCA

The CEPCA comprises two categories of member Churches: active members and associate members. The active members are the following Protestant Churches who founded the council:

Cameroon Baptist Convention (C.B.C)
Native Baptist Church (N.B.C)
Evangelical Church of Cameroon (E.E.C)
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon (E.E.L.C)
Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Cameroon (E.F.L.C)
Eglise Presbytérienne Camerounaise (E.P.C)
African Protestant Church (E.P.A)
Anglican Church (EA)
Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (P.C.C)
Union of Baptist Churches of Cameroon (U.E.B.C)
Union of Evangelical Churches of Cameroon (U.E.E.C)

DUFC strategy workshop, 2011

Working for human dignity

The Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission – Bafoussam

By Father Jean Claude Mbassi

The Bafoussam Diocesan Justice and Peace commission works to promote justice and peace within the parishes and among the families in the diocese. Its mission is to keep society alert to the question of preserving human dignity through non-violent action.

As a global objective, the Diocesan Justice and Peace commission (CDJP) was created to promote the protection of human dignity and fundamental human rights and duties in accordance with the gospel. On the huge undertaking of promoting justice and peace, the Bafoussam CDJP strives to create a culture of peace, to cultivate the desire for peace in hearts and minds and in relations at all levels. The Bafoussam CDJP and its chapters constitute a powerful network at the disposal of the Diocese of Bafoussam to cope with the phenomena of injustices and threats to peace, that the majority of people describe as "the lay tribunals of the Church, an instance for raising awareness and advising the faithful". Consistently with the pastoral policy of the diocese, the subject of which is "self-realisation", the CDJP makes every effort to give people the desire to rediscover the pride of being someone. It has given thought to the question and trained its members and sympathisers in "self-realisation and violence against women", to remind Man that all human beings should be thought of and perceived as God's image and likeness, and should therefore be treated humanely.

With the wave of decentralisation, the CDJP devised the theme of "self-realisation in local governance". Through this topic, it is telling

people that improving the management of public affairs, asserting and defending the interests of our communities, our living environments, also requires our involvement. And to play an active part in this requires a proper conception of the institutional framework surrounding us.

Given the marked lack of interest of the population for public affairs and even more so for elections, we felt we should give people a new opportunity to ponder their rights and duties. Hence the theme "Self-realisation in Citizenship education". By reminding people of the rights and responsibilities that make the citizen, the idea was to arouse people's interest in the electoral process, with the aim of making the population aware of the necessity of registering as a voter, a fundamental step for voters to be able to take part in the choosing of leaders. As the 2011 elections approach, this topic has been taken up again, with special emphasis on the right and duty to vote. It is a question of reminding everyone that failing to exercise their civic duty is an abdication that does not prevent the result of the vote from being imposed on everyone, voters and non-voters alike, and not to succumb to the temptation of those who think and proclaim that the chips are down and there is no point in going to vote. All of which with the concern to keep the peace before, during and after the elections.

To these activities are added the humanitarian actions relative to the protection of Human Rights, particularly of the most vulnerable groups: denunciation, reparation of injustices, conflict management, legal and judicial aid, and multiple forms of assistance to the needy. It is evident that the CDJP, by training and informing, provides the start of a solution to the phenomena of injustice and threats to the peace in our Diocese.

APPENDIX

"O Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace"[1]

The Civil Peace Service (CPS): an instrument of Christian peace work

Joint position paper by the AGEH and EED

This position paper has its origins in the dialogue between the AGEH (German Association for Development Cooperation) and EED (Church Development Service) with their partner organisations in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America during the joint CPS partner conferences in 2001, 2004 and 2007. Particularly at the 2007 conference, the partner organisations of both religious denominations came together to formulate profile attributes of Christian peace work and expressly encouraged the AGEH and EED to intensify their joint activities within the CPS framework. The following document was prepared by a joint working group of AGEH and EED head offices.

The first step is designed to:

- Enable staff members from the head offices to stimulate and improve internal discourse

1 From the Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

- Serve as an orientation for AGEH and EED Civil Peace Service experts and their employers
- Promote dialogue and open discussion with partner organisations all over the world with regard to our shared fundamental understanding of Christian peace work

In a second stage, we intend also to present this paper to lay public and clergy in Germany with an active interest in development policy and to use it in dialogue with the providers of funds. This also includes approaching other CPS and Christian peace work organisations.

With this paper, the AGEH and EED aim to stimulate lively discussion, thereby bringing about a new dynamic in the profile of Christian peace work. Identifying and developing their individual strengths will enhance their joint efforts to promote peace in the world together with their partners.

