

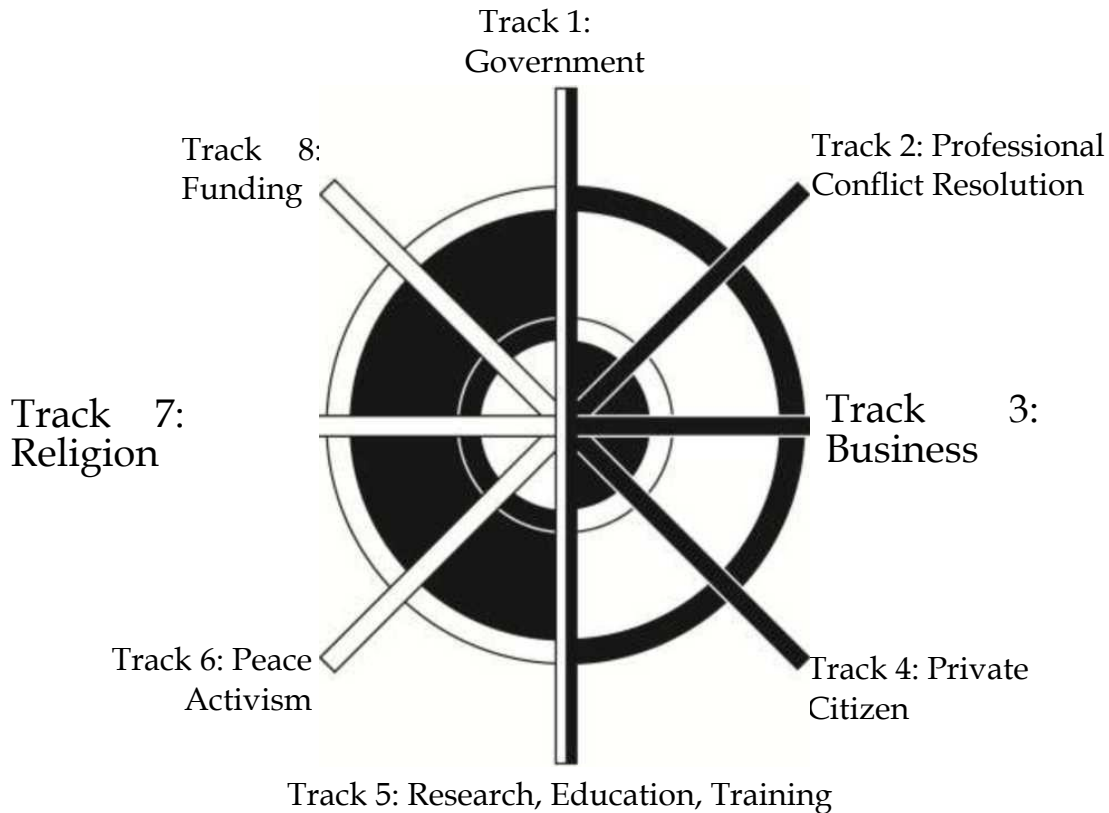
Kristin Clay and Nizar Rammal

Lessons on Partnership from the  
Peace and Development Learning Community

Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy

Occasional Paper 8

December 1997



Track 9 (inner circle)

Media and public opinion

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

The purpose of this paper is to share the effective partnership practices that have been harnessed by three organizations working in the peace field with those in or connected to the relief and development field. These "best practices" should be useful to relief and development professionals who are working in partnership with local communities as they carry out their mission to provide relief and promote sustainable development.

This paper was inspired first by the increasingly broad discussion of the intereffects of conflict, relief, and development. Themes in this discussion include: relief and development operations' effect on conflict; conflict's effect on relief and development operations; peacebuilding's dependence on relief and development; and peace and conflict resolution's contributions to development. In the past, the greatest focus has been on how traditional relief and development practices can exacerbate or even cause conflict. Less attention has been focused on how peace work and expertise can contribute to sustainable development. This paper began, therefore, with the aim to focus on this less explored terrain.

Second, this paper was inspired by a workshop at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia on the subject of conflict and development. Most of the participants were development professionals, a few of them worked with one foot in each field, and fewer yet came exclusively from a peace and conflict resolution nongovernmental organization (NGO). The discussions during this workshop reiterated the broad topics mentioned here and also raised specific questions about how relief and development approaches could be done better.

Many of the questions focused on the relationships and communication between relief and development NGOs and the local communities in which they work. Relationships and communication are primary components of peace and conflict resolution theory and practice. Beginning with the general interest, therefore, in what peace and conflict resolution might contribute to successful and sustainable relief and development, the EMU workshop inspired the specific question this paper examines: what do peace and conflict resolution NGOs know about successful partnership behaviors – i.e., relationship and communication expertise – which might be useful to relief and development professionals as they engage with local communities in pursuit of successful relief and sustainable development?

This paper will begin with an exploration of the themes and issues surrounding the intersection of these two fields, followed by a description of the three organizations that are used as case studies in the paper. We will

then describe in detail some specific initiatives from the case study organizations, including an analysis of partnership issues in that work. Finally, based on the preceding analysis, we will outline seven major lessons about effective partnership.

