DEVELOPMENT AND PEACEBUILDING: RELATIONSHIPS AND PROCESSES

Peacebuilding is a relatively new label put on an old idea. It refers to the long-term project of building peaceful, stable communities and societies. Peacebuilding and development are therefore very closely linked. Both have the same goal, which is to help rebuild or repair societies that are hurting, physically, economically, and socially. The difference that peacebuilding brings is an emphasis on *relationships* and the *process* of interaction that occurs between NGO workers and their partners as they develop and implement peacebuilding, development and reconciliation programmes.

These two central themes, (1) that peacebuilding is *relationship-centred* and, (2) a *participatory process,* are woven together throughout this manual. Rather than just looking at the specific ways to improve food production or build new houses, peacebuilding emphasises a focus on relationships with partners and programme recipients as an integral part of establishing lasting peace in violence-prone areas. Understanding peacebuilding in this way allows us to take a new lens to development projects and programming (Lederach, 1997, 2001).

Putting *relationships* at the centre of relief, development, conflict prevention, reconstruction and reconciliation work is critical in order to achieve lasting social change. By focusing on people and healthy relationships, or what Catholic Social Teaching calls "right relationships," we engage in a process that respects the abilities and talents each person brings, builds trust amongst staff and partners, and helps fortify and sustain the agents of social change and justice – people.

The second theme of this manual is that both peacebuilding and training for peacebuilding need to be a *participatory process.* To fully respect those we are working with, whether they are the participants in our training session or the partners we work with in our programming, we need to engage with them, and identify the goals and the means to achieve those goals together. A participatory process naturally flows from a relationship-centred process.

This is not to say that trainers and workers cannot or should not bring new ideas and expertise to the table in training or during programming discussions. Indeed, to be fully present in relationships we need to bring our knowledge and talents into the interaction as well as eliciting and building on the knowledge and talents of those around us. However, it does require that we respect and listen to those around us.

Frequently people think of peace and worry that *justice* will be forgotten. People worry that because peace often involves compromise, those who have the fewest resources and least political power will have to compromise the most. The tensions between peace and justice are explored further in Challenges of Reconciliation. However, the vision of peace that this manual is built on is tied to a vision of social justice. For peace to last, issues of injustice must be addressed.

BEING AN EFFECTIVE PEACEBUILDER

Work in peacebuilding and reconciliation requires perseverance and commitment. Often particular characteristics make people more effective at building relationships and implementing sustainable social change processes to help create a just peace. To develop this manual, an international group of expert trainers in peacebuilding and reconciliation were brought together. Key qualities they identified for effective peacebuilders were adaptability, non-defensiveness, empathy, creativity, the ability to model good conflict resolution skills and relationship behaviour, and being comfortable with ambiguity.

- **Adaptability** means that you are prepared to change directions during a training and delve into issues that participants are most concerned with rather than strictly following your own pre-planned workshop agenda.
- **Non-defensiveness** refers to being able to hear people's critical comments without defending yourself and your actions as soon as the criticism is expressed. It is difficult to be non-defensive because our first reaction is to protect ourselves. However, when we are defensive, people react by either being more forceful about their opinion or refusing to contribute any more comments, which undermines the open atmosphere of a training.
- **Empathy** involves relating to the emotions that an individual expresses, and then translating these emotions back to the individual and the larger group. Empathy means you are able to figuratively put yourself in the other person's situation or "shoes" and understand what they are experiencing. An important part of being an effective peacebuilder is understanding what people are going through, and showing you understand their emotions and experiences.
- **Creativity** is important for envisioning the future and finding new ways to get there. Imagination is an important part of creativity and peacebuilders should encourage it, or at least not be afraid of it. Building a just peace will require everyone's creativity!
- **Modelling good conflict resolution skills and relationship behaviour** is essential for an effective peacebuilder. We do not teach just by what we say, we also teach by what we do. If our behaviour contradicts the message we are trying to convey we undermine our message and lose the respect of those with whom we work.
- **Being comfortable with ambiguity** means that you do not have to know exactly what direction the group and your activities are headed at each moment. This is an important dimension for peacebuilders because peace is a very long-term goal, and many times we are not sure that our activities will get us there directly. Often it isn't the most obvious, direct route and programme activities that will bring us to a just peace, but rather the more winding route that involves spending time with partners and other people, and building relationships that provide the foundations for peacebuilding. Being comfortable with ambiguity allows us to follow the more winding route, although we should still keep an eye on the final goal.

"Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ."
(1 Peter 5:14)

Definitions of some terms

Conflict Management

Any efforts made to contain violent conflict, reduce the levels of violence, or engage parties in a process to settle the conflict.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution addresses and resolves the deep-rooted sources of conflict. It often uses a problem solving methodology in order to identify options for addressing the sources of conflict. A newer, related term is conflict transformation.

Conflict Transformation

Conflict transformation goes beyond the concept of conflict resolution in that it requires a transformation of the parties, their relationships to each other, and the structural elements that underlie the conflict. These relationships and social structures are often unjust and unequal, and transforming conflict seeks to alter these structures in ways that build a more just society. It is a term that implies a long-term perspective on conflict and its transformation.

Identity Conflict

Identity conflict involves self- or other-defined groups whose identity is based upon shared racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, or kinship characteristics.

Intra-national Conflict

Many of today's conflicts are internal or civil conflicts that take place within a particular state (e.g., Burundi in the 1990s, South Africa before the end of apartheid, Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, or El Salvador). Intra-national conflicts are distinct from international conflict that takes place between two or more states (e.g., World War II or between Britain and Argentina over the Malvinas/Falkland Islands).

Parties

Parties to a conflict are the groups or individuals involved in a conflict. There are primary parties (those who are directly involved in the conflict) and secondary parties (those who are indirectly involved in the conflict or have a stake in the outcome of the conflict). A primary party to the conflict would include the various groups fighting over power or resources, while secondary parties might include those benefiting from war (e.g., those plundering resources or shipping arms into a country) or individuals or groups supporting the primary parties in some way (e.g., with money or soldiers). Both primary and secondary parties are stakeholders (those who have an interest in the outcome of the conflict). Third parties are those individuals that assist the primary parties in resolving the conflict, also called intermediaries or intervenors. These individuals, or sometimes groups, may be considered "neutral" by all parties, or they may be partial but are accepted by and have legitimacy with all the parties involved in the conflict.

Peace Enforcement

The use of armed force by a third party military contingent to prevent or bring an end to armed hostilities in a conflict situation.

Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding represents a way to achieve societal reconciliation. It is important to note that peacebuilding is a very widely used term, one that differs according to who uses the term and in what context it is used.

As used in this manual, it is a people-centred, relationship-building, and participatory process. Peacebuilding occurs either before violent conflict erupts (a preventative measure), or after violent conflict ends (an effort to rebuild a more peaceful society). Peacebuilding may take the form of activities designed to increase tolerance and promote coexistence, or activities may address structural sources of injustice or conflict. Peacebuilding overlaps with what *Working for Reconciliation* defines as reconciliation activities.

Peacekeeping

Peacekeeping is normally carried out by a third party military force and is designed to separate the armed forces in a conflict and maintain any negotiated or proclaimed cease-fire. Peacekeeping missions are often under the auspices of the United Nations (UN), or regional organisations such as NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) or ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States). Missions may include provisions to monitor, police, or otherwise support humanitarian intervention. Examples of UN peacekeeping missions include Cyprus and Cambodia. NATO has a peacekeeping operation in Bosnia and ECOWAS supported the ECOMOG peacekeeping operation in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Peacemaking

Any activities designed to move towards a settlement of armed conflict, usually at the official diplomatic level. This includes peace agreement negotiations such as the Arusha Process to end Burundi's civil conflict or the Sant' Egidio mediated peace agreement in Mozambique.

Violent Conflict Prevention

Any actions taken, procedures put in place, or policies proposed that are designed to prevent either states or groups within the state from using armed force or other forms of violence or coercion to settle disputes.

