POSITIVE APPROACHES TO PEACEBUILDING

A RESOURCE FOR INNOVATORS

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We inhabit a world that is always subjective and shaped by our interactions with it. Our world is impossible to pin down, constantly changing and infinitely more interesting than we ever imagined.

MARGARET WHEATLEY

CHAPTER ONE

TOWARD THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF POSITIVE APPROACHES TO PEACEBUILDING

Mohammed Abu-Nimer

This chapter grounds the volume's exploration of positive approaches to peacebuilding by first providing a brief overview of the development of the conflict resolution and peacebuilding field over the last four decades in North America and, more recently, worldwide—a history that brings us to this moment of new evolutionary possibility. Next it looks at the core assumptions and principles of peacebuilding, which set a framework for considering, throughout the book's explorations, the ways in which positive approaches are in affinity with the assumptions and values of peacebuilding and support key aspects of peacebuilding practice, as well as the ways in which positive approaches may fall short and possibly will need to stand aside or be developed further. The chapter concludes with a discussion of positive elements in existing peacebuilding practice as the first step toward the more systematic study and practice of positive approaches to peacebuilding to which this volume is committed.

The field of conflict resolution and peacebuilding[1] has developed tremendously in the last three decades. Hundreds of academic programs grant degrees in this field, and there is an ongoing process of professionalization, with thousands of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and independent practitioners engaged daily in working to resolve interpersonal and intra- or inter-community conflicts.[2] In addition, hundreds of governmental, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental agencies and initiatives attempt to address conflicts at the international level. The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy has identified nine different sectors or tracks of peacebuilding practice: government; religion; research, training, and education; business; funding; nongovernmental/professional (e.g., humanitarian relief and development); private citizens; activism; and media and communications (Diamond and McDonald 1996).

Several major social and political movements contributed to the emergence of the conflict resolution field in North America. In the 1940s and

1950s, the human relations studies field developed concepts and approaches for dealing with prejudice and stereotypes. The civil rights movement of the late 1950s and 1960s produced a new awareness of the possibilities for change through empowerment and activism of minority groups. New understandings of the function of conflict in the organizational relations field in the 1960s and 1970s led to cooperative approaches in business and labor-management relations. Also in that period, an overwhelmed American judicial system began to refer small-claims, divorce, and other types of suits to lawyers trained in mediation and arbitration, in what became known as "alternative dispute resolution" or "ADR." In the early 1970s, neighborhood justice centers or community mediation centers were created to address the grievances of individuals and groups.[3]

In the international arena, the late 1960s and early 1970s saw the first experiments with problem-solving workshops in an attempt to apply new conflict resolution concepts to international and interethnic conflicts.[4] Also at that time, the Quakers and then Mennonites became active in international peacemaking, leading the way in what today is a rapidly expanding sector of religious and interreligious peacebuilding.[5] The late 1980s and the 1990s saw increasing attention to the perceptual and psychological aspects of conflict behavior and conflict resolution; to indigenous, cultural, and religious/spiritual resources for dispute resolution and peacemaking; to the processes of forgiveness, reconciliation, and trauma healing; and more recently still, to the role of narrative, ritual, metaphor, the arts, and other holistic ways of defining, knowing, and transforming conflicts.

Finally, the post–Cold War period of the 1990s also saw extensive development in peacebuilding beyond North America and Europe, and training workshops, peacebuilding centers, and NGOs working in peacebuilding can now be found across Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America. Today, it is safe to say that peacebuilding concepts and approaches are being applied and developed globally, and the field is expanding further by exploring its theoretical and practical connections with other fields, such as international development, human rights, environment, communications and the media, and business.

This book is itself an example of one such new-frontier exploration, in this case primarily at the interface with social constructionist thought and the Appreciative Inquiry methodology as it emerged in the field of organizational development and then in international development. Paralleling the emergence of positive-change methodologies in numerous other fields,[6] Appreciative Inquiry and other positive approaches to peacebuilding represent a new thrust toward methods that draw the focus of analysis, process design, and action to the peace-promoting capacities and positive potential for transformation that exist in all human systems.

We turn next to a discussion of some of the core assumptions and principles in conflict resolution and peacebuilding that will inform our examination of the theory and practice of positive-change methodologies, in general, and Appreciative Inquiry, in particular.

KEY ASSUMPTIONS AND PRINCIPLES OF PEACEBUILDING[7]

Although there are many processes of conflict resolution and peacebuilding applied by practitioners and analyzed and theorized by scholars, it is possible to identify a set of core assumptions and principles shared by the majority of peacebuilders. These, in turn, highlight the values that motivate practitioners and scholars to engage in this work.

Conflict as a Source of Change

One key assumption in this field is that conflict is not necessarily negative or evil. Most peacebuilders perceive conflict as often leading to needed change and therefore potentially a creative force that can generate new options for solving existing problems. Differences in opinions, incompatible goals, and competing interests are not inherently destructive forces, although they often lead parties to engage in violence or other exclusionary behavior toward the other side. When such behavior takes place, other aspects of the existing relationship between the disputing parties are marginalized or destroyed. Thus, though conflict itself is a natural process, it can lead to either constructive or destructive outcomes, depending on the ways in which parties approach the issues in contention and one another. The conflict resolver's mission, then, is to help the parties identify potential avenues for change that accommodate the interests and needs of all the parties.

Moral and Pragmatic Superiority of Nonviolence

It is assumed in the conflict resolution field that nonviolent methods are more effective in persuading the adversary to change their perceptions, resolve the issues, and agree to settle a conflict than the use of violent force. In the short and long term, violent approaches are more costly and harmful to the parties than nonviolent approaches. Nonviolent methods allow parties to grow and establish a more productive relationship than violent methods. While most conflict resolution and peacebuilding practitioners and scholars believe that nonviolent methods are morally superior to violent methods, not all are pacifists, and there are some who would not exclude the use of limited and conditioned force (violence) in resolving certain types of conflicts.

Cooperation to Resolve Differences

Another assumption is that differences in values, interests, and needs can be resolved jointly and cooperatively. Cooperative relations generate energy and possibilities for overcoming differences since parties are not preoccupied with—and limited by—a win-lose outcome. Parties join their efforts to resolve problems with a willingness to negotiate differences, instead of separately competing to fulfill their interests and negate those of the other side. For cooperation to take place, however, parties need to have a basic understanding of the issues in contention and a willingness to acknowledge the other party's perspective. Much effort in conflict resolution processes is therefore dedicated to clearing up misperceptions, breaking down negative stereotypes, and rehumanizing images of the enemy. Once perceptions have shifted from animosity and hatred to trust and a willingness to cooperate, resolution of the substantive issues becomes much more feasible.[8]

People Are Not Problems

This classic assumption that people are not problems (Fisher and Ury 1981) underlies negotiation and mediation, as well as other conflict resolution approaches. Practitioners focus on the problem (differences in values, interests, goals, needs) and respect the people as individuals. The problem is reframed as a shared and mutual concern for the parties to jointly address, while there is an inherent respect for the person and the rights of each individual involved. By protecting the person, the negotiator or mediator avoids insults and the need to deal with personal injuries. The practitioner assumes that the problem will be easy to resolve once parties redirect their attention and energy to the issues and leave out the personal or collective characters of the others involved. At its core, conflict resolution practice aims to enhance and protect human dignity and fulfill basic human needs (Burton 1990).

Perceptual Change Through Communication

Even if parties are disputing distribution or redistribution of tangible resources, a change in their perceptions and consequently their communication patterns is essential to the resolution of the issues. Communication is a major channel by which negative feelings and perceptions are discovered and corrected or modified among the parties. To change perceptions, effective communication (active listening, paraphrasing, empathy, etc.) is a necessary process, regardless of the nature and type of the conflict. Such a process requires the building of an environment of security, trust, and willingness to take risks in moving toward resolution.

When conflict resolution practitioners assume a stance of genuine and deep listening, without judgment, and allowing people to speak their stories and describe their grievances and pain, individuals and groups in conflict can change. Whether the change is deeply rooted (transformative) or temporary, a change in positions cannot take place without a change in perceptions through communication.

Collaborative and Creative Problem Solving

The primary basis of conflict resolution is a collaborative problem-solving process, which aspires to move parties with genuine or perceived substantive differences towards a shared and agreed-upon resolution. With or without the help of a third party, problem-solving processes assume that parties are capable of resolving their own conflicts and finding satisfactory solutions to the issues involved. The effective problem-solving process requires communication and a basic willingness on the part of the parties to meet the adversary or *the Other, j*ointly address the problem, and creatively seek different ways to fulfill their needs, interests, or desires. Creativity in conflict resolution processes enables the parties to leave their comfortable, secure positions and move with their opponents to the exploration of new options.

Building Sustainable Relationship

Sustainable relationship can be achieved only when disputing parties have reconciled their past histories, recognized their present differences, and agreed upon a future vision for staying in relationship. The sustainability of conflict resolution settlements requires that they provide mechanisms for the parties to resolve future differences and conflicts peacefully through mutually negotiated agreements. The torn relationship is restored and a new type of relationship among the parties is established that is based upon respect for individual and collective rights and recognition of the interdependent relationship that binds them. This ensures that future disagreements will not escalate into violent conflict, but will be resolved in mutually satisfactory ways. To accomplish this requires attention to justice issues, as well as dealing effectively with actual or perceived historical injustices as crucial to the success of any peacebuilding process.

Creating Change Agents

Peacebuilding processes assume that change in people, relationships, and systems is possible and necessary to resolve conflicts, therefore preparing disputants to be change agents is a central principle in the field. Peacebuilding training and problem-solving workshops are aimed at producing change agents who can carry the message back to their

home communities and be catalysts for change. The dominant discourse in peacebuilding frameworks regarding social and political change (especially in North American models) is one that envisions and prepares for gradual types of change, as opposed to sudden revolutionary changes in elite leadership or mass movements for change. Nonviolent resistance and other forms of social activism are often excluded from training and academic programs in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Transforming Power Relationships

Conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes are aimed at producing change in the existing power relationships in a society or among the conflicting parties by transforming destructive, dominant power dynamics into constructive relationships that are balanced through the empowerment of all parties (Curle 1971; Laue and Cormick 1978); and by transforming abusive power (via ideology, coercive use of force, control of resources, etc.) to the joint construction and utilization of power. Giving voice to the voiceless and empowering the marginalized is a central principle in peacebuilding. Empowerment and giving voice can produce tremendous energy for change and transformation on the part of individuals and societies and is essential to the sustainability of peace.

Action and Development

The importance of integrating concrete systemic change as an outcome of a conflict resolution process is gaining greater recognition in the peacebuilding field, especially in the context of international development. Concrete actions and changes in the reality of the parties ensure sustainability of the process and outcomes. In many settings, economic development and improvement of living conditions are essential and may require various forms of advocacy and social activism to be achieved. Such outcomes insure that conflict resolution processes are an integral part of larger processes of social, political, and economic change in the society, as opposed to becoming mechanisms for maintaining the status quo and existing power relations.

POSITIVE ELEMENTS IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION PRACTICES

While all of the above core assumptions and principles of peacebuilding are designed to bring positive, constructive change to systems in conflict, this section highlights aspects of peacebuilding practice that specifically build upon or create hopeful, empathetic, and cooperative dynamics in the interparty relationship and, in turn, give life to the peacebuilding process overall.

One of the guiding principles in the practice of mediation, for example, is to *identify commonalities and build on the small agreements*

achieved by disputants in order to build up to larger agreements or settlements. This principle often requires the mediator to highlight even the smallest accomplishments in the process, for example, that the parties have been sitting together for the last hour in a spirit of cooperation, without exchanging insults, or that they have reached agreement on the time, place, and agenda for the next meeting.

Similarly, peacebuilders *seek defining moments of cooperation* in the broader arena of a conflictual relationship and magnify them to illustrate the potential for positive relationship among the conflicting parties and to instill hope and motivation for change. Celebrating moments of connectedness, even though these may be few in number and small in scale, can nevertheless be highly effective in generating positive energy among the parties and empowering the peacebuilding process. One such defining moment of cooperation that has given inspiration to others is the case of an Israeli woman, Dalia Landau, who inherited a house in Ramle that had originally been built by a Palestinian family. The family was then forcibly evacuated in the 1948 war. With her husband, Rabbi Yehezkel Landau, she joined with members of the al-Khairy family, the original owners, in dedicating the house to Arab-Jewish peace and educational activities, and they gave it the name "Open House" (Gentile 2002).

Practices for *(re)humanizing and developing empathy for the Other* are central to peacebuilding. This process entails not only recognition of the humanness of each individual, but also of the innate equality of all people and the potential contribution that different individuals and groups can make to enriching the human experience. It also fosters a sense of human connectedness and interdependency among former adversaries and confronts them with the prospect that there are harmful consequences to all from inflicting pain on another.

Storytelling to convey holistic meaning and nourish caring and connection among the parties is a primary peacebuilding tool for humanizing the Other and healing trauma. In training, mediation, facilitation, and problem-solving workshops, peacebuilders open space for the stories to be told, both painful as well as stories of hope and positive interaction (Duryea and Potts 1993). The stories, if told with honesty, compassion, and passion, may transform perceptions, instill hope that change is possible and worth working for, and inspire and motivate participants to take concrete actions to transform their conflict reality. We will also see in this volume how a storytelling project was able to dispel a sense of helplessness, unleash positive energy, and point the way to concrete actions that could be taken by American youths to reach out to the Arab world in the aftermath of the "9/11" terrorist attacks (see appendix to chapter six).

Peacebuilders often use *rituals that enact aspects of meaningful, compassionate interaction* to infuse meaning, life, and new forms of

shared experience into a dysfunctional system of relationship. Rituals allow people to connect without words or ideologies through their spirituality and universal human connectedness and as such are powerful constructs for rehumanizing the Other and creating images of positive relationship. Even simple rituals such as joint meals, music, dancing, and sports are used by peacebuilders to significant effect in interethnic encounters (see Schirch [2001] on the use of rituals with Greek and Turkish Cypriot youths; and Abu-Nimer [1999] on Israeli and Palestinian dialogue rituals).

Most peacebuilding processes assume that "the cure is in the pain" and that disputants should be given the opportunity to recall their suffering and air their grievances and negative emotions together in a safe and secure environment, in order for the parties to understand and reprocess these memories differently. This experience is often exhausting and draining, however, and can overwhelm the participants with a sense of helplessness and the magnitude of the problem. Often the participants feel more apart and discouraged as a result of this phase of the process (see Abu-Nimer 2001). To counteract these effects, either following these experiences or concurrently with them, peacebuilders introduce activities for *building trust and forging new positive relationships through games, humor, art, music, and other fun and uplifting experiences.*

Peacebuilding processes also infuse hope and help the conflict parties *construct a new vision for future relationship.* Elise Boulding's methodology for visioning a nonviolent world (see chapter four) was used, for example, in the Usulutan province of El Salvador to help former adversaries in that country's civil war create a common vision for peaceful community in their region, complete with details related to the roles and functions of the state and civil society, police and courts, cultural rituals, and civil-sector mechanisms for promoting peace (see chapter five).

In interethnic dialogue and encounter, facilitators often design an intervention process with a *task or goal to be accomplished by the parties that does not relate directly to the issues in the conflict.* In Northern Ireland and in Israel-Palestine, for example, teachers and students from the two conflicting sides have cooperated in creating a curriculum for environmental studies that they use separately in teaching their students. The accomplishment of such a task gives the parties an opportunity to build trust and the experience of success in a joint effort.

CONCLUSION

Peacebuilding is about bringing change in human relationships and institutions. As we have seen from the above examples, many peacebuilding techniques and approaches cultivate the positive, life-giving forces that exist in every conflict system to enable people caught in the web of

violence to see the potential for a different future. These approaches assume that there are sources of energy and capacities for innovation, passion, hope, imagination, and transformation within the human system—the people, relationships, groups, and communities—that if awakened can be a moving and powerful force for change. In fact, learning and practicing ways to identify and create these positive resources as a path to the future is one of the things that differentiates peacebuilders from other people who experience conflicts.

Yet typically, peacebuilders aim to empower communities primarily by devoting enormous energy to validating and acknowledging the pain and injustice, hoping to motivate people to see the potential for peaceful alternatives. Many of us in the field still overemphasize the pain and victimhood in our intervention processes and the need to show the participants the destructive consequences of violent conflict. Our assumption is that when people realize and acknowledge the horrible reality of war, as rationalistic human beings they will shun violence and prefer peaceful alternatives.

At the same time, most people living in a constant conflict situation lose any hope for a positive future, and more importantly, they lose confidence in their ability as individuals or as a collective to contribute to positive change. This calls upon us as peacebuilders to motivate people and groups and help them find the strength, courage, and confidence to change. These can be better cultivated if people share what it is they really yearn for and what their dream of peace would look like, and if they learn how to view themselves as positive change agents, rather than as helpless victims.

Finally, the fundamental desire that characterizes the gathering of groups and individuals for peacebuilding is to improve their individual lives and help their communities to move forward by reducing violence and resolving conflicts. This implicit link that binds people from opposing sides of the conflict to be together for a few days (even if it is only a temporary bond of but a few days) is a strong positive force, yet it is underestimated and underutilized in many peacebuilding processes. Constructively tapping into the deep desire for more fulfilling relationships and a better future is the main challenge of peacebuilding field.

This chapter and book assert that peacebuilders can be more effective in bringing change if they intentionally integrate positive elements, processes, and approaches into their current practices. It is in these types of approaches that parties can feel free and able to connect with one another and can acknowledge their potential role in changing the system. The challenge for peacebuilders is to become constantly attuned to the positive elements present in their contexts and processes and to access and activate them. And more, beyond this piecemeal approach, a framework for positive approaches to peacebuilding is needed. What remains to be developed are strategies and methods for more systematically and comprehensively integrating

positive-change principles and practices in all aspects of peacebuilding, including training and education. It is to that purpose that this volume is committed.

ENDNOTES

1. The term *peacebuilding* is used here as an umbrella term that includes the full spectrum of conflict resolution and transformation frameworks and approaches, including negotiation, conciliation, mediation, facilitation, alternative dispute resolution, problem-solving workshops, education and training, advocacy, and nonviolent resistance, among others.
2. See, for example, the *Global Directory of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution Programs* of the Consortium on Peace Research, Education, and Development (O'Leary 2000).
3. On the development of the conflict resolution field in the United States, see Scimecca (1991).
4. For a full review of the historical development of the conflict resolution field, including the problem-solving workshop, see Kriesberg (1997) and Fisher (1997).
5. On the development of the religious and interreligious sector of the peacebuilding field, see Sampson (1997), Appleby (2000), and Smock (2002).
6. For a brief survey of positive, strengths-based approaches in psychology, criminal justice, social work, and in the treatment of trauma survivors, see chapter sixteen.
7. Some of the assumptions discussed in this section were identified in Abu-Nimer (1999).
8. In various surveys of Israelis and Palestinians, for example, on the issue of Jerusalem, which is one of the most difficult obstacles for peace between these two groups, the majority of people agreed that there were many possible solutions. At least thirty-two options were identified by Jerome Segal (1989) to resolve the status of Jerusalem. None of these options could be pursued, however, without a minimal degree of trust and willingness to cooperate on the part of the parties.

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Peace is a state of mind and a path of action. It is a concept, a goal, an experience, a path. Peace is an ideal. It is both intangible and concrete, complex and simple, exciting and calming. Peace is personal and political; it is spiritual and practical, local and global. It is a process and an outcome, and above all a way of being.

LOUISE DIAMOND

CHAPTER TWO

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY IN ORGANIZATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
AN INVITATION TO SHARE AND LEARN ACROSS FIELDS

Diana Whitney, Claudia Liebler, and David Cooperrider

This chapter provides an overview of the theory and practice of Appreciative Inquiry, a positive-change approach used for organizational innovation and capacity building, strategic planning, and partnership, network, or coalition building in businesses, international development agencies, and social-change organizations of all kinds. Powered by the principle of "wholeness," Appreciative Inquiry involves people from every stakeholder group in connecting to the positive core of a system's capacities, strengths, and assets to create a shared dream of the future and mobilize creative energies to work towards its realization. After defining Appreciative Inquiry, the chapter takes the reader on a journey through the 4-D Cycle of Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny, giving examples of the work that is done in each phase. The Appreciative Inquiry Summit, a high-participation, full-voice process is described; and the chapter concludes by proposing five areas in which Appreciative Inquiry might be put to the service of peacebuilding.

In our hearts and minds there is no more worthy endeavor than building peace. From the cultivation of inner peace, to the creation of peaceful communities, to the resolution of conflict among differing persons, groups, or nations, to the healing of wounds and the establishment of relationships after acts of violence, peacebuilding is a core competency in the creation of sustainable organizations, civil societies, and a viable global community.

All societies and organizations have means of resolving differences and maintaining harmony among members. Some approaches are peaceful, others are not; some means are life giving, others are life taking; some approaches are liberating, others are oppressive; some means are relationship enhancing, others are divisive; and some means serve the highest good of humanity, while others diminish human potential.

When we look at some conspicuous approaches to resolving differences today, we see many closed conversations—embedded in secret meetings, enmeshed in the many dimensions of the conflict, and not involving people who are impacted. This kind of top-level process has its strengths, but there are weaknesses as well, and these are being played out on the world stage in these times. This type of peace process rises and falls on *high-level leaders* and presumes that: (1) representative leaders *can* be identified, (2) they *will* articulate and advocate, from the perspective of those they represent, the concerns giving rise to the conflict, and (3) they *possess* the power, or at least the influence, to deliver the support of their respective communities for the implementation of any agreements reached (Lederach 1997). But what if people no longer follow monolithic power structures? What if high-level leaders such as Yasser Arafat and Ariel Sharon do not possess the power or influence to bring along parts of their constituencies (e.g., the Palestinian Hamas and Israeli extreme right-wing parties)? If the trickle-down approach to peacemaking can no longer carry the day, how do we build peace as well from the bottom up and middle out, engaging all sectors of society? That is the peacebuilding project of today.

The proposition we subscribe to in this chapter is that for there to be any chance of long-term success in any peacebuilding process, it must be open to everyone who has a serious stake in it—political leaders, religious communities, the business sector, educators, artists, youth, people from the world community, media, victims and offenders, the oppressed and the oppressors, and many others. With Lederach and others, we argue for a system-wide approach to peacebuilding, involving all concerned sectors of society. At the largest level, this proposition implies that the means and ends of peacebuilding must be better matched, even the same. If we want whole-system change, we need whole-systems methods. Likewise, if we want sustainable justpeace, we need positive approaches to peacebuilding.

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the theory and practice of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and to begin to build a bridge from the field of business management and leadership, where AI was born and has made tremendous impact, and from the world of international development, where it has been successfully used, among others, by the Global Excellence in Management (GEM) Initiative through its work with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs),[1] to the field of international conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

In the first section, we share a brief overview of Appreciative Inquiry, including what it is and where it has been successful in organizational development and strategic planning in business, international development, and other kinds of social-change organizations. In the second section, we take the reader through the four stages of the AI process or 4-D Cycle—Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny—giving examples of applica-

tions in each phase. In section three, we introduce one of the most powerful ways to use AI with a system, the Appreciative Inquiry Summit, a large-group methodology that involves all stakeholders in connecting the positive core of a system's past and present to a vision and design for system change. In the final section, we offer five ways that we believe the adaptation and application of Appreciative Inquiry can serve the peacebuilding field.

WHAT IS APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY?

OUR DEFINITION

Ap-pre'ci-ate, v.,

1. *Valuing; the act of recognizing the best in people or the world around us; affirming past and present strengths, successes, and potentials; to perceive those things that give life (health, vitality, excellence) to living systems.*
2. *To increase in value, e.g., the economy has appreciated in value.*

Synonyms: valuing, prizing, esteeming, honoring.

In-quire', v.

1. *The act of exploration and discovery.*
2. *To ask questions; to be open to seeing new potentials and possibilities.*

Synonyms: discovery, search, systematic exploration and study.

AI is both a philosophy of positive change and a methodology for high-participation, collaborative transformation. At the heart of AI is the understanding that human systems move in the direction of what they continuously study, analyze, and discuss. Appreciative Inquiry is therefore a call to study "root causes of success," rather than "root causes of failure." It is a call to reframe the focus of attention from deficit discourse, a growing body of vocabularies produced by the critical and problem-oriented approaches to social scientific research, to positive discourse. It is a shift from investigation into problems, pain, suffering, failure, breakdown, and victimization to curiosity about living potential, key success factors, images of the ideal future, and hope.

As a philosophy of positive change, Appreciative Inquiry suggests that change occurs most readily when people engage together in inquiry into their strengths, resources, capacities, best practices, successes, hopes, dreams, and ideals—in other words the *positive core* of their shared or

other life experiences. Positive change begins with inquiry and analysis into the positive core—the essential life-giving resources, capacities, and forces for goodness—at the center of any human system.

Thus, a more comprehensive description of Appreciative Inquiry is,

> the cooperative search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves systematic discovery of what gives a system "life" when it is most effective and capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. AI involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to heighten positive potential. . . . In AI, intervention gives way to imagination and innovation; instead of negation, criticism, and spiraling diagnosis there is discovery, dream, and design. AI assumes that every living system has untapped, rich, and inspiring accounts of the positive. Link this "positive-change core" directly to any change agenda, and changes never thought possible are suddenly and democratically mobilized. (Cooperrider and Whitney 1999, 10)

But—What About Problems, Pain, and Suffering?[2]

This is one of the most frequently asked questions about Appreciative Inquiry. "Isn't it unrealistic to deny what's wrong?" people ask. "Aren't you asking us to ignore problems, or to act as if suffering and violence don't exist?" Let us be clear. We are not saying to deny or ignore problems, pain, or suffering. What we are saying is that if you want to transform a relationship, a situation, an organization, or community, focusing on strengths is more effective than focusing on problems. Throughout this chapter we offer stories about organizations and communities that have benefited by using AI to shift their attention from problems to possibilities.

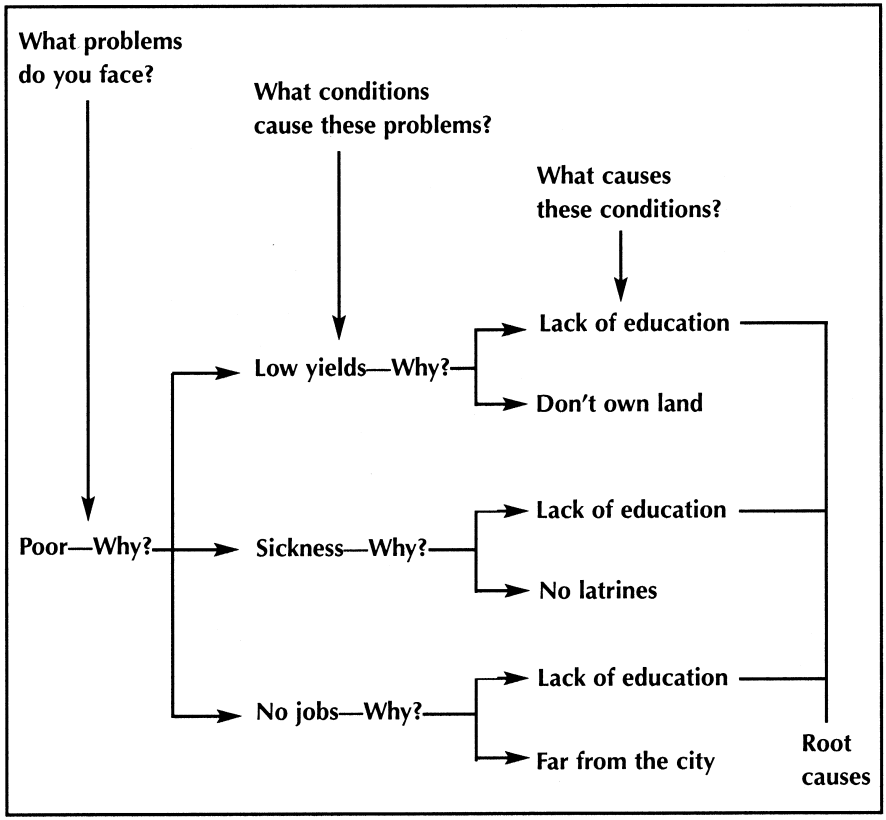
We often work in situations fraught with anxiety, tension, and stress, be they union-management relations, cross-gender or intercultural relationships, or competing interests among diverse groups within a system. Time and again, when we turn people's attention from what is wrong to who we are when we are at our best, conflict turns to cooperation.

We do not dismiss accounts of problems, stress, or conflict. We simply do not use them as the basis of analysis or action. We listen when they arise, validate them as lived experience, and seek to reframe them. For example, in the corporate environment, the problem of high turnover becomes an inquiry into magnetic work environments or a question of retention, thereby redirecting the focus of analysis. The problem of low management credibility becomes an inquiry into moments of management credibility or inspired leadership. The problem of sexual harassment at work becomes a question of positive cross-gender working relationships. This simple shift in attention allows people and organizations to rise above or move beyond the conditions in which the problems originally existed.