## BACKGROUND

### Themes in the Peace and Development Discussion

The interdependence between peace and development is currently the focus of research and discussion in both fields. Many regions where relief and development assistance is focused are often areas embroiled in violent conflict. Not only do relief and development personnel come in contact with the conflict, but there is an increasing awareness among development professionals that escalation or de-escalation of a conflict can be affected by relief and development work. Research has demonstrated that development "aid more often worsens conflict (even when it is effective in humanitarian or development terms) rather than helps mitigate it."<sup>1</sup> Development is also vulnerable to conflict. In recent years, cases such as Rwanda – considered a development success until the massacres of 1994 – demonstrate that sound technical and economic development alone cannot ensure sustainability; conflict can destroy years of work in a matter of weeks or months.

Similarly, peacebuilding necessarily involves development. The division and use of resources directly affect the fulfillment or denial of both basic survival needs, such as food and water, and also human social needs, such as acknowledgment and respect. Building peace does not simply imply an absence of war (commonly defined as "negative" peace). Rather, peacebuilding, in terms of "positive" peace,

is generally understood to entail a re-ordering of global priorities so as to promote social justice, economic development, and participatory political processes. This attention to structural issues is motivated both by an understanding that poverty and oppression are a primary cause of violence and war, and by a desire to construct a more humane world future."<sup>2</sup>

Peacebuilding, by this definition of positive peace, accompanies development.

Dividing the themes about the interdependence between peace and

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<sup>1</sup> Mary B. Anderson, *Do No Harm: Supporting Local Capacities for Peace Through Aid* (Cambridge, MA: Local Capacities for Peace Project, 1996), p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

development into two broad groups we see, therefore, that one part of the interdependence is that even successful development can contribute to the worsening of conflicts in progress, and that violent conflict often destroys what development achieves. The other part of this interdependence is that development can contribute to the growth and sustainability of peacebuilding capacities, and peace skills and capacities can contribute to the sustainability of development.

### Questions Raised During the EMU Workshop

During a workshop at Eastern Mennonite University's 1997 Summer Peacebuilding Institute entitled "Conflict and Development," taught by Dr. Vernon Jantzi, many of the questions raised by development professionals in the course revolved around how NGOs might work more in partnership with local communities than has traditionally been the case. During a small group discussion on what makes development sustainable, participants asked: (1) how does an NGO identify the "core" local people in a community to work with on a particular development project; (2) how does an NGO work with the "core" in setting an agenda for work; and (3) how does an NGO build capacity without replacing capacity? These questions deal closely with issues which define partnership relationships, such as cooperation, communication, creative problem-solving, and capacity-building.

### Partnership Defined

Partnership is a particular type of relationship. It is an ongoing, vital process of learning and growing and doing together –with resulting impacts on both the individuals and the relationship. Partnership is about individual human beings, or groups of human beings, helping each other to do together what would be difficult, or impossible, to do alone. Partnership is a relationship which focuses on both the needs and strengths of both partners and how they can best be addressed and supported in order to reach individual and common goals.

### The Peace and Development Learning Community

A learning community is a group of individuals or organizations that is engaged in learning about a particular topic. In such a community, each member is both a teacher and a learner. The peace and development learning community consists of a number of organizations in the two fields that are exploring the interdependence between peace and development.

In this paper, we will look at three organizations in this learning community. We will focus primarily on the work of the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy (IMTD) and *Action Pour Alternative Civil* (APAC) –each of the two coauthors of this paper work at one of these two organizations. We will also draw from the experience of the Mennonite

Central Committee (MCC) in looking at the ways they work in partnership with communities, and the lessons we can draw from their work.

The three organizations, IMTD, APAC, and MCC, were singled out, because each combines peace and development work in their programming. IMTD, a conflict resolution NGO, has been training CARE and World Bank employees since 1996. APAC's initiatives include both a nonviolence/conflict resolution training component and a small-scale development projects component. The MCC is a relief and development agency which has, for over a decade, included conciliation and conflict transformation in their programming. Additionally, each of these NGOs attempts to work in close partnership with the communities they are serving. We will examine these three organizations, therefore, to see what we can learn about effective partnership. We present the lessons we have learned about effective partnership here as a contribution to the peace and development learning community.

We will turn now to look at how each organization brings peace and development into its programming:

IMTD. IMTD is a nonprofit organization founded in 1992 by Ambassador John McDonald and Dr. Louise Diamond. The mission of IMTD is to promote a systems approach to peacebuilding and to facilitate the transformation of deep- rooted social conflict. In 1993, in acknowledgment of the growing awareness of the interdependence between peace and development work, IMTD approached several different nongovernmental relief and development organizations, including Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), in order to explore this topic and the possibilities for cooperation. Through this exploration, IMTD began in 1996 its Peace and Development Initiative, which includes training and consultation for CARE and the World Bank.

The Peace and Development Initiative is part of IMTD's system development activities. IMTD includes in its mission the development of the peacemaking system: training, supporting, and connecting the people and agencies in various fields to help develop a systemic approach to peace.

One method IMTD uses is strengthening the capacity of a particular track in the system to participate fully in peacebuilding. The Peace and Development Initiative aims to strengthen the capacity of Track One (intergovernmental) and Track Four (citizen peacebuilders).

