

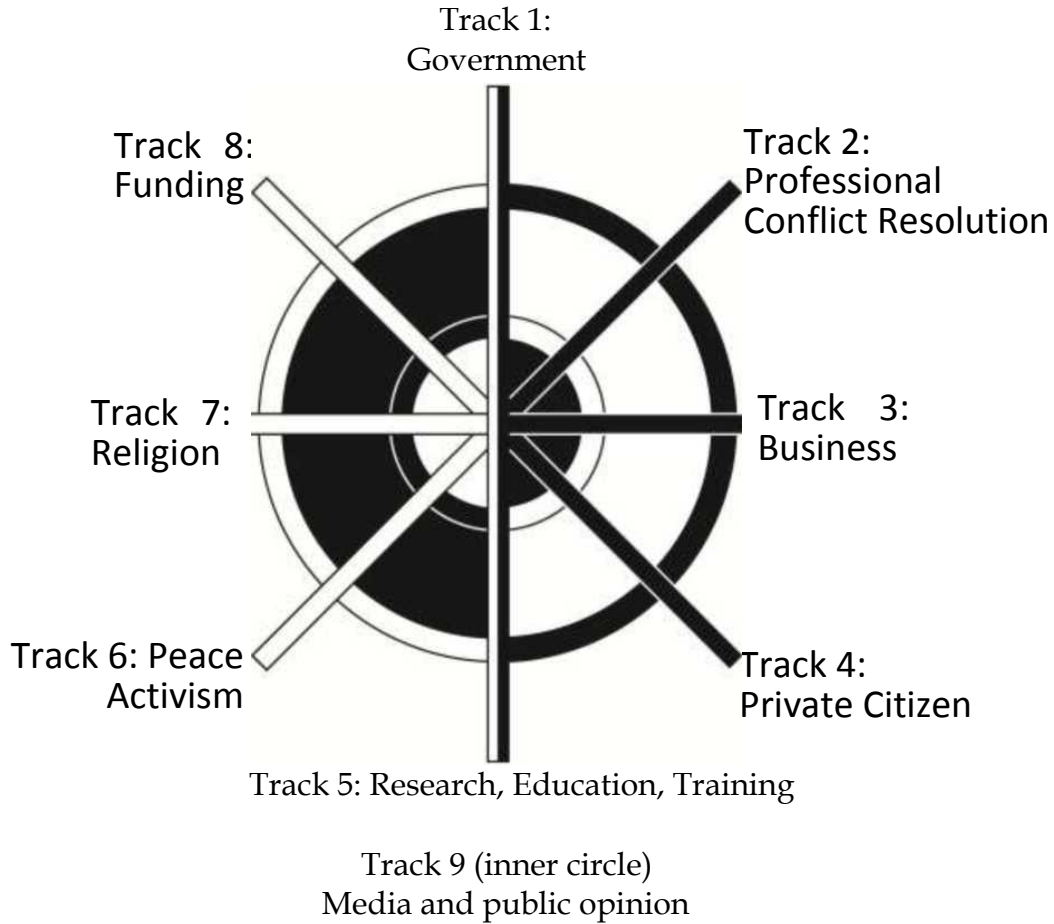
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Trust and Conflict Transformation

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The mission of the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy is to promote a systems approach to peacebuilding and to facilitate the transformation of deep-rooted social conflict

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INTRODUCTION

Trust and conflict transformation both revolve around issues of relationship. As the conflict resolution practitioner explores and repairs relationships between conflicting parties, he or she will undoubtedly encounter issues of trust at one level or another. It is a key factor in any analysis of a conflict, and it is fundamental to the relationship-building process between the practitioner and the parties in conflict. Given the importance of trust to those in the field of conflict resolution, this paper is designed to shed light on the ambiguities of trust and to provide a framework for understanding it which practitioners can use in their work. Following a review of the academic literature on trust, this paper will explore in detail how trust relates to conflict resolution processes and interventions, looking specifically at IMTD's conflict transformation training program in Cyprus as an example.