From Problem Solving to Possibility

Historically, the field of community development has focused upon problem identification and resolution. Development initiatives have begun with the identification of problems and led to analysis and dialogue about "what needs to be changed." The central organizing focus of this work was the "root cause of failure." An example of this problem-oriented approach to development is illustrated by the "Problem-Solving Tree" (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
PROBLEM-SOLVING TREE

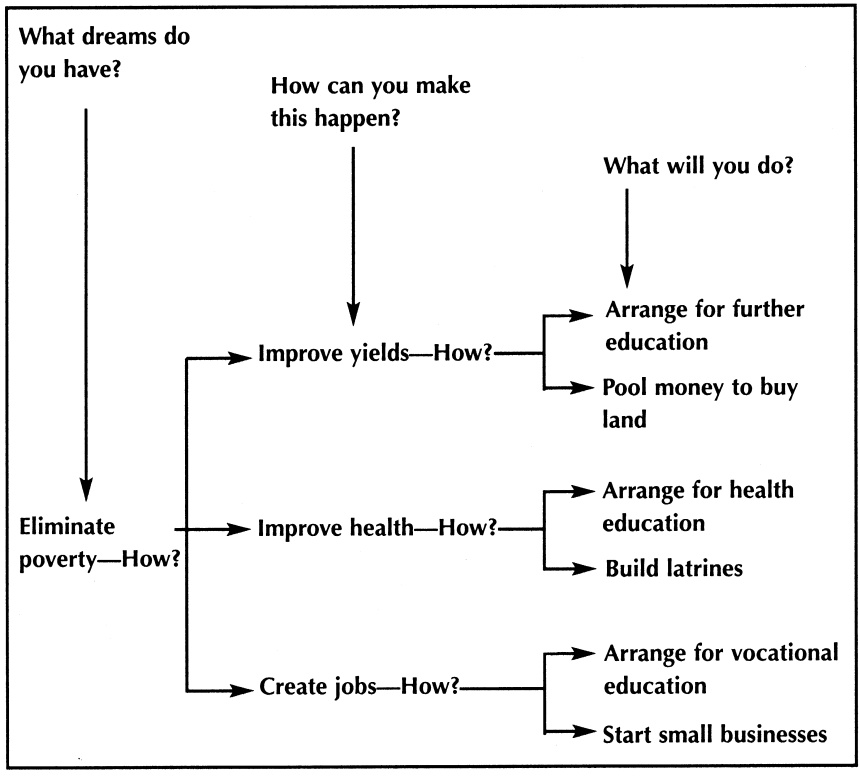


SOURCE: CRWRC (1997, 86). Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

This approach has contributed to some of the most successful community development around the world. Yet when a group of development workers in Africa was introduced to it, the members felt there might be a better way. Having been introduced to Appreciative Inquiry, they noted that a typical problem tree would take them in a circle and would not lead to understanding or a consensus on tangible actions to take. Their problem tree, for example, suggested that the lack of education is caused by poverty, which is caused by no jobs, which is caused by lack of education.

So instead, they created a "Possibility Tree" (see Figure 2), which shifted the focus from problem to possibility, changed both the information and ideas generated, and also pointed the way to specific actions to be taken.

Figure 2
POSSIBILITY TREE



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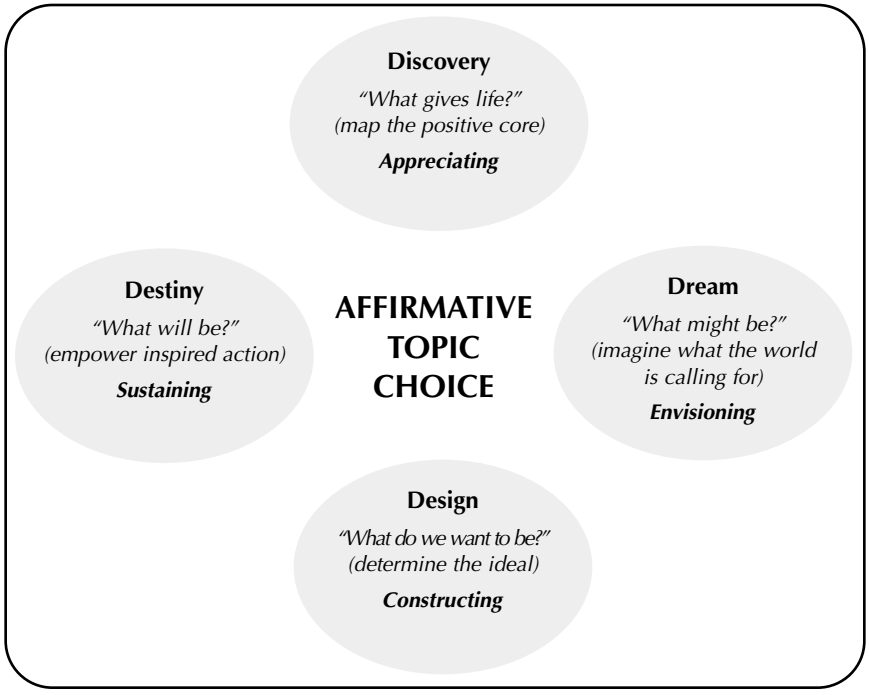
APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY 4-D CYCLE

The Appreciative Inquiry methodology follows a process known as the 4-D Cycle (Cooperrider and Whitney 1999). The four phases in the process can occur as rapidly and informally as a conversation with a friend or colleague, or as formally as an organization- or community-wide process involving every stakeholder. Figure 3 shows the 4-D Cycle of Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny (or Delivery), a step-by-step process for building a vision informed by positive experiences and then working to realize the vision in action. What follows is a brief description and illustration of each phase, starting with an explanation of affirmative topic choice, at the center of the model.

Figure 3
APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY 4-D CYCLE



Affirmative Topic Choice: A Fateful Act

The starting point for an Appreciative Inquiry process is the determination of the focus of the process—the topics for consideration, inquiry, and dialogue. Human systems—relationships, organizations, identity groups, communities, societies—move in the direction of what they discuss, analyze, and reflect upon. As an inquiry into what gives life to the human system, AI begins with a clear discernment of what is desirable to the system involved, as captured in a set of affirmative topics.

Many hospitals around the world, for example, are adapting Appreciative Inquiry for building communication among doctors and nurses, to include the voice of the patient in strategic planning, and to build cultures of inclusion and respect. Our colleague, AI practitioner and consultant Susan Wood, shared with us the following example of topic choice from her work with one large urban hospital in applying Appreciative Inquiry as a means of enhancing nursing retention. At a time when nurses in many places are feeling overworked and under appreciated, these nurses selected the following affirmative topics for inquiry and conversation into how they might be strengthened.

- *The privilege of nursing.* We make our professional life count by caring, listening, and understanding, whatever the circumstance. It is a privilege to participate in another person's life. It is our privilege to share our passion for nursing to ignite the spark in you. Be part of the many, the proud, and the caring!
- *Humor—a vital sign.* Humor is an important sign of life—critical to our survival. It enables us to cope with absurdities, sad situations, and the insecurities of our lives. Laughter is contagious and makes the air sing. Humor is a prism that expands and amplifies. The intuitive knowing of when and how to use humor is priceless.
- *Appreciation.* We crave it and want more of it. We want it from each other, patients, leaders, and self. It sounds like kind words, it looks like nice letters, and it comes from the heart.

In many situations, the selection of topics for inquiry requires a reframing of some problem into an affirmative topic, as illustrated in Figure 4.

In the field of international development, the shift from problem to affirmative topic in one situation produced life-saving results.[3] When Save the Children sent Jerry Sternin and his wife to Vietnam in the 1990s to open an office, nearly half of the country's children were malnourished. The Vietnamese government gave him just six months to make a difference. Instead of diving into a study of the causes of malnutrition, Sternin turned to the theory of amplifying positive deviance: In every community or group, there are individuals whose exceptional behavior or practices

Figure 4
REFRAMING PROBLEMS INTO AFFIRMATIVE TOPICS

Authoritarian leadership	Participatory leadership
Discrimination	Diversity as a source of innovation
Ethnic conflict	Creative coexistence
Silenced voice	Full-voiced participation

enable them to get better results than their neighbors from the same set of resources. Without realizing it, these "positive deviants" have discovered the path to progress for the entire group if their methods can be isolated, analyzed, and shared with others.

Sternin knew little about Vietnam, but was certain that the only way to come up with a plan to fight malnutrition was to discover it within the Vietnamese village culture itself. The Sternins, together with Save the Children's Vietnamese staff and a volunteer, Nguyen Thanh Hien, enlisted village women to help identify the mothers within the villages whose children were not malnourished because they had discovered ways to feed and care for their children effectively. The lessons revealed by these positive deviants enabled everyone else in the village to learn to practice those survival skills on their own. Within a two-year period, the incidence of malnutrition dropped 65–85 percent throughout Vietnamese villages.

A CHALLENGE TO THE STATUS QUO. The process of topic choice often requires people to rethink the way they do what they do. It challenges the status quo by asking people to focus on what they want *more* of rather than what they don't want. The example of British Airways is illustrative.[4] In 1998, British Airways Customer Service NA selected topics for a system-wide inquiry. Forty people from twenty-two locations gathered to learn about Appreciative Inquiry and to identify three to five topics. Before long, a particularly nettlesome topic considered paramount to the well-being of their business surfaced—"baggage." Participants shared stories of the wedding dress that didn't make it to the wedding on time and had to be replaced at British Airways' expense; of camping gear that didn't get to the Grand Canyon until the vacation was over; of the daily disturbances of luggage not making the transfer from Heathrow to Gatwick airports in time for connecting flights.

The AI facilitators paraphrased the stories to demonstrate an understanding of the participants' concerns for the issue and then

invited small groups to frame the baggage issue as a topic. The response came too quickly and unanimously to be anything but a habitual response to the situation: "better service recovery." "Let's see if we have this right," the facilitators replied. "It's okay to lose a customer's baggage, as long as you recover it promptly?" Clearly, the answer was *no*. "Given that organizations move in the direction of what they study," the facilitators coached, "what is it that you want more of. What affirmative topic would move this organization in the direction you want?"

After another twenty minutes' discussion, one group came out with an innovative and emphatic reply: "exceptional arrival experience." How much more it would be like British Airways at its best, one person pointed out, if customer service agents were focused on providing exceptional arrival experiences rather than worrying about lost baggage. This was the topic that would bring real progress, and the large group adopted it by consensus.

THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL AFFIRMATIVE TOPICS. As the stories above illustrate, good AI topics are things that members of the organization, community, or other group sincerely want to learn about and create more of in their lives; and they may be problems or concerns reframed and stated as what is wanted. Affirmative topics elicit stories about people, the organization, or the community at its best. They are said to be "fateful" because they set the tone and direction for discovery, conversation, learning, and transformation.

The best AI topics are "home grown," that is, they are chosen by the people who are involved in the process. In our work with businesses, employees and executives together have decided the focus of their inquiry by selecting the topics. In medical facilities, patients, doctors, nurses, and administrators have joined in selecting the topics for their Appreciative Inquiry. In schools where AI has been adopted, students, teachers, parents, and administrators have selected topics they believed would help them learn and co-create the future they desired. From the start, Appreciative Inquiry is a democratic process that gives equal voice to all stakeholders.

Discovery Phase: Crafting Questions and Conducting Interviews

The primary Discovery Phase task is uncovering positive capacity. This occurs through the crafting of positive questions, about the topics selected, which serve as the basis for widespread appreciative interviews. What distinguishes Appreciative Inquiry at this phase is that every question is positive. In addition to being positive, good AI questions elicit stories. They generate rich accounts of the best of what is and has been, as well as images of what might be.[5]

WHO SHOULD BE INTERVIEWED? When asked how many people should be interviewed in the Discovery Phase or who should do the interviews, we increasingly say "everyone" because in the process, people reclaim

their ability to value, be surprised, and be inspired. As people throughout a system connect to study qualities, examples, and analysis of the positive core—each one appreciating and everyone being appreciated—hope grows and community expands.

Consider the example of Leadshare, a major Canadian accounting firm that used Appreciative Inquiry to support the tough transition in executive succession of its "legendary" managing partner. Leadshare seized the moment as a leadership-development opportunity for all four hundred partners. An extensive two-hour interview protocol was designed focusing on affirmative topics like innovation, equality, partnership, speed to market, and valuing diversity. The firm's thirty junior partners were paired for interviews with the more seasoned senior partners. A powerful and instant intergenerational connection was made, and organizational history came alive in face-to-face storytelling. Like a good piece of poetry filled with endless interpretive meaning, people began to relate to their company's history as a reservoir of positive possibility. At the next annual partners' meeting, attended by all of the four hundred partners, the interview stories and data were coupled to the future through a strategic planning process. The stories instilled a strong sense of continuity and served as the foundation for bold new directions for the future. This strategic planning session turned out to be one of the "best" the partners could remember (Rainey 1996).

In the international development context, a less formal approach is often taken to interviewing. In Canada, the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) carried out an Appreciative Inquiry in partnership with the Skownan First Nation to explore how to incorporate aboriginal values into land-use and resource-management programs in the province of Manitoba.[6] A project team composed of IISD and Skownan representatives conducted appreciative interviews with more than one hundred members of the Skownan community during three seasons. All age groups, family groups, and a rough gender balance were represented in the survey sample. The team's interviews with the Skownan people were informal and relaxed, usually taking place over a cup of tea in the home or while the person was working on the land. The interviewer would begin by asking the person to tell the story of a peak experience—an outstanding success in fishing or hunting, for example, or a particularly memorable family outing. The interviewer would then ask why the person valued that activity so highly and what it gave them in terms of economic benefit and spiritual fulfillment. Finally, the interviewer would ask the person for ideas for how to make experiences like this happen more frequently or readily. This response would lead into a discussion of the person's vision for the Skownan First Nation in the future.

Yet another approach to interviewing was developed by MYRADA, a south Indian development agency, in the Kamasamudram

region. To get stories of peak moments and achievement, MYRADA staff would walk through the village with a group of villagers to look for examples of previous achievements. If a hill had been replanted with trees or a temple constructed, the staff asked how it happened, who did what, who else was present, and how they felt when it was completed. They tried to identify the strengths that the villagers drew upon to complete the task. Other questions related to what the villagers felt most proud of in the village and what achievements they would want to showcase if an important person were to visit. The goal was to find stories that evoked pride and fond memories from the villagers to create an atmosphere conducive to further storytelling (Ashford and Patkar 2001).

INTERVIEW PARTNERS: IMPROBABLE PAIRS. Appreciative interviews are an exceptional vehicle for bringing together people who might not otherwise talk with one another. Whenever people come together across a divide—whether of age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, class, politics, or ideology—there is a need for a safe way to meet so that people may express themselves and be heard. The positive nature of Appreciative Inquiry fosters safety and facilitates relationship building. We have been surprised again and again by the deep connections created during appreciative interviews. As angry union leaders and corporate managers have interviewed one another, we've watched roles drop and human hearts connect. As members of warring religions have shared their stories, we've seen hurt and pain turn to tears of remorse and commitment to partner for peace. As youth have interviewed teachers and principals we've observed the adults recommit to making the world a better place.

As we do this work we ask ourselves, "Who are the people who need to get to know one another, person to person? Who are the people who haven't felt safe to share their stories, hopes, and dreams and really need to give voice to them? Who are all the people invested emotionally, financially, socially, or physically in the well-being of this organization or community? Who are all the people who need to be involved to make things better, safer, more life giving, just, or sustainable?"

And then we invite them to do appreciative interviews with one another . . . to share their stories . . . to listen to one another . . . and to imagine the future together. They focus on the positive core—of their lives, cultures, traditions, beliefs, and practices—and the most positive possibilities for their future together.

In 1998 Catholic Relief Services (CRS), with help from the GEM Initiative of Case Western Reserve University, began an initiative to improve the quality of its partnerships with local churches and NGOs in countries where the development agency was active. Through honest dialogue with indigenous partners who were unlike the huge global organization in

many ways, and by gathering stories of partnership excellence, innovation, and best practices, there emerged a fresh way to view partnerships, moving from a model of resource-based dependence to one of mutual benefit and strength (Kinghorn 2001).

Dream Phase: Envisioning and Enacting What Might Be

Appreciation draws our eye toward life, stirs our feelings, triggers our curiosity, and inspires the envisioning mind. AI's Dream Phase asks people to actively envision and dramatically enact their ideal future—a time when things are just as they wish they could be; a time when they and their organization or community are contributing to a better world. As people share what they learned in their interviews and listen together to vital moments in the life of the system, the future becomes visible though ideals interwoven with actual experiences, and this energizes and moves people to action.

During a merger-integration summit for Child Welfare Services in Nevada, one young man, himself a foster child, took the microphone and said, "I do have a dream. I want to redesign the courtrooms so children are not afraid when they go to their foster care or adoption hearings. I want there to be round tables that everyone sits around—the kids, lawyers, social workers. Even the judges should come down from their high desks and sit at the round table. I want the judges to wear regular clothes instead of black robes. Maybe even there could be cookies on the table so the kids can feel at ease." The room was silent as the images portrayed in the young man's dream settled into the hearts and minds of the social workers, foster parents, lawyers, and judges in the room. And then a judge spoke, "I love your idea and I am willing to do it in my courtroom. Will you help me make it the way you believe will be good for the kids?" At that point the room was filled with the voices of volunteers offering to help rewrite policy, move furniture, and make this one dream a reality.

The more positive, hopeful, and life giving our images of the future, the more positive and affirming our actions are in the present. Powerful dreams and compelling images of the future can lead to dramatic results. Organizations are centers of human relatedness thriving when there is an appreciative eye—when people see the best in one another, when they can dialogue about their dreams and concerns in affirming ways, and when they are connected in full voice to create not just new worlds but better worlds.

Design Phase: Creating Statements of the Ideal

Once the dream is articulated—a vision of a better world, a powerful purpose, or a compelling statement of strategic intent—attention turns to creating the ideal organization or community, a design of the system

in relation to its world. When inspired by a great dream, organizations, schools, teams, or communities feel compelled to design something very new and very necessary.

One aspect differentiating Appreciative Inquiry from other planning methodologies is that future images emerge through real examples from the positive past. Good-news stories are used to craft provocative propositions that bridge the best of "what is" with the collective aspiration of "what might be." People challenge the status quo, as well as common assumptions underlying the system's design. They explore: "What would our system look like if it were designed to maximize the positive core and accelerate realizing our dreams?"

CRAFTING PROVOCATIVE PROPOSITIONS. The Design Phase of Appreciative Inquiry comes forth in the form of provocative propositions (or possibility statements), statements of the ideal relationship, organization, or community written in the present tense, as if the ideal already exists. Provocative propositions stretch the system in new directions in relation to key elements of organizing, such as relationships, distribution of power and authority, leadership, communication, learning, financial rewards, and in the case of business, products, technology, and customer service.

Many organizations, for example, seek to reduce the incidence of sexual harassment in the workplace. They spend a great deal of time and money studying the problem, its causes, and its consequences. As a result, they become experts in sexual harassment yet often are unable to reduce its occurrences. One organization, however, was able to shift the focus of inquiry and analysis from sexual harassment to the affirmative topic, "positive cross-gender working relationships." At the Avon Company in Mexico, the many stories gathered in response to this topic provided positive images of healthy, strong, and productive cross-gender working relationships and generated the knowledge needed to create a safe work environment and foster positive relationships.

From the interviews it became clear that positive working relationships are not created in workshops. Rather, they come about as women and men work together as equals on committees, projects, and tasks of significance. Based on this finding, staff members wrote the following provocative proposition: "Every task force or committee at Avon, whenever possible, is co-chaired by a cross-gender pairing." The result? Within two years this company was awarded the 1997 Catalyst Award as the best place in Mexico for women to work (Schiller 2002).

Once a compelling dream is articulated, the need for new relationships, structures, systems, and decision-making processes becomes apparent. Redesigning the policies, organizations, and institutions that hold injustice, inequality, and abuse in place is not a simple task. It takes attention, time, resources, a favorable policy environment, the commitment of

leaders, and consciousness to go from complaining about systems to redesigning them. It takes thoughtful consideration and dialogue among all stakeholders to design systems that reflect the values of human well-being, respect for differences, equality, and peaceful coexistence.

Appreciative Inquiry and aboriginal values. Returning to the story of the Skownan First Nation introduced above, the Discovery Phase was followed by six community workshops during which possibility statements on eight topics were formulated as "Values, Visions, and Action Plans,"[7] as follows:

- *Respecting the land.* Our people respect the lands and waters. We work to ensure that the land and water are clean and healthy for our children and the animals.
- *Community.* Our people work together to build a strong, safe, and united community for our children and future generations.
- *Family.* Our people spend time with our families to learn from our elders and to pass on our culture, language, and values to our children.
- *Recreation.* Our people build pride, unity, and strength in our bodies and minds through recreation and meditation.
- *Education.* Our people strive for higher education. We complete high school, excel at our jobs, achieve our goals, and bring meaningful employment requiring skills and education back to Skownan First Nation. Our children are educated in our traditional values, and we have the skills, knowledge, and respect needed to survive on the land. Our people speak Ojibway.
- *Spirituality.* Our people respect each other's spirituality or ways be they Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, Native culture, or atheist, and we are free to practice our own beliefs.
- *Livelihoods.* Our people provide for our families through productive works based on traditional activities on the land. Working individually, we support our community as a whole.
- *Health and nutrition.* Our people share food from the land gained through hunting, fishing, trapping and gardening, and learn the traditional medicines from our elders.

An initial action plan was developed to achieve some of the goals identified, such as planting trees, preserving aboriginal culture through the educational system, and maintaining access to and the health of Skownan's traditional lands.

The project concluded with a series of focus-group workshops that enabled the Skownan First Nation people to communicate their values and vision to decision makers, explore the benefits and opportu-

nities of using Appreciative Inquiry, and discuss how to engage in collaborative processes when carrying the work forward with other aboriginal communities.

Destiny Phase: Empowering Inspired, Self-Organized Actions

Some call this phase Destiny, some call it Delivery. Either way, we've discovered that momentum for change and long-term sustainability in organizations increases the more we abandon traditional "delivery" ideas of action planning, building implementation strategies, and monitoring progress. Change in a human system should look more like an inspired movement than a neatly packaged plan or engineered product. The story of GTE (now Verizon), one of the largest telecommunications companies in the United States, is suggestive. Dan Young, the head of organization development at GTE, and his colleagues call it "organizing for change from the grassroots to the frontline." Or, it might be called the path of positive protest or a strategy for positive subversion.

Begun as a pilot at GTE to see what would happen if Appreciative Inquiry were given to frontline employees, things took off. Frontline employees launched interview studies into topics like "innovation," "inspired leadership," "revolutionary customer responsiveness," and "fun." One employee, newly trained in AI, did two hundred interviews into the positive core of a major call center, which handles a large volume of calls from customers. "I'm trying to learn about the best innovations. I see you as someone with insight into creating settings where innovation happens…," the interviews began. Soon these affirmative topics began to find their way into meetings, corridor conversations, and senior planning sessions. The ensuing conversations began to change corporate attention, language, agendas, and knowledge. Other employees started brainstorming AI applications, like surveying customers who were 100 percent *satisfied* with GTE service and changing call-center performance measures from measures of deficits to measures of effectiveness and success.

The pilot attracted requests from new people wanting to participate. Ten regional training sessions linked by satellite conferencing were held. Then the unions raised serious concerns about not having been consulted about this process early on. A meeting was called for the unions and GTE management. At the meeting the leaders of two major unions said they saw something fresh and unique about Appreciative Inquiry. They agreed to bring two hundred union leaders together for an evaluation and vote on AI, to see if it had any place in GTE's future. The outcome was an endorsement of the process, and eight months later, an in-house document announced an historic Statement of Partnership: "The company and the Unions realize

that traditional adversarial labor-management relations must change to adapt to the new global telecommunications marketplace. . . . The company and the Unions have agreed to move in a new direction emphasizing partnership. . . ."[8]

THE 4-D CYCLE IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. The transformation of the SHARED Project, a ten-year project of the international NGO World Learning and funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), into an indigenous, independently supported NGO was a complicated, frustrating, time-consuming, and joyful experience.[9] Begun in 1990 through a USAID–World Learning cooperative agreement, the SHARED project was the single largest source of support for the development of an indigenous NGO sector in Malawi. It provided grants management and technical assistance to more than forty-five organizations in the burgeoning nongovernmental sector. Midway through the agreement, the parties began to realize how important it would be to the goals of sustainable devolvement for the work of SHARED to continue beyond the agreed ten-year framework. They settled on an innovative idea whereby the final outcome of the project would be the creation of an independent indigenous NGO. This new entity would be the means by which the expertise and resources of SHARED would continue as a primary agent of NGO capacity building in Malawi.

The GEM Initiative worked with the parties in designing and carrying out a multi-phased, iterative 4D-Cycle process, which initially involved the core staff of SHARED and later a larger group of stakeholders. One SHARED staff member recalled one workshop as a significant milestone in envisioning the pathway to transformation: "It was at that workshop that the origins of a clear vision, strategy, and process were first hatched. It is surely the clarity from that retreat that had carried us through a very busy, overwhelming, and sometimes frustrating transformation. The breakthrough for me was the involvement of all stakeholders in the process and the chance to make decisions that still guide our actions even today" (GEM Initiative n.d. [1998], 11).

THE APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY SUMMIT

Appreciative Inquiry has been applied in a wide variety of situations and ways.[10] In this section we present one process for applying AI that we have found useful for businesses, nonprofits, and communities and believe holds promise for peacebuilding contexts—the Appreciative Inquiry Summit.[11] We offer here a basic description of the summit process with the hope that readers will adapt it to meet the demands of their own situations.

The AI Summit is a large-group methodology for positive change. While each use of the summit is tailored to the unique situation of a given organization or community, all summits share four common characteristics: they include the whole system; they are focused on a common task; they

are organized around the 4-D Cycle; and they foster dialogue that is affirmative and life giving.

Whether the system is a department, organization, multi-organizational alliance, community, or global social movement, AI summits allow everyone who has an important stake in a particular topic or future vision to join in a face-to-face "dialogue of equals" with others who also share in that stake. In a school summit, for example, students, parents, teachers, administrators, counselors, and community leaders all meet together to chart the course for the school's future. The summit is based on the simple idea that in any system, momentum for change requires large amounts of positive energy and social coordination—things like hope, enthusiasm, inspiration, cooperation, and a shared commitment to build the future together—and that the more engaged people are in the process, the more committed they will be to the change effort.

AI Summits are purposefully focused and are intended to generate dialogue and open up possibilities for action. The purpose may be a business objective (e.g., strategy formation, leadership development, merger and acquisition integration, process improvement, organization design, staffing and retention, customer satisfaction) or a social objective (e.g., economic development, community health, educational reform, environmental preservation, peacebuilding), in addition to being a learning objective (engaging the whole system in learning as much as it can about its history, identity, and modus operandi, including best practices and sources of excellence).

The 4-D Cycle serves as the framework for the summit agenda and supports the group in discovering and tapping into its strengths, envisioning the future its members want, designing the type of system that will enable the realization of their dreams, and then launching action teams to realize the future.

While still in its infancy as a large-group process, the AI Summit methodology has successfully advanced a number of major initiatives, including at medical centers, universities, corporations, international development NGOs, and with other kinds of social-change organizations. The summit was used to craft the innovative union-management partnership at GTE (described above) and to launch the global United Religions Initiative (described in chapter nineteen). Two Brazilian companies, Nutrimental and Dia, have used AI summits to gather all employees together with customers, vendors, distributors, and community leaders—mayors, city planners, educators, environmentalists, etc.—for strategic visioning and planning. The rewards for these two companies have been both qualitative and quantitative, with reduced rates of absenteeism and turnover and with revenues more than doubling.

When to Hold an AI Summit

An AI Summit is the intervention of choice when *the task requires high levels of participation and cooperation.* The ratio of monologue to dialogue during a summit is about 10 percent monologue to 90 percent dialogue among participants. There are no formal leadership presentations. Every person present participates with equal voice and stays the entire time. All stakeholders (or representatives of all stakeholder groups) are included and participate in discussions that span boundaries. The AI Summit is a high-participation, full-voice process.

The AI Summit works best when there is a need to *accelerate the process of change,* as in the case of the Brazilian company Nutrimental. The capacity to bring large numbers of people together in a participatory process builds consensus and momentum in a short period of time and therefore enables system change to occur rapidly and effectively.

Through *experience with highly diverse and at times conflicting groups,* we have discovered the AI Summit's capacity for building and nurturing relationships and cooperation among diverse groups of people involved in high-stakes, high-innovation work. Summit participation affords opportunities for relationship building across levels and functional sectors in the organization or community, as well as with constituencies and community-interest groups. The summit provides a rich field for informal conflict resolution and reconciliation as people work affirmatively together toward the task focus. Sharing stories, getting to know one another's hopes and dreams, and working affirmatively together builds relationships that endure. In addition to any formal mechanisms and structures that may result from visioning and designing at a summit, the informal relationships forged frequently lead to ad hoc cooperation for the good of the organization. Overall, enhanced cooperation is an outcome of the majority of AI summits.

The AI Summit also serves well as the umbrella process when there is a need for *integrating and making sense out of multiple change initiatives.* As a philosophy and methodology it provides a set of principles and practices that enhance participation and hence commitment to change. Change in an organization's internal operations and way of working in the world, for example, requires a phased process of weaving new ways of relating and working throughout the organizational system. When these changes occur via Appreciative Inquiry, the process has integrity and makes sense. The summit serves as an integrating event—a time for envisioning the system in the future and for putting order into all of the change initiatives underway and newly planned.