1. Church involvement in the CPS[2]

The fundamental mission of the churches is to devote themselves to working for peace.[3] Preserving, promoting and restoring peace is the constant objective of the churches in the service of their fellow man. The churches do not see this service as being subject to any constraints relating to time, subject matter, region or any other factor.

The objective of church-based development work and its services, including the AGEH and EED, is to help bring about social justice, to promote and safeguard peace and to preserve creation worldwide by

2 See also the Mission Statement of EED, the pastoral address of the Catholic Bishops "Gerechter Friede" (Just Peace), 2000; EKD Council memorandum "Aus Gottes Frieden leben – für gerechten Frieden sorgen" (Living in God's Peace – Caring for Just Peace), 2007; Misereor guidelines "Frieden und Zivile Konfliktbearbeitung" (Peace and Civil Conflict Management), "Spuren zum Frieden" (Route to Peace) AGEH, 2002, etc.

3 "The most important way in which the Church can contribute to world peace is by making itself the 'sacrament of peace'…", page 11, address on 'Gerechter Friede' (Just Peace), Bonn 2000

means of concerted efforts. This is done by helping the poor, the disadvantaged and the oppressed to improve their own lot and to become involved in shaping peace.

The CPS gives the churches the opportunity to bolster their own peace-building activities by joining forces with the state and with other civil society organisations. In this regard, the AGEH and EED act as church development services on behalf of the churches and their partner organisations in Germany and abroad. The CPS is seen by the AGEH and EED as being complementary to rather than separate from other church instruments concerned with development and peace work. It is implemented on the basis of well-established and recognised development policy principles. At the same time, the AGEH and EED make a specific contribution to the CPS's own profile as an instrument of civil conflict management. They contribute the experience and strengths of church peace work to the CPS, thereby shaping the conceptual framework of the latter together with the other development organisations.

2. Christian values

The AGEH and EED share the basic Christian understanding of "just peace"[4]. The two organisations see it as their mission and motivation to work towards just peace, thereby helping to pave the way for the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven. "Just peace serves to preserve mankind and to help it evolve; because of this, it must always be based on a respect for equal human dignity"[5].

Biblical sources offer a wealth of guidance, but also indicate two

4 The vision of just peace is described as early as in the Old Testament (e.g. Isa 9 and 11) and is also evident in all that Jesus says and does. The belief of Christians that they are called upon to follow in Jesus' footsteps in working for peace stems from unambiguous passages in the Bible (e.g. Ps 34,15 and 1 Pet 3,11)

5 "Aus Gottes Frieden leben – für gerechten Frieden sorgen" (Living in God's Peace – Working for Just Peace) – EKD Council, 2007, page 53

inalienable criteria which are fundamental to the nature of the peace sought by God and which lead us Christians in our efforts to establish peace: justice and non-violence[6]. Accordingly, the maxims of justice and non-violence are, independent of cultural differences, globally applicable standards that unite people in church organisations in their quest for peace. Even outside the Christian context, this basis is also shared by many of our non-confessional partner organisations.

The common basis for the work of church organisations is the Christian image of men and women. The dignity of each and every man and woman comes from their having been created in God's image. This is the basis for our belief in unlimited respect for human rights.

The marriage of peace and justice that this creates, and which characterises the common understanding of "just peace"[7], features in biblical writings as the subject of divine promise. "The exuberant wording of the Psalms declares that 'justice and peace will embrace' (Ps 85,11). Under the Messianic reign, it is written that "mountains shall yield peace for the people, and the hills justice", that justice will be done to those in misery and help given to those in poverty (Ps 72,3; cf. Isa 9,1ff). The marriage of peace and justice is such that the fruits of just actions will be peace. (Isa 32,17).

For the Christian faith, the ethos of the peacemaker (Mt 5,9) is ultimately based in the God-given reconciliation of men and women with Him and with one another; the goal of this ethos is in the coming Kingdom of Heaven.[8] God's demands and expectations of us are rooted in the reconciliation that He has defined and given to us.[9] The Civil Peace Service provides the churches with a means of carrying out these demands.

6 Cf. Mt 26.5, indicating the biblical principle of non-violence as the basis for Christian conduct and therefore also for the work of church organisations within the CPS.

7 Cf. "Gerechter Friede" (Just Peace) II.1.1 (59) Model of Just Peace

8 "Aus Gottes Frieden leben – für gerechten Frieden sorgen" (Living in God's Peace – Working for Just Peace) – EKD Council from 2007, page 50 f.