In Track One, IMTD has been working with the World Bank since 1997 offering training, consultation, and debriefing for Senior Bank staff participating in the poverty module of the World Bank's advanced management training. The poverty module is the brainchild of World Bank

President James Wolfensohn and is designed to give Senior Staff practical experience by spending one week living in a village in the developing world. IMTD provides a one-day preparation training for participants about to begin their "poverty week" and debriefing sessions upon their return to Washington. To date, IMTD has worked with approximately seventy-eight Bank staff in this program, and their work is ongoing.

In Track Four, which includes citizen peacebuilders, Public Voluntary Organizations (PVOs), and development programs, IMTD has been working with CARE. One major assumption of Track Four is that "people cannot be at peace when they are hungry or impoverished; peace and development are partners, and neither can exist effectively without the other."<sup>3</sup> IMTD is working to build the capacity of Track Four through training and consultation with CARE staff, internationally and nationally, and at senior- and mid-levels.

IMTD's work with CARE began in 1995 with discussions focused on how we might support them in their mission with our particular expertise in conflict transformation training. Based on these discussions, in 1996 IMTD conducted two week-long training sessions, one for senior CARE officials in East Africa, held in Nairobi, Kenya, and one for national staff in the Rwandan refugee camps located in Ngara, Tanzania.

In Nairobi, participants explored the basic principles of conflict resolution, examined the interactions among relief, development, and conflict resolution activities, and considered specific implications for CARE in its work. In Tanzania, the purpose of the training was to enhance the CARE staff's ability to carry out relief and development work in an environment laden with ethnic tensions.

In 1997, IMTD conducted three training sessions, two specifically for CARE (in Sierra Leone for West African staff and in Guatemala at a global meeting) and one with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The CARE workshops, like the Nairobi one, focused on how conflict resolution could complement and support CARE's work. The Bosnia-Herzegovina training was held for local peacebuilders, OSCE staff, and CARE staff, bridging the fields of peace and development.

APAC. The Lebanese nongovernmental organization, *Action Pour Alternative Civil* (APAC) is a nonprofit organization. It was founded in 1992 by a group of young people, from different backgrounds, yet united by the common sufferings engendered by the fifteen-year Lebanese civil war.

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<sup>3</sup> Louise Diamond and John McDonald, *Multi-Track Diplomacy: A Systems Approach to Peace* (W. Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1996), p. 61.

APAC's mission is to build a society where human rights, broadly defined, are protected and implemented. APAC works toward this mission through both social and economic development.

APAC is a 100% volunteer organization of young people in their twenties and thirties. The organizational structure of APAC is flat: there is no hierarchy. Decision-making in the organization is by consensus, though its membership numbers over fifty people. The following is APAC's definition of the civil society which they work to promote:

It is a non-discriminative society where citizens belong to it as Human Beings in the first place regardless of color, race, religion, sex, .... In this society individual and group freedom are respected and protected and all civil poles interact and communicate in a non-violent way to attain their right of participation and to satisfy their basic needs without conflicting with the needs of the society as a whole.<sup>4</sup>

The objectives of APAC are developing one's potential and positive self image, learning to live in harmony with others, and participating in the development of environment and the building of the future. APAC believes that one of the means to reach sustainable development in Lebanon is to deal with peace issues, rehabilitate the consequences of the war (physical and psychological), disseminate a peace culture, and promote interaction among the various communities, the government, and the emerging civil society. All activities are aimed at contributing to creating a civil trend among youth that would be the nucleus for development and change.

Since its inception, APAC has organized numerous events including trainings, seminars, and volunteer development camps for youth in various parts of Lebanon. This work entails developing the youths' sense of self, their acceptance of others and constructive interaction with others, and their skills to create and implement small-scale development projects, such as building playgrounds and planting trees.

MCC. The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) was founded as a relief and development organization in 1920 in response to a hunger crisis among Ukrainian Mennonites. A "Central Committee" was formed to organize relief to be sent from North American Mennonites to the Ukraine with the idea that following the crisis the Committee would be dissolved. It was felt, however, that the Committee could continue to be of use and it should be maintained.

In 1978 the Mennonite Conciliation Service was established to

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<sup>4</sup> APAC, Organizational Brochure p. 2.



promote work in the area of conflict resolution and mediation, primarily in North America. In the 1980s the need and linkages between relief, development, and peacemaking in international settings became increasingly apparent. Assignments were formulated with explicit conciliation components, and in 1990, the International Conciliation Service was formed. (ICS/MCC Overview 1988-1993) The ICS works closely with the MCC.

Each of these organizations has integrated peace and development into its programming in its own way. IMTD is a peace and conflict organization offering training to relief and development professionals. APAC has a joint peace and development mission. MCC is a relief and development organization which increasingly includes conflict transformation in their programming. Each organization, therefore, brings a unique perspective to the peace and development learning community.

## PARTNERSHIP DESCRIBED: IMTD IN CYPRUS

### Cyprus Context

Independence was granted to Cyprus by the British in 1960. At that time, Greece, Turkey, and England crafted a complicated Constitution that attempted to institutionalize power sharing between the two main communities on the island: Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. The Greek Cypriots make up 80% of the total population. This attempt was unsuccessful, however, and civil war broke out between the two communities in 1963. United Nations Peacekeeping troops arrived on the island in 1964, and are still there today.