THE NATURE OF TRUST

What does it mean to trust someone? When defining trust, we should keep in mind three important variables: relationship, expectations, and behavior. Variations and combinations of these three elements are present when trust and distrust are present, and these variables provide the understanding of how trust works, how trust is developed, and how people react to trust being broken. For example, a simple definition of trust would be to count on someone to do as they say they will do. Immediately the issues of relationship (one person counting on another), expectation (counting on) and behavior related to that expectation (doing) become evident. The sociological and psychological literature on trust attempts to flesh out this very skeletal portrayal of trust as a combination of relationships, expectations, and the behaviors linked to those expectations.

Expectations are normally the focal point in defining trust. What types of expectations qualify behavior as trusting? The first element to focus on is risk. In order for a person to engage in trusting behavior, that person must expose him or herself to the real risk of personal loss *with the expectation* that the trustee will not take advantage of the truster's risky exposure. It is important to note, also, that the potential costs (i.e., the results of the trustee breaking the trust) must be greater

than the potential benefits one would incur from the trust being fulfilled.¹ In this sense, trust can be a product of a cost/benefit analysis where the element of trust counterbalances the risk factor.

Trust, however, is not always the result of specific cost/benefit analyses. For example, we trust when we expect people in powerful roles to wield that power competently. Trust in technical competence refers to a basic trust in our social system and the roles that are inherent in it—that is, we trust that doctors (whose existence is a product of a combination of several large social institutions in action) will perform the duties that their roles tell us they will perform. This highlights the importance of relationships in the formation of trust, because social roles are all about defining relationships in the social system.

Moving away from the issue of power, we also trust, in certain situations, that certain people will put others' interests before their own. For example, we trust that bus drivers will obey the rules of traffic (for the most part) even when it goes against their personal interest in getting where they are going as quickly as possible. This is similar to the basic action of trusting someone to keep their word, but it highlights the aspect of relationship because the expectation is derived from a social role and a specific situation.

Another element of relationship that is important in understanding trust is the issue of interdependence. Deutsch insists that for one person to trust another, the trustee must be aware of the trust being conferred,² and this awareness is the beginning of interdependence. Much of the research done on trust has created "games" like the Prisoner's Dilemma, in which cooperative or competitive behavior is elicited, depending on the level of trust between the two players. The need for interdependence is revealed clearly in these exercises, as the benefit of trust can only be gained if both players trust each other, or as Deutsch puts it, engage in "mutual trust."³

The Prisoner's Dilemma experiment not only illustrates the factor of interdependence, but it also clarifies the relationship between trust and cooperation. The discussion of an interdependent relation and risk behavior can

¹ Morton Deutsch, "Trust and Suspicion," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Volume 2 (1958), p. 266.

² Deutsch, p. 267.

³ Deutsch, p. 267.

also be described as a situation where two interdependent parties must cooperate in order to receive any benefits. Trust is the key element, because you must trust that the other person will cooperate. The difficulty, of course, lies in the fact that by trusting, you expose yourself so that the other person can take advantage of that trust and turn the situation into win/lose (the other person wins/you lose), or if both are distrustful, it can turn into a lose/lose situation.

DISPOSITIONAL TRUST: THE TRUST RELATIONSHIP

To this point, this discussion of developing, breaking, and experiencing trust has been in the context of a particular situation or a specific relationship. Trust goes much deeper than this. This deeper level is particularly important to the conflict resolution practitioner. Regardless of the situation, there are instances where trust is transferred at the level of disposition and becomes an element of character. The truster views the trustee's "disposition" as being trustworthy. This is in contrast to a situational trust where the truster knew that the trustee's costs for being untrustworthy were too great, therefore it was safe to confer trust.⁴

Character, in this case, however, should be understood as a fundamental element of a relationship – not just a simple attitude that one party has about the other. This is the image behind the concept of implicit trust. It is what we mean when we describe a relationship as a "trust relationship." A good example of dispositional trust exists in our trust in the social order. It is a trust that is implicit in our cooperation with and existence in a social and natural order, and it allows us to behave "rationally" and sanely in that context. We cannot prepare ourselves for every single possible course of events in the social and natural orders, thus we trust that certain patterns and sequences of events will happen as they "should." Our trust in regularity and order reduces the potentially huge complexity inherent in our world and allows us to act rationally.⁵

Complexity is the key. Dispositional trust is ultimately about reducing

⁴ Svenn Lindskold, "Trust Development, the GRIT Proposal, and the Effects of Conciliatory Acts on Conflict and Cooperation," *Psychological Bulletin* Volume 85 (1978), p. 774.