9 Cf. "Gerechter Friede" (Just Peace) III.1.2 (165) The Church: a Force of Reconciliation

This common Christian basis gives rise to the growing trust underlying the specific kind of working relationship that the AGEH and EED enjoy with their partner organisations all over the world and the working relationship between peace experts and their local colleagues. The stable nature of this common basis also helps peace work organisations to overcome differences and to spur on ecumenical cooperation for the sake of the shared vision of just peace; however, it also helps them to actively seek out a working relationship with people of other faiths.

3. Religion and the church: a force for lessening violence

Working for the poor and victimised and demanding justice creates potential for conflict. Peace work founded on Christian faith — and, in particular, on Christian social teachings — is nonetheless wholly opposed to all conflict management mechanisms involving force and military action. Christian peace work subscribes to the preferential option of non-violence and urges for all forms of violence to be prohibited. It seeks out the path of peace laid out by Jesus Himself: a path embracing the ethos of non-violence, forgiveness and loving one's enemies[10].

Christian peace work stresses the necessity of taking a holistic approach. This involves changes to people and institutions at a personal and interpersonal level as well as at community and society level. Accordingly, we are required again and again to strike the correct balance and the right combination of internal efforts to improve social justice and efforts in order to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence.

This also means that it is necessary to make a clear distinction between Christian peace work and workers on the one hand and military players on the other. Similarly, Christian peace work and workers must dissociate themselves from projects involving cooperation between civil and military partners.

10 Cf. Mt 5,17–48

4. The "dark side" of churches in violent conflicts

As active forces within individual societies, churches are frequently involved in conflicts too. The role of a church in this regard is not always clear, frequently mirroring the spectrum of positions that exist within a society. Members of the church, from ordinary churchgoers to bishops, are to be found not only among the peace-loving contingent who abhor violence but also among the warring contingent who embrace violence. Certain Christian elements have also been guilty of fundamentalism, arrogance, exclusionism, intolerance and calls to violence — and the situation is no different today. History shows that churches and Christians have not always sided with those striving for peace and harmony. The history of Christianity and its churches is also marked by violence. In some cases, the Christian mission is still politically instrumentalised in order to justify violence as a means of implementing political objectives and hegemonic interests. Religion is often abused or instrumentalised on account of its emotional power.[11]

With this in mind, the AGEH and EED strive, together with their partner organisations, to subject their own role and actions in social conflicts to constant and critical review[12] and to come to terms with their "dark side". Only in this way can church players bring their strengths to bear in the long term and identify and address their own weaknesses and the risks to which they are exposed.

11 However, religion itself is seldom a genuine reason for violent conflicts, even though claims are frequently made to this effect.

12 In this regard, for example, methods and concepts relating to conflict analysis or to the principles of "Do No Harm – Local Capacities for Peace" can be helpful.

5. Potential and limitations of churches and their institutions with regard to peace work

In addition to their shared faith and values, Christian players have specific strengths that can be channelled into their active peace work.

5.1 Spiritual aspects and subject matter

Christian peace work puts particular emphasis on the significance and combination of forgiveness and reconciliation in peace processes. It differs from other approaches and concepts associated with reconciliation work primarily through the "forgiveness comes before reconciliation" approach.

The focus is on both victims and aggressors: both groups — each with different roles and needs — are brought together in an ongoing, fortifying process of healing and reconciliation. This is based on the awareness that reconciliation processes are above all spiritual processes for which people need time and space. To this end, Christian churches offer a diverse approach, varying from culture to culture, and a ritual form for dealing with blame and forgiveness which can be used in active peace work.

A significant aspect of Christian understanding is that reconciliation is not dependent on the human element alone and cannot be simply "organised into existence". It cannot be brought about by human efforts alone, regardless of how focused and genuine these may be. Reconciliation is ultimately a gift from God. It becomes possible when people create the necessary space for it to flourish.

The limitations of human ability are especially evident when it comes to reconciliation work. It is important for all those involved to understand this, but most of all for those partners and peace experts who experience the successes and failures of their peace work at first hand. Not every success can be attributed to our efforts and not every failure to our shortcomings. The firm belief that not all things ultimately de-

pend on us — and also the belief that our efforts are elevated into something greater — can be a source of strength and stamina that enables us to withstand difficult situations and to accept failure.

5.2 Structure

All over the world, church structures have grown over centuries at all levels of society, where they continue to maintain a presence. These are established at a local level and networked at an international one. They are temporally and structurally stable and capable of surviving catastrophes, wars and breakdowns in civil society. Experience has shown that churches stand by their people in crisis situations, when all other state and civil society players and structures disappear or fall asunder. People in areas of conflict frequently have a great store of faith in their churches; this is due not only to their presence, but also because they have repeatedly demonstrated their intrinsic morality through their work for the poor and the victimised.