Between 1963 and 1974 there were violent acts precipitated by both communities, although this period represents a particularly difficult one for the Turkish Cypriots. Their community withdrew from the Governmental structure, and the Turkish-Cypriot population continued to band together in enclaves to protect themselves.

In 1974 the Greek military junta in Athens launched a coup attempt against the Greek-Cypriot President of Cyprus. Turkey, fearing that such an attempt would lead to Greek annexation of Cyprus, intervened militarily, sending 30,000 troops to the island. A major war ensued as the Turkish and Turkish-Cypriot forces gained control of the northern portion of Cyprus. More than two hundred thousand Greek Cypriots fled their homes in the northern part of the island to the south.

Since that time, the island has been effectively divided, with UN troops monitoring the "green line" between the two communities. There is no telephone contact or mail contact, and crossing to the other side is only

permitted in a few circumstances. The United Nations has been sponsoring negotiations at the governmental level since 1974, with very little progress.

### Project Development

The Cyprus project began even before IMTD was created. In 1990, Dr. Louise Diamond met a Greek-Cypriot woman at the World Conference of Peace Institutes, held in Des Moines, Iowa. The woman asked Diamond to visit Cyprus, and Diamond agreed. Diamond, originally working as a consultant to NTL Institute and from 1992 on representing IMTD, made eight trips to the island in 1991 and 1992 to develop a potential project in Cyprus. These trips were spent mostly in building a network of people in both the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities who were interested in bicomunal interaction, conflict resolution, and peace.

On each visit to the island, Diamond expanded her contact to more and more people, and she also made public presentations, lectures, and workshops in both communities. For example, on her second trip, Diamond gave a lecture to the approximately seventy-five Turkish-Cypriots on the Beyond Win/Win model. On another trip, Diamond held a Seder for members of both the Christian Greek-Cypriot community and the Muslim Turkish-Cypriot community. Additionally, she toured the island with key participants, learning individual perspectives on the island's history, and developing strong individual relationships. During these trips, a point person emerged in the North and in the South who handled most of the invitations and arrangements for the various events.

By 1992, a key group of interested people on each side of the island had formed, and Diamond (now on behalf of IMTD) began to offer introductory training events. These trainings were at first done separately in each community, although the curricula were the same for each group. In the fall of 1992, Diamond established a Bicomunal Steering Committee, composed of four people from each community, to advise IMTD on the Cyprus project and to serve as project coordinators on the island. The committee was self-selected, made up of the people who had the most interest in the work. There was also an attempt to have the committee represent as broad a political spectrum as possible, in both communities.

This group advised IMTD on all facets of project development. They reviewed drafts of project proposals, and most proposals were developed based on conversations with members of the Steering Committee. Most of IMTD's needs assessment for the Cyprus project was developed using information from this group. The Steering Committee was instrumental in the development and implementation of IMTD's first major training in the summer of 1993.

Following this training, named the "Oxford Training," for the location of the event in Oxford, England, the Steering Committee continued to assist IMTD in developing the project. They were also consulted by other groups on the island, most notably the Cyprus Fulbright Commission. The Fulbright Commission is one of a very few organizations on the island that can sponsor bicomunal activities. They were developing a "Request for Proposals" (RFP) for a bicomunal conflict resolution program, and they consulted the Steering Committee to get advice on what was needed.

That RFP was released in early 1994 and IMTD and National Training Laboratories (NTL) combined forces with the Conflict Management Group (CMG) in Cambridge, Massachusetts to form the Cyprus Consortium in order to respond to the RFP. Once again, the Consortium relied heavily on members of the Steering Committee to review and suggest changes to the Consortium's proposal. The Consortium received the contract and conducted eight training events in the summer of 1994. The following year the Consortium received another contract, this time covering six more events over three years.

#### Project Implementation

Once the work became a fully-funded, multi-year endeavor in Cyprus, the relationship with the Steering Committee developed further. As part of the budget submitted for the contract, the Cyprus Consortium included payment to the Steering Committee for its consultation services throughout the life of the project. Money was split evenly between the two communities, as participation in the Committee was always on a one-to-one ratio. Money for the Steering Committee was included in both contracts that the Consortium was awarded.

In addition, on the second contract the Consortium included payment for other, more specific advisory groups to the project. For that project there was money for the Steering Committee, but also money for an Education Resource Group and an Evaluation Team. The Education Resource Group was a specific subset of people the Consortium had been working with (different from the Steering Committee) who work in the field of education. They provided advice on the development of two Education projects, one with educators, and one with teenagers. The Evaluation team has been assisting Consortium staff in developing instruments for evaluation of the impact of the program.

One important component of the training program in Cyprus has been the Training of Trainers Program. In 1994, 1995, and 1997 the Consortium put on training programs for Greek and Turkish Cypriots on training design and delivery and facilitation skills. These trainers are now implementing training programs and facilitating dialogue sessions both

within and between the two communities.