⁵ Bernard Barber, *The Logic and Limits of Trust* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983), p. 11.

complexity.⁶ As Niklas Luhmann points out,

...by introducing trust, certain possibilities of development can be excluded from consideration. Certain dangers which cannot be removed but which should not disrupt action are neutralized.⁷

The function of reducing complexity does not apply exclusively to our trust in the social or natural order. Interpersonally and between groups we can develop trust relationships when we attribute, at the level of disposition, the character of trustworthiness. This then eliminates the complexity of having to calculate the cost/benefit of risking and trusting in every situation. It increases our ability to risk, since we automatically trust that we will not be taken advantage of. In this way, trust becomes a liberating action as well.⁸ By limiting the complexity, it allows us to pursue activities that otherwise we would not "rationally" pursue. Paradoxically, Luhmann also notes that being the object of interpersonal dispositional trust effectively *limits* your freedom of action, since you are being trusted not to take advantage of the truster.⁹

You can see here the link between situational trust and dispositional trust and recognize that the distinction between them is sometimes artificial. The real link between situational trust and dispositional trust, however, is in the process of trust development. Trust is often a self-fulfilling prophecy. By exposing yourself to risk in a particular situation, and trusting another not to take advantage of it, two things will happen. First, if the other chooses the trusting alternative and does not take advantage of you, then your trust in the other has grown. Second, by making that risk, you are likely to become more trustworthy in the eyes of the other. Trust breeds trust. As the cycle continues and each party is given repeated and increasingly weighty opportunities to earn the trust, the individual episodes of trust transform into a trust relationship, or dispositional trust. Trust analysis at the situational level eventually gives way to a dispositional allocation of trust. This dispositional decision thus eliminates the complexity of analyzing each situation.

⁶ Barber, p. 10.

⁷ Niklas Luhmann, *Trust and Power: Two Works by Niklas Luhmann* (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 1979), p. 25.

⁸ Luhmann, p. 39.

⁹ Luhmann, p. 63.

I should also point out that reduction of complexity can also be satisfied by distrust. Distrust is not simply the lack of trust, rather it is a functional equivalent of trust. An individual must make a choice between the strategies of trust and the strategies of distrust, when seeking to reduce complexity.¹⁰ Choosing trust, as we have noted, involves strategies of risk and confidence in others, but the strategies of distrust are inherently negative. They involve definition of the other as an enemy who must be fought—reserves must be mobilized to defend against expected breaches of trust. Luhmann notes that when employing these strategies, the "consciousness of distrust is often lost, and the strategies of reduction demarcated by it become autonomous, become a habitual outlook on life, a routine."¹¹

Although distrust does reduce complexity (by ruling out trustworthy behavior), it also makes preparation to deal with the less complex world much more difficult. It fosters an unconscious attitude of distrust that can become part of the disposition of the distruster in the first place. Strategies of distrust will ultimately provide a self-strengthening barrier against developing trust in the future. These strategies absorb strength, leaving little energy for exploring the possibility of trust, and allow fewer opportunities for learning.¹² Learning, according to Luhmann, is ultimately how trust is developed (i.e., making judgments about the trustworthiness of someone based on analyzing evidence of their behavior, etc.).¹³ In this sense, distrust, like trust, is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

TRUST AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The relevance of trust to conflict and conflict resolution should now be apparent, because of the close connection between trust and cooperation. At the situational level, trust is a particularly important component of the more specific processes of conflict resolution. De-escalation, conflict settlement, and the formal termination of conflicts, which in international conflicts often means signing agreements and making treaties, are all affected by trust. These processes are loosely grouped under the term "conflict termination."

¹⁰ Luhmann, p. 71.

¹¹ Luhmann, p. 71.

¹² Luhmann, p. 72.

¹³ Luhmann, p. 74.