There is widespread recognition among leaders in many sectors of the benefits of whole-system positive change. When the financial manager of a family-medicine clinic was asked by the director if they could afford to close the clinic for two days to bring all personnel together, his

answer was, "We cannot afford *not* to do it. We need to get everyone involved in crafting our future if we want them on board in making it happen." And so, for the first time in its thirty-year history, the clinic was closed and all one hundred personnel, along with a number of patients, patient advocates, and community members, gathered to chart the course of the clinic's future.

Appreciative Inquiry Summit Design

As a starting point, we present here an illustrative four-day process for an AI Summit for a business or other type of organizational context. This would need to be appropriately adapted for a peacebuilding setting. Each summit draws people together for a unique task, and each group of summit participants has a unique and diverse cultural and geographical mix; a unique set of relationships among stakeholders; and unique ways of expressing its most precious values, honoring relationships, making meaning, and taking decisions. Each type of uniqueness must be considered in designing the AI Summit process to ensure resonance, engagement, and collaboration among participants.

DAY 1–DISCOVERY. The first day's focus is on the discovery of many facets of the organization's positive core. Discovery includes questions such as: "Who are we, individually and collectively?" "What resources do we bring?" "What are our core competencies?" "What hopes and dreams do we have for the future?" "What are the most hopeful macro trends impacting us at this time?" And, "What ways can we imagine going forward together?"

Specific activities of the Discovery Phase include:

- *Setting the task focus*—a brief introduction to the context and purpose of the meeting.
- *Appreciative interviews*—all participants engage in one-on-one interviews organized around the topics of the meeting.
- *Who we are at our best*—small-group recollection of story highlights and best practices discovered during the interview process.
- *Positive-core map*—large-group process to illustrate the strengths, resources, capabilities, competencies, positive hopes and feelings, relationships, alliances, etc., of the organization.
- *Continuity search*—large-group process to create organization, industry (or other organizational context), and global time lines to identify factors that have sustained the organization over time and are desirable in the future.

Day 2–Dream. The second day is a day of envisioning the organization's greatest potential for positive influence and impact in the world. Dialogues are stimulated by questions such as: "We are in the year 2015 and have just awakened from a long sleep. As you wake and look around, you see that the organization is just as you have always wished and dreamed it might be. What is happening? How is the organization different?" Another way of asking the dream question is: "Imagine it is 2015 and your organization has just won an award for the outstanding socially responsible business of the year. What is the award for? What is said about your organization as the award is presented? What are customers saying? What are employees saying? What did it take to win the award?"

Specific activities of the Dream Phase include:

- *Sharing of dreams*—small groups discuss dreams collected during the interview process.
- *Enlivening the dreams*—small groups discuss specific, tangible examples of their dream and develop creative, metaphorical presentations.
- *Enacting the dreams*—group presentations of dramatic dream enactments to the large group.

Day 3–Design. During day three participants focus on designing an organization in which the positive core is boldly alive in all of the strategies, processes, systems, decisions, and collaborations and able to realize its dreams. They craft provocative propositions, affirmative statements of the future organization that are stated in the present tense and stretch the organization toward its dreams. While these are not statements of specific actions to be taken, they are actionable, for example, "At XYZ Company people have widespread access to knowledge, with liberty to make decisions." Such a statement, while highly desirable, will take action to fulfill. It represents the organization's commitment to move in that direction.

Specific activities of the Design Phase include:

- *Creation of the organization design architecture*—large group identifies organization design architecture best suited to their operation.
- *Selection of high-impact organization design elements*—large group draws on interviews and dreams to select high-impact design elements.
- *Crafting of provocative propositions for each organization design element*—small groups draft provocative propositions (design statements) incorporating the positive-change core into the design elements.

Day 4–Destiny. The final day is an invitation to action inspired by the prior days of Discovery, Dream, and Design. For some this is the day they have been waiting for, a time to finally get to work on the specifics of

what will be done! At this point we invite personal and group initiative and self-organizing. We seek to demonstrate the large group's commitment to action and support for those who choose to go forward working on behalf of the whole.

Specific activities include:

- *Generation of possible actions*—small groups brainstorm possible actions and share with the large group.
- *Selection of inspired actions*—individuals publicly declare their intention for action and specify cooperation and support needed.
- *Emergent task groups form*—self-organizing groups meet to plan next steps for cooperation and task achievement.
- *Large group closing.*

A Dramatic Possibility for an AI Peacebuilding Summit

In May 2002, a videoconference brought together six courageous business leaders from Israel, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United States to reflect on the crisis between Palestine and Israel. The session was happening at a time of the worst violence the region had seen in years. The six business leaders were shown together on a large split screen, an image telecast internationally with two hundred other chief executive officers (CEOs) from around the world watching.

The focus of the two-hour conversation was at two levels: What was happening for these business leaders personally, and what was happening with their businesses. At one point Mohammed, a Palestinian CEO, said, "I wrote the word 'hope' on the paper in front of me. The Palestinian people desperately need hope, any kind of hope that there is light at the end of the tunnel."

The teleconference was intense, with tensions and deep feelings expressed. The Israeli CEO Joshua started the session with a shaking voice as he told that members of his wife's family had just been killed by a Palestinian bombing. Mohammed, too, spoke at a personal level of the humiliation and endless delays of going to work each day through Israeli military checkpoints, even while trying to provide jobs for hundreds of employees. Amin, in Saudi Arabia, spoke about the collapse of his business. There were moments of tears, as the raw emotions shared by these business leaders spoke loudly.

The CEOs witnessing the event watched as dialogue shifted the relationships. At one point Mohammed spontaneously offered a prayer to Joshua, the Israeli, sharing the grief of the loss of family members. Others opened up about their fears, hopes for their children, and the sense of exhaus-

tion. Soon there were proposals for collaboration and plans to help each other's businesses—to get supplies and products delivered, raise funds for social-change projects, and more.

Joshua observed that business, perhaps more than any other arena, could be a force for bringing people into positive contact and cooperation. Then someone commented half in jest: "We business leaders should hold our own peace summit, and then after a three or four days of finding pragmatic solutions and shared hopes, we will impose our plans onto the political arena. . . . With our governments paralyzed, it will all be a lot more simple if we get involved. Right?" Everyone laughed, grateful for a moment's comic relief.

Yet after the teleconference, another small group of CEOs met to debrief. One of them said that "many a truth is said in jest." Business might well be one of the few places where good conversation like this can happen, he suggested, and an idea was born. There could be a Middle East summit convened and co-chaired by Palestinian and Israeli CEOs working together. The title: "Business as a Force for Hope: Coming Together to Discover the Postconflict Future We Want to Create." Excitement grew, and someone proposed using Appreciative Inquiry to structure the summit. A foundation agreed to fund the idea.

Almost a year later, with the killing between these two peoples continuing and tensions heightened throughout the Mideast region, the moment has not yet arrived that provides the right kind of opening for this complicated work to proceed. But the possibility continues to give hope, and the idea and funding stand poised, awaiting the arrival of an opportune moment to carry it forward.

WHEN MIGHT WE USE APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY FOR PEACEBUILDING?

As we have introduced Appreciative Inquiry to businesses and communities around the world, we have encountered questions, hesitations, and even strong resistance. On the first day of a workshop in Austria, one participant stood in front of the group and called us naïve and uninformed about the realities of political life in her country. She argued that the situation there and in the world was so "dark and potentially dangerous" that we could not afford to ignore the problems. She was the leader of a growing and highly influential resistance group that was mobilizing against the neo-fascist forces that were then in the political ascendancy in her society. Then, on the third day of the workshop, she made a plea to the group: "Please help me. I see now that resistance is not the strongest way to build the future I want. We must help people believe in themselves and envision the future that they want. I now see that through Appreciative Inquiry can we help people create the world they want, not just resist what they don't want."

Many of our readers may be like this woman, wondering if it is possible to move beyond suspicion, suffering, injustice, abuse, and violence by reframing and dealing with such deeply challenging problems through positive approaches to peacebuilding. We believe it is not only possible, but essential that those of us who deeply desire a just and peaceful world set about creating it—and that we put our hearts, minds, attention, and best efforts to work creating enclaves of peace, points of light that will some day join together in a vibrant show of the best of humanity. And we believe that Appreciative Inquiry as a philosophy and methodology may have something to offer.

In this section we offer five areas we believe may be served by the adaptation and application of Appreciative Inquiry. Each of these ideas builds on those that come before. The result is a progression of possibilities for integrating AI into peacebuilding initiatives. Together they constitute a working hypothesis about how Appreciative Inquiry might be of service to the peacebuilding field.

Reframing the Issue: Transforming Helplessness to Commitment to Action

Appreciative Inquiry has the potential to transform the way people talk about, see, experience, and act upon the situations in their lives. In some cases a reframing of the issue followed by inquiry and dialogue into an affirmative topic may provide a safe opening for initiating communication.

A colleague phoned recently who has been working with a United Nations project in Africa to reduce HIV/AIDS. He told the story of using Appreciative Inquiry with a group of forty government leaders in one African country. Some group members asserted that a key factor contributing to the spread of HIV/AIDS in their country was disrespect for and abuse of women. At first the men among them felt defensive. All of them, men and women, felt helpless to change anything, until they engaged in an Appreciative Inquiry on the topic of "respect for women." Women and men interviewed each other and shared stories of times when men had given respect and women had felt it. Many wept as they heard these stories. Later the men shared what a relief it was to be recognized for the respect they give to women and their capacity to make a difference. The women, after telling their own stories of overcoming oppression and abuse and being listened to, expressed confidence that things could change. Altogether the group realized that education, in general, and health education that specifically supported the women's right to say no to men would increase respect for women and might help stem the tide of HIV/AIDS. They realized that these were indeed things this group of leaders could do, and they committed to doing so.

It is cases like this, as well as our work with conflict situations in business and international development, that give us confidence in the potential of Appreciative Inquiry for reframing situations from helpless to hopeful.

Bringing People Together Who Might Not Otherwise Talk

Among the things essential to peacebuilding is the creation of a safe climate for conversation and a vehicle for people to have equal voice in the process. One of the things that Appreciative Inquiry does best is bring people who might not otherwise talk into deep conversation. The positive focus creates a safe and inviting context for conversation. The choice of "homegrown" affirmative topics assures participants that what they want to discuss and create in their lives is not just *on* the agenda, it *is* the agenda. And the opportunity to meet as equals and tell and hear stories of deep personal meaning and significance can humanize the adversary or *the Other* as little else can. Indeed, the "freedom to be heard" is described by many as one of the key success factors of AI (Whitney and Trosten-Bloom 2003, 241–243).[12]

Some indigenous practices and contemporary restorative justice practice suggest that healing occurs when all parties involved sit in circle and talk—when victims, offenders, community members, law-enforcement officials, and judges join together for sharing and restoration planning. Restorative justice practitioner Thom Allena tells us he is finding that when Appreciative Inquiry is used, these conversations open up more quickly, people are more forthcoming, and resolutions are more collaborative.

Building Confidence and Courage—Healing Through the Positive Core

The theory and practice of trauma healing sees the need for trauma survivors to give voice to their loss and pain. Appreciative Inquiry suggests that healing also requires a remembering of strengths and capacities, a recollection or re-creation of dreams, and a reclaiming of identity in community. These all can occur through the 4-D Cycle.

The developing field of positive psychology (Seligman 1998) concurs with noted psychologist Carl Jung who commented at the end of his career that he had never seen people grow *from* a problem. Instead, he suggested, they grow *toward* some more compelling life force.

We wonder if there might be a three-step process for using Appreciative Inquiry in situations of violence, abuse, and trauma: first, *within groups* of trauma survivors as a way for them to discover and articulate their forgotten strengths and visions and to build confidence and courage to go forward in relation to the Other; second *between groups* in the conflict as a way for parties to meet safely to discuss both their experiences of suffering and loss and also their hopes and dreams for the future; and third, when the *par-*

ties together conduct the process, including interviewing, envisioning, and designing a just and peaceful shared future.

A gradual process such as this might provide time and safety for people who have been harmed to build confidence and heal as they discovered and discussed first their own and then their counterparts' strengths, hopes, and dreams. And finally, it would provide them with an important shared task—the co-creation of their own future. We have found that often when people who consider themselves opponents work together on a task of significance, relational improprieties heal in the process.

Envisioning the Future Together

The Dream Phase of Appreciative Inquiry is different from other visioning methodologies in two important ways. First, it is grounded in stories generated during the discovery interviews. These stories create a context of possibility. If participants know, for example, that someone somewhere or some other community has created a particular kind of program, they are more likely to envision it as a viable part of their future than if they did not know of it. The knowledge of best practices lived elsewhere or experienced at other times enriches dreaming in Appreciative Inquiry.

Second, we ask people to envision the world a better place and then to imagine what and how they can contribute to that image. In this way a group's vision for themselves is integrated into their hopes and dreams for the world, and they become meaningful and essential to the creation of that better world.

Appreciative Inquiry might contribute to peacebuilding by giving people the time and space to discuss and envision the life they want together. Recognizing, however, the power of prevailing policies, politics, and oppressive structures in many conflict situations, the predominant challenges for Appreciative Inquiry would be (1) how to safely and viably get all the relevant and affected parties together and involved in the process, and (2) how to mobilize enough clarity and strength of vision and action to have the necessary transformative effect in changing policies, structures, and systems.

Designing Better Ways of Being Together

Appreciative Inquiry goes beyond values and relationships to the design of programs, policies, and institutions that foster justice, democracy, and health and well-being for all people. In business we use AI to facilitate the creation of democratic, self-organizing systems. In international development we use AI to facilitate the design and establishment of self-determined local organizations. In many peacebuilding contexts there is a profound need for policy and institutional transformation. We believe that the highly participatory, affirmative nature of Appreciative Inquiry might also

serve the creation of cultures of peace, institutions that serve and develop the habits of peace, and ultimately communities at peace.

Give Peace a Chance, Give AI a Chance

At this writing, the philosophy and practice of Appreciative Inquiry is no more than eighteen years old. Its co-originator, David Cooperrider, suggests that even now it is has reached only 5 percent of its potential as a methodology for social transformation and organizational change. In this chapter we've attempted to give an overview of what has been achieved and a taste of what may be possible. The invitation is now for you, the reader, to take up the call and experiment with Appreciative Inquiry, to adapt it to your work and see what more we can learn from it and what new ways the peoples of the world can benefit from its principles, ideas, and practices.

We welcome collaboration among AI practitioners and peacebuilders. We welcome research about Appreciative Inquiry and its potential for peacebuilding at the relational, local, and global levels. We welcome continued opportunities for building bridges across fields to enhance and expand the positive core of peacebuilding. And most importantly, we welcome you into the community of advocates for positive approaches to peacebuilding, a community of people who are being the change they want to see.

ENDNOTES

1. The GEM Initiative was a program of Case Western Reserve University from 1994 to 2001. Funded by the United States Agency for International Development, it provided innovative capacity-building programs in leadership, organizational strengthening, and partnership building for NGOs all over the world. Its signature approach was based on the use of positive-change methodologies, with a special focus on Appreciative Inquiry. Through the GEM program, some one hundred NGOs were exposed to these methodologies and had the experience of using them successfully, often in the most trying of circumstances.
2. This section is excerpted from Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003, 18–19).
3. The following account is drawn from Dorsey (2000).
4. This section is drawn from Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003, 133–134).
5. For an explanation of how to craft appreciative questions, a description of what to do with the stories collected, and forty sample questions, see the *Encyclopedia of Positive Questions* (Whitney, Cooperrider, Trosten-Bloom, and Kaplin 2002).
6. This account, here and continuing in a section below, is drawn from IISD (2001).
7. This is the title of an annex to the project's final report (IISD 2001, 23–30).
8. For more on GTE's use of Appreciative Inquiry, see Cooperrider and Whitney (1999, 7–9) and Whitney, Cooperrider, Garrison, and Moore (2002).

9. This section is drawn from Hlatshwayo, Khalsa, and Muyoya (2000).
10. For an overview of the various forms of engagement for Appreciative Inquiry, see Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003).
11. For a comprehensive description of the AI Summit and its uses, see Ludema, Whitney, Mohr, and Griffin (2003).
12. The other five freedoms commonly associated with Appreciative Inquiry are: the freedom to be known in relationship; the freedom to dream in community, the freedom to choose to contribute, the freedom to act with support, and the freedom to be positive (Whitney and Trosten-Bloom 2003, 238–251).

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The world we have made as a result of the level of thinking we have done thus far creates problems we cannot solve at the same level of thinking at which we created them.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

CHAPTER THREE

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY IN PEACEBUILDING:
IMAGINING THE POSSIBLE

Claudia Liebler and Cynthia Sampson

This chapter integrates insights from the two previous chapters by relating the theoretical underpinnings and practice of Appreciative Inquiry to those of conflict resolution and peacebuilding. It also relates the foundations of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) to a number of the case studies of positive approaches to peacebuilding in this volume. The chapter concludes by exploring how the AI 4-D Cycle of Discovery, Dream, Design, and Delivery has been, or might be, applied in peacebuilding contexts; and it illustrates some of the ways in which the design of the AI process can be contextualized for different types of conflict settings.

This chapter weaves together the threads of what has come before and also provides a "gateway" to the chapters that follow. In chapter one, we looked at the evolution of the peacebuilding field, key assumptions and principles of peacebuilding, and examples of positive elements in existing peacebuilding practice. In chapter two we were introduced to the theory and practice of Appreciative Inquiry as it evolved from organizational settings, primarily in business, to applications in international development and other social-change arenas. The second chapter ended by offering a vision of five possible ways in which Appreciative Inquiry (AI) might be brought to the service of peacebuilding: by helping transform a sense of helplessness to a commitment to action; by bringing people together who might not otherwise talk; by building courage and confidence for posttraumatic healing; by assisting conflict parties in envisioning the future together; and by designing better ways of being together.

In this chapter we pick up the threads of that vision and look more concretely at how Appreciative Inquiry has been and might be applied in peacebuilding.[1] We begin by exploring the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of Appreciative Inquiry with reference to peacebuilding and then relate AI's 4-D Cycle—Discovery, Dream, Design, Delivery—directly to the practice

of peacebuilding. A key purpose in the latter task is to illustrate some of AI's potential for adaptation and improvisation in peacebuilding contexts.

This chapter continues in an exploratory spirit. It does not presume to have glimpsed all of the possibilities or to have all of the answers. Far from it, we offer it instead as a further invitation to you, the reader, to explore, expand, adjust, and adapt the ideas and practices presented here. As you do, we hope you will share with us your experiences, your challenges, and your triumphs, however small or large.[2]

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Appreciative Inquiry has been described as,

> the cooperative search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves systematic discovery of what gives a system "life" when it is most effective and capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. AI involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to heighten positive potential. (Cooperrider and Whitney 1999, 10)

An Appreciative Inquiry might be viewed as a journey—but not the kind that you plan three months ahead and have all of your rooms and excursions booked in advance. This journey involves improvisation and a certain amount of risk. It begins with a general vision of the direction and an idea of the type of trip you're embarking on, but leaves a lot of room for the unexpected to happen along the way. As on any journey, there are certain provisions to take along. In this section we explore the major concepts and theories that drive the Appreciative Inquiry process, particularly as they relate to peacebuilding.

Major Concepts of Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry was developed in the mid-1980s by David Cooperrider and his colleagues studying organizational behavior at the Weatherhead School of Management of Case Western Reserve University. Drawing on research from such fields as organizational behavior, psychology, medicine, education, and sociology, as well as their own extensive experience in working with organizations, they challenged the traditional theories of change and created a new set of ideas that have been tested and further shaped by practitioners in the intervening years. Some of the most important concepts that underlie Appreciative Inquiry are the following:

IMAGE AND ACTION ARE LINKED. Cooperrider's research, drawing examples from diverse fields, has shown quite clearly that our actions are linked to our image of the future (1990). Perhaps the best known of the the-

ories demonstrating this are the placebo effect, from the field of medicine, and the Pygmalion dynamic, from education.

The widely documented placebo studies dating from the mid-1950s in the United States have shown that people given sugar pills but believing they are taking real medicine get well at about the same rate as those taking actual medicine. Though controversial for some twenty years, most in the medical profession now accept that anywhere from one-third to two-thirds of all patients will show marked physiological and emotional improvement in symptoms simply by believing that they are being given an effective treatment (Beecher 1955; White, Tursky, and Schwartz 1985).

The Pygmalion studies, carried out in U.S. classrooms in the 1960s (Rosenthal and Jacobson 1968), demonstrated the power of the image that another person holds of us, positive or negative, in affecting both that person's behavior toward us and also in shaping our performance. In these studies teachers were told that one group of students was not very intelligent, tended to do poorly, and was often not well behaved in the classroom. The second group was described as bright, hard working, and successful. The teacher believed this to be fact, while in actuality the division of students into these groups was completely random. Within one semester, almost without exception, those labeled as poor students were performing poorly and those labeled good students were excelling. It was shown that the image the teacher held of the students' future potential affected the teacher's actions in displaying more patience with the positively construed students, having more eye contact, offering more praise, and so forth. These experiments were considered so damaging that they were discontinued.

Groups that are successful tend to be those that have a positive guiding image that is widely shared and galvanizes action. In the Appreciative Inquiry 4-D Cycle, therefore, participants spend a great deal of time in creating a shared vision. Likewise in peacebuilding, linking images and actions is the ultimate objective for the practitioner using processes designed to replace the negative image of war and the enemy or dehumanized *Other* (linked to negative and destructive actions) with a different set of images and actions. In this volume, for example, we see how the development of a common vision for peaceful community by former adversaries helped develop a culture of peace in the violence-prone Usulutan province of El Salvador (chapter five); and how a transformed image of the Other led to breakthroughs in understanding and establishment of relationship between former adversaries in the aftermath of World War II in Europe (chapter eleven), in South Africa (chapter fifteen), and in Bosnia (chapter seventeen).

Groups move in the direction of the questions they ask. The kinds of questions people ask determine what they will find, and what they find then sets the direction for the journey toward change. In peacebuilding, this has tremendous implications for interveners first entering a

conflict situation, not only with regard to the substance of the questions, but also with regard to how the questions affect the parties' perceptions of themselves, the Other, and their collective potential for constructive change. A motivating question in the peacebuilding arena is, "What resources, conditions, practices, and relationships are present in the system that promote peace?" This approach is well illustrated in a strategic opportunities assessment of Guinea-Conakry conducted by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, which sought out the peace-generating capacities inherent in Guinean society (see chapter eight).

ALL HUMAN SYSTEMS HAVE SOMETHING TO VALUE ABOUT THEIR PRESENT OR THEIR PAST. All systems, no matter how troubled, can find practices, experiences, or ways of being that work well or have at some time in their history. (See, for example, the remarkable history of creative coexistence between Muslims, Jews, and Christians in Muslim Spain and the medieval Mediterranean, described in chapter seven.) Appreciative Inquiry draws the analytical focus to these types of factors—the root causes of success—as the basis for change action, instead of looking for deficits or what is problematic or lacking in the system.

Mary Anderson writes, "Even when war erupts, local capacities for peace exist. Peace capacities are important because they provide the base on which future peace can and must be built." She identifies five categories of peace capacities as systems and institutions, attitudes and actions, shared values and interests, common experiences, and symbols and occasions (1999, 24). In the language of Appreciative Inquiry, peace capacities such as these are *positive-core elements* in the conflict system, which are discovered through inquiry and provide the foundations for visioning, planning, and implementing system change. By preceding the visioning process with inquiry aimed at discovering these affirmative values, social strengths, cultural and religious resources, indigenous conflict resolution practices, successful experiences in living with difference, and other positive-core elements, action toward change is grounded in the realities of the system at its best.

Five Principles of Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry is guided by five key principles. In many ways, peacebuilding is guided by these same principles, although they are often not made explicit in theory or practice. In this section we define each of the principles and discuss how they relate to peacebuilding.

CONSTRUCTIONIST PRINCIPLE. We can create what we can imagine. The *constructionist principle* states that we collectively make meaning of our world based on our habits, traditions, teachings, and how we view our very identity. What we believe to be real in the world is created through our social discourse and the conversations we have with one another.

These conversations lead to agreement about how we see the world, how we will behave, and what we will accept as reality. The ways in which we commonly understand the world, the categories and concepts we use, are historically and culturally specific. Our categories depend on when and where in the world we live.

This impacts our experience of conflict. For John Paul Lederach: ". . . a constructionist view suggests that people act on the basis of the meaning things have for them. Meaning is created through shared and accumulated knowledge. People from different cultural settings have developed many ways of creating and expressing as well as interpreting and handling conflict" (1995, 10). Meaning is not fixed, and new meaning is created continually through new experiences and new forms of shared and accumulated knowledge.

The effective peacebuilder in any situation, therefore, must be skilled in the art of reading, understanding, and analyzing conflict as a living, human construction. What we believe to be true about a conflict—that is the way that we "know" it—will affect the way we act and the way we approach change in that system. (See, for example, the role that the rewriting of conflict narratives had in transforming a formerly adversarial relationship in post-apartheid South Africa [chapter fifteen].) The first task for a peacebuilder, then, is to understand how people have shaped their meaning systems in regard to their own community and their constructed enemy.

We note here, however, that the social constructionist reading of conflict is not universally held by practitioners and advocates of positive approaches to peacebuilding, or at least is not seen as a fully adequate explanation of conflict behavior and dynamics. In considering the potential contribution of Appreciative Inquiry in complex peacebuilding and development contexts, Mary Hope Schwoebel and Erin McCandless challenge the notion that we have ultimate power to create our life opportunities and re-create our life circumstances (see chapter ten). They argue that we are born with or into many conditions of life or that they may be structurally determined by the institutions, environmental conditions, or cultural practices that surround us.

Poetic principle. In any culture, a people's past, present, and future are endless sources of learning, inspiration, interpretation, and possibility, just as a good poem is open to endless interpretations. The *poetic principle* acknowledges that people and their culture are open books, constantly being coauthored by the people themselves, as well as by those outside who interact with them. The poetic principle values storytelling as a way of gathering holistic information that includes not only facts, but feelings, and of getting beyond the verifiable data to the most meaningful and inspiring moments in the life of the individual, group, community, or society. In dialogue groups involving gay and evangelical Christians in California, for example, intimate and moving stories of religious and personal experiences

were shared that enabled a deep level of connection among Christians who were otherwise deeply divided on theological interpretations regarding homosexuality (see chapter fourteen).

Stories carry meaning and truths that elude even the most sophisticated documentation systems. In peacebuilding, using approaches that elicit meaningful stories it is possible to access learning that is embedded in cultures and people's experiences to create culturally appropriate and sustainable strategies for peace.

PRINCIPLE OF SIMULTANEITY. The seeds of change are embedded in the questions we ask. The *principle of simultaneity* recognizes that inquiry and change are not separate moments, but are simultaneous, and therefore inquiry is also intervention. Not only does the way we go about analyzing conflicts and assessing needs determine what we find, but the questions lead to the stories that create the conversations that shape how people in conflict will construct their future.

One of the most impactful things a peacebuilder does is to formulate questions. To draw an example from this book, appreciative interviews on the topic of posttraumatic healing and growth, which were conducted with peacebuilders who had themselves survived trauma, not only yielded meaningful insight on the topic for the researcher conducting the interviews, but also provided new insight and perspective for the interviewees. This helped several of them appreciate how far they had come on their own healing journeys and strengthened their confidence and resolve to continue to support the trauma healing of others (chapter sixteen).

ANTICIPATORY PRINCIPLE. We anticipate the future based on the images we hold in the present. These images are guided by habits of the collective imagination. The *anticipatory principle* recognizes that our behavior is based not just on what we were born with or have learned from our environment, but also on what we anticipate, what we think or imagine will happen in the future.

This principle is critical in peacebuilding. People in conflict anticipate negative, hurtful behavior on the part of the Other, based on past experience. Sometimes this anticipation continues even in the face of new evidence to the contrary. Working to dislodge the deeply held images of conflict and allow more positive images to emerge is at the core of peacebuilding.

Examples abound in this volume of efforts to engage the positive imagination in giving birth to new images of the future. To cite one particularly creative example, an original song and storytelling project, created in response to the "9/11" terrorist attacks in the United States, put forward a vision of how one high school could change the world and bring an end to wars. As this vision reached wider and wider audiences, it triggered ripples of response in that high school and far beyond (see appendix to chapter six and compact disc included with this book).

Affirmative principle. A positive stance is just as contagious as a negative stance. There is power in positive questions. The *affirmative principle* carries the key idea that if image leads to action, a positive image leads to positive action. In peacebuilding, the accessing of hope in situations that appear hopeless is essential if parties are to persevere in creating a different future. Positive inquiry can be an antidote to cynicism.

This principle does, however, depart from the mainstream of peacebuilding practice, which is focused on analysis of the root causes of conflict for the purpose of eliminating them. In peacebuilding, as we shall see in number of chapters in this book, a stance of "both-and" is most often warranted. We must give voice to the stories of trauma, loss, and pain *and* help the survivors recognize their own resilience, courage, and strength to move on and grow beyond trauma. We must allow respectful acknowledgement of past injustices *and* encourage positive visioning of the future as a way of creating positive change. We saw, for example, in chapter two how the sharing of "war stories" allowed the staff of the Christian Extension Services in Sierra Leone to appreciate their own and their agency's strengths exhibited during the war crisis and to plant the seeds of new vision.