The first Training of Trainers event took place in August 1994, but even before that event, some of those who were scheduled to participate in the program attended other Consortium training events as "apprentice" trainers. Following the Advanced Training of Trainers program that was run in October 1995, all Consortium training events since that date have included one Greek Cypriot and one Turkish Cypriot as full members of the training team. In addition to including Cypriots in our Cyprus training events, the Consortium has made an effort to give these trainers experiences in other contexts as well. Several Cypriots were brought to Israel and Palestine to assist IMTD with a project there, and another was brought to Turkey to assist in a training for educators in the Middle East involved with conflict resolution.

In addition to training, an important component of IMTD's work in Cyprus has been in the development of ongoing bicomunal conflict resolution projects on the island. This has been predominantly the work of the Greek and Turkish Cypriots themselves, although the Consortium has been advising and supporting these peacebuilders in their work. Following the Oxford training in 1993, a few modest bicomunal projects were developed, but due to political constraints, they grew at a slow pace. Following the wave of training in 1994, these projects began to take off. Following the Advanced Training of Trainers program in 1995, they reached a new level. By October 1996 there were at least ten ongoing, regularly-meeting bicomunal projects being undertaken on the island.

The Consortium supported the Greek and Turkish Cypriots as much as possible as they developed these projects. The Consortium worked very closely with a Fulbright conflict resolution scholar who was living in Cyprus and working with these projects on a daily basis.

Analysis of IMTD's Partnership with the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots

Looking at IMTD's work with the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot communities, we can note a number of specific behaviors which contributed to a successful and ongoing partnership.

First, IMTD responded to an *invitation*, to enter the Cyprus system. This is in line with IMTD's first founding principle: "We do not impose ourselves on a system but go only where there is an open door and some form of request for our participation."<sup>5</sup> By using invitation, both parties

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<sup>5</sup> James Notter and Louise Diamond, "Building Peace and Transforming Conflict: Multi-Track Diplomacy in Practice," Occasional Paper #7 (Washington, DC: Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy, 1996), p. 10.

have full choice in creating the partnership and begin the relationship freely and with good will. It is much more effective to start a relationship from a place of mutual choice and respect than to try to build in these components at a later date.

Second, IMTD was *present* with the community. The Institute spent fifteen months engaging in dialogues, offering presentations, offering conflict transformation trainings, having one-on-one conversations, and even sharing in holiday meals. Presence, through sheer familiarity, promotes trust and builds relationship. The Greek and Turkish Cypriots had time to learn about IMTD, and about the individuals who work at IMTD. In Cyprus, it was only on the eighth visit that one Turkish-Cypriot businessman said to Diamond that he then believed IMTD had no hidden agenda on Cyprus.

Third, during the time and through the activities described above, IMTD *listened* to individual and group perceptions of the needs, interests, positions, culture, and actors in the Cyprus situation. Through listening in initial meetings and dialogues, IMTD learned about the system on Cyprus, analyzed the conflict-habituated nature of the system, and assessed the possible ways IMTD might support the communities living there. Listening, like presence, also promoted trust. IMTD continued listening throughout the project by including evaluation in their program, focusing both on particular events and on the overall progress of the project.

Fourth, IMTD *depended* on members of the communities to organize events. The key people who emerged in the North and the South took responsibility for planning events and meetings, in consultation with IMTD. This balanced the community's dependence on IMTD for skills training. The structure of the relationship allowed for and supported interdependence. Each partner was both contributing and receiving from the other. This differs greatly from the common donor/beneficiary structure which describes part of the relationship but does not honor either the contributions of the "beneficiary" or the gains of the "donor."

Fifth, IMTD instituted *on-the-job capacity training* by including Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot apprentice trainers in their events. The initial trainings were given solely by IMTD staff. In 1994 IMTD began using apprentice trainers. In 1995, IMTD began including one Greek Cypriot and one Turkish Cypriot trainer on the training team for each event. Through on-the-job capacity training IMTD institutionalized the transfer of capacity and responsibility to their partner. The transfer rather than replacement of capacity and responsibility is crucial to the sustainability of peace and development projects.

Sixth, IMTD *grew* in the partnership relationship. The two most

prominent examples of this are: (1) the focus of IMTD's work shifted from training skills to project management skills as the needs and abilities of the Greek- and Turkish- Cypriot community changed and grew, and (2) Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots shifted from participants, to apprentice trainers, and finally to full trainers working with IMTD internationally. IMTD, therefore, demonstrated flexibility in its role in relation to its partner. This growth benefited both the Cyprus community and IMTD. Growth, individually and together, is key to the longterm viability and productivity of any relationship.

### **PARTNERSHIP DESCRIBED: APAC AND LEBANESE YOUTH**

One of APAC's projects, begun in 1997 and still ongoing, is the Civil Development and Awareness Project (CDAP). It is aimed at promoting nonviolence, cooperation, peaceful conflict resolution, active learning, and reconciliation in the hope of replacing the "culture of war" in Lebanon. It focuses on enhancing positive attitudes and behaviors which promote peace and human rights values. The purpose of CDAP is to create a "sustainable peace." CDAP is carried out by merging peace education and development into one initiative.

The CDAP project is taking place in the Chouf mountains in a region that has been chosen because of the particularly cruel events it witnessed during the war, the massive scale of migration and evacuation that ensued, the destruction of its infrastructure, and the deep backlashes of the war its inhabitants still suffer. Reconstruction of this region, socially, economically, and physically, is still to come. APAC's partners in this project are youth, ages 17-30, from diverse religious groups, socio-economic classes, and regions of Lebanon. Some of the youth are attending high school or university, and some are out of school.