The first link between trust and conflict termination focuses on de-escalation. Trust is a vital step in the de-escalation process – for any conciliatory act to be effective, it must involve a healthy dose of trust. Unfortunately, trust, like de-escalation, is enveloped in a paradox. In order to trust another person you must risk personal loss (as indicated above), yet we so often demand proof of trustworthiness before we will take that risk. The paradox lies in the fact that one must first take the risk in order to develop that trust.¹⁴

De-escalation is trapped by a similar situation. In a conflict situation, one party will only want to make a conciliatory move if it knows, for sure, the other side will not take advantage of the situation. This explains why parties in conflict will so often make conciliatory gestures that require a similar move by the other side *in advance*. These "I will if you will..." approaches reveal the difficulty of deescalating in an environment of distrust. Trust building reveals a very important lesson for de-escalation and conflict termination in general. In these processes, a certain "leap of faith" is required to get the parties started. For any de-escalation process to start, one side must take a risk. One side must make a conciliatory move that is independent of the other side doing the same. In trust, it is the same process. One must take the risk—one must expose oneself to harm without *knowing* for sure how the other side will react.

A complicating factor in the discussion of conflict resolution and trust building concerns communication and perception. Loomis' version of the Prisoner's Dilemma experiment indicated that trust was more easily established in that case when free communication was allowed between the two prisoners. Luhmann agrees, claiming that "the building up of trust therefore depends on easily interpretable situations and not least, for that reason, on the possibility of communication."¹⁵ The element of "easily interpretable" is also addressed by Swinth who indicates that the trust-building process is dependent on clear and accurate perceptions.¹⁶

¹⁴ See Kenwyn K. Smith and David N. Berg, *Paradoxes of Group Life: Understanding Conflict, Paralysis, and Movement in Group Dynamics* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1987), especially chapter 6.

¹⁵ Luhmann, p. 43.

¹⁶ Robert L. Swinth, "The Establishment of a Trust Relationship," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* Volume 11 (1967), p. 337.

Of course, conflict situations are often based on imperfect communication and perception. Building trust in a conflict situation, then, is not simply about the parties exploring risks and trusting each other. It goes deeper into the fundamental behavior which fuels the conflict by requiring more accurate perceptions and clearer communication.

DISPOSITIONAL TRUST AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

As we move away from termination processes and situational trust and into the root causes of conflict, we move into the area of dispositional trust and conflict transformation. The term "conflict transformation" is only beginning to gain acceptance in the conflict resolution field. The more common term, "conflict resolution," implies addressing the ultimate source of a conflict. This, however, often requires a transformation of the relationship between the parties, so I prefer to use the term "conflict transformation." When the issues concern change in elemental components of relationships, the result is transformation—not settlement, not management or de-escalation, not even resolution. This is why the issue of trust is so vital to the field of conflict resolution. In deep-rooted conflicts, where the parties are not simply disputing over material interests but are suffering from deeply damaged social relationships, rebuilding trust is a key step towards resolution and transformation. Specific instances of situational trust between parties in conflict will never be enough to resolve a conflict. Conflict resolution (or transformation) must include some dispositional level of trust to yield a lasting settlement. As Lindsfold asserts,

...trust, when it exists between conflicting parties, facilitates creative or integrative bargaining and cooperative solutions to the many conflicts that arise between interdependent and interacting parties. Thus, achieving trust is a means to an end as well as an end in itself.¹⁷

Trust also demonstrates its importance to conflict transformation by the fact that betrayed trust is such an important element in the creation and escalation of conflict. As Worchel and Lundgren point out, "if the relationship is not completely destroyed after the [trust betrayal], it is changed forever."¹⁸ Similarly, they note that

¹⁷ Lindsfold, p. 777.

¹⁸ Stephen Worchel and Sharon Lundgren, "The Nature of Conflict and

until that trust is rebuilt into the relationship, the conflict will always be "exceedingly difficult" to resolve.¹⁹

The challenge of developing successful conflict intervention techniques which can rebuild dispositional trust into a damaged relationship is daunting. Trust is certainly at the root of many of the practices which are being used today. All of the problem-solving techniques, with their stress on controlled communication and joint analysis (cooperation), clearly dance around the concept of trust. The pressing question is, how do you build the concept of trust into a framework for conflict resolution or conflict transformation? How should the issue of trust be included in the application of basic human needs theory when designing conflict resolution activities in the context of deep-rooted, ethnic conflicts? In the following section, I will deal with these questions at two levels. First, there is the importance of trust between the conflicting parties and the third party as a foundation for intervention. Second, there is the issue of fostering trust between the parties as a goal for the intervention itself.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