JOURNEYING WITH APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY: AN INVITATION TO EXPERIMENT

We turn now to exploring how Appreciative Inquiry has been or might be practiced in peacebuilding contexts. Typically when people hear about Appreciative Inquiry for the first time, whether practitioners or prospective participants, a number of questions come naturally to mind.

Can Appreciative Inquiry make a difference in situations of deep-rooted ethnic and political conflict? Can this way of working that has grown out of the field of organizational development be used with whole societies as they work toward the transformation of relationships, structures, and systems? Can it redress injustice and transform unequal power relationships? Can AI help people dealing with intolerance, fear, mistrust, and hate?

For those involved in destructive conflict, the questions can be quite personal. Will focusing on the positive oversimplify the complicated situation I find myself in and trivialize, suppress, or overlook my grief and pain? Will my voice be heard? Will my grievances be fully aired and considered? How can I trust my enemy with personal stories of violation and loss?

We invite you to take up questions such as these and try on these ideas, by using the full 4-D Cycle of Appreciative Inquiry or parts of it and adapting it to the specifics and needs of your context. Far from a rigid, formulaic process, there are almost as many potential applications of AI as there are practitioners who use it. In the remainder of this chapter we suggest some ways to think about using AI in peacebuilding, beginning with

identifying some of the other arenas of practice where helpful resources might be found.

Arenas of Appreciative Inquiry Practice

Although the bulk of the experience with Appreciative Inquiry has been in building organizational capacity in businesses and nonprofit organizations, AI has also been used to

- build global and regional coalitions and networks of social-change organizations, such as the Mountain Institute (Kaczmarski 1996) and the United Religions Initiative (see chapter nineteen; and Gibbs and Mahé [2003]);
- to strengthen partnerships between international and indigenous nongovernmental organizations (see Catholic Relief Service's *Partnership Toolbox* [Kinghorn 2001]);
- to empower communities to discover and more effectively use their distinctive strengths and assets in building a better future (see Imagine Nagaland [chapter nine], and the project that inspired it, Imagine Chicago [Cooperrider 1996; Browne 2001; Belsie 2001]; see also Chupp [2002] on the use of AI in an interracial conflict in a Cleveland neighborhood);
- and to design and implement a wide range of literacy, education, health, agriculture, and other types of socioeconomic development programs (see examples in chapter two; see also Ole Sena and Booy [1997]; Liebler and Roche [1998]; Odell [2002]).

In addition, much healthy experimentation is taking place with appreciative ideas, for example, in the integration of appreciative processes with Future Search, a large-group visioning and change-action methodology (Weisbord and Janoff 1995; Kaczmarski and Khalsa 1997; United Nations Children's fund 2000); with Open Space Technology, a methodology for organizing meetings through self-managed work groups and distributive leadership (Owen 1997a; 1997b; Open Space Institute n.d. [2003]); and in the strengths-based approaches created by the Asset-Based Community Development Institute (Kretzmann and McKnight 1993).

Around the world today, Appreciative Inquiry and other positive-change approaches are being tried and adapted to local peacebuilding settings, as many of the chapters in this book attest. AI and peacebuilding practitioners are part of a larger movement of those exploring positive approaches to transformation in order to invigorate change processes with hope, possibility, creativity, and self-directed change.

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY PROCESS IN PEACEBUILDING

In this section we look at some of the ways in which the AI 4-D Cycle might be used in peacebuilding settings. But first we look at some preparatory steps to assess the appropriateness of using Appreciative Inquiry in a particular setting and, if deemed appropriate, to lay the groundwork for doing so.

Preparing for an Appreciative Inquiry Process

To engage effectively in an AI process in peacebuilding, the conflict parties must be ready to turn toward building a new future together. It is important to allow time to explore whether Appreciative Inquiry is the right vehicle for them to take a next step. By sharing an overview of the philosophy and the 4-D Cycle, discussing the level of willingness to engage in a positive process for change, and sharing hopes, expectations, and fears about what could emerge, a safe space for beginning this work can be created.

There are a number of indications as to whether a situation is particularly well suited for this approach. They include:

- Is there a shared sense that the time is right to begin working toward a positive future?
- Do the leaders have some level of comfort with appreciative ideas?
- Is there some experience among group members of using participatory processes?
- Are there some group members who are risk takers?
- Are there some who are able to see possibilities that others cannot?
- Does the environment (do stakeholders, the government stance, conflict dynamics, global events, etc.) support change?

If these conditions exist, the potential for change is present. Even when these indications are not present, however, the process might be used to help create them, for example, by doing some initial appreciative work with the parties individually (see below). So Appreciative Inquiry may still be a valuable way to move forward.

Designing the AI process in peacebuilding—variations on a theme. Once a decision is made to proceed, the preparatory phase moves ahead with designing the overall process to be used for the Appreciative Inquiry. Each situation is unique, and AI has the capacity to adapt and adjust to take advantage of the resources within each situation and be informed by its constraints.

In the peacebuilding context, it may be appropriate to move through the 4-D Cycle more than once or to use the first steps in the cycle, Discovery and Dream, in some initial work with the conflict parties individually before attempting to undertake a full joint process. In that case, the

first round would involve an inquiry into the positive-core elements—the values, strengths, capacities, resources for peace, and experiences of cooperation across differences—as well as some initial visioning within the individual groups. These stories and dreams would then be exchanged between the groups as the first step toward bringing them into dialogue. If the groups have some history of living in relationship, the second round would then be a joint inquiry into the positive core of their intergroup relationship, to discover the possibilities for creating a constructive relationship and provide the basis for visioning a shared future of peaceful coexistence. We see this two-phased approach illustrated in the model for an Appreciative Dialogue Workshop proposed to address an interstate conflict between Bolivia and Chile (see chapter thirteen).

The scope and conduct of the Discovery Phase inquiry may be varied in other ways as well. If the inquiry includes all parties touched in some way by the conflict, it could potentially involve hundreds of interviews with people from all sectors of the affected groups or societies. An inquiry of this scope might take several months to complete. Once the data has been collected and compiled, a representative group of the various stakeholders might then come together to work with the data and move through the 4-D Cycle in creating a vision of the future, designing the social architecture needed to support the vision, and charting next steps toward implementation.

Or, the inverse configuration might be warranted in which interviews (or the full 4-D Cycle) are conducted in microcosm in a workshop setting and then replicated with a larger group if momentum is created for further engagement. A third variant in process design would be for all participants, whether a dozen or dozens, to come together to work through the 4-D Cycle over a several-day period, in which case the Discovery Phase would take place on day one. (See the day-by-day description of the Appreciative Inquiry Summit in chapter two).

Finally, two variants in the actual conduct of the interviews are worthy of note for the peacebuilding context. The typical approach is to have one-on-one interviews, either in pairs of participants at an AI workshop or summit or by dispatching interviewers to conduct interviews with individuals in the larger society. One peacebuilding variant would be to have interviews conducted by pairs of individuals coming from different sides in the conflict, so that both may engage interviewees and their stories from different sides of the conflict and so the interviewer pairs can begin to build a common narrative out of the shared experience. The second would be would be for individuals to spontaneously conduct informal interviews virtually on the spot, as opportunities presented themselves, using an interview guide prepared in advance. This approach might work well in situations in which hostility

between the parties or logistical restrictions (e.g., on travel) do not allow members to work together as a group at the initial stages of the process.

There are many ways in which the inquiry can be conducted, but the purpose in every case remains the same: to discover the positive-core elements in the system and to use this discovery data to help create an image of the future. Additional purposes served in the peacebuilding context are that parties discover new ways of viewing the conflict and that conflict meaning systems are transformed through personal connection and through exploring affirmative topics with individuals deemed "the adversary."

Once agreement has been achieved to use Appreciative Inquiry and an overall plan developed, the process moves to the first stage of the 4-D Cycle, the Discovery Phase.

Discovery Phase: Collecting Stories of Peace Capacities

The core task in the Discovery Phase is to uncover and appreciate the best of "what is" and "what has been." Empowering and hopeful ideas almost always emerge from stories that are grounded in a system at its best. The goal is to help the participants come to understand their relationship as one of positive possibility rather than a static, problematized set of conditions or events.

In peacebuilding this involves focusing on the local capacities for peace within the individual groups and in the intergroup relationship. In conflicts with longstanding hostilities, discovery may mean inquiring into and learning from even the smallest examples of constructive interaction in what is otherwise a highly conflictual relationship. For parties with no shared history of positive relationship, inquiry focuses on analogous situations of building relationship across other lines of division in the experience of the parties.

Affirmative peacebuilding topics. Appreciative Inquiry begins and ends with valuing that which gives life to human systems—the discovery of the "life-giving" story, which in the peacebuilding context is the "justpeace-promoting" story—as it is understood and related by the people involved. The path to discovery is through the selection of affirmative topics for inquiry. AI topics are those qualities of the system that members want to discover more about and that will lead to conversations about the kind of future they most desire.

In peacebuilding, if identification of affirmative topics proves challenging for groups in conflict, it may be easier for them to identify things that are undesirable and then reframe them affirmatively. If, for example, a group wants to stop outbreaks of violence between two factions, reframing would be prompted by the questions: "What is it that you would like to see

instead of violence? How would things look if the violence ended?" The affirmative topic might be "caring and cooperation across boundaries." Some other possible peacebuilding topics are:

- "improbable pairs"—finding partners for peacebuilding on the other side
- religious and cultural resources for peace
- breakthrough moments in understanding the Other
- courageous acts of compassion
- fearlessly witnessing the truth
- forgiving and being forgiven
- new growth out of the ashes
- boundary spanners (people who move across lines of division)

APPRECIATIVE QUESTIONS IN PEACEBUILDING. The next step is to develop interview questions to fully explore the selected topics. Good appreciative interview questions spark the appreciative imagination by helping the person locate experiences that are worth valuing; evoking essential values and aspirations; bringing out that which is inspiring, energizing, mobilizing; instilling hope; and opening up possibilities for positive change.

Three interview guides illustrating many types of appreciative questions that were developed for peacebuilding contexts are included in Appendix A to this chapter. The first guide was used at the conference "Positive Approaches to Peacebuilding: A Practitioners' Exploration" in September 2001. The second was designed to elicit stories of inner strength and personal growth out of difficult or "trying times." The third was used to initiate dialogue and planning at the founding meeting of a forum of religious leaders in November 1998.

Dream Phase: Visioning the Justpeace Ideal

The mental images and conversations of people in a system both drive and limit its activities; therefore to expand, enhance, or change the system, its image must be reconstructed through conversations among those who participate in and are impacted by it. The Dream Phase involves participants in bold conversations that challenge the way things are done and push the creative edges of possibility in realizing the ideal.

In peacebuilding, dreaming and visioning of a better future is crucial to sustaining hope and fortifying the resolve of individuals to continue to work for peace. Keeping their dream alive may be a matter of survival for people in a conflict zone. Yet for most people locked in conflict with one another, this will be the first time they have been invited to think great thoughts and create grand possibilities together. The process of

jointly imagining and constructing a shared future with one's adversary requires courage and risk taking, but if accomplished, it can empower and provide a strong impetus for joint action. The story of Imagine Nagaland (see chapter nine) illustrates how AI discovery and dreaming creatively involved a diverse group of stakeholders, from children to government officials, in developing compelling visions for strengthening the social, political, and economic infrastructure of that northeast Indian state, which has seen decades of often-armed struggle for self-determination.

During the Dream Phase, participants create possibility statements (or provocative propositions) that describe their most desired future, as if it were already a reality. These statements stretch the way things are, challenge common assumptions or routines, express real desires, and suggest possibilities for system change. One of the ways facilitators assist participants in accessing and creating their vision of the future is by using a guided imagery exercise. A sample guided imagery exercise on the topic of "creative coexistence in my community" is included in Appendix B.

Possibility statements are visionary blueprints for pursuing the joint dreams of the AI participants. They are both imaginative and real. They contain the seeds of hope for a different future and yet are realizable. An example of a possibility statement that captures a dream for peaceful coexistence in Jerusalem, drawn from the real history Muslim-Jewish-Christian coexistence in medieval Spain (see chapter seven), is found in Figure 1.

Figure 1
SAMPLE POSSIBILITY STATEMENT

In Jerusalem's bustling markets, Muslims, Jews, and Christians come together to build a world of enlightenment. It is a time when these three communities are living together in harmony, neither oppressing nor being oppressed. The society in this era is being studied worldwide, not only for its intellectual excellence emanating from new knowledge being jointly created in the arts, sciences, medicine, engineering, philosophy, and literature, but also for its principles of tolerance and creative coexistence. Coexistence is modeled not on the melting-pot theory, but rather on the interchange of different points of view through wide-ranging dialogue.

Design Phase: Creating the Infrastructure to Realize the Dream

The Design Phase involves aligning values, structures, and processes with the vision for change and designing the social architecture that will be needed to support the envisioned future and ensure the feasi-

bility of its implementation. Here, the participants begin to think about the kinds of changes that are needed in the institutional, social, political, and economic arrangements currently governing the system to allow their vision to be realized. One way for doing this is to write more detailed possibility statements about each part the system and its ways of functioning.

In peacebuilding contexts, social architecture might include some or all of the following elements, among others:

- laws, policies, agreements
- institutions, structures, systems
- communication mechanisms
- dispute-resolving mechanisms
- education and training
- multicultural approaches
- relations with the broader community.
- joint activities and projects
- strategies for sustainability

For peacebuilding, the Design Phase must address desired change at three levels: interpersonal, subsystem, and macro systems. Special attention is also needed to support the transfer of attitudinal change into the participants' home communities and to design elements that will sustain their energies and ensure their safety upon returning home.

Delivery Phase: Organizing to Begin Implementation

In the final, Delivery Phase of Appreciative Inquiry, the group plans concrete steps for realizing the vision and implementing the design. Typically, task groups form to initiate planning around different aspects of the vision and design; and in the best case scenario, dialogue continues beyond the immediate session, with new rounds of inquiry carried out at key junctures in the implementation process or as new members become involved. The Delivery Phase is a time of continuous learning, adjustment, and improvisation.

Action planning is, of course, integral to virtually any conflict resolution intervention as a necessary step toward implementation. Sound implementation planning is vital in peacebuilding contexts in which so often agreements are signed and celebrated yet crumble or face major challenges in their implementation. Increasingly, emphasis is being placed on delivery and monitoring mechanisms as equally crucial to the sustainability of peace as the terms of the agreement. An added serious concern in peacebuilding, alluded to above, is the "reentry factor," which involves the immediate safety and credibility of participants as they return to their communities and

risk facing hostile constituencies who perceive them as having met with "the enemy." Thus the nature, scope, and intensity of the delivery and monitoring mechanisms carry the added weight of the real issues of participant credibility and safety, as well as of not undermining or working at cross purposes with the larger peace process within which the Appreciative Inquiry process may be embedded.

If full implementation of the vision and design seems daunting and beyond the ability of the participant group to fully plan for, they can look at delivery through the lens of "appreciate-influence-control." This involves identifying the parts of the social architecture and the specific aspects of the design that are within their immediate purview and ability of to either influence or control. This can help establish a strategy for setting implementation in motion, with checkpoints identified and additional rounds of Delivery Phase planning convened as appropriate and necessary along the way.

CONCLUSION

We close by touching briefly on some of the conjunctions between Appreciative Inquiry and peacebuilding and some outstanding questions that must be carried further into the book's explorations.

In chapter one, Mohammed Abu-Nimer presented a number of core assumptions and principles of peacebuilding. Peacebuilders assume, for example, that conflict is often a source of needed change and as such is neither good nor bad except in the ways in which it is pursued. Conflict can be a creative, constructive force for dealing with competing values, interests, goals, and needs, provided it is resolved nonviolently and in ways that empower all of the parties to collaborate creatively in problem solving. Peacebuilding assumes that "people are not the problem," and peacebuilders seek to treat every individual with dignity and respect. It is also assumed, however, that a change in the parties' perceptions of and communication patterns with one another is essential both to the resolution of the issues in the conflict and also to the creation of sustainable relationship among them.

Except for the difference in the analytical focus of Appreciative Inquiry, namely, its lack of problem orientation, these peacebuilding assumptions are all congruent with the AI philosophy of change and principles of practice. AI shares two core assumptions with peacebuilding that empower all parties to participate collaboratively and creatively in producing change. The first is that diverse participation in the process produces better outcomes, not only by ensuring that a range of viewpoints is represented, but also in providing a source of creativity and innovation. The second is that outcomes are more sustainable when all stakeholders participate in creating them. The AI process honors each individual and empowers every participant to contribute fully out of the best of who they are and what they can be.

It has the potential to transform perceptions and relationships by connecting participants with the goodness and humanity of the Other, as well as by engaging them together in creative visioning and mobilizing for action.

A second set of peacebuilding assumptions outlined by Abu-Nimer relates to systemic issues. It is assumed that the sustainability of outcomes also requires the transformation of dominant power relationships in the society and that agreements be supported concrete actions of social, political, and economic change. It is to these types of relational and systemic changes that Appreciative Inquiry as a methodology for whole-system change is dedicated and for which it has been tested in organizational systems of many kinds, including very large and complex organizations. Exactly how this experience will translate and adapt to social systems in conflict, however, is perhaps the leading question before us in this book.

This brings us to the take-off point of delving more deeply into what is known so far about Appreciative Inquiry in peacebuilding and positive approaches more broadly. The coming sections present seventeen chapters on applications, most of which are case studies and all of which give some clues to the answers for—or at least help to further illuminate—this and other real and compelling questions about positive approaches to peacebuilding.

ENDNOTES

1. Parts of this chapter have been adapted, with permission, from the practitioner's handbook of the Global Excellence in Management (GEM) Initiative of Case Western Reserve University (GEM Initiative 1999). We wish to extend warm appreciation to five colleagues who met with us for a day and contributed from the wealth of their experience and ideas in relating the theory and practice of Appreciative Inquiry to that of peacebuilding: Mohammed Abu-Nimer, Mark Chupp, Jayne Docherty, Susanna McIlwaine, and Nancy Good Sider.
2. Please contact us at: Positive Approaches to Peacebuilding, c/o Pact Publications, 1200 18th Street, NW, Suite 350, Washington, D.C. 20036 (tel: 202-466-5666, fax: 202-466-5669).

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

AI Practitioner. Online newsletter. http://www.aipractitioner.com/Pagefiles/newsletter.htm.

Appreciative Inquiry Discussion List. Hosted by David Eccles School of Business, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah. http://mailman.business.utah.edu:8080/mailman/listinfo/ailist.

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Appendix A

SAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDE 1

Positive Approaches to Peacebuilding: A Practitioners' Exploration*

MOMENTS OF MAGNIFIED MEANING

Each of us, over the past couple weeks since September 11, at some level wonders what possible good—what new understandings, awareness, energies, relationships, spiritual insights, and perspectives—will come out of this moment? Surely there are many answers, most of which are not yet visible.

- What compels or draws you to this conference, and can you share some of the heartfelt hopes that are stirring in you, both about this conference on Positive Approaches to Peacebuilding and your hopes for the world? What is the most important thing stirring in you right now, and how do you sense that it relates to your future work or your larger sense of purpose?
- Moments like this offer the opportunity for shifts, big and small. But openings do not last forever, and one way to keep such openings vital and expansive is to magnify meaningful stories through conversation with others. Will you share one story, image, or powerful quote—either from the news or your own experience of recent days—that provided you with a precious image, new understanding, or appreciation of what we as human beings, in the positive sense, are capable of?

PEACEBUILDING EXPERIENCES: AN IMPORTANT STORY FROM YOUR LIFE

You, as well as everyone here, have been active in peacebuilding—in relationships, in organizations, in communities, in societies. Certainly there have been ups and downs, peaks and valleys, high points and low points.

- As you do a quick scan of your experiences in peacebuilding, please share a story of one powerful experience or initiative that stands out as something of an exceptional or extraordinary nature—a time when you felt particularly effective, challenged, alive, transformed, and found yourself learning? We're especially interested in a story when you felt

* This interview guide was developed for the conference, "Positive Approaches to Peacebuilding: A Practitioners' Exploration," held at American University in Washington, D.C., September 28–29, 2001.

like you used your full capacities and felt you were able to draw out the best in the others you were working with.

- If we now had a conversation with some people who know you the very best and asked them to share, what are the three best qualities they see in you—qualities or capabilities that you bring to peacemaking—what would *they* say?

LEADING EXEMPLARS WHOSE EXAMPLE YOU WANT TO MAGNIFY

- In your life, who is someone who has stood out to you as a great example of a peacemaker? What was or is it like to be around this person? How has he or she inspired you? How did this person do their work and live their life?

VISION OF A POST-TERRORIST WORLD AND ROLE OF PEACEBUILDING

- Let's assume that today, after this conference, we were to go into a sound sleep. When we awaken, it is ten years into the future—the year is 2011. While we were asleep, many small and large miracles happened, and the world changed and was constituted in ways you would most like to see it—for yourself, for children, for grandchildren, for nature, etc. Now you awaken. You go out into the world and get a panoramic view. You are happy with what you see. It's the kind of world you most want to be part of. So now, share highlights of what you see: What do you see happening that is new, better, healthy, and good?
- Now, more specifically, how did the field of peacebuilding, however you would define it, help bring about this change? Visualize the kinds of partnerships, projects, practices that were created and used. What do they look like?

CREATING EPIDEMICS OF POSITIVE CHANGE

Jonas Salk, M.D., would ask people three simple but powerful questions. None were medical questions about illness. In Salk's view "health" was not simply the absence of disease. It was qualitatively different and vastly more. He wanted people to discover, through systematic study and positive awareness, those things that they do that make them healthy. He was amazed with the wisdom people possessed and the varieties of techniques, behaviors, and lessons they identified. He would conclude each conversation with a request: Please share your insights with as many people as possible. Salk's great hope was to discover the means and methods "to create an epidemic of health." He realized that no action, no conversation, no thought was too small, in fact, that most tipping points have very small beginnings, but they reverberate.

- If anything at all imaginable were possible, how would you ignite or catalyze an epidemic of positive change?

SAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDE 2

Trying Times**

DRAWING ON INNER STRENGTH

Life is full of challenges, failures, and even tragic events that we cannot avoid but must live through. Often during these times we discover an inner source of strength, a hidden reserve of energy and love, that is just what we needed to make it through.

- Describe a time when you discovered an inner source of strength and used it to get through a difficult time. Describe the quality in detail. How did it make itself known to you? What did it enable you to do? What did you learn about yourself? What did others say about you as you drew on this source to get through your ordeal? How were you able to draw on this source at other times?

FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND (DEEPENING OR DISCOVERY OF FAITH)

When events reel out of our control, we feel powerless and small. It may be only by tapping into a higher power and giving our lives over to our faith that we are able to find the will to survive and to carry on.

- Describe a time when you felt a presence in your life that quietly and gently assured you that you were not alone and provided you with the support, encouragement, understanding, and love you needed. How did you feel the presence? What did it feel like? What need did it fill at the time?

PERSONAL GROWTH

Times of adversity are often times of tremendous personal growth and self-discovery, when we are open to the lessons to be learned. Sometimes these learnings don't occur until long after an event is over.

- Describe a time of great personal growth born of adversity. What was the event? What did it challenge you to do? How did it change how you

** This interview guide was developed by Elizabeth Lincoln, principal, Peace Tree Consulting, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

see yourself? What specifically did you learn, and how have you applied that learning in other instances in a way that helped make a difference to you and to others?

HELPING HANDS

Often it is the selfless giving of others that gets us through bad times. Friends, family, even complete strangers who reach out to us, sometimes in unexpected ways, can often make the difference between despair and hope.

- Share a story of when someone helped you during a time of great need. What did they do? How did it help you? How did it make you feel about yourself, about them? How did it change the way you interact with others?

BEST MOMENTS

It was once said that our greatest gift as people is that we are at our best when things are at their worst.

- Describe a worst moment when you were able to step in and do what was needed to rescue the situation. What was the situation and what did you do? How did others describe you during that time? What did you learn about yourself? How have you applied that learning to other situations?

SAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDE 3

Creating a Forum Where Leaders of the World's Religions Can Gather in Mutual Respect and Dialogue***

OPENING DIALOGUE

A Story From Your Life Journey

One could say a key task in life is to discover and define our life purpose and then accomplish it to the best of our ability.

- Can you share a story of a moment, or the period of time, where clarity about life purpose emerged for you—for example, a moment when your calling happened, when there was an important awakening or teaching,

*** This interview guide was developed by David Cooperrider for use at a meeting of religious leaders held in Washington, D.C., on November 9, 1998.

when there was a special experience or event, or when you received some guiding vision?

- Now, beyond this story . . . what do you sense you are supposed to do before your life, this life, is over?

Insights from Important Interfaith Encounters

We have all been changed both in outlook and in our lives because of encounters with people from other spiritual traditions or religions. In your work as a leader you might have had one, two, or perhaps many encounters with people of other traditions that stand out as particularly significant.

- Can you share a story of one experience that stands out in your memory—for example, an encounter outside the normal "safety zone," where you were surprised or humbled, or where there was an experience of healing and hope, or where there was a genuine experience of compassion, joy, love, or friendship?
- Whether it was difficult or easy, what did you come to respect most, not just about that person, but about their particular religion or practice?

INSIGHTS FROM THE PAST

World Events and Trends Over the Past One Hundred Years

Taking steps to create an enduring dialogue among leaders of religions does not happen in a vacuum.

- Think about the five most important historical events that have occurred over the past one hundred years—global or local events and trends that give you a sense of urgency, readiness, or calling for our work here. What trends or challenges do you see as most significant?

ASSESSMENT OF THE PRESENT: OUR WORLD AND THE HARD ISSUES

The Emerging Story of Interreligious Relationships

The *1996 Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential* lists over fifteen thousand global problems and documents, for example, that half of the armed conflicts in the world early in 1993 were not between nation-states but between groups from different religions. Against the background of many world problems and conflicts there is also a hopeful story that offers a glimmer of what is possible when we find ways to promote peace rather than war, cooperation rather than prejudice, and sustainability rather than environmental degradation and human oppression.

The century since that historic gathering in 1893 in Chicago—the Parliament of the World's Religions—has seen a vast widening of

interfaith dialogue, interreligious prayer and meditation, pilgrimages, joint action, and study in world religions. Indeed, it appears there is a worldwide urge for enduring, daily cooperation among people of the world's religions, to make peace among religions, and to serve, in the presence of the sacred, the flourishing of all life. As leaders in these arenas, what are we most proud about? What are we most sorry about?

- Think about the most significant achievements, milestones, developments, and infrastructures that have happened locally or globally in your lifetime. What developments are you most proud about?
- Conversely, as you look at events or trends in the world and the current responses of religious leaders, including yourself, what are you most sorry about? More important, what should we be doing more of or differently?

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: VISIONS OF A BETTER WORLD

Your Vision of a Better World

Dag Hammarskold, former United Nations Secretary General, said: "I see no hope for permanent world peace. We have tried and failed miserably. Unless the world has a spiritual rebirth, civilization is doomed. It has been said that the next century will be a spiritual century or it will not be."

Put your thinking about thirty years, a generation or so, into the future. Even though the future is, in so many ways, a mystery, we want to begin to visualize the kind of world you feel we are being called to realize, a better world, the kind of world you really want. What do you see in your vision of a better world?

- Specifically, what are three changes or developments in your vision? What is happening in the world a generation from now that is positive and different, and how do you know? How would you feel if these three things were realized?

Your Vision of the Relationships Between the World's Religious Leaders

The assumption in the invitation to today's meeting is that there needs to be, in today's complicated and interconnected world, an ongoing and sustained conversation among the religious leaders of the world. The simple hypothesis: The world will be a different place, a better place. It is easy to see the value of something like this, is it not?

Let's imagine a scale from one to ten, where a rating of ten represents the ideal kind of relationship among leaders of the world's religions and spiritual traditions.

- What does your "ten" look like? The quality of relationships? The kinds of contact and communication?
- Let's assume a significant and growing number of leaders from the world's religions do choose "to get to know one another"—and it begins to succeed. A safe, confidential, ongoing, and non-binding forum is created. How might the world benefit? How might you and your faith community or organization benefit?

Appendix B

SAMPLE GUIDED IMAGERY EXERCISE

Topic: Creative Coexistence in my Community

The facilitator instructs participants as follows:

> "Get comfortable, close your eyes if you like, and bring the topic, 'Creative Coexistence,' into your mind's eye. Imagine that creative coexistence has been implemented fully in your 1ife and the lives of everyone in your community.
>
> "Imagine that as you wake up, you are excited because you know that you'll find a flourishing community, one that is more harmonious, equitable, and alive because people from diverse groups live in dynamic, creative interrelationship.
>
> "As you think about the racial, ethnic, religious, or some other group that you most identify with, what are some of its most outstanding qualities and capacities that it brings to this lively and constructive interaction with other groups in the community?
>
> "Wander around your community and as you meet people in the course of the day, what pictures emerge that are inspiring and energizing? What are you feeling? What are people doing differently—in neighborhoods, in the marketplace, in the workplace, in government? What skills are children learning in school? What kinds of programs are on TV? What new kinds of activities do religious congregations engage in?
>
> "What is your day-to-day life like, and how has it changed? What conversations do you have with family, friends, and coworkers about these changes happening in the community?
>
> "Congratulate yourself for being a part of such a healthy and meaningful social transformation. Open your eyes and return to this room at your own speed."