The short and middle term objectives of the CDAP are to endow the participants with consciousness of themselves as individuals, understanding of the meaning of conflict and the means to deal with it peacefully, and knowledge of nonviolence (philosophy and life style). Additionally, it is important to this project that participants learn to be part of a group (which involves democracy, equality, participation, cooperation, and justice), and that they gain awareness about the common issues that concern all individuals and peoples regardless of race, religion, and color. Finally, CDAP wants to raise awareness about youth's role in the prevention of conflicts (e.g., preventing another Lebanese war) and to engage the youth in rehabilitating the damages of war. In addition, this entails building youth's capacity to coordinate with the official local institutions.

In the long-term, CDAP expects the youth to become organized

around developing themselves individually and developing their society socially and economically – working within the institutions of civil society.

The strategy for meeting those objectives was elaborated according to the needs of the inhabitants of the region. These needs are divided into three broad categories: individual, group, and social needs. The strategy APAC developed focuses on the youth's individual and social needs.

The strategy can be subdivided as follows:

- Motivate (to engage in development actions, both individual and social)
- Train (two target groups: the animators and the participants)
- Organize (organize the youth into a cohesive and coordinated group of action, capable of taking coherent stands and able to work at the realization of its objectives)
- Engage (through building a common positive background, which leads to engagement, responsibility and accountability)
- Implement: This is the final stage of each single phase of the strategy. As the volunteers reach the end of each phase, they will be able to use the concepts and skills they acquired and translate them into action.

The project plan for CDAP has two parts which take place over the course of fourteen months. The first part of the strategy is an ongoing process to build the capacity of APAC trainers and animators.<sup>6</sup> To this effect, APAC asked for the cooperation of specialists in psychology, sociology, and education to teach interactive learning techniques to APAC members who are the trainers and animators responsible for the implementation of part two of the CDAP. The training involved workshops on training techniques and active methods in social animation, psychological characteristics of youth, dealing with conflict (concepts and techniques), nonviolent philosophy and strategy of action, peace concepts and values, communication skills, theater skills and techniques, and evaluation skills. This part of CDAP is independent yet complements the second part.

The second part builds the capacity of forty youth. This part is divided into three phases. In the first phase of this part, a study of the area and target group was conducted by animators through meetings and local visits, in order to discover the real needs of the local community and its eventual willingness to satisfy them. In this study phase, animators and

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<sup>6</sup> "Animator" comes from the French term *Animatuer*, commonly used in Lebanon, and refers to someone who organizes, facilitates, and motivates groups.

youth set the objectives for the CDAP activities (according to the expressed needs), determined the existing resources (human and financial), determined the means and ways to reach the needs, and organized various groups of action, having clearly defined objectives. This process was finished by establishing the functioning norms of the groups. The trainers and youth reached these goals through sessions of brainstorming and group discussion.

In the second phase, coordinators and youth then proceeded to: establish a plan of action and a project schedule; distribute tasks; gather the needed requirements; and prepare the project budget. Following this, the youth were subdivided into various working groups according to the stated needs and fields of interest. Animators and special trainers provided the youth with the proper technical training to implement the mentioned activities. Training workshops were held to this effect, according to each group's objective.

In the third phase, the groups began implementing the activities that they had chosen, planned, and been trained to carry out. Activities were held on the precondition that the youth be the sole participants and executors, supported by APAC's animators (in terms of human interaction, coordination, and technical advice). The three phases of prong two were carried out over fourteen months.

APAC's role was and continues to be organizing and implementing political and social awareness seminars. This supports the group's adoption of positive attitudes in regard to development, as well as political and social change. This continuing support strengthens the youth's ability to follow-through on the activities begun through the CDAP.

#### Analysis of APAC's Partnership with Lebanese Youth

Looking at APAC's work with Lebanese Youth, we can note a number of specific behaviors which contributed to a successful and ongoing partnership relationship.

First, APAC "hones its own capacity." The APAC trainers who will work with the youth undergo intensive "training of trainers" courses with professionals from the fields of psychology, nonviolence, and conflict resolution in preparation for starting a new project. This acknowledges that there are needs and strengths on both sides of any partnership: it is not only the youth who need capacity building, but the NGO as well. Development partnerships are not about the "haves" giving to the "have nots" but about the needs and strengths of both partners and how they can best be addressed and supported. APAC increases its own capacity in order to better support its partner.



Second, like IMTD, APAC was both "present" with the community and "listened" to their needs and strengths. APAC spent three contiguous months meeting with youth and holding dialogues. This allowed the two potential partners to get to know each other, build trust, and witness as well as hear each other's needs and abilities. As APAC learned what issues were of concern to the community, it also learned that the community was willing to make change.

Third, APAC "asked" how willing the community was to satisfy its own needs. APAC did not just offer what it could give, but asked what the community was willing to offer. This reflects a desire on APAC's part to work interdependently with the community rather than bearing the burden of change by itself. APAC's question about the willingness of the community to fulfill its own needs provides a foundation on which to construct an interdependent partnership relationship.