CHALLENGES OF RECONCILIATION

Basic Concepts and Content

What is Reconciliation?
Religious Perspectives on Reconciliation
Dilemmas of Reconciliation
Sustaining Reconciliation Work

We can identify three elements that are important for opening up spaces for reconciliation which can be brought into discussions of reconciliation:

- First, people need safe, *hospitable spaces*. This means that basic human needs like being free from physical harm, having shelter and food are met. Without these basic needs met, we continue to live in fear and anxiety. Hospitable spaces lead us into the realm of being able to be thankful once again. When we feel secure and welcome we are open to the possibility of reconciliation.
- Second, spaces for reconciliation have to be places *where we can act graciously and experience graciousness*. Breakdowns in relationships are ultimately about trust. Trust can only be restored and reconciliation achieved if we are reasonably sure our trust will not be broken again. However, trust only flourishes if it is not forced or threatened. Safe, hospitable spaces allow us to rebuild trust as we experience graciousness. Expansive acts of graciousness are denied as relationships breakdown. Graciousness, unlike the gratuitous acts of violence, has a purpose; it allows us to rebuild trust, feel hospitality and can help restore our broken spirit.
- Third, spaces of reconciliation are places *where we can discover or build something new*. The free character of the space means that we do not know everything that can come out of it. If the experiences that victims had were highly traumatising, the experiences of the new may be of discovering their own personal strengths and those of their communities. Paralysis may be replaced by renewed confidence and the ability to build something anew with others.

The process of reconciliation occurs as part of our journey to *peace*. Peace is an interesting term with many meanings. Peace is often understood in the negative, as the absence of war or conflict. However, we can also understand peace positively as a state of personal and social health and wholeness. For example, concepts of peace in Christianity build on the Old Testament Hebrew term *shalom*, or in the New Testament Greek term *eirene*. Captured within both of these terms is a holistic vision of peace that includes well-being, as well as right and just relationships and structures. As we think and work towards reconciliation we need to reflect on how our work also builds peace.

Dimensions of reconciliation.

Spiritual. The spiritual dimension refers to creating harmony and restoring broken relationships with God. This relationship is central to the other relationships: an individual needs to restore her or his relationship with God before moving on to restoring other relationships.

Personal. The second dimension involves reconciling with the "self." In Christianity, renouncing personal sinfulness and selfishness to God leads to forgiveness. When forgiveness is received, it is expected to lead to personal tranquillity, peace, and harmony – reconciliation with the self.

Social. Reconciling with those around us, our neighbours and the larger human community, is a third dimension. We need to restore relationships with our neighbours and larger communities to reflect justice, mercy, respect and love. Relationships here reflect reconciliation at the other dimensions; if we are not spiritually or personally reconciled, it

is unlikely that we will be able to achieve social reconciliation.

Ecological. The fourth dimension of reconciliation can be called reconciling with nature. From a Christian perspective, this dimension recognises that humans cannot be fully reconciled with God while disrespecting and abusing God's creation. Reconciliation at this level calls for respect of and care for nature and the ecological system in which we live.

Dilemmas of Reconciliation

Reconciliation is a process that involves many layers of meaning, recovering lost spaces and addressing the dimensions identified above. Often people are afraid of reconciliation, because they are afraid they will lose their rightful claim as victims of great injustice, or that they will be asked to forget the act that caused them pain, or lose the hurt that has become so familiar and even comforting. To get beyond these fears, and contemplate reconciliation, we need to first examine some of the dilemmas that reconciliation poses for us

Fast or slow?

In public, political processes, reconciliation is often portrayed as a process that a country must go through immediately, in order to move into a new future. However, this approach contradicts much of the research and practice on individual healing and reconciliation. Personal reconciliation is a very slow process. The stories and memories need to be given time to be told. As Robert Schreiter states, "Reconciliation involves a fundamental repair to human lives, especially to the lives of those who have suffered. That repair takes time – time that can make the participants feel insecure, but necessary time nonetheless for beginning a new life" (1995, p.21). When working with trauma or supporting a reconciliation process, taking a long-term view is critical. Reconciliation, like peacebuilding, is a very long process that needs to be supported throughout.

A social or personal process?

Reconciliation for some is a public process, such as that in South Africa, but a very personal process to others. This manual builds on the idea that it is a very personal process; it is not something that can be managed by a larger social body although changes in physical space can help create personal space. It comes from the heart of the victim and the victimiser, and has to be "discovered" there first. Reconciliation is a way of believing or seeing the relationship rather than a way of doing things. Political processes of reconciliation run the risk of watering down the concept of personal reconciliation by adding a deadline for the process, as well as potentially co-opting the term as a label for a process that actually does not change the structural realities that produced violations in the first place (Gopin, 2001; Schreiter, 1995).