Let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin with me.

JILL JACKSON AND SY MILLER

CHAPTER FOUR

PEACE CULTURE FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

Elise Boulding

History has shown that positive images of the future have empowered creative action for social change in societies of the past. Recognizing this, the author has for many years conducted workshops on "Imaging a Nonviolent World," with groups of many kinds. In this chapter, she describes the encouraging findings of one such workshop, as participants made commitments to actions they were personally willing to make to bring about the nonviolent world they had imagined twenty years hence. The author then shares her own vision, from the vantage point of the year 2032, of a new sense of three-dimensional citizenship that has come into being in that world. The manual for facilitating this type of imaging workshop is included as an appendix to the chapter.

The United Nations General Assembly has named the first decade of the twenty-first century as the Decade of Education for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence. Responding to that mandate, a group of educators, students, and peace activists met for a weekend discussion of peace culture at Tufts University in the early spring of 2001. What kind of mindset about peace culture would one find in a group already committed to peace studies, a group already familiar with many of the conceptual analyses of the structures, institutions, and processes involved in the social phenomena of conflict, violence, and peacebuilding, and already acutely aware of the obstacles to peace in the present world situation? Having been asked to lead a session of futures-imaging about a world in which peace culture prevails, I can report some surprising and, to me, encouraging findings.[1]

Futures imaging needs to be grounded in a sense of the present as process, so participants were invited mentally to enter the two-hundred-year present—from the birth year of today's centenarians to the centenary year of

the babies born today. We did this by first reviewing the social movements and events of the past century (positive and negative) and, second, by focusing on positive personal experiences of social-change activity. Only then did we step into the second half of the two-hundred-year present and concentrate on how a world at peace might look in 2031, thirty years forward from the midpoint of the time span (a year most participants would live to see). After a period of personal reflection, participants divided into groups of six and shared with each other positive images of a 2031 in which diversity was celebrated on a green and flourishing planet where conflicts were settled nonviolently. The walls of the auditorium were then filled with sheets of newsprint prepared by each group depicting a colorful, joyful, peaceable 2031.

Because this was a *mini*-workshop, conducted in a two-hour time frame, there was no time to reflect as a group on *how* 2031 came about, but I did point out that the future would, to a significant degree, be a product of the social movements and political, economic, and cultural developments taking place in 2001. After reflection on that, I asked them to choose what they would be willing to commit to doing *now* to help bring about this world they had just imagined, and to write down their personal action commitments on a sheet of paper.

After a few minutes of thinking and writing, the entire group of over a hundred participants joined hands in a giant circle to affirm the commitments they had just made, and then placed their slips of paper in a container I was holding as they left the room. The atmosphere was electric, and I could hardly wait to get home to begin studying what they had written.

The results really surprised me. I expected the commitments to be social action commitments, and many were. But what I did not expect was that 43 of the 107 sheets turned in contained one or more commitments and statements that related to the participants' personal growth and development as human beings. This response suggested that many participants felt that they had not given enough attention in their own lives to the inner development required to become effective peacemakers. Often, but not always, these personal-development statements were accompanied by community action statements. And some of the teachers present also developed new ideas about their teaching. The themes for all three categories—personal development, community action, and teaching—covered a wide range of approaches. But together they represented a level of deep thoughtfulness about what peace culture entails that goes beyond the usual categorization of social change activities.

Personal Development

My favorite response was just two words, beautifully printed on a single sheet of paper. BREATHE PEACE. That makes a good exercise for meditation! The most frequent personal development theme (11 responses) involved living a simpler life style, including driving less, walking and biking more, living in cohousing, using old-fashioned postal mail instead of e-mail, when possible (surprise!). This theme was followed by one on children: raising children to be peacemakers, adopting a child, working at peace in one's own family (10 responses). Developing inner peace, practicing nonviolence in personal life, both in spiritual development and social behavior, also appeared in ten responses.

Then a new note: laugh a lot, play more, be more relaxed (6), followed by becoming a better listener, more empathic (5). Next, write a book about peacemaking (4!), followed by commitments to: developing independence of spirit, finding one's own voice, affirming others, love a new person every day (3), find a job in which I can contribute to peacemaking (3), become a teacher (3), and finish what I start, be more focused in my life (3). The following commitments each appeared twice: devote more time to learning, and become more aware of social injustice. Finally, the following commitments appeared once each: become more aware of self and planet, change the world one person at a time, help others develop inner peace, come out of the closet as a gay feminist, and become more fluent in Spanish.

In short, these conference participants felt that peace culture calls for attention to one's inner life, lifeways, and life styles. Historically, peace cultures have always been marked by special life styles, and that insight has not disappeared in our fast-paced consumer culture.

Community Action

Community peacebuilding commitments show a similar awareness of the qualitative dimensions of peace culture. There was an underlying theme of becoming more familiar with the local community and building on the resources for peacebuilding that already exist, combined with a focus on creating meeting spaces for local peace and justice groups of all ages and for intergenerational interaction. Community-building themes included: developing more cohousing; working with rural and urban children to build nonviolent conflict resolution skills in cooperation with schools, local colleges, and faith groups; encouraging peacebuilding through the arts; and working with restorative justice programs.

There was also a strong theme of community mobilization for action on international issues: abolition of nuclear weapons; aid to victims of war and violence in Iraq, the Balkans, and Central America; work with peace organizations to move U.S. policy in the direction of conflict preven-

tion; and campaigning to elect a woman president. Other more general commitments included working for economic justice for the poor, undertaking projects for local sustainability, and *just being there* for the community and its needs.

Clearly, most of the participants were thinking of peace culture in terms of peacebuilding at the local level, but this was also accompanied by a recurring theme of networking and linking with other nongovernmental organizations around the world on a range of peace, justice, environmental, and human rights issues. An emphasis on the uses of modern technology, including information technology, was, however, notably absent. Face-to-face interaction was central to most of the activities mentioned.

Teaching

Then there were the commitments that focused on teaching roles. First and foremost was the commitment to develop or expand peace studies at one's college or university, and to include peace studies in teacher training programs aimed at the next generation of teachers in the public schools. The most common commitments included: developing a course on nonviolence that would specifically include peacemaking skills and an emphasis on cultural diversity, working with and encouraging student peace groups, and working for peace education programs in the local public schools. The concern to do more teaching about peace issues was combined with a commitment to focus on community internship opportunities to empower young people in their development as activists.

Of the 107 slips of paper turned in, only two contained the simple message: TBA (to be announced). I am hoping those two participants will eventually write me to tell me what they have decided!

The Power of Positive Images

Because imaging the future workshops were originally designed to empower social activists, based on futurist Fred Polak's concept of positive images of the future acting as releasers of social energy in the societies holding such images,[2] it was encouraging to find that even in a primarily academic environment, participants responded so concretely to the request to verbalize specific commitments on behalf of the visualized future. These commitments went well beyond traditional campus and community-based activities to include a strong focus on nurturing personal and community development, as well as on the skills of nonviolent social change and accompanying strategies. Since these participants were well aware of rising levels of violence around the world, it is significant that they chose to focus on build-

ing peace culture at the levels most accessible to them—personal and community—with a backup strategy of networking nationally and internationally.

The focus on personal growth and locally based activities by a group possessing considerable knowledge of a highly complex world system reflects an ancient wisdom that has survived through the ages and is well expressed in the familiar phrase: "Let there be peace, and let it begin with me." The presence of that wisdom in peace studies practitioners is certainly to be celebrated.

NEW CONCEPTS FOR PEACE CULTURE IN ACTION

Yes! The old wisdom is still to be celebrated. But now, in the post-September 11 era, I feel the need to reflect on the sudden turn by a United States presumably at peace to a worldwide war on terrorism in defense against a small assault on its sovereignty (small in relation to massive deaths from aerial bombings in Japan in World War II, and in the Balkans more recently). What have we been missing in the peace studies field? In dealing with the complexities of an interdependent world, are we paying enough attention to a serious fear of diversity that characterizes many national communities?

That fear of diversity is not only a problem within states but between states, and keeps the United Nations from playing the peacebuilding role in the world that it was designed to do. How slow and hesitant states are in signing treaties that limit their "uniqueness," their sovereignty—especially the more powerful states. Yet the states themselves harbor societies within them that are also unique, and few states recognize their own internal societies—the *ethnies,* the cultural identity groups, each with its own history. The 190 states that comprise the United Nations actually consist of various groupings from among the world's ten thousand societies,[3] the cultural identity groups spilling every which way across their borders. Many current wars involve those identity groups, fighting within states as well as across national borders. Some of them—not all—get labeled "terrorist groups." What will bring these struggles to an end?

Let us take a fresh look at the world that lies thirty years into the future. In 2032, I can imagine all the valuable developments in the field of peacebuilding, so well described in this book, as expanding to include the development of a new sense of citizenship that encompasses the local in all its diversity and the global in all its diversity. The old citizenship was a wonderful social concept that addressed in a balanced way the twin human needs of bonding and autonomy, calling for love, loyalty, and sense of responsibility to the national entity. But in 2032, citizenship will come to be understood as being essentially three-dimensional. The first dimension is the local, the ethnic/cultural identity that shapes our human becoming in family and community, the identity that is primary in the ten thousand societies.

The second dimension is the national—the state whose institutions serve the well-being of the ethnies within its borders, and attracts their loyalty and support to the extent that they are acknowledged and respected. The third dimension is international—the United Nations itself, formed to protect the well-being of the six billion humans living in the ten thousand societies spread across the 190 states.

Back in 2002, we had forgotten that the United Nations came into being as an association of "we the peoples," as its founding charter says. It was not "we the states." The purpose of the association was to put an end to war. That means that we are, all six billion of us, citizens of the United Nations and have as much stake in its survival as in the survival of the state we live in and the identity group we belong to. Taking up this citizenship involves our own personal growth at the deepest level, as well as the development of our intellectual, social, and civic capacities. It involves a different and unfamiliar way of being in the world. Put in terms of our civic responsibility, we must see to it that our national representatives to our United Nations General Assembly and its associated regional organizations sign the necessary treaties that protect the security of all humans (as well as all life on the planet).[4] We need to be familiar with the United Nations, to know it and to love it, as we need to know and love our own country. All those treaties that the United States failed to sign at the turn of the century stand as signals of poor citizenship on our part. It also signifies a failure to love the United Nations as it needs loving, warts and all!—as we love our country, warts and all.

We are not born citizens. Becoming citizens is a process of social learning and personal growth. Our challenge is to learn "how things work" so we can exercise that citizenship. School systems must play an increasing part in this, along with those critically important bodies in the civic arena: nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)—especially international nongovernmental organizations, or INGOs. Those INGOs, roughly twenty-five thousand of them, provide the critical links that help activate our three-fold citizenship. They do this by bringing our concerns for peace, justice, human rights, and the environment from the local chapters where we live (including our local faith communities) to national offices and international headquarters of these organizations, and then right to the United Nations itself.[5] It is at the United Nations conferences and commission hearings and treaty negotiations on key world issues that INGO voices are heard and where our delegates can make a difference with their skills at negotiation across differing national interests.

As at the turn of the century, now in 2032 INGOs themselves are still in the learning stages on how to make the most of these opportunities for mutual learning and collaboration at every level, from the local to the United Nations. Thousands of citizen hours have gone into continuing dialogue with diplomats and government officials and U.N. offi-

cials, to produce the programs, agreements, and treaties now in effect after years of effort.[6] It is a slow and difficult process, but that is the only way in which new norms of governance and new models of behavior, based on problem solving rather than the exercise of force and violence, come into effect.

The peacebuilding approaches described in this volume will come to be seen as part of the evolution of a new, inclusive citizenship that embraces the riches of the cultural and biological diversity of the planet. Will there not be an accompanying change of consciousness about what it means to be human that will make of planet Earth a delightful place to live?

ENDNOTES

1. Part one of this chapter detailing the futures-imaging event held at Tufts University originally appeared as "Peace Culture and Social Action" in Boulding (2001), and is reprinted here by permission of the publisher, Taylor & Francis, Ltd. (www.tandf.co.uk).
2. The Dutch historian Fred Polak was the first to write a macrohistory showing how positive images of the future have empowered creative action for social change in societies of past times, and how the lack of positive images of the future have led to social decay (1961; 1972).
3. *Ten thousand societies* is a term referring to the existence of thousands of ethnies, and appears in UNESCO's report on "Our Creative Diversity" (1996), as well as in Ankerl (2000).
4. For insight into the workings of the U.N. process in relation to peace issues, see Peck (1988).
5. For examples of the activities of INGOs in relation to peacebuilding, see Boulding (2000).
6. A vivid description of citizens' involvement in the development of the law of the sea is found in Levering and Levering (1999).

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Appendix

FACILITATION MANUAL FOR WORKSHOP ON THE FUTURE: IMAGING A NONVIOLENT WORLD IN THE YEAR 20xx*

Elise Boulding, Workshop Facilitator

INTRODUCTION

Since it is hard to work for something we can't even see in our imaginations, and since visions can guide and empower action, we will spend the next several hours exploring a _____ (name of a context) in which the twentieth-century cultures of violence have been replaced by peace cultures.

After an initial introduction to the process, participants will

1. list their hopes for the future,
2. engage in a brief exercise of "remembering," to discover how the imagination works in a future space,
3. spend a few minutes in _____ (the context), exploring what is going on in this future time, what a peace culture looks like,
4. in small groups, share individual experiences of _____ (name a type of experience) and then examine those experiences analytically to discover how this future world functions,
5. as a group, construct a history from the future to the present—how did all this happen?
6. choose action strategies for the present (present date) that may help bring this future about.

* This workshop is adapted from "Imaging a World Without Weapons," a workshop format developed by Elise Boulding and Warren Ziegler, which is fully described, complete with workshop instructions, in Boulding (1990).

IMAGING THE FUTURE

Choosing Your Hopes for the World

What specific social goals in relation to the overall goal of the abolition of the war system and the creation of a diverse, inclusive, nonviolent world community would you like to see realized three decades from now? Think in the most hopeful and optimistic way you can. Do not let yourself be confined by what you expect or fear will happen.

Exercising the Imagination

In a few minutes we are going to enter the world of thirty years from now through the door of our imagination. First we need to get into the imagining mode. To do this, each of us will enter our personal memory world and pick one memory to re-experience. It should be a "good" memory, one you will enjoy reliving. You will be able to describe in detail the setting, the people involved, the smells, sights, sounds, the feel of the place. The longer you explore the memory, the more you will see. Make some notes about the memory so you do not forget the details. The way you imagine (remember) the actual past experience will let you know how your imagination works, and this same mental mode will now take you into the future, where you will imagine (remember) something that has not yet happened.

Notes and Sketches of the World in Thirty Years

Now you have passed through a hedge separating the present and the future. You are in the year (give the year). Move around freely, observe carefully, ask questions of the people you meet. Make notes here of what you find. Make a pictorial or diagrammatic representation of the world you are experiencing on poster paper that will be provided.

World Construction

In small groups, share your individual images of the future world, then begin to ask more analytic questions of your combined imaging material. What kind of world is out there? Refer back to your goal statements for a theme to "build" your world around. Draw on each other's future memories. For the purposes of this exercise, you are still in the future-present. Use the present tense in speaking of the future-present. If you wish to refer to the present time, do so in the past tense. What structures must exist in this world you are in to account for what you have seen? How is family life organized? What is the economic, political system? How is education organized? How does civic and cultural life maintain itself? What makes this society tick? Account for your society locally, and move as far out as you can in terms of regions and the planet as a whole. Are there nation-states?

Time will be a limiting factor here, so begin with those aspects of the society that interest you most. You can add others later (even after this workshop is over). Take turns helping each other analyze the structure of the world you have each seen individually. On the basis of this analysis, the group will create a pictorial or diagrammatic representation of what you know about that world on poster paper, which will be provided. Each group will share their future world with all workshop participants in plenary.

Remembering History

Again working in small groups, stand in this future world and look back. How did this future come about? Remember/imagine some key events. Include major benchmarks in world trends as well. Last year? Five years ago? Ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five? Each group will create a time line for the events. These will be shared in plenary to develop a common remembered history.

ACTION IN THE PRESENT

- *Step 1.* Back in your small groups, think through what you individually might do now, this year, to help bring about this future world you have experienced in imagination. First think about the action settings available to you. List them: your family, neighborhood, community settings, work place, organizations you are involved in, where you shop, etc.
- *Step 2.* What objectives might you set for yourself—concrete, specific goals that you could achieve in the short term, in other words, in the coming months? Who will be your allies? How will you relate to decision makers?
- *Step 3.* Now begin to flesh out a specific project based on your answers to the above.
- *Step 4.* In the closing plenary session, share this project with all of the workshop participants.

To create this new society, we must present outstretched and friendly hands, without hatred and rancor, even as we show great determination and never waver in the defense of truth and justice. . . . [W]e know that we cannot sow seeds with clenched fists. To sow we must open our hands.

ADOLFO PEREZ ESQUIVEL

CHAPTER FIVE

CREATING A CULTURE OF PEACE IN POSTWAR EL SALVADOR

Mark Chupp

The Usulutan province of El Salvador was pivotal in the country's civil war. After the war, the area lacked infrastructure and state support for thousands of families who settled in the region. A group of villages formed a grassroots organization, La Coordinadora, to prevent disasters and promote sustainable development. In 1998, they declared themselves a Local Zone of Peace and established the Culture of Peace Program (CPP) to overcome rampant violence and teach peace. Rather than adopt a foreign conflict resolution model, CPP selected international consultants with an elicitive approach to create an indigenous process. The CPP process involves a core group of peasant leaders who facilitate dialogue and reflection circles as a means of educating villages, resolving conflict, and promoting democratic processes. The consultants promoted an inclusive, whole-system approach, active nonviolence, a positive vision of the future, and an experiential-reflective program-design process. Although slow, the effort avoided dependency on outsiders and is transforming communities into a zone of peace.

Civil war is the ultimate breakdown of a society's ability to peacefully manage its differences. After the guns cease to fire, regardless of the outcome a defeated outlook pervades. In an effort to rebuild society, postwar countries often look to foreign experts to reassemble polarized factions, introduce new approaches to conflict management, and teach people lost skills in communication and cooperation. Supported by international aid agencies, mediation consultants and trainers stream into postwar countries to rebuild nonviolent mechanisms for handling differences. If there is a lack of appreciation of indigenous resources, however, the introduction of foreign models and methods can further erode the confidence people have in their own capacity to handle differences.

El Salvador, the smallest and most densely populated country in Central America, faced such a dilemma in the 1990s after decades of civil unrest and twelve years of outright civil war. Usulutan, located in the southeastern part of the country on the Pacific Ocean, was one of the most affected depart-

ments (i.e., provinces). During the war guerrillas occupied Usulutan, strategically located across from Nicaragua on the Golf of Fonseca. Today, the department continues to struggle toward peace, as it is comprised of communities of former military personnel and their families, as well as communities of former guerrillas and their families. Previously a sparsely populated region of cotton plantations, the newly formed police force and public infrastructure were ill prepared to provide security and promote healthy relations. Many believe their ineffectiveness was part of a government effort to undermine the peasants and drive them out of the area, to make way for large-scale farming and tourist development (Cowan 2001).

A grassroots movement formed in 1996, when seven communities joined together to prevent flooding caused by the release of a government controlled dam. Known as La Coordinadora (The Coordinated Communities),[1] this movement did not rely on the government, an educated elite, or foreign experts to bring change. They embarked on an alternative path, building on the strengths of their own people and culture to transform the region. Eventually, dozens of communities joined to prevent natural disasters and promote self-sufficiency in response to poverty and government inaction. By 1999, eighty-six communities representing thirty thousand people constituted La Coordinadora, and the mission expanded to include peace and democracy (Cowan 2001).

Inspired by a United Nations concept, they declared themselves a Local Zone of Peace and developed community circles for rediscovering nonviolent problem-solving methods in their culture. To actually develop peace in the zone, they initiated their own home-grown Culture of Peace Program. A comprehensive approach, the program promoted peace through three components—restoring human rights and responsibilities, promoting peace and indigenous methods of conflict resolution, and fostering the transformation of organizational life to reflect peace and democracy.

This is their story. This chapter offers a brief overview of the civil war and the Usulutan context, describes the development of La Coordinadora and, in particular, its Culture of Peace Program (CPP). The ways in which this effort reflects an appreciative orientation is also examined. Specific methods and examples are given to illustrate how the CPP departed from the traditional North American mediation model. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the challenges and opportunities encountered in this positive approach to grassroots peacebuilding.

POSTWAR EL SALVADOR

Peacebuilding in a postwar context presents a series of challenges that must be addressed simultaneously. Politically, the country is typically polarized with military and economic structures linked to one side of the

conflict. Economically, the means of production are so disrupted that food is in short supply, trade is reduced, and unemployment soars. Socially, the institutions that would normally be expected to provide health, education, and other public services are in disarray, if functioning at all. Culturally, peaceful ways have been replaced with an over-reliance on violence in response to interpersonal, political, and economic differences.

El Salvador, the smallest and most densely populated country in Central America, faced all of these realities in 1992, with the signing of the United Nations-mediated peace accords. After twelve years of war that left over seventy-five thousand dead, El Salvador was reeling from one of the most intense modern conflicts in Latin America. The country fit the classic revolutionary scenario—a dictatorial regime with outside (United States) support, grave inequality of land holding, middle class opposition, and peasant grievances. The *Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional* (FMLN), a national liberation front established in 1980 among five revolutionary movements, created the strongest revolutionary alliance in the hemisphere. These forces were stronger and more organized than Peru's Shining Path and the successful revolutionary movements in Nicaragua and Cuba (McClintock 1998).

The difference between outcomes in El Salvador and its neighbors was the strong commitment by the United States to stand by the country, partly out of a fear that if El Salvador fell, Guatemala and the rest of Central America would fall to leftist revolutionary movements. The United States commitment included extensive military training and support as well as economic aid. In 1987, the United States provided El Salvador $574 million in aid, which was more than all the country's exports. By the end of the decade, the United States had spent more than $200,000 per guerrilla, yet still failed to produce a victory over the FMLN (McClintock 1998).

In 1989, after years of fighting, both sides recognized they could not win the war. The government had lost the upper hand militarily and in terms of public will. Even aid from the United States decreased after a U.S.-trained Salvadoran military unit killed six Jesuit priests. That same year, the FMLN realized they could not win the war outright after failing in their final offensive. Under the auspices of the United Nations, both sides entered into negotiation over the next two years, leading to the 1992 signing of peace accords. The peace accords eliminated the most notorious military divisions linked to death squads, restructured the national police force with former guerrillas joining their ranks, stipulated some land reform and the resettlement of refugees, and implemented political and electoral reforms that would assure a place for the FMLN as a political party.

While successful in bringing the armed conflict to an end, the peace accords were not fully implemented and did not mean an end to violence. By the end of the 1990s, El Salvador, Colombia, and South

Africa became the countries with the highest per capita violence rates in the world. But unlike Colombia, violence in El Salvador was not primarily politically motivated. Violence stemmed from economic causes, the newly formed gangs, and simply as a common response to even the most petty conflicts.

LA COORDINADORA AND CULTURE OF PEACE PROGRAM

There were multiple factors that adversely affected the southern Usulutan Department, providing the impetus for the creation of La Coordinadora and their Culture of Peace Program. The war exacted a heavy toll on the region. For example, the only major bridge crossing the Lempa River, the largest river in Central America, had been destroyed in a guerrilla attack. The resettlement of entire communities into a previously unpopulated area meant the necessary infrastructure was nonexistent. Given the fact that the FMLN had controlled the region during the war, a high percentage of pro-FMLN families were in the area, which was further strengthened by the influx of refugees. The government was slow in providing resources and assistance in rebuilding the area, partly due to the enormity of the task, but also because it was trying to get the peasants to move away, offering them a pittance for their land. At any rate, the right-wing government did not want to strengthen the base of a leftist stronghold. To further complicate matters, the government attempted to establish a more politically balanced region by resettling former military personnel and their families in new communities strategically located next to leftist communities.

La Coordinadora emerged in response to these needs. Initially, seven communities came together to address the high risk of natural disasters. Heavy rains and the release without warning of a large dam up river frequently triggered flash flooding along the Lempa River. A network of volunteers established two-way radio communication and a rapid response system. La Coordinadora also lobbied the government to bring about policy changes to build flood walls and have the government hydro-electric agency give notice before releasing the dam.

Seeing this success, other communities joined La Coordinadora, forcing internal changes in its structure and institutionalization. Committed to democratic decision making and local participation, each community held an assembly and voted to join La Coordinadora and elect a representative. As the number of communities grew to twenty-six and then to three times that many within two years, it was no longer possible to make all decisions and carry out all work through the commission of elected representatives. In 1998, the group adopted a plan to establish a nongovernmental organization (NGO).[2] To assure community control in a democratic process, the constitution of the NGO linked its governance to the commission of elected representatives. Known as the Mangrove Association,[3] the organiza-

tion was incorporated in 1999, with a purpose of not simply generating funding and projects, but also empowering people to become self-sufficient. In 1999, in an effort to be more democratic, La Coordinadora restructured itself again to create eight local groups—grouping together member communities from the same micro-region (Communitas Charitable Trust 2000).

Even with a separate NGO with its paid professional staff, La Coordinadora remained at the forefront. Mission and program direction were set by the peasant representatives, not by the NGO board of directors. La Coordinadora set as its mission "to engender in the population the basic conditions in organization, participation, and individual and collective skills and capacities that lead to integrated development." The areas of focus included organization, disaster prevention, local participation, culture of peace, production, and the environment. With an overall goal of promoting self-sufficiency, the NGO began securing funds and hiring agriculturists and other specialists to promote the development of collective shrimp farms and family cash crops.

While increasing production and preventing disasters greatly improved the quality of life in the communities, it did not address another major threat—community violence. An often-cited statistic declared that, at the current rate, more people would be killed in the twelve years since the Salvadoran civil war ended in 1992 than were killed during the twelve years of war. Interpersonal conflicts erupt into gunfights. Many feel violence has become a way of life, infused into the culture, a means of solving even petty disagreements. In addition, families have returned from living in exile, bringing back with them their teenage sons who were involved in gangs in Los Angeles and other U.S. cities. The U.S. government also routinely arrests and deports Salvadoran gang members, sending them back as free citizens to start gangs in their home communities (Wallace 2000). Even small communities live in fear as these imported gangs, the 13th Street and 18th Street gangs,[4] rival each other for turf.

Local Zone of Peace Declared

In response to increasing violence, on August 15, 1998, La Coordinadora, with the support of many other local organizations, declared themselves a Local Zone of Peace. They had explored, with the International Center for the Study and Promotion of Zones of Peace in the World, the concept outlined in numerous United Nations' proposals and a declaration presented by UNESCO. The U.N. first initiated the concept when it declared the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace in 1971, and later the South Atlantic as a zone of peace and cooperation. A study by the U.N. University of Peace in Costa Rica between 1987 and 1990 culminated in a proposal to declare Central America and the Caribbean a zone of peace and coop-

eration. On December 17, 1990, the presidents declared Central America a "Region of Peace, Cooperation, and Development." The U.N. General Assembly ratified the treaty in 1991 (Salvadoran Human Rights Institute 1996).

These earlier declarations were all top-down approaches to the creation of a zone of peace, including one for Central America in 1990 and one for El Salvador in 1993. The United Nations intent in launching the zone in El Salvador was to transform postwar zones into demilitarized civil societies. Unfortunately, all these efforts around the world were unsuccessful in actually creating a visible and known presence. The Usulutan initiative was the first grassroots initiative by the communities themselves. The declaration stated, "in a Zone of Peace, the principal actor is the community . . . and all efforts will be dedicated to sustaining life and the resolution of conflicts without violence." The government's role was stated as assigning resources and empowering communities.

The extreme violence in the region impeded La Coordinadora's efforts to develop the region and led them to embark on a zone of peace and conflict management project. The Local Zone of Peace (LZP) was based on a number of principles and values held by La Coordinadora as well as a commitment to create a new identity for the region. With the new theory of their region as a peaceful one, the LZP activities and definition would take shape over time. La Coordinadora facilitated annual commemorations, including a walk from one town to another that drew two thousand people in 1999. José "Chencho" Alas, a former priest from El Salvador who collaborated and supported La Coordinadora through his Foundation for Self Sufficiency for Central America (FSSCA),[5] played a pivotal role in promoting the principles and values behind the LZP. He provided nearly fifty workshops on human rights and responsibilities that brought people together in their communities to learn and affirm these rights and responsibilities.

The Local Zone of Peace was a declaration around a geographic place—in many ways initially more symbolic than substantive. A newly formed Culture of Peace Program created by La Coordinadora put flesh on the LZP skeleton. They faced a dilemma, however, as it was not clear whether to create a distinct Culture of Peace Program or to consider all programs and activities a reflection of a culture of peace. The original LZP declaration reflected not only a commitment to promote human rights and social justice, but also to assure local participation, democracy, and self-sufficiency. If the Culture of Peace Program was going to be one component of the organization, then it must affect all other components yet somehow not have authority over them. This dilemma required repeated dialogue among all the representatives and their communities. The program definition evolved over time, much of it taking shape after a team was organized, received prelimi-

nary training and was doing some pilot work in the communities. Practice informed program policies and procedures.