Fourth, APAC "shared equal functions" with their partners. In APAC's approach to partnership, the members assume essentially the same roles at the beginning of the work, even though the resources they bring to the work at the start are very different from each other. Starting during the needs assessment, APAC already works jointly with the community it has entered to set the objectives and begin planning a strategy to achieve them. This prevents APAC as an NGO outside the community from imposing its own agenda on the community. From day one, APAC and the youth of the Chouf mountains are partnering as two groups of human beings with varied and rich resources brought jointly to bear on a common objective. This not only ensures that the work will address the needs of the community, it also starts to empower the community and build their capacity to help themselves – a key factor in promoting sustainability.

APAC continues to work with its partner in this manner as the project progresses. Task distribution, scheduling, budget preparation, and recruitment are all handled jointly, with the youth taking the lead and APAC providing skills training and consultation. This ensures full ownership by the community of the projects they chose with APAC to carry out. The strategy of "assuming equal functions" is the framework of interdependence which APAC builds with its partner.

Fifth, APAC "builds capacity on the job." This approach blends capacity building and project implementation. The youth are trained "on the job." This puts them in a more powerful position than if the older and more experienced members of APAC showed them how to do the work first, but kept the crucial responsibilities such as budgeting for themselves until APAC decided the youth were ready. The trust building, empowerment, and capacity-building achieved in giving responsibility for

budget preparation to participants is tremendous. This approach further supports the relationship structure based on equal roles, even while acknowledging different resources.

Sixth, APAC "exits from day one." The youth receive advice on project implementation from APAC, but the NGO does not engage in implementation itself. The local volunteers implement the projects they developed on their own, supported by APAC only by advice. The youth are, from the beginning, made as little dependent on APAC as possible so that APAC in no way replaces the capacities within the community or becomes necessary to the community. At the end of the project, APAC leaves the youth to continue carrying out the projects they are trained and already experienced to handle.

This approach is different from most where the "expert" starts out with all the responsibility and gives it out bit by bit to the "learner," perhaps even completing the project before handing over the responsibility for it. APAC's approach starts by giving the partner primary responsibility from day one, and then phases itself out even before the start of the youth's project implementation.

### **ADVICE FROM MCC**

Finally, the following insights into this subject were offered by Stephen Gonsalvos in the discussion at EMU on what makes development sustainable. Mr. Gonsalvos works for MCC Calcutta. MCC Calcutta has trained all of their staff in conflict transformation, from the drivers to the directors. Additionally, they have implemented structures within their office for dealing with internal conflicts, for example, "venting" sessions where staff members can air concerns and find constructive ways to address them. He proposed the importance of putting one's own house in order, before trying to aid another.

Regarding partner interaction, he emphasized the importance of accountability, communication, and transparency with money. He recommended instituting feedback mechanisms with the community such as journaling, oral or written, and holding periodic open dialogues. He advocated giving time and priority to consistency in one's work so that the internal structure of relationships in the organization matches the structure of relationships with the outside community.

### **LESSONS LEARNED**

(1) *Put your own house in order.* An NGO seeking to begin a partner relationship should, at the same time, conduct an analysis of its own needs and strengths and develop strategies to build its own capacity, maintain

consistency between what it is and what it offers, and sustain itself as a healthy system. Tools for this include capacity training for staff (including the trainers), and periodic staff retreats or problem-solving sessions.

(2) *Set a positive atmosphere at the beginning of the relationship.*<sup>7</sup> The relationship should be started freely, with good will, mutual respect, opportunity for trust, and openness to learning. Tools for setting a good atmosphere include responding to invitations and bringing "gifts" which could be training demonstrations, presentations, written materials, and oral stories. Additionally, tools such as meetings and dialogues in which both the NGO and the community have the time and the opportunity to express themselves and to listen to each other set a positive atmosphere. Out of such activities compatible parties may emerge who have a willingness to create change and a common vision.

(3) *Be present with the potential partner community.* Time in each other's presence is a crucial element to building trust which in turn is a crucial element to building a relationship. Presence communicates reliability, commitment, interest, and caring. Building on the initial atmosphere, presence builds a strong foundation for a successful partnership.

Tools for this include frequent trips (for international NGOs) or visits (for local NGOs). These trips and visits should also include presentations and miniworkshops which show what the NGO is about, and meetings which elicit information about the community. These meetings can be discussions, dialogues, or interview sessions. Additionally, casual social events are a key tool for achieving the benefits of presence. Sharing meals, going on tours of the countryside, sharing spiritual events, and engaging in one-on-one conversations are activities that can promote familiarity, trust, and relationship.

(4) *Listen to your partner.* As basic as this sounds, it is a crucial element which often is not given enough attention, or included structurally in the partnership. Listening honestly and frequently is the only way to learn the true needs and strengths of a partner. Listening means asking questions instead of making assumptions.

Conflict analysis is a key tool which IMTD uses in order to assess the actors, interests, needs, and goals of a community. Conflict analysis is a structured way to "listen" to the partner. Again, dialogues and discussions are also useful tools for listening. Another tool is Action Research. According to Don Klein, co-editor of *Community Research*, a key component of Action Research is to build knowledge by engaging the members of the setting in framing the purpose and nature of the work, and in interpreting the findings.<sup>8</sup>

The key tool within these methods is the question. To paraphrase a

biblical example, when Jesus saw a blind man sitting by the side of the road who

<sup>7</sup> See Dudley Weeks, *The Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Resolution*, (Los Angeles, CA: Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc., 1992), for more on "setting the atmosphere."