All too often, the potential of the churches to bring about social change is still being prevented by rigid hierarchical structures, involvement with political and economic powers and the under-representation of women. The AGEH and EED aim to help their partners to overcome weaknesses such as these and to draw from their strengths.

5.3 Interreligious dialogue and cooperation

Observers often have the impression that the role of Christian players in interreligious conflicts is not a constructive one, particularly when Christians have an interest in and are party to a conflict. Many peace projects during and after such conflicts tend to take a purely secular approach in order to demonstrate the apparent neutrality of the mediators working with conflict parties of different religions. To those involved in the conflict, this may instead give the impression that it is necessary to give up one's faith for the sake of harmony. "Secularism is not

a recipe for pluralism."[13] On the contrary, the commitment of Christian players in such contexts harbours the potential to show people that their religions — even non-Christian ones — are taken seriously. People of a religious faith are needed in order to understand violations in this area and to join together with those affected to look for solutions that include spiritual elements and mutual tolerance, or that even facilitate a "celebration of differences"[14].

6. Specific approaches to Christian work within the CPS

The AGEH and EED view the CPS as a specialist peace service, founded on solidarity and Christian faith. The work of the AGEH and EED within the CPS is based on the firm belief that peace can only grow from within a society. Peace, justice and the preservation of creation are not goals that can be attained independently of one another. For this reason, many of our partner organisations tend to view CPS projects as part of their comprehensive work relating to social and development policy rather than as isolated peace projects.

All church activities centred on development, peace and human rights work — and therefore including CPS activities — have the same preferential option of helping the poor and victimised, as well as sharing the principles of partner orientation, participation and subsidiarity.

Peace cannot come from outside but rather must grow from within. It is consciously not used as an intervention instrument for foreign policy or as compensation for military operations.

Through their involvement in the Civil Peace Service, the AGEH and EED have established an additional instrument for personnel support. Their goal is to support local organisations in crisis regions who are attempting to prevent the outbreak of violent conflicts (crisis pre-

13 Working for Reconciliation, page 48

14 ibid.

vention), who are working to help establish the basis for peaceful conflict resolution (reduction of violence), and who are endeavouring to secure long-term peace by setting up suitable structures (post-conflict activities). The most important concern in this regard is to safeguard the local potential for peace.

When making use of the Civil Peace Service, the AGEH and EED focus on personnel cooperation in the form of individual projects with partner organisations. These can stand alone as flagship projects and frequently generate synergy effects when combined with the partner's other development policy measures. The aim is to promote the range of options open to partners, to strengthen dialogue and to facilitate networking by enabling partners to meet, interact and work together. Accordingly, personnel cooperation in the Peace Service involves far more than merely transferring expertise.

CPS work never involves simply taking strategies developed in Germany and implementing them on location, but rather enabling 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. Peace processes require a cautious, step-by-step approach. The ultimate responsibility for all peace work therefore lies with the local partners who effectively commission and "own" the CPS projects carried out by the AGEH and EED, who make a limited contribution to the overall work.

This gives rise to the positions of the AGEH and EED, which are used in strategy discussions in the CPS Group and with the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The essence of these positions is that it is only possible to analyse and address the causes of conflict and to develop concrete peace perspectives when those affected are directly involved. Peace experts do not go about their work alone, but rather make their skills and know-how available for solution processes carried out by and under the responsibility of local players. On behalf of accountable partner organisations, they strengthen local peace efforts and help to establish them as part of an international

network. As they come from a different cultural background, peace experts can make an important contribution to the dialogue and work on location. The peace experts work with their local colleagues on an equal footing, are aware of their own limitations and are primarily answerable to the management of the local partner organisations.

7. Specific fields of action

The following main areas of focus of the AGEH and EED within the CPS are derived from the structural strengths of the partners, most of which are church organisations:

- Networking players involved in peace work
- Providing support to church peace efforts; working together with church communities and groups involved in peace work
- Reintegration and rehabilitating groups affected by violence
- Working with traumatised people; psychosocial work, particularly in connection with churches and partner organisations
- Supporting truth commissions
- Peace education
- Training in and advice on non-violent conflict management
- Lobbying and advocacy work
- Peace journalism and media work
- Strengthening local legal safeguards and human rights work
- Context analysis and taking into account challenges for peace in strategy development

In dialogue with the partner organisations, the AGEH and EED aim to shift the focus of future CPS work more towards peace work that is geared towards specific Christian strengths (see also paragraph 5).