La Coordinadora sought international financial support and consultation in order to more fully transform the area into a zone of peace. The Foundation for Self-Sufficiency secured a grant from the U.S. Institute of Peace in 1999 and later one from the Hewlett Foundation to develop the Local Zone of Peace. The original funding proposals, developed in consultation with La Coordinadora by Richard Salem, a North American international conflict management consultant supportive of La Coordinadora, followed a traditional North American model of training local people to operate community mediation centers. As soon as the program was funded, FSSCA retained three Mennonite consultants to work at an elicitive design with the Usulutan communities. La Coordinadora recognized the communities would need to help develop the structure and methods for promoting peaceful conflict management.

CULTURE OF PEACE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

While a general vision and commitment to peace existed, the Culture of Peace Program evolved over time. The first two years of the LZP, from August 1998 through 2000, consisted of annual commemorations of the Local Zone of Peace and internal organizational changes to assure that the organization reflected peace and democracy. La Coordinadora restructured its governing commission to increase representation and reinforce democratic decision making. They educated themselves around issues of gender and recruited women to the commission staff positions. They established policies with clear criteria for selecting program recipients that was not based on personal relationships or biases.

The actual Culture of Peace Program received international funding and went through key stages in its development, beginning with the first trip made by the international consultants. Internal dialogue, pilot projects, and input from the consultants led to the development of principles of practice and policies that led to the current program structure and methodology.

Three Mennonite peacebuilding consultants, Phil Thomas, Luzdy Stuckey, and Mark Chupp (the author), assisted in the development of the Culture of Peace Program.[6] At Salem's recommendation, we were chosen as much for our approach as for the extensive experience we had in Latin America. We provided a combination of training and facilitated dialogue around the theoretical framework of conflict transformation. From the first trip in early 2000, we did not assume mediation as the model and only briefly introduced it as a method for transforming conflict. Six principles of practice guided us as consultants and were reflected in the first workshop.

Use an Elicitive Approach

Rather than arrive with predetermined objectives and a training agenda, the consultants first interviewed the staff and commission members. The interviews helped them build relationships, understand the history of the area and organization, discover the needs and vision that led to the Local Zone Peace, and learn the local parties' expectations for the upcoming training. Together with the key leaders, we established the objectives of the first workshop, which were to (1) understand what it means for us as individuals to live in peace, (2) together reflect on what it means to be a community of peace, and (3) discover the role and function of La Coordinadora in relation to the vision for a culture of peace. Only then did the trainer-consultants sit down and finalize the workshop activities.

The first workshop and subsequent training used a popular education model, which looked at where the group was in its development and then used exercises that allowed participants to experience the content firsthand and reflect on the experiences and its relevance to their communities. Abandoning preconceived notions of training a group of mediators, we focused on the theoretical foundation of conflict transformation and conflict management skills. Aware of the many failed attempts at establishing mediation centers in Central America,[7] we encouraged the program participants not to commit to any one model.

Building on the framework established by our colleague, John Paul Lederach (1995), we used an elicitive model in which we were catalysts and facilitators who attempted to make explicit the knowledge of the participants. Rather than import a model, we sought to create a discovery process in which they could identify the meaning and methods indigenous to their culture for transforming conflict from destructive to constructive. This type of training framework can be seen as an integration of contributions from popular education, appropriate technology, and ethnography. As primary resources, the participants presented case studies from their communities and then role-played how they would naturally incorporate the communication and conflict management skills to help transform the conflicts. Exercises and simulations evoked awareness and validation as they experienced the dynamics of their culture in the training itself.

Promote the Transforming Power of Nonviolence

More than simply teaching conflict resolution, the trainers brought an understanding that within each person there is a transforming power of peace and nonviolence. Drawing from the Quaker-based Alternatives to Violence Project,[8] the concept of transforming power posits that each person has a choice. The trainer's task is to increase each person's awareness of his or her strengths and the benefits of tapping into this internal

source of nonviolence. The workshop included a small group exercise in which each group developed the "tree of life." Divided vertically, one half of the tree represented violence and the other half nonviolence. Each side detailed the elements that made up the roots, trunk, branches, leaves, and fruit of violence or nonviolence. At the same time, nonviolence was not the prescribed response, simply presented as an often forgotten alternative that can potentially transform a destructive situation.[9]

Promote an Inclusive Community and Whole-System View

Both La Coordinadora and the group of trainer-consultants placed a high value on an inclusive, nonhierarchical approach. The first training included commission members (grassroots community leaders), administrators, program staff, and even secretaries and the bookkeeper. One of the first team-building exercises was the Spider Web, where the group must pass, one-by-one, through a web strung between two trees without touching the web and without using the same web opening more than once. This exercise was a high point. The entire group cheered as the last member was helped through the web. It encouraged an atmosphere of mutual support, demonstrated the diverse needs and abilities of each, and stressed the importance of finding a place for everyone.

Inclusion took on a more serious tone on the last day of the first training. One question raised by the consultants was whether the Local Zone of Peace included all those in a specific geographic region, or simply the communities that had joined La Coordinadora. The earlier interviews revealed that some leaders and communities felt at odds with or alienated from the organization. Using Maire Dugan's nested paradigm (1996), the trainers illustrated how a specific conflict can be analyzed to see the causes and impact it has at multiple levels, from the individual, relationship, subsystem (e.g., organization), to the system. The workshop reinforced their commitment to democratic processes and inclusive participation and led them to extend the reach of the Culture of Peace Program to all communities in the region.

Create Experiences to Taste the Transformation We Seek

The training design (see Figure 1), beginning with the Spider Web, used an experiential learning approach to create the conditions in which participants could experience transformation personally and in the group. Exercises, followed by reflection, stressed the multiple levels of transformation—self, relationships, culture, and system.

Figure 1
FIRST TRAINING WORKSHOP—FEBRUARY 2000
La Coordinadora

Activity	Explanation
Day One	
Introductions in Pairs	Name, community, something you value about La Coordinadora, and something no one else here knows about you
Workshop Objectives and Agenda	Discussion of popular education approach and development of group norms (ground rules)
The Spider Web	Objective: to get all team members through web without touching the web and without using any space more than once
Violence-Nonviolence	Brainstorm list for each term; reflection
Conflict Transformation • Tools for analysis • Dugan's nested paradigm • Reflection on transformation	Discuss how conflict and violence affect all spheres (individual relationships, organization, community, society/world)
Light and Lively	"Big Wind Blows"—a type of upset-the-fruit-basket game
Tree of Life • Creation in groups • Presentation and reflection	In small groups, create a detailed drawing of the tree of life, split vertically between violence and nonviolence
Concentric Circles • Sit in two concentric circles • Rotate one chair after each question	Two minutes for each person to tell one other person their response to questions of self-esteem, personal strengths and successes, experiences of forgiveness.

Figure 1, continued

Activity	Explanation
Evaluation and Closing	
Day Two	
Integration Exercise	
Synthesis and Review of Day One	Trainers summarize participants' reflections from day one into synthesis of content
Peaceful Vision of Community in Ten Years • Small-group work • Presentation • Discussion of the roles of civil society and the state in a peaceful El Salvador	Divided by municipality, each group draws their community after ten years of peace • What makes it democratic? • What makes it peaceful? • How are differences handled?
Light and Lively	"Fire and Storm" group mixer
Simulation Exercise: Foundation for Development, Democracy, and Harmony • Competition to receive funding • Proposals must include how the collaborative will make decisions and deal with minority opinions	In small groups, determine how to develop project for funding that requires collaboration with local government and other organizations
Reflection and Observations by Trainers	Strengths of La Coordinadora; possible areas of risk
Work Session: Building on Strengths to Overcome Risks	In small groups, brainstorm what can be done to overcome each major area of risk
Evaluation	Oral, with several focus questions
Closing	Each person states something that inspires them

The workshop began with the individual level. Participants interviewed each other in pairs, focusing on something no one knew about them and what each person valued in La Coordinadora. Rather than presenting themselves to the group, each person presented their partner, speaking as if she or he were that person. This stimulated great camaraderie and tapped into the self-worth of each person and what the group valued about the organization. Even the skill-building exercises focused on the participants' knowledge and skills. To teach listening skills, for example, the trainers asked each person to identify the person they go to who best listens to them. A list of what the best listeners do served as the basis for practicing active listening skills.

At the relationship or group level, many of the exercises had a team-building quality to them. All plenary sessions were held in a circle, where the group served as a resource to one another during the reflection times. "Light and livelies"—short, interactive, cooperative games—appealed to the playful child in everyone. At a deeper level, a listening exercise called "concentric circles" invited participants to systematically share personal stories individually with other participants. Topics included "a way I show respect for myself," "a time when someone forgave me," and "an occasion when I did the right thing, even though I was afraid to do it."

At the cultural level, the entire training elicited the peaceful qualities indigenous to the group and their communities. Creating trusting and cooperative experiences and reflecting on the impact they had on the group provided the basis to explore how a culture of peace could be more fully realized in the region of southern Usulutan.

Create a Positive Vision of the Future

The impetus for the Culture of Peace Program was twelve years of war and a culture caught up in violence. Unfortunately, there was a greater sense among participants of what they wanted to move away from than there was of where they wanted to go. Using Elise Boulding's vision of a peaceful future (1991; see also chapter four), the trainers divided participants in the first training into groups from the same geographic areas and asked them to draw a picture of their municipality after ten years of peace. The trainers invited each person to reflect in silence and then contribute to a common group vision of their peaceful community. We guided them in the group work by asking how the future municipality would be democratic, what would make it peaceful, and how differences would be handled. Each group gave special attention to the roles and functions of the state and civil society in their vision of a peaceful future. Reporting back in plenary, the entire group reflected on appropriate roles of the police and courts, the meaning of integrated development, cultural rituals, and civil-sector

mechanisms for promoting peace. There was a palpable excitement generated from these visions and they were later displayed in the central office.

At the conclusion of the first trip, the trainer-consultants and leaders from La Coordinadora arrived at a consensus about the appropriate ongoing role of the consultants. There were three roles: (1) explore with La Coordinadora the vision of a Local Zone of Peace, (2) offer experiences in conflict transformation from other parts of Latin America, and (3) facilitate a process for developing the Local Zone of Peace.

The program developed naturally over the next year and a half. One or two of the international consultants visited the program every three or four months. I served as the primary consultant and was present on each of the trips. Eventually, La Coordinadora appointed seven grassroots representatives from a number of communities to serve as the CPP team. The consultants visited to listen, learn, and share—mirroring back what they heard and observed, accompanying the group as it reached out to the communities, and providing training in specific skills. Much like the first training, the training focused on making explicit how the communities worked at conflict. Topics such as communication and restoration of trust involved an exchange of indigenous knowledge and that from the trainers. Ultimately, the program team determined how they would implement what they gained from the training sessions. As they gained experience, team members and consultants co-facilitated sessions with the staff, commission members, or community groups.

An Experiential-Reflective Program Design Process

A pilot effort in July 2000 in the town of Tierra Blanca gave legs to the program. A dilemma in using the elicitive approach—not having a clear model to follow—had created some confusion or uncertainty as to how the program would affect real conflicts. In an effort to provide a more formal intervention, I conducted a three-day training on participatory action research for the team. As part of the training, the team developed criteria for selecting a community for the intervention, an interview protocol, and a general strategy for approaching the community. With support from La Coordinadora's leadership, the team selected Tierra Blanca because of its strategic location, size, and high levels of violence.

The fieldwork consisted of working over five days with co-researchers from the community (grassroots leaders) to interview seventy-three households and the institutional leaders of Tierra Blanca. Interviews were tabulated, patterns and themes were categorized, and a focus group was held with key informants from the interviews. The final analysis and recommendations were then presented to more than fifty community members at the end of the week. The number-one concern in the community per-

tained to two rival gangs that had terrorized the community.[10] Even though all the youth and young adults in the gangs were from Tierra Blanca, many residents feared going out after dark. The written report and community assembly empowered the community to openly name the problem and identify a provisional committee to work on the gang conflicts and other needs in the community.

As a result of the participatory action research, the team, under the leadership of José "Chencho" Alas, held two mediation sessions over the next few weeks. In a dramatic turnaround, the gangs agreed to stop fighting and to seek ways of coexisting together. They developed personal goals for turning away from drugs and alcohol and sought vocational training and jobs. Unfortunately, the local police entered the Catholic Church at the end of the last mediation session and seized one of the gang members. Despite the fact that the arrested youth walked the streets of Tierra Blanca every day, the police felt this was the moment to act on a six-month-old warrant. The mediation team's credibility was at stake as both gangs wondered if this was all a plot to clamp down on the gangs. The team followed the police, advocated on the youth's behalf to the prosecutor, and eventually secured his release. In the end, however, the incident reinforced the community's sense that the police were still as much a problem as a resource.

In part because of this controversy and increased expectations created by developing close working relationships with the gangs, the commission that governs La Coordinadora held an evaluation of the program in October 2000. The burning question was whether the Culture of Peace Program had turned into a gang-intervention program, as word spread across the province and people sought out the team. I facilitated a self-evaluation in which commission members, the CPP team, administrative staff, and members from Tierra Blanca met in small groups to review all previous training sessions. The group collectively developed a list of values and principles for guiding the work. They also analyzed the Tierra Blanca pilot project as a case study, identifying the concerns, needs, contributions, relationships, and decision-making role of each of the groups present in the evaluation. They also discovered a long list of achievements that resulted from the Tierra Blanca project.

The three-day evaluation had a future orientation: How would the CPP work in the communities, make program decisions, and not overextend themselves beyond their capacity? The diverse group came together to develop a set of program goals, objectives, and policies to guide the project into the future. They developed policies that spelled out the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders. They also considered various international organizational models before deciding to adopt an itinerant model, where a regional team would serve as promoters to develop the program in a limited

number of micro-regions. Once established in these regions, the program would expand.

The document from the evaluation was adopted in 2001 by the commission and serves as the program's theoretical and programmatic framework. The overall emphasis is on promoting a comprehensive culture of peace, with mediation as one small component. The three major thrusts of the program are presented below, along with the objective and components of each.

CULTURE OF PEACE PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Conscientization and Education for Peace

The objective is that the communities in the Local Zone of Peace appropriate the principles, values, attitudes, behavior, and practical applications of peace. The three components of this education include (a) concepts of peace, (b) human rights and responsibilities, and (c) conflict transformation.

Methods for Transforming Conflict

The objective is that the communities in the Local Zone of Peace recognize the nonviolent mechanisms already present and develop and utilize new negotiation and mediation alternatives for improving conflict management and minimizing violence. The three components include (a) discovering and reviving existing nonviolent methods, (b) conflict management skills and processes, and (c) conflict intervention.

Organization and Participation for Peace

The objective is that the communities in the Local Zone of Peace participate in dialogue and reflection circles, in the formation of local Peace Initiative Committees, and in reflecting peaceful principles and values in all their organizational structures. The two components of this objective are the building of democratic participation internally in the Culture of Peace structure and building of democratic participation in community institutions.

In October 2000, the program hired as the full-time coordinator Mario Mejia, a Salvadoran with experience working on human rights in Guatemala. Although not a mediator, he brought expertise in program development and organization. An educated professional, the coordinator provided on-the-ground leadership as he quickly incorporated conflict transformation theory and practice. The program therefore became less dependent on the international consultants. The team was also gaining valuable experience as promoters in their micro-regions.

Over the next six months, the team developed a clearer methodology, having faced confusion about the itinerant model. The new approach centered around the newly created dialogue and reflection circles.

These informal circles, often taking place under a shade tree in a central part of the village, gathered residents together around a specific theme or topic. Less intimidating than a training workshop, the circles created a safe space for people to reflect on their own experiences and thereby make talking through conflict normative. The circles have an educational benefit but equally important, they create a trusting community. As a circle gains confidence, the facilitative role of the team member becomes less significant.

In order to accomplish the program objectives, the methodology incorporates different sectors of the same community and also integrates groups from different communities in the same micro-region. The current methodology is given in Figure 2. The third objective—organization and participation for peace—is worked at through the methodology by working jointly with sectors that typically do not cooperate and by expanding program involvement to communities not involved in La Coordinadora structure (the local group). The CPP team anticipates providing more direct training in organizational issues once the first two components are implemented.

A POSITIVE APPROACH

The Culture of Peace Program and La Coordinadora are founded on a positive approach. Clearly, the impetus for the organization and CPP program were problems and difficulties facing the communities, yet these peasant leaders had the foresight to avoid dependency models. They created structures and programs to promote self-sufficiency and a culture of peace. This orientation affected their choice in consultants, program development, staffing, even the strategies and methods they developed for advancing a culture of peace.

After considering several potential consultants, La Coordinadora invited consultants affiliated with Mennonite Conciliation Service to work with them. The Mennonite approach incorporated a strong commitment to peace and conflict transformation, a bias toward community building, and a style that fostered empowerment and self-development. All three consultants had lived in Latin America and accompanied peasant groups. The elicitive model, articulated by John Paul Lederach (1995), reflected in part the approach Mennonites had been taking in development work for decades around the world under Mennonite Central Committee. All three consultants were therefore convinced of the importance of working from the ground up in building a movement and structure that would be sustainable long after funding and consultants were gone. More than problem solving, the effort needed to create a safe and trusting space for communities to dialogue and build a peaceful future (Chupp 2000).

The most significant factor, however, that propelled the peacebuilding effort in a positive direction was the decision to become a

Figure 2
CULTURE OF PEACE PROGRAM METHODOLOGY

1. Collect basic information on the community.
2. Approach the community.
3. Identify and select reference persons or sectors to participate in the Culture of Peace Program.
4. Introduce the CPP program within the vision of La Coordinadora.
5. In coordination with the reference persons, motivate and invite receptive sectors of the community to participate in the CPP.
6. Promote dialogue and reflection circles with the local group of communities and among interested sectors.
7. Train persons selected from the dialogue and reflection circles who are willing to serve as trainers in their communities.
8. Train and strengthen the community in organizational processes that promote peace.
9. Accompany and follow up with existing organizational processes.
10. Promote the organization of those interested in continuing with CPP.
11. Internal exchange between diverse sectors of the communities from the same local group, and the communities from the same micro-region that have not been involved in the La Coordinadora local group.
12. External exchange to share experiences with different micro-regions.
13. Train selected persons in conflict transformation and conflict management.
14. Train those with interest and skills from previous training in mediation.
15. Organize and plan with the communities in light of their needs and priorities.
16. Accompany the communities in the implementation of activities that further generate a culture of peace.
17. Evaluate and systematize the process.

zone of peace, boldly declaring that an area of overt hostility and violence would become a place where a culture of peace pervaded. The war was due at least in part to a breakdown in democracy; the Local Zone of Peace declared peaceful democracy must be restored. In so doing, La Coordinadora proclaimed as fundamental the free exercise of economic, social, and cultural rights and the preservation of the natural environment. In addition, they were inviting government institutions and other organizations to join together with La Coordinadora to guarantee the sustainability of life (Local Zone of Peace Agreement 1998). Violence as a way to solve problems was out, replaced by a commitment to use human and financial resources to promote and develop peaceful alternatives that preserved human rights.

The declaration and orientation of the trainer-consultants coincided in a joint commitment to promoting the transformation of conflict as a negative force to a constructive one. Conflict, after all, is a social construction in which one's beliefs influence perceptions and responses. If one approached conflict with a sense of fear and a conviction that conflict never results in anything positive, the person's response would likely be negative, produce destructive results, and therefore reinforce those negative beliefs. If, on the other hand, people could come to believe that differences and conflict are a natural part of our diverse world, their responses would likely be more respectful, produce constructive results, and promote these same positive views of conflict. The task was to reconstruct notions of conflict as normative and a means to mutual understanding, self-realization, and peace.

This commitment to be positive has its roots in the positive core of Salvadoran culture and the nature of La Coordinadora. From their first disaster-prevention work, the organization did not assume a victim role but sought to create the conditions that would preserve and sustain life. Going beyond simply serving as advocates for their communities before the government, the organization mobilized people around the resources they held to effect change. From the programs it developed to the very structure of the organization, La Coordinadora built on existing human and financial resources to create a social infrastructure that embodied their principles and vision.

Peace, democracy, and self-sufficiency formed the basis of the new culture they were creating. La Coordinadora demonstrated the power of civil society through its accomplishments. It enabled citizens to act, educated its constituents, focused light on abuses of power, and critiqued the government. Through advocacy, organizing, and coalition building it created local structures and networks and alleviated the pain of poverty. These efforts represent the possibility of sustainable democracy; La Coordinadora demonstrated a new way when the future was not clear (Cowan 2001).

The approach also built on the best of Salvadoran culture. Decades of poverty and lack of government support gave rise to a

spirit of self-sufficiency and prompted grassroots organizing. Unlike the Nicaraguan revolution movement headed by comandantes, the FMLN operated as a collective and developed sophisticated democratic decision-making processes. Aristides Valencia, the executive director of La Coordinadora and a former leader in the FMLN, had not used his FMLN position to demand results but frequently sought the participation of the communities in decision making, seeing himself as a facilitator of democratic process. A dialogue about the principles of democratic participation often preceded a discussion and decision about the matter at hand.

These were living laboratories, creating internally the methods for peaceful relations that were so needed in the communities. The structure of the organization evolved and added layers of participation as more communities joined to assure that democratic process could still take place, although more efficiently. Funding and staffing of programs reflected these beliefs. If a new potential source of funds emerged, La Coordinadora first asked who would control decisions—the communities or the funder—and how the funds would support self-sufficiency. At times they decided to alter a proposal in order to avoid entering into a relationship that would promote dependency. They also made a commitment to hire few professional staff, relying instead on the peasants themselves to carry out the work. In the case of the Culture of Peace Program, they appointed the team of peasants before they hired a full-time professional coordinator.

The Culture of Peace Program emerged over time and followed a natural course of development. Reflecting on training in specific skills and learning about other experiences in conflict transformation, the team developed the appropriate methods that fit their context. Leery of focusing too much on workshops, the team developed its own strategy for introducing the program into a community—the dialogue and reflection circles. Informal, nonthreatening, and less focused on imparting knowledge, the circles drew in people who wanted to talk. The focus clearly invited participants to share about their conflicts, but not as an opening for the team to solve the problem. It was a process of mutual discovery—how the conflict affected them and what resources were available in the community to help out. Building strong trusting relationships within the village—relationships where people could express themselves freely and give or receive support—was essential to the creation of a culture of peace.

Another positive aspect to the program pertained to the team itself. They were not selected because they were the most powerful members of their communities. This helped prevent others from seeking them out as experts who would solve their problems for them. In fact, the experiential training approach meant that the team focused as much on their own transformation and development. They modeled the possibility of drawing out of people the life-giving forces that could be used to create a cul-

ture of peace. As they worked through their own conflicts on the team, using methods and skills discovered in the training sessions, they shared their own stories in the circles.

The Local Zone of Peace and Culture of Peace Program represent a combination of positive and traditional problem-solving approaches. Their motivation stems from deep concerns about violence and conflict. When reflecting on their past or current situations, the dialogue often revolves around the problems, not the best of what already exists. Yet they are guided by a vision of the future that embodies self-sufficiency, democracy, and peace. The program drew on both problem solving and community building. There is a new language emerging that is transforming the culture. People are shifting from old thinking, where others solve their problems, to the possibility that there are nonviolent resources within them and their communities that can be tapped to create harmonious communities.

There are several challenges as the program moves forward. Trying to obtain more measurable outcomes, such as those associated with local mediation centers, is still a temptation. Funding sources like to see tangible outcomes. Some people have difficulty giving up the notion that an expert must come in and solve their problem. There is a paradox in the approach. The commitment to popular education means that they must start where the people are, but somehow the team needs to transcend negativity to embrace the positive elements and values in the communities. Listening can give legitimacy to negative thinking. The trust-building and cooperative exercises, however, create new possibilities in people's minds as they experience the joy of coming together to meet a challenge.

A FUTURE OF POSSIBILITIES

Where is the program headed? The current methodology anticipates expanding the circles and then drawing from them a core group to receive additional support and training. Ideally, these people will serve their own villages, facilitating circles and offering to accompany those in conflict. More than creating mediators or mediation centers, the program envisions creating a transformed culture centered around human rights and responsibilities—a space in each community where people practice a transformative process that evokes respect and care for one another and democratic, inclusive organizations. As people learn the ins and outs of conflict, they can serve as resources to one another, informally offering help to those who know and trust them. Not necessarily an appointed group carrying the name mediator, people will emerge who exercise a combination of indigenous and learned methods that facilitate peaceful relations.

Admittedly slower than training a group of educated leaders as mediators, this positive grassroots approach offers a more sustainable

model. Not relying on foreign experts or a local elite, the Culture of Peace Program breaks the dependency model—possibly for the first time for a conflict management program in Central America. The program is guided by a commission of peasant leaders inspired by the prospects of a culture of peace and self-sufficiency. The team becomes less and less dependent on outside training and consultation. Ongoing training now occurs within the country, provided by a growing Salvadoran conflict transformation resource group, Yek Ineme ("well being"). Networks of rural communities are forming as the CPP team is in dialogue about their vision and experience with a group of peacebuilders in the northern province of Chalatenango.

Breaking from the dependency model, La Coordinadora anticipates creating a strong civil society empowered to work at building healthy relationships, organizations, and communities. Government institutions and political leaders will become key sources for public services and will be accountable to the community. Hopefully, a balanced relationship with clear and mutually supportive roles for civil society and the state will emerge over time.

The promise of such a vision already exists, albeit in miniature. Seeing the team discover within themselves skills and knowledge is truly inspiring. In November 2002, the team discovered their potential after a training-for-trainers workshop when I invited them to carry out the workshop we had just designed. They were expecting me to serve as the lead trainer for the upcoming four days of workshops for representatives from six local groups (micro-regions). After their initial shock, they reached within themselves and found the confidence to facilitate the entire workshops themselves. They exuded surprising confidence as each member deftly facilitated exercises, led group reflections, and expressed in their own language the concepts of peace and conflict transformation. I was moved and convinced again of the power of peasants creating their own peaceful future.

A new sense of community is emerging in southern Usulutan. Diverse groups are joining together to discuss their future and are beginning to live into a new vision of inclusion, mutual support, holistic development, and true democracy. The fabric of society is being recreated. Social capital—the networks of trust and cooperation—extends freely to span all people, regardless of past affiliations. While many strangers still begin to get to know one another through a litany of their past military or political activities, these conversations soon give way to discovering what they hold in common. Twelve years of war are not easily forgotten. In a region of great conflict and polarized repatriation, a local zone of peace emerges based on a vision of ten more years of peace.

ENDNOTES

1. In Spanish the full name is La Coordinadora de Comunidades de Bajo Lempa y la Bahia de Juiquilisco, literally the Coordinator of Communities of the Lower Lempa River and Juiquilisco Bay. The organization prefers to use "La Coordinadora" as both their English and Spanish name.
2. El Salvador law requires that NGOs be structured with two organizations—one the social entity and the other the administrative/fiscal entity.
3. The mangrove is a threatened habitat for aquatic life and a source of self-sufficiency for the peasants living along the many miles of Usulutan shores. The organization chose this name to reflect its commitment to the indigenous way of life in the region and its commitment to preserving the natural environment.
4. These gangs have been transformed and carry their own names in El Salvador, *Mara Salvatrucha* 13 and 18. Even many active gang members are not familiar with the origins of these numbers with Los Angeles street gangs.
5. The Foundation for Self Sufficiency in Central America, a U.S. foundation dedicated to supporting La Coordinadora, employs Chencho and serves as a bridge between North Americans and the program (see www.fssca.net). For more on José "Chencho" Alas, see chapter sixteen of this volume.
6. The proposals were initially written by international consultant Richard Salem, who accompanied the group of three Mennonite trainer-consultants in the first visits. The trainer-consultants were all fluent in Spanish and had lived in Latin America for extended periods. Thomas had lived in Guatemala and El Salvador; Stuckey is a Colombian now living in Arizona; and Chupp had lived in Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. All had worked previously under the Mennonite Central Committee.
7. The trainers provided an overview of various efforts to establish mediation centers in the region, most of which were based on North American mediation practice. These efforts failed in part due to the short time frame expected to train and organize such centers. In other cases, the efforts lacked sufficient local ownership.
8. The Alternatives to Violence Project began in New York in the mid-1970s, when Quakers and civil rights workers developed workshops for prison inmates. Today there are community and prison-based projects throughout North America and numerous other countries.
9. Aware of not having themselves lived through the Salvadoran civil war, the trainers were careful not to prescribe nonviolence as the preferred response to a given situation.
10. Gangs in El Salvador are a relatively new phenomenon, emerging as Salvadorans living in exile in Los Angeles returned with their sons who had joined gangs. Some hardened gang members returned to the streets of El Salvador after being arrested and deported from the United States. The 13th Street and 18th Street gangs are the imported rival gangs in this community and throughout the country.

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Dream, dream
We're coming out of the night.
Let's close our eyes
And dream of the light.
Dream of new tomorrows
From the rubble of today.
Dream of things that we can do
To build a better way.
Let's dream.