<sup>8</sup> Telephone conversation, November 4, 1997.

was crying "help me!" his response was first to ask the question, "What do you want of me?" before deciding how to help him.

(5) *Structure the relationship to support interdependence.* Partnerships structured as donor/beneficiary describes one part of a partnership relationship but does not honor the contribution of the beneficiary nor the gains of the donor. Likewise an expert/learner structure does not honor the knowledge held by each partner. A partnership which reflects interdependence rather than dependence (in terms of power, authority, responsibility, and resources) honors the contributions and knowledge of all partners and shares the burden and empowerment of change. This strengthens the trust and respect in the relationship as well as makes the best use of everyone's talents in achieving the final aim of the partnership.

Tools for interdependence include: capacity-building training from day one for all partners; asking for help from the non-NGO partner; joint decisionmaking, agenda planning, and task distribution; and shared control of key power areas such as financial information and relationships with funders. Additionally, close attention must be given to the roles and functions of each partner, ensuring that equal or heavier responsibility is assigned to the community. Apprenticing, or even placing the less able or knowledgeable person in the leadership position, with the more able or knowledgeable person consulting to him or her, are two other useful tools.

(6) *Make building and transferring capacity a priority.* The NGO should have an exit strategy for each section of the partnership in place from day one. The strategy and structure of the work should include on-the-job training and experience for community members so that they are able to take over at the earliest possible date. Existing capacity should be acknowledged and used, new capacity should be built, and capacity should be transferred at the earliest point possible. The transfer of capacity should be of equal or higher priority than implementing the project, since the capacity will last well beyond the time frame of any particular project.

This statement is counter to the action-oriented values in American culture but is an essential element to sustainability. Of course, decisions about priorities are tied to the particular circumstances surrounding a given project, and long-term capacity-building and short-term products are

ideally integrated into a single initiative. As a general rule, however, long-term change requires a foundation in intangible elements such as capacity-building, which affect societal structures and institutions. Upon such a foundation, tangible, product-oriented projects which build dams or plant trees are better utilized and maintained. If the goal of a project is sustainability, therefore, the transfer of capacity should be of equal or higher priority than implementing the project.

In order to avoid the trap of substituting local capacity with NGO capacity, the NGO and the local community can jointly assign tasks to joint working pairs or groups. Community members should participate in these working groups at the beginning of an initiative, whether they initially have the capacity or not. Through participation, coupled with training, the community partner can more quickly take on responsibilities. Invest in capacity training at the beginning so that in the mid- and long-term the community is able and ready to handle any aspect of the project. This models cooperative behavior and assures sustainability.

Other options for building and transferring, rather than replacing, capacity are to look for key people to take responsibility for various tasks such as arranging meetings and workshops and to ask willing and interested members of a community to join an Advisory Committee which represents the community. Finally, make implementation of the project primarily the responsibility of the community, not the NGO.

(7) *Grow in the work.* Any relationship changes with time, and so do needs and abilities. Constant reassessment of focus, roles, responsibilities, and functions is needed to maintain effectiveness. Tools for growth include evaluation, check-ins, flexibility, and listening.

## CONCLUSION

We have drawn the above seven lessons from the experience of IMTD, APAC, and MCC, regarding the ways they work in partnership with communities. Each organization is part of a growing learning community on peace and development. Each takes a unique approach to the link between peace and development in their programs, and each seeks to understand the interdependence between the two fields more fully. This paper harnesses some of the separate learnings of each organization about partnership, and forms them into a common understanding of effective partnership concepts and behaviors which can be used by relief and development NGOs when they work with local communities.

In looking back at the "Conflict and Development" workshop at Eastern Mennonite University's Summer Peacebuilding Institute, we see that the lessons learned offer at least initial answers to the questions posed

by the participants.

(1) Who are the "core" local people who should be involved in a particular development project? The "core" people will vary from project to project, but, in any case, the core can only be discovered through being present and through listening – over time. They will be people who have a will to make change, and who accept the NGOs invitation to collaborate on a plan for change.

(2) How does an NGO work with the "core" in setting an agenda for work? By structuring the relationship to support interdependence, from the initial meetings through the end of the project.

(3) How does an NGO build capacity without replacing capacity? Again, by working with an interdependent structure, and by making the transfer of capacity and responsibility a priority: on a par with, or even ahead of, implementation of the project itself.

Furthermore, the entire partnership between the NGO and the local community depends both on the consistency of the NGO's internal structure and methods with its external work in the community, and also on each partner's ability to grow in the relationship as the context changes. Finally, the tools discussed under the lessons learned give ideas for practical means of implementing the answers offered for these questions.

These lessons on partnership with communities represent one small collection of practical knowledge and tools the peace and conflict resolution field can use in making development sustainable. As research on the interdependence between peace and development continues, we hope that the observations contained in this paper will help promote further inquiry and discussion on this topic. In the long term, we hope such exploration will serve to support the effectiveness and sustainability of relief and development work.