8. Special requirements for peace experts working in a church context

Working in and with churches and Christian organisations entails certain requirements for AGEH and EED peace experts. In order for these experts to find their place in the partner structures as part of a team, it is necessary for them to conduct a critical review of their own work and to view themselves as being in a learning capacity. To be accepted in the partner organisation, the experts must identify with and reflect upon basic Christian values, actively participate in the local church and be willing to integrate church-specific forms of reconciliation and peace work.

9. Challenges relating to peace work

The status of the AGEH and EED as recipients of state financial support, together with their church and civil society identity, defines their framework for working together with CPS partner organisations. The bones of this framework are to be fleshed out on a daily basis, together with the partner organisations, based on the conditions in the partner countries.

This leads us to examine our own culture as Christian organisations. If specific Christian and spiritual strengths are to be used and developed for the purposes of peace work, we are required to offer our experts and other employees spiritual support and adequate space for reflecting upon their work. This is to provide a source of strength and a means of coming to terms with the stressful and often harrowing experiences associated with working in conflict regions.

In this connection, the need to address the specific Christian aspect of peace work and spiritual support as part of personnel development in preparation work and in the project itself is, together with specialist training and psychological support, of particularly great importance.

Providers of funds and the general public ask — as they are perfectly entitled to — about the impact of CPS work. The question regarding the specific effectiveness and logical consequences of personnel cooperation must be examined in greater detail and greater depth. Because of this, the AGEH and EED are especially active in looking for ways in which the CPS can be used even more effectively as an instrument with a focus on human interaction.

10. Position of the AGEH and EED in relation to the further development of CPS as an instrument

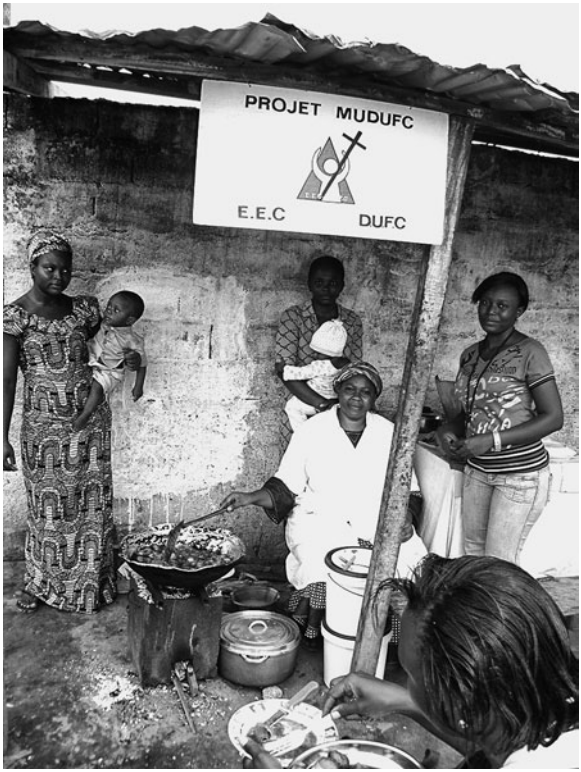
The AGEH and EED see themselves as advocates of the belief that "peace must grow from within". They work to ensure that conflict analyses are always carried out jointly by partners and CPS organisations, that a joint vision of peace can be developed through dialogue, and that the responsibility for carrying out projects rests primarily with the partners. Because of this, greater scope for flexibility is needed for successful and productive project work, whereby the administrative structure of the CPS is geared more flexibly than before to the specific characteristics of peace-building processes.

Peace work must go hand-in-hand with efforts to ensure justice and preserve creation. Because of this, it must be fundamentally possible to take action in a wide spectrum of areas in all phases of conflicts.

Peace and development can only be lasting if they are rooted in the people, in their community, in their wishes and in their actions.

Bonn and Cologne, April 2009

Further reading:

- "Aus Gottes Frieden leben – für gerechten Frieden sorgen" (Living in God's Peace – Working for Just Peace) – EKD Council, 2007
- Pastoral address of the Catholic Bishops "Gerechter Friede" (Just Peace), 2000
- Mission Statement of EED
- Misereor guidelines "Frieden und Zivile Konfliktbearbeitung" (Peace and Civil Conflict Management)
- "Spuren zum Frieden" (Route to Peace), AGEH 2002
- "Working for Reconciliation", Caritas Internationalis, 2004

Micro-credit for women