HERM WEAVER

CHAPTER SIX

THE "WOW FACTOR" AND A NON-THEORY OF CHANGE

John Paul Lederach

This "thought piece" conceives of the positive approach to peacebuilding as a "composite moment" in which the creative process lifts sight to a new, more holistic view and motivates action not directly on "the problem," but rather in the relational spaces surrounding the problem. In changing the people, relationships, and environment, the process ultimately changes the problem itself. This "non-theory" of change is derived in part from author's experience with a storytelling project, "Dream the Light," following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, in the United States. An appendix to the chapter tells the story of the storytelling project and then presents the story itself, together with an original song created to accompany it. A second appendix, this one a compact disc found in the cover of this volume, presents the song and story as performed by the songwriter and storyteller.

My experience over the years suggests that there are two axiomatic questions for peacebuilding. "What creates a catalyst for constructive change?" and "What sustains the change process once it starts?" Both questions circle back to a critical platform of inquiry for the broader field that has not been adequately explored: "What are our theories of change?"

These kinds of questions have a direct bearing on our conceptual frameworks and practice, and in particular, they have implications for positive approaches to peacebuilding. If we take as our point of departure the need to make more explicit our underlying assumptions about how constructive social change happens, particularly in settings of deep division and polarization, we may arrive at some useful observations about our guiding-but-implicit theories. I find that these observations, by articulating the promises and challenges of theory, complexify our often too-simple notions of change. Let me give two examples.

One guiding-but-implicit theory of change in the justice and peacebuilding fields proposes that increased awareness about injustice and other sources of conflict translates into motivation for pursuing change. Hence,

much effort is placed on publishing, speeches, and campaigns aimed at increasing people's exposure to facts and information, to motivate them to make a response. The promise implied in this theory of change is that cognitive knowledge coupled with emotional impact creates response and action.

Not explored to any great extent, however, are the questions of how, when, and for what reasons people who hear or read something about a situation actually translate that exposure into action, particularly when the information is aimed at contributing to their cognitive knowledge about the situation. Does information create insight and enlightenment that impel action? Does information instill of a sense of responsibility that motivates action? Must information employ the social hook of guilt to drive action? If we probed these questions deeply, we might in fact discover that the electronic age of instant global news, Internet, and email creates an overload in which awareness is numbed by too much information, and responsive action is actually diminished.

A second guiding theory of change is that solving problems is the key to constructive change. Implicit in this theory is the assumption that increased process skills will increase social change. More specifically, if people increase their skills in the various aspects of conflict transformation such as communication and problem-solving processes, there will be a corresponding increase in their interest in applying these skills to problems of real life. In this orientation, training often carries the day. The more training, the greater the social change.

Not explored in depth, however, are the presumed socio-political, cultural, and economic connections that underpin this theory. Who is drawn to training and from what groups in the society? For what purpose do people pursue training? What skills are taught and for what kinds of "market" demands? How exactly does the skill base translate into social-change processes? What is the impact of defining change in relation to the problem, and how does that create a platform for broader social transformation? Might it instead impose a limitation?

What do positive approaches to peacebuilding suggest about theories of change? While this is still a new and rising facet of the field, my experience suggests that, like all other theories of change, there are promises and challenges. A quick review may be useful.

I find positive approaches to peacebuilding to have the greatest impact when they create a composite moment that draws upon some aspects of the above-mentioned theories, but with a twist. There are several keys to creation of the "composite," while innovation and creativity provide the "moment."

The first key is that a positive approach does not define itself by the problem, but rather by the quality of the "beyond the problem." A

social problem per se is often the manifestation of something that is deeply stuck, as reflected in the metaphors of "loggerheads" and "dead-end streets." These are situations in which social energies collide over issues, facts, and decisions and create incompatibilities of both social analysis (how the problem is understood and broken down into logical pieces) and social solutions (whose answer to the issue is best, usually based on analysis). A positive approach is not defined so much by a pollyannaish view of the possible, but rather by its willingness to see life beyond the boundaries of the problem. It looks for change not in the problem, but in the relational spaces that surround it. This is like trying to focus intently on an object in a dark room. The harder you look at it, the more difficult it is to see. If, however, you look around the object, placing it in your peripheral vision, the object becomes clear and settled.

A second key to a positive approach is paradoxical: It involves finding a social action that creates energy independent of the problem, but that ultimately affects the problem. This requires that a paradox be embraced. The action has to be practical (as in "Wow, this can be done and I can do it!") and also engaging ("Wow, this is great!"), providing a proactive and hands-on component that people feel and see making a positive difference.

In the story and compact disc, *Dream the Light* (see appendices to this chapter), the common response received by teenagers was simple. As one of the students commented in an interview, "The events of September 11 left us numb. The possible responses seemed like they were so far away from what we could do. But in the story there were very specific things we could do and [they were] immediately available. We could learn a language. We could talk with people from the mosque. We could find a pen pal in the Middle East and actually develop a relationship. It was, like, 'I'm not paralyzed. I can do something and it actually makes a difference'" (Kniss 2002).

The third key to a positive approach is innovation and creativity. I would call this the "wow factor." It can only be understood in parallel with arts and the creative process, as opposed to sciences and the analytical process. Understanding in the sciences comes, for the most part, through cognitive processes of breaking a phenomenon down into parts that can be studied. We "see" analytically by pieces. The artistic process, on the other hand, goes beyond the view seen through a parsimonious lens to capture the whole. It provides a way for us to "see"—to discern and grasp—what is visible but not seen with the eyes. That is the capacity of a painting, poem, play, or photograph. In its small wholeness, a deep truth about something is revealed and understood. When applied to peacebuilding, such a process is not set into motion by logical intent and cognitive design, but rather, as many artists would say, by intuition and an "I fell into it" quality. From my spiritual interpretative understanding, I refer to this as "divine

naiveté." It is the intervention of an energy that goes beyond cognitive understanding and penetrates to a new level of understanding, motivation, and action.

When these three things come together—a willingness to not look for change in the problem, but in the relational spaces around it; a social action taken independently of the problem but ultimately affecting it; and a creative process that reveals a holistic new view of the situation—something is created that engages people, provides an avenue for meaningful action, and adds something new and creative to the situation. That new social "thing" has an impact on the problem and the process; on the past and the future; and on the individual and the system. Paradoxically, like a painting it often can only be grasped cognitively in retrospect.

What is the underpinning theory of change? To my current understanding, it is a non-theory in that it is not designed to systematically go "straight at the problem." Or perhaps it is a theory of social relativity. It is akin to the energy released by the splitting of an atom into the relational environment around the atom. When you create a catalyst that goes beyond the problem, you spark a creative process of engagement that is independent of the problem and yet changes the environment, the people and relationships, and ultimately, the problem itself.

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Appendix

"DREAM THE LIGHT": THE POWER OF STORYTELLING FOR PEACEBUILDING

John Paul Lederach and Herm Weaver

The single greatest challenge facing positive approaches to peacebuilding is found in the paradox of how people in an ongoing violent conflict can develop unexpected creative action, while living in the grips of genuine tragedy, deep injustice, oppression, and trauma. This paradox hit home for North Americans in the wake of September 11, 2001. For the two of us this did not pop up as a rhetorical or theoretical question, though as academic professors each of us has written about the processes of reconciliation and healing. The paradox was, so to say, in our face.

Nearly a year prior to September 2001, we had agreed to facilitate several back-to-back events that unwittingly came on the heels of the violence unleashed in New York and Washington. On the surface, our tasks involved relatively routine, local, and in the bigger global picture, insignificant activities. We were to be the masters of ceremony for the annual variety show of our home congregation, Community Mennonite Church, in Harrisonburg, Virginia. We were also to provide input for a national meeting of elementary and secondary school educators who teach in private Mennonite institutions. Finally, we were to serve as the resource people for the spiritual renewal week at Eastern Mennonite High School, also in Harrisonburg.

These engagements came literally "on the heels" of the terrorist attacks. Working in Guatemala on September 11 and unable to fly home, John Paul was caught shuffling from airport to airport. The church retreat was Saturday, September 22; the plenary session with five hundred educators in Maryland was Friday, September 28; and the five morning sessions with four hundred junior high and high school students was the week of October 1–5. Local and personal? Yes indeed. But what an opportunity to practice Carl Roger's notion that that which is most intensely personal is also most universal, and Kenneth Boulding's proposal that change happens by demonstrated potential. If something exists it is possible.

We did have a certain advantage. For some years we had dabbled and experimented with the arts and peacebuilding. (Well, some may not call what we do "the arts.") We tell stories and sing folk music, at times bordering on the irreverent, but always aimed at insights and lessons from life experiences. With tragedy before us we felt we had to change most everything we had planned to do. The night before the church retreat variety show, we decided to end the evening of fun with a story and song that would propose a positive response to September 11. The story was intensely personal, based roughly on John Paul's life story as a peacebuilder and on resources and real-life people found in our congregation, in particular, a computer language program that had been developed by one of our church members. In previous variety shows, John Paul had told stories about the quirks of life and growing up that always started with the line, "Everything in this story is true, except for the parts that I changed to make it a better story." On the evening of September 22, under the night stars of the Shenandoah Valley, we started the story with the phrase, "Everything in this story is true, except for the parts that haven't happened yet."

That evening we were overwhelmed with the response of people in our congregation to the simple proposed action of learning Arabic and developing people-to-people contacts among children, teenagers, and schools in Central Asia, the Middle East, and the United States. A week later, we deliv-

ered the story and song to the educators instead of giving a lecture on peace education. There were tears and encouragement. But more importantly, teachers wanted to know how they could actually get connected to "doing the plan" with their students. Most significant was the feedback from several people on how to improve the story so that it had less "reaction" to political leaders and a more positive spin on the concrete steps that could be taken. We tweaked the story into version three and a week later delivered it to its original intended audience, "the high school that changed world." The following day we engaged students in a simple process of generating proposals for what could be done next. Suggestions ranged from language study and getting pen pals in Central Asia, to inviting guest speakers from the Middle East into the school and seeking connections with the local mosque, to activating the school to send relief supplies to Afghanistan.

With strong encouragement from several church members, three weeks later we recorded a compact disc (CD), *Dream the Light—A Story and Song.* By then Herm had written a new song, "A Dream of the Light," that provided the introduction and closing to the story, "How a High School Changed the World." The costs of production were defrayed by generous support from our church, which made available hundreds of free *Dream the Light* CDs to high school teachers across the United States. It was a homespun adventure. The church youth group and high schoolers gathered to stamp labels and package the first five hundred CDs. Within six months a total of 2000 CDs had been given or sold at cost.

Meanwhile, back at the high school in the months that ensued, seventy-five kids started Arabic lessons, with free computer language programs going to anyone who would commit to studying at least five hours a month for three months. Other schools finding out about the possibility wrote and received the same. Other students pursued pen pals, finding high school friends in Lebanon to correspond with by email. In their weekly "neighbor groups" the entire high school made "afghans for Afghans," and a significant number of blanket comforters were sent via a relief agency to Afghanistan. A small set of students chose to fast and pray on Fridays during Ramadan as an act of concern and solidarity with those who were suffering.

Now, nearly two years later, another two thousand CDs have been circulated into the public and a follow-up CD, "In Your Song I Hear My Voice," has recorded the original song in twenty-two languages. In an unexpected move just before his death in 2002, the owner and inventor of the Rosetta Stone language programs, Alan Stoltzfus, through a family foundation put in motion a gift of $3 million that will make the Arabic language CDs available to high schools across America. And on the one-year anniversary of the September 11 attacks, the story and song were used in a number of memorial services.

Amanda Maust, one of the students thinking back over the events of fall 2001, noted that the key impact of the story was that she could think about "doing something immediate to connect with real people. And I could actually do that with people over there and right here in the United States, in our own town." Amanda proposed the Ramadan solidarity fasting at home, and then she brought the idea to the Peace Club at school because "it was a way to show support to people who were different than us that said we do not look down on you. We want to understand and support you. So on Fridays, instead of eating lunch we would gather to email our pen pals in the Middle East" (2002).

Another student, Sharon Kniss recalled that she felt a sense of "empowerment." "Up until we heard the story, it was like we were watching things happen, looking at it all from a distance and not knowing what to do. Here in the story we had ideas about specific things to do, if we were willing to put forward the effort. What I liked best was that for a period of time, the whole school came together in committees—a committee to get language study going, one to connect to people that were affected in New York, another to get local people from the Middle East into our school, one to find pen pals. People were willing to do something rather than just say 'we should do something.' We had a course of action" (2002).

Did the entire program and movement described in the story actually happen? No, at least not to date. Did the high school actually stop the war or change the world? No. But then again, maybe. We still get more requests that we can fulfill to perform the story. High school educators continue to write us, from Louisiana to Alberta, out of the blue asking about the CD, the language program, and the initiative. Websites were created. Songwriters have asked permission to record the title track. Eastern Mennonite University sent thousands of copies of the story as a Christmas gift to its entire alumni list.

We cannot assess the impact of this adventure in traditional quantitative measures. What we do know is that the most important feedback we receive consistently from the song and story is simple. As one person said, "Thank you. In the midst of this tragedy I have struggled to know what to do. You have given me simple ideas that are possible for me to do with my children." As we wrote for one of our introductions, this was a small response to a big challenge, but one that suggests that no matter how small, all that is good starts with hope, faith, and a step of love. We are grateful for the opportunity to share this song and story with you.

HOW A HIGH SCHOOL CHANGED THE WORLD

(Chorus)
Dream, dream
We're coming out of the night.
Let's close our eyes
And dream of the light.
Dream of new tomorrows
From the rubble of today.
Dream of things that we can do
To build a better way.
Let's dream.

It happened in the sunlight of the day
Filled with fear that would not go away.
A rising pile of rubble in the haze
And I couldn't even find the strength to pray.

(Chorus)

Fear turned into anger from that day.
"Revenge" it could be heard along the way.
Somewhere in the night
A soft voice would say,
"Hold fast and dream about the light of day."

(Chorus)

I want to tell you a story. The title of this story is "How a High School Changed the World." This is a true story. Everything in this story is true, except for the parts that haven't happened yet.

There was once a very old man who had lots of grandchildren. He loved to tell stories. And at night the children would come and beg him for a story. He would gather them up in his lap and ask, "Now which story do you want to hear?"

"Tell us, Grandpa," they would all shout, "tell us the one about the war that never started." And then the grandpa began. . . .

Once upon a time, a long time ago, there was a young man who went on a trip to the Bible Lands. He visited Lebanon, Egypt, and Jordan. He crossed over the Jordan River into Palestine and Israel. He visited refugee camps, holocaust museums, and stayed in people's homes. He even got sick and spent a couple of nights in a Jerusalem hospital.

One afternoon on the trip, he met an American volunteer working in Beit Jala, at a Palestinian boys' school. He was so impressed with how this American could speak Arabic. It just flowed. He felt a deep stirring in his tummy. He wanted to come back. He wanted to go to Beit Jala. He wanted to learn Arabic.

When he returned to the United States, he applied immediately to the volunteer agency. On the form where it said, "Where do you want to serve?" he wrote by the line for Preference Number 1: "Beit Jala"; Preference 2: "Beit Jala"; Preference 3: "Beit Jala." He mailed off the application. And then he waited. Three months later the agency called. "We are closing the position in Beit Jala. We cannot send you to the Middle East. Too dangerous. Too much fighting. Too many problems at the school." But they had other suggestions. "We can send you to a horse farm in Poland, or a university-student housing project in Belgium."

The young man went out that night and looked up at the stars. Perplexed and confused he called into the sky, "Why, God? Why not Beit Jala?" But he did not hear any answer.

So he chose Belgium and he learned French. And lived with Africans, Arabs, Asians, and Latin Americans. And late at night around a chessboard he learned about the world. After three years he went to Spain and learned Spanish. He visited people who were in jail because they did not

want a military dictatorship. He walked all over Spain, seeking people's stories about the war and their desire for peace. And he learned about struggle.

After about five years, he came home to finish college. He got a degree, but more importantly, he got fifth-degree burns being swept off his feet by the most beautiful, vivacious, olive-skinned, A-1 choice of a young woman he had ever expected to meet, and there she was right there in Hesston, Kansas. Can you believe, right there in Hesston, Kansas. They got married and went back to Spain, then on to Central America. They got into all kinds of good trouble and got chased around. But in the end they helped hundreds of new friends end a war in Nicaragua. The young man learned about suffering and commitment. He learned peace might be possible. They came home to teach young people about this idea, and that is how the young man came to be at a community church in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

One Sunday at church a man with a funny walk and crooked glasses stood up and said, "I have a dream that I am going to teach the world to speak languages through computers. And our world will be better for it." The young man smiled. He liked languages. He told the man with the crooked glasses it was a good idea.

Time went on. The young man and his wife had children. They grew up. The children played basketball. They sang in choirs. Actually the young man was not so young any more. He had some gray hair and his belly started to flop over his belt. He traveled to a lot of places where people were fighting. He had a weird job nobody could explain.

When his son was asked by a teacher at school, "What exactly is your daddy doing in

Somalia?" his son replied, "My dad has gone there to tell them to put their guns away and eat their food." That is what he did, this not-so-young man.

Then one day he was flying on a plane to Tajikistan, and he picked up the airline magazine. And right there on the back cover he saw an advertisement for the Computer Language Program straight from the friend at church with the funny walk and the crooked glasses. His finger went across all the languages until it stopped at Arabic. Then he thought about Beit Jala. And his stomach stirred.

When he got home he looked up his friend with the crooked glasses in church. "Listen," the not-so-young man said, "I saw your advertisement in the magazine. I have just come back from Tajikistan and nobody there speaks any English, and they really need to see your program. And . . . I want to learn Arabic. I have a laptop with a DVD. And I want to learn Arabic." His friend with crooked glasses gave him an Arabic-language CD.

On his very next trip headed for Colombia and Guatemala, the not-so-young man took along the new Arabic-language CD. On the plane he put on his earphones, fired up the laptop, and started his first lesson.

"Walad!" "Kalb!" he would repeat the words as the pictures on the DVD flashed by. He noticed his seatmate on the plane looking at him as if he were an odd-ball.

"I'm learning Arabic," he said a bit embarrassed. "Walad wa kalb. The dog and the boy," he said in Arabic pointing at the screen.

Then it happened. Before he could return from his trip, some men hijacked and crashed three airplanes into New York City and Washington, D.C., like a knife in the heart of

America. It was horrible. It made the not-so-young man sick to his stomach. And angry and sad.

Late one night, stuck in Guatemala, he went out onto the hotel rooftop and looked up at the stars. Perplexed and confused he shouted into the sky, "Why God? Why now? Why so many innocent people?" But he did not hear any answer.

The not-so-young man wished he were home with his family. But it could not be. No planes were flying. Everyone was afraid. He listened to the news reporters. They said the hijackers were Arabs. They found Arabic manuals and books in the rented cars.

The not-so-young man felt his stomach stir. He sat all alone in his hotel room, took out the Arabic-language CD and looked at it. "What should I do?" he wondered. They were pulling people off the airplanes with Arabic connections. He sat for a long time.

Then he pulled out the only compact disc jewel box he had in his luggage. It was from his daughter's high school choir. The title said, "I Can Tell the World." He put her CD in his computer and listened to track three. "Now Is the Cool of the Day."

Ah, the music felt good. He looked at his Arabic-language CD. He looked at the high-school-choir CD jewel box. Then the not-so-young man smiled and said out loud, "That's it!"

He put the Arabic-language disc from his friend with the crooked glasses into his daughter's high-school-choir CD box, walked to a post office, and mailed it home.

A week later, the not-so-young man spoke at a church retreat and told his community his story, all about Beit Jala, learning Arabic, the computer-language CD, and the high school choir. Then the next week he told the same story to five hundred

school teachers at a big conference. And then he told the story at his daughter's high school. Each time he ended with the same idea.

"You see," said the not-so-young man, "just like the high-school-choir CD box 'I Can Tell the World' nestled its loving arms around the Arabic-language CD, so, too, can we wrap our arms around those we are told to hate. We have to find a way to understand each other in this world, and I have a proposal. With financial support from churches and the Computer Language Program, we will make available free Arabic-language CDs to all American high schools so they can learn Arabic, with two conditions: first, that each school agrees to find and develop a relationship with a sister high school in an Arabic-speaking country; and second, each high school must convince one other high school in the United States to do the same."

Of course the not-so-young man had not consulted with his friend with the crooked glasses who owned the Computer Language Program, but he figured his proposal might have greater moral persuasion if it had the whole community behind the idea.

And behind it they came.

His daughter's high school got so enthused, they started an after-school Arabic club. Sixty kids signed up for free Arabic CDs and started lessons. They invited local Arabic speakers into their classes. They found their way to sister schools, one in Jordan and one in Syria. And their U.N. club convinced two other high schools to join them. But more importantly, a local newspaper published an article about their efforts. Once it got onto the news wires, Good Morning America called and interviewed a couple of the kids, and the choir even sang on national TV.

Within a month the idea spread.

The man with the crooked glasses said he gave away five thousand Arabic CDs and a whole bunch of English ones to the Middle East.

Exchange programs jumped up all over the place. Soon there were hundreds of high schools all over America learning Arabic and writing emails to new friends in the Middle East who were learning English. It was no longer an idea. It had become a movement.

Why, the whole thing got so big that it finally reached Washington, the national security advisers, and even the President's cabinet. It seemed this movement had better connections in the Middle East and Central Asia than anyone else in the country. There were pen pals everywhere, and some were even going for visits. The advisers were curious and just had to know more. They invited the leaders of this movement to Washington. They were surprised when three teenagers showed up.

The advisers did not waste any time. "How in the world do you propose we achieve peace?" they demanded.

"Walad!" said one. "Kalb!" said another. "The boy and the dog," smiled the third.

"What kind of answer is that?" A security adviser could hardly believe his ears.

"Learn Arabic," the teenagers responded. "And remember Abe Lincoln!"

The grandpa paused, the last words still hanging in the air. The children watched his face carefully until one of them could wait no longer.

"But Grandpa," she burst out, "what about Abe Lincoln?"

"Well," the grandpa responded, "Ole Abe Lincoln once said that the only way to truly get rid of an enemy is to make him your friend."

"And so did that war ever start, Grandpa?" another one asked, looking at the old man.

"Oh the war started," said the grandpa. "But the amazing thing was that the second and third wars never did. Too many children grew up speaking Arabic. And I guess maybe

they just finally understood what President Lincoln meant."

All was quiet again. Then one of the children asked, "Did the young man ever get back to Beit Jala?"

The grandpa thought for a while and then shook his head. "He never went back to Beit Jala. But you know, Beit Jala never left his heart."

Late that night, when all the children had gone off to bed, the grandpa went outside and looked up at the stars for a long time.

Then he just whispered, "Wow, God. Wow!"

(Sing)
Some dreaming has been done since that day
Singing, telling stories 'bout some day.
We shall overcome, they used to play
Building new tomorrows
From the rubble of today.
Building new tomorrows from today.

Dream, dream
We're coming out of the night.
Let's close our eyes
And dream of the light.
Dream of new tomorrows
From the rubble of today.
Dream of things that we can do
To build a better way.
Let's dream.

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A vivid imagination compels the whole body to obey it.

ARISTOTLE

CHAPTER SEVEN

CREATIVE COEXISTENCE IN MUSLIM SPAIN AS A MODEL OF POSITIVE PEACE

Joseph V. Montville and Heidi Paulson Winder

In order to build upon the positive history that the Muslims, Jews, and Christians shared in Muslim Spain and the medieval Mediterranean, seven historians have contributed to a book detailing how in the eighth to fifteenth centuries, peoples of these three faiths were able to create the greatest civilization that Europe north of the Pyrenees had seen. This chapter documents how the book project has been at the heart of efforts by the former preventive diplomacy program of the Center for Strategic and International Studies to combat Israeli-Palestinian pessimism by focusing attention on the principles of tolerance and pluralism at the heart of Jewish and Muslim teachings. The project aims to provide a roadmap for creative coexistence for Israelis and Arabs. With the book as a cornerstone, the plan is to launch a multi-level, multimedia information campaign among Israelis and Palestinians so that they can draw on their positive past to generate a vision for a collaborative future.

As devastating conflict continues to escalate between the Israelis and the Palestinians, each side increasingly despairs that they will ever be able to make genuine peace. The derailed Oslo peace process serves as a touchstone for pessimism. Each side blames the other for the continuing violence and failure to make peace. Many people on both sides believe it is no longer possible to negotiate with the other. This attitude not only makes it much more difficult to launch an effective new peace process, but people become more dangerous when they feel that violence is their only viable option. It is our belief that the Jewish-Muslim relationship within and beyond Israel and prospects for stability in that relationship require a major initiative to deal with the deep pessimism among the Jews of Israel that they can ever build community with the Muslims and among the Palestinians that they will ever be treated with dignity and respect by the Israelis.

A basic reason for the distrust and fear between Jews and Muslims, which long predates the collapse of the Oslo process yet exacerbates current pessimism, is what could be called the "value gap" between the two cultures. There is a palpable sense that the two sides can never coexist peacefully or even functionally, as envisioned in the Oslo agreements, because they share no values in common. The two peoples are psychologically separated by perceptions that each has no meaningful connection with the other, except for their mutual distrust and disdain. This belief has been brought home with shocking emphasis as the death toll continues to mount on both sides, as homes are destroyed, civilians are blown up, and peace talks are stalled before they have barely begun.

This distrust has been rooted in stereotypes, years of violence, and competitive psychologies of victimhood. Israelis have been deeply affected by enduring and episodically brutal anti-Semitism in European Christendom (the creation of the state of Israel was ultimately the result of the obscene climax of anti-Semitism—the Holocaust). The Palestinians, for their part, have suffered the humiliation and degradation of losing their homeland and living under occupation. With these sad histories so present in their collective memories, the Israelis and the Palestinians both struggle with a profound sense of loss and injustice that, taken together, is a toxic combination. As Joseph Montville, a scholar of ethnic conflict, writes:

> Making history and absorbing historical change is one way of describing ethnic conflict over time. . . . [T]here is a direct correlation between intensity, scope, and continuity of interethnic violence—the absorption of history—and the difficulty in making peace between the ethnic groups involved. In other words, the higher the level of victimhood felt by aggrieved groups, the harder it is to get the conflict resolved. A situation is particularly difficult if both ethnic groups in conflict feel victimized—that is, if there is a competition of victimhood over which group has suffered more. (1990, 537)

The Middle East is a place that is struggling with its present, yet is crippled by its history. Both the Palestinians and the Israelis have experienced historical losses to a degree that they both approach the conflict with the mentality of victims. It is our belief that their painful histories must be addressed before real peace can be possible.

But negative memory can be fought with positive memory. In psychologically sensitive political-historical analysis of ethnic and sectarian conflict, the task is to discover where and when the blows to collective self-esteem of the peoples involved occurred. Strategies to transform conflicted relationships depend significantly on restoring self-esteem and a sense of justice to the groups that feel victimized.

Often the people mired in the Middle Eastern conflict forget or are unaware that the Jews and Muslims have a history that was for the

most part devoid of conflict. They actually share positive history. There are broad periods of history when neither was victimized and both excelled. By re-introducing these positive histories—stories of Arab and Jewish cooperation, stories of how that cooperation lead to a golden age for both the Arabs and Jews—the parties involved in the conflict can begin to imagine the shared future that is essential in a peace process.

Dissemination of positive information can have a strong social impact under certain circumstances. There is empirical evidence to support the efficacy of a broad-gauged information campaign. W. C. Adams affirms that research on persuasive mass communication shows that in most cases it will strengthen already held views, rather than change them. In particular, when it is a question of public attitudes toward disliked or distrusted groups or nations, both sociological factors—from social networks, value systems, and influential leaders—and psychological factors—family, peer, and/or ethnic biases—act as barriers to the receipt of new, favorable information. Yet even these barriers are vulnerable if the dissonant "good" news is conveyed by mass media and if it comes from a credible source, is repeated with variation, is disseminated via multimedia, is reinforced by personal contact, and if it presents balanced, "two-sided" accounts (Adams 1987, 263–267).

Everett M. Rogers, professor of communications at the University of New Mexico, agrees that mass-media channels are effective in creating knowledge of new ideas, but less so in persuading people to adopt them. Change of attitude depends instead on interpersonal communications networks in which respected opinion leaders and then near peers accept the new information as valid and thus change their attitudes. He reports consistent empirical findings that once an innovative idea is accepted by 15–20 percent of the population, it takes on a diffusion rate that cannot be stopped (1998).

THE IDEA

How, then, might one launch a "cognitive assault" on the collective consciousness of the Israelis and Palestinians? How could one bring a focus to the positive histories, the memories of peaceful and creative coexistence?

One of the most positive eras in Islamic history, an era that Muslims still talk about with pride, extends from the eighth to the fifteenth centuries C.E. when Jews, Muslims, and Christians created a level of civilization in Spain that was the envy of Europe and compared favorably to Constantinople and Baghdad. Although there were bad patches, this is a positive history for people on all sides of the current conflict in the Middle East. Muslim Spain, as seen in the history of al-Andalus, was not only a time of intellectual and material excellence, it was also a time when Muslims, Christians, and Jews lived together in relative harmony, neither oppressing nor being

oppressed. It is an era worthy of study today, not only for its art and architecture but also for its principles of tolerance and creative coexistence.