I have had the opportunity to explore the issue of trust in relation to conflict transformation in my own experience in the field of conflict resolution. As a staff member at the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy (IMTD), I have worked over the last few years with Dr. Louise Diamond on a peacebuilding project on the island of Cyprus. IMTD's work in Cyprus provides an excellent case study of how to include trust as part of conflict interventions – looking at trust both between the conflicting parties and the third party, and between the parties themselves.

Building Trust as a Foundation for Intervention

Trust is one of the twelve principles of multi-track diplomacy. As a rule, all initiatives at IMTD must be based on a solid, trust relationship with the individuals and organizations with whom we are working. IMTD interventions are long-term (at least five years) and focus on systemic change, and trust is a prerequisite for a long-term relationship and for a relationship that revolves around such deep,

Conflict Resolution," in Karen Grover Duffy, James W. Grosch and Paul V. Olczak (eds.), *Community Mediation: A Handbook for Practitioners and Researchers* (New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 1991), p. 12.

¹⁹ Worchel and Lundgren, p. 13.

transformative change. Without trust, IMTD could not achieve its objectives.

In the case of Cyprus, IMTD, as an outside, American organization, had to work gradually to earn the trust and respect of the Greek and Turkish Cypriots. It took several years to develop this relationship fully, and we found that there were five factors which contributed to developing this trust: (1) making a longterm commitment; (2) showing up; (3) establishing familiarity; (4) listening; and (5) being perceived as neutral and fair.

As mentioned above, IMTD makes a long-term commitment in all of its initiatives, and this is something we made clear, publicly and frequently, from the earliest stages of our activities in Cyprus. In the past, several conflict resolution professionals have made single-shot or short-term interventions in the Cyprus situation, and many of our participants were aware of (or had participated in) those events, thus our commitment was a new experience for this system.

To make a commitment is one thing; to honor it is another. During the first two years of the project, Dr. Diamond (with various other staff) made six visits to the island in support of this project. This consistent and reliable presence was an important factor in developing trust. One key participant said that he did not really believe that IMTD was "for real" until the sixth visit. Another said it took until the Oxford training²⁰ (two years into the project) before she trusted that this was not a CIA-sponsored activity. Both of these participants were active and critical players straight through the project, from the beginning, which indicates that even as they involved themselves, they were weighing issues of trust deeply.

This consistent presence also built familiarity. As human beings, we fear what we do not know. As we become familiar with someone, or with a process, we relax our resistance and participate more fully. Each time IMTD made a trip to the island, Dr. Diamond offered some sort of public lecture or training event. Because the two communities are physically separated on the island, these training events were at first mono-communal. We would often do one training with Greek Cypriots on one day, and then a similar training with Turkish Cypriots on the next day, although by the end of the second year we did begin some bicomunal trainings in the U.N.

²⁰The "Oxford Training" was, in part, funded by the United States Institute of Peace. The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Institute of Peace.

Buffer Zone between the two communities. Through this process, the Greek and Turkish Cypriots developed a familiarity with IMTD staff, and with each other, which breeds trust in the process.

Our very first activity during this process, however, was listening. When Dr. Diamond traveled to the island in July 1991, she met with many people in both communities and listened to their needs, fears, and concerns about the Cyprus situation in general, and about the role of private citizens in bicomunal peacebuilding in particular. It was this information, combined with feedback and more listening in later visits that shaped the project as it went along. This listening built trust in two ways. First, it assured the participants that the project staff was not there to impose a pre-set process or methodology, but was in an interactive, mutual process with the participants to develop something together. Second, it demonstrated the kind of listening the participants were invited to do with each other—a skill we would focus on specifically at our Oxford training (which will be discussed in more detail below).