Forgiving means reconciled?
Forgiveness is a different process from reconciliation, although it is very related. There are different interpretations of the relationship between the two concepts. For some, forgiveness means the survivor was able to let go of the resentment. It does not mean that the relationship is reconciled or back to "normal." In this case, forgiveness comes before reconciliation. For others, the process is the reverse: reconciliation comes before forgiveness (as evident in *Working for Reconciliation*). Cultural and religious contexts are very important in shaping this relationship.

Remembering or forgetting?
For some, forgetting is important in order to move forward, and for others, remembering is critical. In peacebuilding, a common assumption exists that remembering is essential for true forgiveness. Denial is a common response to great injustice, and often survivors are told to "forgive and forget," which undermines their ability to tell their story and in doing so regain their human dignity. Supporters must learn to stay through the pain and encourage survivors as they learn to live with memories of their experience. It is also important for offenders to remember in order to recover their own human dignity by taking responsibility for their actions and recognising the effect they had on the victims.

Forgiving means accepting?
Frequently a dilemma of reconciliation is seen as accepting, and thus negating, an injustice when it should be named. However, naming the offence as harmful and unacceptable is a crucial part of forgiveness and reconciliation. It is important for survivors to acknowledge their injury before they can let go of the resentment they feel because of the injury. How the injury is acknowledged can be very different across cultures, as a comparison of *sulh*, or other traditional rituals, and the western legal system indicate.

Sustaining Reconciliation Work

When people work with trauma, the trauma can begin to work on them, go after their own wounds or be internalised. The result is what is known as *secondary trauma* or *compassion fatigue*. Some of the symptoms include (Grant, 1995): high levels of stress; chronic fatigue; diminished level of self-care; somatic (physical) complaints like headaches, muscle ache, and the like.

Behavioural changes may also occur as part of secondary trauma. They include: withdrawal from social contacts and pleasurable activities; increased levels of work and self-sacrifice; inability to be refreshed by sleep and recreation; drug and alcohol abuse; putting oneself unduly in high-risk situations; increased levels of cynicism, anger and aggression.

Chronic levels of secondary trauma are harmful to those experiencing it and can put others at risk because of the sufferer's risk-taking behaviour. Co-workers should help identify the presence of these symptoms. Those suffering from secondary trauma need to withdraw from stressful situations and seek rest and reorientation (additional resources in Appendix A).

Workers in reconciliation and peacebuilding need to be clear about what kind of framework sustains them to prevent or limit secondary trauma, whether it is their worldview, a religious commitment, or a commitment to humanity in general. Maintaining spiritual and mental health is an important part of being an effective support to victims of trauma and violent conflict. Below are a number of things that peacebuilders can do to maintain their mental and spiritual health.

Listening

Listening provides the opportunity to get in touch with who you are at the core. Listening can be done through meditation, prayer or regular journaling. By listening to your own inner voice, you can learn from your experiences, reconnect your peacebuilding efforts with your personal beliefs, be inspired and renew your inner strength

Contemplative prayer and meditation

Contemplative prayer comes out of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions. It focuses on learning to wait and watch for God on a regular basis. One does not always hear something in contemplation, but that does not negate the practice. The discipline of coming to stillness helps keep perspective amidst trauma and often overly busy schedules. Meditation and prayer can help prevent overload from experiencing failure and witnessing suffering.

Story-telling

Stories allow us to share our common humanity. Telling and listening to stories can affirm who we are and how we relate to those around us. By sharing stories we connect at a more personal level with those we whom we are interacting. When we share with others who have experienced similar things we develop networks of support that can sustain us through stressful experiences and trauma. Sharing stories can also help us work through personal stress and trauma, and be part of a healing process.

Ritual

Performing rituals is another rich way of tapping our feelings and beliefs without necessarily articulating them. Rituals can be powerful in helping us deal with issues and find inner peace. As discussed above, rituals help us recognise important events, and permit us to connect with each other and something larger than ourselves in ways that go beyond the constraints of words. Some examples of rituals include *sulh*, communion, fasting, and funerals, among many others.