Neutrality is also a very important issue in the Cyprus context. As in any protracted social conflict where the slightest word or deed is politicized, there is in Cyprus a tightrope to be walked between what each side interprets as showing favor to the other. We had to be extremely careful with our language and our behavior in order to show respect to each community without alarming the other. Developing a trust relationship, however, went beyond mere impartiality. In fact, the term "neutral" does not capture the essence of the relationship because, as in the automotive sense, it implies "not engaged." In Cyprus, we could only be trusted if we *were* engaged — we had to show that we cared about Cyprus, but that we knew the Cyprus conflict is theirs to resolve, not ours, and that they know best, among them, what a fair and just solution would entail. In other words, we became advocates for a process, champions for citizen diplomats strengthening their role in peacebuilding—but not advocates for any particular outcome or political solution.

Thus the first relationship that the IMTD intervention had to consider was the one between the parties in conflict and IMTD. We spent two years building relationships in both communities — relationships built on trust—because that is the only way we would be in a position to focus on the more traditional aspect of conflict resolution: the relationship between the conflicting parties themselves.

And in one sense this is also a part of the intervention, because by modeling trust relationships we are teaching the importance of the element of trust in general.

Trust as a Component of Conflict Intervention

It is one thing to develop a trust relationship with someone; it is another to attempt to foster the creation of a trust relationship between two different parties – particularly parties engaged in a deep-rooted social conflict. This, however, was precisely the challenge that IMTD faced when designing a conflict intervention strategy for the Cyprus project. The primary form of the Cyprus intervention was training. As mentioned above, this project began with two years of brief training events held on the island, often in single-community settings. The culmination of this first stage of the Cyprus project, however, was a ten-day, residential conflict resolution skills training held in Oxford, England during the summer of 1993. In partnership with the NTL Institute, IMTD brought ten Greek Cypriots and ten Turkish Cypriots to Oxford for a nine-day training.

Before examining the specific issue of trust in this training event, however, we must understand the broader framework on which this training was based. During some of the smaller training events on the island, Dr. Diamond had introduced a framework for understanding basic human needs at the identity- group level, with specific attention to the obstacles to satisfying the needs and the antidotes for overcoming the obstacles. This framework incorporates four basic, group-level human needs and examines behaviorally how unsatisfied needs can perpetuate ethnic conflict. The framework also demonstrates how these groups can learn to change their patterns and begin to climb out of the conflict spiral. Diamond has presented this framework graphically in a chart (see figure 1).

The four needs Diamond focuses on are identity, security, community, and vitality. These are identity-group-level adaptations of some of the needs Maslow includes in his hierarchy of individual needs, namely self-worth, safety and survival, belongingness, and self-actualization.²¹ Since Diamond's focus is on conflict transformation, she has attached to each of these needs a transformative skill set – the focus of attention for developing the antidotes which overcome the

²¹ Abraham Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological Review*, 50 (1943), pp. 370-96.

obstacles to satisfying these needs.

For the security need, the transformative skill set is trusting. The human need for security is violated in many ways, but Diamond's model *focuses* on trusting to overcome these obstacles. Reintroducing trust into the damaged relationship should provide an important spark and ignite the de-escalatory process in a deep-rooted ethnic conflict.

Achieving this spark, however, is a tremendous task. As Smith and Berg note, "how safety is created out of fear is the question at the heart of the paradox of trust."²² This statement is tremendously important. First, it links the issue of trust with the concepts of safety and fear—two elements of the need for security in the first place. Second, it directs attention to the process of transformation. Effecting such a radical change—as from fear to safety—is precisely the kind of transformation Diamond's project on Cyprus is seeking to achieve.

This is revealed in one of the most important theoretical developments represented in Diamond's framework, namely the introduction of the need for vitality. The essence of vitality is growth and transformation. It involves breaking out of the unconscious and damaging states of mind and unresolved wounds which blur our perceptions, confirm our stereotypes, and keep us from rising above our conflicts and realizing our full potential. By linking the vitality need and the security need in this framework, Diamond, as a conflict resolution practitioner, focuses on reestablishing a trust relationship between the conflicting parties. Both trust and transformation are about risk. Trusting the enemy is vital to overcoming security obstacles. It also involves risking great loss, but this element of risk is central to growth and transformation as well. All transformation requires risk, since it means entering new, uncharted territory. The interventions of Diamond and the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy seek to build the skills within the two Cypriot communities which will support them to take these risks and transform the conflict system on Cyprus into one of peace.

Trusting: Training to Address Security Needs

Thus as IMTD launched its conflict intervention, which culminated, in the first stage, with an intensive skills training event in Oxford, England, the important

²² Smith and Berg, p. 110.

element of trust was addressed by training focusing on the need for security. In Cyprus, as in other areas of intractable conflict, the two communities feel profoundly threatened by each other. Each believes that the other side is poised to move against them, militarily or politically, in a way that threatens their very existence. In this atmosphere, even though there has been no significant violence on the island in twenty years, there is great psychological distrust.

The training challenge was to address security issues at several levels: first, to create a social and psychological safe space, where people could let down their defenses and take some risks in new ways of understanding each other and approaching seemingly intractable issues; and second, to offer opportunities for participants to freely explore their communities' needs around security. In other words, we had to provide ways to address both the *content* and the *process* of trusting.

Trust grows from shared commitment, from familiarity, and from respectful listening. We tried to highlight these elements in the training. Throughout the life of the Cyprus project, we have invited people to articulate their motivation so we could, as a group, feel that base of common commitment and shared vision. By developing a core group of trainees and then taking them off-site to a residential setting, we built the element of familiarity. The listening aspect was highlighted through intensive drills in communication skills.

Communication is the prototypic activity for trust building, because it is ultimately about two aspects of relationship that must be in balance for trust to exist—giving and receiving. By examining the communication process closely, one can clearly see—and make choices about—where the resources of the individual are offered freely or withheld. One can determine where one feels safe enough to take a risk and go beyond previous limits, and where one feels the need to withdraw behind known walls.

In training, we focus on both sides of the communication process — the giving, or sharing dimension and the receiving, or listening dimension. Participants quickly learn how they help make things safe or unsafe for one another by their communication behaviors. They experience the process by which they can build a base of safety by taking small, step-by-step risks in exposing or extending themselves. They also learn that they can survive misunderstanding, rebuff, and

even betrayal, and still continue building a sense of trust and safety in the relationship.

Because safety often rests on what is known, trust grows when we can step beyond the familiar and be open and vulnerable until we can find new ways of relating. In the Cyprus case, we focused on patterns of relationship known as the "drama triangle." This pattern, common to protracted social conflicts, and present in Cyprus, involves the victim, the persecutor, and the rescuer. In Cyprus, where the victim/persecutor roles are inter-changeable, and the international community has been the unsuccessful rescuer, the ability to risk transcending these constraining roles and try new forms of relationship is critical. We worked with this triangle, helping people to become aware of their individual and collective attachment to these roles.

CONCLUSION

With a foundation of trust to build on, the twenty Turkish and Greek Cypriots from this Oxford training have continued their relationship over the years that have followed. They have continued to organize bicomunal confidence building initiatives on their own, and they have been the core of IMTD's broader training program in Cyprus since that date. We have now been instrumental in the training and education of over three hundred Greek and Turkish Cypriots in conflict resolution. Drawing strength from their new bicomunal relationships, this core group has persevered through periods of intense negative pressure from political groups and from the media in both communities. They have kept this peacebuilding process going. That is a testament to the power of a dispositional trust relationship in sustaining a conflict transformation process. There is obviously a long way to go in Cyprus before the two communities will trust each other at a community level, but the groundwork has been laid.

We can identify other examples of how this work is building a foundation of communal trust. While the "track one" (i.e., government to government) negotiations have failed to agree on "confidence-building measures," our work has started to make a difference. By fostering the creation of local groups and institutions that are recognized in both communities, we are introducing the element of familiarity which starts the trust-building process. In 1992 we helped to create a Bicomunal Steering Committee to advise us in our work. Today, this

body is fully independent and acting on its own, sponsoring bicomunal activities and training. This group has even secured an office within the UN Buffer Zone where they can do bicomunal conflict resolution work.

Clearly the power of trust is immense. It is a critical part of the peacebuilding process and it can be integrated into conflict interventions, as is evidenced in the above description. When understood at both the situational level and the dispositional level, trust can become a focal point for conflict interventions. Just as trust lives at the heart of our personal, every-day relationships, trust is at the heart of conflict transformation theory and practice.

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