The former preventive diplomacy program of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) has designed a project that studies the roots of that tolerance and how it can apply to the current conflict between Muslims and Jews in the Middle East. The goal is to confront the current despair in the Israeli-Palestinian and Jewish-Muslim relationship by reminding these peoples that there is a precedent of peace, tolerance, and respect in their history and that that combination resulted in extraordinary cultural achievement. The principles of tolerance that flourished in Muslim Spain and the medieval Mediterranean region could be revived today, and the people of the Middle East could benefit from revisiting the creative history of that period.

The Muslim rulers of medieval Spain applied Koranic tolerance toward Judaism and Christianity and created an environment for cooperation, economic prosperity, and scientific achievement that not only preserved ancient knowledge, but also added significant contributions to the arts, sciences, medicine, engineering, philosophy, and literature. As historian T. A. Perry has written of Andalusia, "Coexistence was not modeled on the melting-pot theory, but rather on the interchange of different points of view, on a dialogue that could range from commonly shared tenets of moral philosophy to religious confrontation and polemic. This attempt at cultural *convivencia* has not only been of historical interest, but also has ongoing importance for modern pluralistic culture in search of models of coexistence" (1987, 4).

Muslim scholar Abdulaziz Sachedina explains that this tolerance is at the heart of the Koran and the practice of Islam:

> Islamic revelation presents a theology that resonates with the modern pluralistic belief that other faiths are not merely inferior manifestations of religiosity, but variant forms of individual and communal responses to the presence of the transcendent in human life. All persons are created in the divine nature *(fitrat allah),* with a disposition that leads to the knowledge of God, the Creator, to whom worship is due simply because of the creation. This universal knowledge of the Being in creation holds equally for the believer or non-believer, the worshipper of One Being or of idols. More important, both a monotheist and an idolater can understand that God, by inspiring faith in divine mercifulness and forgiveness, can guide anyone He wills to save. (2001, 14)

Middle East scholar Fouad Ajami, in a retrospective essay on the millennium at A.D. 1000, writes with obvious enthusiasm:

> In Andalusia's splendid and cultured courts and gardens, in its bustling markets, in academies of unusual secular daring, Muslims and Jews came together—if only fitfully and always under stress—to build a world of rel-

> ative tolerance and enlightenment. In time, decay and political chaos would overwhelm Muslim Spain, but as the first millennium drew to a close, there had arisen in the city of Cordova a Muslim empire to rival its nemesis in the east, the imperial world around Baghdad. . . . In the seven or eight decades that followed [Abd al-Rahman III's ascension in the early tenth century], the city would become a metropolis of great diversity. Blessed with a fertile countryside, the city had some 700 mosques, 3,000 public baths, illuminated streets, and luxurious villas on the banks of the Guadalquivir River, and countless libraries. Legend has it that the caliph's library stocked some 400,000 volumes. (1999, 45–50)

Erna Paris, another scholar of the era, writes:

> The ambience that marked the early centuries of Arab rule in Spain could not have been further removed from the brutal Visigoths, or from Christian Europe in general. While Europe embraced ignorance and superstition, the Moors promoted scholarship. While Christianity denigrated the senses, the feel of Arab Spain was nothing short of sensual. . . . Public literacy was a government priority. Successive caliphs built libraries that were open to all; in fact, one tenth-century ruler, Hakam II, was so obsessed with books that he sent emissaries to Baghdad with orders to buy every manuscript that had ever been produced. . . . The Jewish poets of Andalusia were profoundly influenced by their Muslim compatriots, and from the tenth to the twelfth century, during the justly named Golden Age of the Spanish Jews, they, too, wrote remarkably beautiful verse. (1995, 40)

There is a rich inventory of published works on Andalusia dealing with political history, Muslim-Jewish-Christian relationships, literature, art, science, economic relations, and even water systems engineering. There are numerous subjects that can be explored to document the collaborative creativity of Muslims and Jews, early in the "Golden Age"; and when Christians regained ascendancy in Northern Andalusia, the tolerance and teamwork of Jews and newly subject Muslim and Arabized Spaniards made Toledo an historic entrepôt for the translation and transmission of scientific works, philosophy, and literature, which sparked the Renaissance in Italy.

Some people will argue that the model of Andalusia is irrelevant to the current situation in the Middle East and that coexistence in Andalusia was based on Jewish and Christian minorities' subject to Muslim rule. They argue, correctly, that Israel today would never give up its sovereignty. We agree that Israel will not submit to Muslim or Christian rule. Rather, Andalusia offers a template for today based on its principles of tolerance, cooperation, and coexistence. For example, Israel is a Mediterranean and Middle Eastern country; the countries that surround it are Arab, as are the Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and almost 20 percent of the citizens of Israel. In this social and cultural context, it

is conceivable that if the Eurocentric Jewish population of Israel could bring itself to recognize and respect the culture and history of the Arab world that surrounds it, there might emerge a new basis for political peace. Similarly, the Arab world could learn from the principles of tolerance practiced in Muslim Spain to enable it to accept the Jewish state in their midst.

THE PROJECT

The project begun at CSIS is a unique, if highly experimental, approach to peacebuilding in the Middle East. Although the fighting in Israel and the Palestinian territories has dominated the consciousness of both peoples, Project Director Joseph Montville was able to win consistent support from Israelis and Palestinians during an October 2001 visit to the region. The concepts they approved were as follows.

Through multimedia dissemination and a variety of academic and popular cultural events and ongoing educational programs, an attempt will be made to revive the memory of Muslim Spain and the medieval Mediterranean and to confront current Israeli-Palestinian pessimism with new knowledge, or perhaps more accurately, to launch a cognitive assault on both peoples. The message would be that not only can (you) Arabs and Jews build community, you did so in Andalusia, and in the process created the greatest civilization that Europe north of the Pyrenees had seen.

By convening working groups of experts to evaluate the source material, we are developing a collection of themes that illustrate the remarkable interreligious creativity of the era. These discussions produced a team of seven outstanding historians, each of whom has written a chapter about actual lifestyles and daily practices of the Jews, Muslims, and Christians of that period—how they interacted, how they tolerated, and sometimes fought with one another. The resulting book, with an introductory chapter by Montville, will be translated into Hebrew, Arabic, French, and Spanish.

The project will then launch a multi-level, multimedia information campaign among the Israelis and the Palestinians. This part of the project will be shaped through consultations with distinguished social psychologists on the most effective methods to convey and disseminate information and imagery of Muslim Spain and the medieval Mediterranean, especially Egypt, to Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Israel and Palestine. Models and mechanisms will be developed for testing the campaign's effectiveness with the goal of making this grand experiment transferable to other interethnic conflicts.

The project will encourage and support the creation of elementary school, high school, and college curricula to teach the newly revived knowledge. We will seek out journalists, television and radio documentary producers, and other responsible people in cultural institutions. We will promote historical tours of al-Andalus for Jewish and Arab high school

and university students, and establish paired Israeli and Arab university study projects on the period. We will also explore the creation of temporary and permanent exhibitions of art, science, and culture in Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon, which might be transferable to Damascus and Baghdad. This work will build on an alliance already established with the Center of Andalusian Studies and the Dialogue of Civilizations in Rabat. All of this activity will contribute to the overall goal of enhancing the credibility of Israeli-Palestinian community as a goal of the peace process.

THE USES OF KNOWLEDGE

This project actually began with another book, unrelated to Muslim Spain. *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism,* by religious scholar Abdulaziz Sachedina, was conceived with and co-produced by the preventive diplomacy program. Written for Muslims and non-Muslims alike, the book undertakes the important task of highlighting the universal human values at the heart of the Koran that undergird democracy everywhere, especially with regard to religious tolerance. The analysis in this study goes a long way in bridging the value gap between Islam and the West. Although *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism* does not deal specifically with Muslim Spain, it is intrinsically linked to the project because it addresses Muslim religious values that explain why pluralism could flourish in Spain and the entire medieval Mediterranean.

Chapters in the current book, which should be published in 2004, include a study of Muslim and Jewish merchants in the medieval Mediterranean world, by Olivia Remie Constable of Notre Dame University. Diana Lobel of Boston University has written a chapter on Sufism's influence on philosophy in Muslim Spain. Stanford historian Kathryn Miller has written an account of the collaboration between Muslim and Jewish physicians. Raymond P. Scheindlin of the Jewish Theological Seminary has written a chapter on the poem, "The Battle of Alfuente" by Samuel the Nagid. The poem demonstrates a blend of Hebrew and Arabic literary techniques, as well as describing the high position Samuel the Nagid, a Jew, held in the Muslim court of Granada. Thomas Glick of Boston University has written on Jewish and Muslim collaboration in mathematics and science; and Ahmad Dallal of Stanford University has written a chapter on the legal status and rights of the Jews in medieval Yemen. Finally, Mark Cohen of Princeton University has written a chapter on the coexistence of Jews and Muslims in Egypt.

The project has also established strong partnerships with people in Israel and Palestine. Sami Adwan of the Department of Education, Bethlehem University, and Dan Bar-On of the Department of Behavioral Sciences, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, co-directors of PRIME

(Peace Research Institute in the Middle East), have pledged to support this project to revive the memory of Muslim Spain in the Middle East.

In addition, the project has supported publication of and is promoting in the United States the translation from Hebrew to English of *The Upright Generation,* by Dan Rabinowitz and Khawla Abu Baker. The book is a social anthropological portrait of the young generation of Palestinian citizens of Israel. It is also an autobiographical account of the coauthors, a Jew and a Muslim of the same age, growing up separated in the same city, Haifa.

This project will rely heavily on systems of mass communication, television, radio, drama, and literature and will incorporate the knowledge of Muslim Spain into Arab and Israeli school curricula. Ultimately, we hope that knowledge and understanding of Jewish-Arab creative coexistence in Muslim Spain will become part of the conventional wisdom in the Middle East. When Arabs and Jews can recognize that there is a precedent for harmonious coexistence and the cultural and religious values that made it possible, they can begin to incorporate this understanding into their own lives and imagine that real peace is possible.

We hope to contribute to the building of a viable and lasting peace in the Middle East by offering a vision of a positive future based on an authentic past.

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One cannot throw the baby out with the bath water.

AFRICAN PROVERB

CHAPTER EIGHT

PROVENTIVE PEACEBUILDING IN THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA:
BUILDING PEACE BY CULTIVATING THE POSITIVES

Sam Gbaydee Doe

This chapter advances a new model of peacebuilding—"proventive peacebuilding"—which identifies, affirms, celebrates, and strengthens the values, instruments, and processes that nurture and sustain peace in a society. It focuses on the conflict-carrying and peace-generating capacities of the society. Conflict-carrying capacities assure relative stability or negative peace, while peace-generating factors nurture and sustain positive peace. Guinea Conakry is cited as a case study in which proventive peacebuilding has been applied. The peace-generating factors identified in Guinea Conakry are history, interethnic coexistence and cohesion, economic potentials, and religion, while the culture of silence is identified as a conflict carrying capacity.

Several sometimes contradictory definitions for the term *peacebuilding* have emerged in the last two decades. The landmark report to the United Nations Security Council, *An Agenda for Peace,* by former U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, places peacebuilding at the end of a conflict cycle, as a process of repairing what has been damaged during violent conflict (1992). It describes *preventive diplomacy* as peacemaking, peacekeeping, and post-conflict peacebuilding. Similarly, Ernie Regehr describes peacebuilding as the immediate process of stabilizing society after a violent crisis. This differs from the long-term pursuit of common security by focusing on short-term, emergency measures in a crisis context (Regehr 1995). Jonathan Goodhand and David Hulme, on the other hand, define peacebuilding as the promotion of institutional and socio-economic measures at the local or national level to address the underlying causes of conflict (1999). John Paul Lederach describes peacebuilding as a comprehensive, integrated, and interdependent process by which we identify root causes of conflict, manage crises, build structures that will mitigate the likelihood of violent conflicts recurring, and facilitate the building of a new vision for post-conflict societies (1997).

A world that has experienced some of the most appalling violent conflicts in recent times can no longer tolerate this level of deadly conflict. The United Nations, now under the leadership of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, has made conflict prevention a major priority, pledging to move the international body from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention (Annan 2002). Governments and multilateral agencies such as the European Union and the Bretton Woods financial institutions now operate conflict prevention units. The primary activity has been assessing societies for risks. The various agencies have oriented themselves to seeing the world through the single lens of conflict. Development initiatives are also adopting this approach. "Conflict impact assessment" is the common language spoken by development workers today. This essentially addresses how to implement development projects without generating, exacerbating, or sustaining conflicts.

While I do not dispute the claims that peacebuilding includes conflict intervention, nor do I discount the new and noble efforts of the United Nations and Bretton Woods institutions to nip conflicts in the bud before they become deadly, it would seem to me that linking peacebuilding and human security exclusively to conflict or the effects after conflict is a terrible limitation of a grand process that encompasses everything that has to do with the quality of life of the human person.

In a small way, I have set out to argue for an alternative to the problem-oriented lens with which many well-intentioned peacebuilding practitioners and world leaders have viewed the world. I name this alternative paradigm, *proventive peacebuilding*. John Burton first coined the word *provention* to signify a proactive response to conflict by addressing structural or systemic factors (1990). He posits that conflict is rooted in the lack of opportunities to satisfy one's needs. As I use the term, provention is a combination of proactivity and intervention. It is proactive—rather than reactive—intervention. Proventive peacebuilding is about celebrating the values, instruments, and processes that nurture and sustain a healthy society. It takes the focus away from what is wrong to what is right, from conflict-generating factors to peace-generating factors. Proventive peacebuilding is a continuing process of building and sustaining the human society. The process is different from the traditional problem-focused intervention; it cannot be a process that only repairs damages to societies ravaged by conflicts. Proventive peacebuilding begins with the identification of the good in a society. It argues that the problems in society are a consequence of either the deviation from its quality values and institutions or that the institutions are nonprogressive and therefore unresponsive to current exigencies. By asking what generates peace in a society and how responsive the peace-generating resources are to current situations, proventive peacebuilding sets itself apart from other processes.

In this chapter I seek to demonstrate how beginning with the positive in understanding any human situation opens windows of

opportunities and possibilities. It also invigorates communities that might otherwise become resigned to their fate, simply because others have branded them as wretched and irredeemable. To argue my case, I use an empirical study that was conducted by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, in collaboration with the Forum on Early Warning and Early Response. Out of the case study I offer some propositions for proventive peacebuilding (or positive approaches to peacebuilding). Proventive peacebuilding is not a marginal activity or a mere twist of jargons. It requires a significant paradigmatic shift from conflict orientation to peace orientation, from risk to opportunity, from impossibility to possibility.

THE CASE OF GUINEA CONAKRY

In February 2000, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), through the Forum on Early Warning and Early Response (FEWER), was contracted by a United Nations agency (which prefers not to be named) to conduct an early-warning study on Guinea Conakry, to alert the international community to potential threats for violent conflict in that country, especially as it moved towards its presidential elections in 2003. A basic definition of early warning is the collection and analysis of information with the aim of providing strategic options for preventive action. Early warning is generally geared towards anticipation rather than prediction of possible outcomes of a given situation. It is designed to fulfill an alerting function by identifying critical situations with a high potential for conflict escalation, so that timely action can be taken to reverse the trend or at least to soften its impact through contingency planning (Jongman and Schmid 1994).

Warning, as construed by the theoreticians, is therefore about assessing threats in order to minimize them. Contrary to traditional warning systems, proventive peacebuilding is more oriented to assessing opportunities for peace and social cohesion in order to build on them. What was striking for us, while discussing this offer, was the seeming lack of interest in what accounts for the stability of Guinea Conakry, in the face of violent conflicts in all of the bordering countries and the resultant influx of refugees into the country for more than a decade. We were convinced that by assessing Guinea's capacity to endure the composite stresses of internal transitions, massive influx of refugees, and regional threats, the world could learn from the people of that country. So instead of designing the strategic risk assessment study requested by the U.N. agency, we designed a strategic opportunities assessment study (Doe and Suifon 2000).

The aim of the study was to analyze Guinea's potential for stability, conflict carrying capacity, and resiliency in the face of adversity. We hoped the study would: (1) mobilize the people of Guinea to develop awareness on the rapid and radical socio-political and economic changes being

demanded by their evolving democracy; (2) create an atmosphere for cooperation and mutuality between state actors and leaders of civil society; and (3) call on the international community to support Guinea on the difficult road to economic development, good governance, and sustainable peace. The core question for us was, "What accounts for the resiliency of the country and its people in the face of rapidly increasing economic, social, political, cultural, and military debility?"

The study lasted six months, with a number of visits made to the country and regular contact with key actors in the social, religious, and political life of Guinea. At the end of the study, we conducted a two-day roundtable conference with a cross-section of Guineans and other international actors in the country. This gave Guineans the opportunity to debate our findings and provide clarifications where needed. The minister for interior, responsible for internal security, though publicly disagreeing with some aspects of the report, officially accepted it and challenged his fellow compatriots to learn from its lessons.

Traditional early warning emphasizes confidentiality, and a large part of most early warning reports tends to be classified. Assessments conducted in proventive peacebuilding are not only public, they are thoroughly discussed by key stakeholders and actors who can effect the desired changes in the society, among them local religious, traditional, business, and political leaders. The media are also invited to build awareness around issues and resources identified.

For our present purposes, this chapter highlights key findings and draws conclusions that may contribute to the theoretical development of positive approaches to peacebuilding.

THE CONTEXT

A small country of about seven million people on the Atlantic coast of West Africa, Guinea Conakry is bordered by Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Senegal, and Guinea Bissau. The largest ethnic groups are the economically dominant Fullah or Peul with approximately 35 percent of the population, the Sousou with approximately 30 percent of the population, and the Malinke with approximately 25 percent. Members of the Malinke group are also found in Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, and Liberia. Guinea is also home to a number of forest tribes—the Guerze or Kpelleh, Manon or Kono, and Kissi.

In the thirteenth century, the Malinke established hegemony in the region, including Upper Guinea, and by the fourteenth century, Guinea in its entirety was absorbed into the powerful Empire of Mali. In contemporary times a French colony, a landmark in Guinea's fight for independence came in 1958, when independence leader Ahmed Sékou Touré urged

Guineans to refuse "quasi" independence from France. In French President Charles de Gaulle's referendum, Guineans massively voted "non," to the surprise of the international community and the humiliation of France. Sékou Touré's defiance, despite all pressure to the contrary, shattered de Gaulle's vision of a Franco-African community and made Sékou Touré a great figure in the history of Africa's independence movements. His position was epitomized in his words: "We prefer freedom in poverty to riches in chains." De Gaulle's colonial administrators prepared to leave as Sékou Touré declared, in 1958, the independence of the second African colony, after Ghana (which negotiated and gained independence from Britain in 1957).

The battle for Guinea did not end with independence. A number of Western powers, including France, made attempts to destabilize Guinea. The abortive invasion by Portuguese and other foreign mercenaries in 1970, allegedly supported by West Germany, strengthened Sékou Touré's image as a true hero and Pan African who successfully opposed imperialism and neocolonialism in post-independence Africa. By portraying the West as the enemy of Guinea and successfully crushing the Portuguese invasion, Sékou Touré won admiration and successfully mobilized nationalist fervor within Guinea.

Sékou Touré's reign ended abruptly in 1984 with his death from heart failure while visiting the United States. Just three days after his burial, Guinea's armed forces staged a bloodless military takeover, deposing the prime minister and acting president. Headed by Col. Lansana Conté, the Military Council for National Redressment described Sékou Touré's rule as a bloody and ruthless dictatorship characterized by widespread corruption. Radio Conakry announced that the armed forces had taken over power "in order to lay the foundations for a true democracy, to avoid any personal dictatorship in the future." That same day one thousand political prisoners were set free. The message, however, also acknowledged and praised Sékou Touré's achievements, describing him as a great proponent of African unity.

In 1985, a few months after the military takeover, the Military Council announced revolutionary measures aimed at revitalizing an economy exhausted by twenty-six years of isolation. With the help of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a structural adjustment program was initiated, and the economy began an upward trend, according to IMF reports.

In 1991, after considerable national and international pressure, the Conté-led military government agreed to reinstitute a multi-party political system. Eight candidates competed for the presidency elections in 1993, including the incumbent Col. Conté. The pre-election period was tense, marked by incidents of violence between government and opposition supporters. Conté won under doubtful circumstances by a slight majority of just over 50 percent. The legislative elections of 1995 were also

characterized by allegations of fraud, vote rigging, and violence. The ensuing political tension culminated in a military mutiny in February 1996, when a group of disgruntled rank-and-file soldiers protested against inadequate salaries and poor living conditions. Conté quelled the uprising by agreeing to improve conditions for the soldiers.

In 1998 Guineans again tested their young democracy with a second presidential election. History repeated itself, as Conté was re-elected, defeating his closest challenger and political rival, Alpha Condé. Condé was later arrested and held without charge for over fifteen months, later to be convicted of planning a military invasion and sentenced to five years in prison. A few months later President Conté extended executive clemency to Condé.

By decree in 2001, Conté conducted a referendum that now allows him to have a third term. The process was blatantly manipulated, but he nonetheless got away with this action. Many believe that the passive nature of the Guinean people coupled with increased security threats, especially from the government of Liberia, and the international community's support for the Conté regime as a key ally in the Mano River basin, gave the president a free hand to violate Guinea's democratic and constitutional processes with impunity.

SALIANT CONDITIONS FOR STABILITY

The WANEP study identified five salient conditions as forces for peace and stability in Guinea: history, interethnic coexistence and cohesion, religion, economic growth, and the culture of silence. We argued that Guinea provides the international community with the occasion to build peace positively by learning from and acting on the lessons spawned from these conditions. The culture of silence that pervades the Guinean society is, however, a permissive condition that assures negative peace, in other words, the mere lack of violence. In an increasingly globalized and rights-based world, culturally prescribed silence or the subjection of a society to passivity is fundamentally unjustifiable within the context of the contemporary understanding of justice, freedom, democracy, and human dignity.

History

The traditional political and social arrangements that existed in precolonial Guinea continue to shape modern Guinean society. Anti-colonial leaders such as Diana Salifou, Alpha Yahya, and Almamy Samoury Touré, the legendary Emperor of Wassoulou who led the Fullah and Malinke in resistance to colonial domination, are acclaimed as undisputed national heroes, although the French colonialists crushed Almamy Samoury Touré's Malinke rebellion in 1898 and captured him. Thus the seeds of discord and animosity between Guinea and France were sown. This rift was to

become more evident with the rise to power of Ahmed Sékou Touré, kinsman of the former emperor. The present Guinean government, though headed by a Sousou, has erected a monument in honor of the legendary Malinke emperor, and in 1999 sponsored an international conference in his honor in Gabon.

The majority of post-independence African states are burdened with the past. Bloody interethnic cleavages, colonial preference for one ethnic group over the other, conflicting interpretations of historical events, and manipulation of history by political demagogues have fragmented the present socially, politically, and economically.

Individuals and societies are the construct of memory, of history. As Robert Schreiter correctly concludes, "To trivialize and ignore memory is to trivialize and ignore human identity, and to trivialize and ignore human identity is to trivialize and ignore human dignity" (1992, 19). By extension, to trivialize and ignore human identity is to trivialize and ignore the identity of an entire group or society. Reconciling and healing history is a painful exercise that many nations have preferred to abandon, hoping that by turning their backs on the past, it will fade away. A few such as South Africa have come to the unhappy truth that without redeeming the past, they are unable to build a new society, let alone appreciate the future. The past has remained a painful and disrupting reality in most African societies (Botman and Peterson 1996).

Vamik Volkan has identified two extreme subjective interpretations of the past—"chosen glory" and "chosen trauma"—both of which are potent sources for building individual and group identity (1988). Wrapped in myths, these interpretations determine the way individuals and their community perceive themselves and the world around them. While both interpretations are psychological, based on perception, one—the chosen glory—engenders self-appreciation or even inflated self-esteem, as well as an enhanced capacity to face the future. The other—the chosen trauma—engenders fear, hatred, low self-esteem, and a perpetual desire for revenge. The stability and peace of a nation will depend on the proximity of the estranged *Other* and the level of awareness on both sides regarding their histories.

Guinea is on the lucky side. History is in her favor. Situated at the heart of the Great Malian Empire, the cradle of civilization in sub-Saharan Africa, Guineans are unanimous in interpreting historical events that only describe them as victors. Present-day Guinea still possesses historical artifacts that were the symbols of the Malian Empire. The victory of the Wassoulou emperor of the Malinke nation over France, concluded by his distant nephew Ahmed Sékou Touré, has been a unifying force in Guinea.

Long years of warding off external threats created inward-looking people whose internal cohesion is strengthened by external threats.

The best thing that can happen to any government in Guinea is to have an external enemy attack the country. In September 2000, for example, in spite of heightened internal political tension, an insurgency allegedly supported by Liberia and the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone instantly reduced the tension at home and united the country against the military incursion. Retired officers of the Sékou Touré army dusted off their uniforms and arms to defend the motherland. Students and youth volunteers mounted guard and ensured the defence of their villages and towns. Unlike Liberia and Sierra Leone, where during their respective civil wars, the national armies quickly disintegrated, with large sections conniving with the rebels and with businessmen and politicians negotiating profitable deals with rebels, the reverse happened in Guinea. The Guinean business class created a war fund. Musical caravans of peace led by the griots, traditional praise singers, chanted old patriotic songs of the Sundiata, Samouro, and Sékou Touré eras. It was like the entire nation was in a trance. In less than a month, the Guinean government drove the insurgents out of the land.

At the roundtable conference where findings of this study were discussed, a number of the participants slipped into nostalgia. "The patriotism of yesterday is no longer experienced today," said one former minister. "The young generation is losing our past and even the adults are no longer demonstrating patriotism at their work places." "Sékou Touré's legacy of revolutionary sacrifice is fast disappearing," lamented another. "Sékou Touré's soldiers and police were trained and imbued with an exceptional sense of patriotism and were always ready to defend their country."

Inspired by reflections on the past, roundtable participants spontaneously suggested a "National Renewal Commission." The emphasis would be placed on the positive opportunities available for "preserving Guinea's assets and maximizing its opportunities and gains." The commission would initially focus mainly on selected "nonpolitical" problems such as health, poverty, and wealth generation, and then as it gained acceptance in the country, it would promote public dialogue on specific political problems of national concern.

History has the potential to engender positive or negative, divisive or unifying sentiments in any given society. It possesses a cumulative strength from which current events can draw inspiration. Such inspiration can either elicit complicity and belief in the inevitability of the status quo, or provide grounds to fight for change when other possibilities or alternatives become available. In Guinea's case, historic gains remain the ideal for the older generation, while the young are fast turning their backs on the rich past of their country. The nation's survival will depend on concrete efforts to translate historical gains from idealism to pragmatism. Love for Guinea must come to be seen in the ways people care for the common good, how civil servants conduct themselves in the work place, how the government dis-

tributes the nation's wealth, and how Guineans collaborate with external corporate interests, which exploit other African countries through their own governments and citizens. Patriotism must be demonstrated in constructive ways when there is no external enemy or threat.

Without a shred of doubt, Guinea stands to be a great nation in West Africa's Mano River basin if its historical accomplishments are sagaciously exploited. This task is much easier in Guinea than in other African countries where there is first the need to heal, reconcile, and rewrite history before educating the young. The international community, especially UNESCO, should help Guinea to uphold her history. The story of each Guinean community possesses rich resources that can build social cohesion and self-appreciation. An internal revolution is required, especially in the schools, to revive and lift up these stories among the younger generation.

Another group that needs support in order to revive Guinea's life-giving stories are the griots or praise singers, formerly the custodians and narrators of history. Woven in poetry, proverbs, and parables, each community's story is beautifully told through the griots' music. Griots are still an integral part of many West African societies, but their rich values and roles are now reduced to singing primarily for the wealthy. With a minimum of support (training, finance, and equipment), griots could resurrect dead memories and inject new life into communities.

The media are another institution that could support a historical revival. Unifying historical events could be dramatized and aired on radio and television. The national media already place emphasis on promoting local music and drama. This should be encouraged further.

Interethnic Coexistence

Interethnic social cohesion is another asset that deserves maintaining and strengthening. Guinea is one of the few African countries where ethnic conflicts have been kept to a minimum. Our research uncovered a number of factors related to peaceful coexistence. First, Guinea is united as a nation by a strong history of a common external enemy. From Diana Salifou to Almamy Samoury Touré, Guineans were mobilized to work together to save their nation from outside invaders. Second, there are no restrictions on an individual's choice of partner. Intermarriage is encouraged, even among bigger groups like the Sousou, Malinke, or Fullah, as well as among the smaller tribes. Communities are bonded through marriage. A third and most outstanding element is social relation. Guinea is a closely-knit society. The free thinking and individual liberties that characterize Western civilization have yet to prevail in Guinea, and the control that a community has over its members, whether educated or uneducated, remains strong in Guinea.

Most Guineans with whom we spoke could not imagine trading community safety and security for their individual freedom. Community values and harmony are emphasized over individual needs. Educated and employed members of communities take full responsibility for other members who are not educated or employed. "The choice of who stays with you or whom one is to support in school is not made by even the individual who is to foot the bill. It is made by his external family and community," one respondent indicated. "This is our own social security system—each community cares for its own."

Some of these social assets are not without excesses, but excesses do not justify the complete replacement of the socio-cultural values and system of any people by another group. They should be addressed continuously in order to make the system functional. Participants at the roundtable conference emphasized problems of nepotism and the suppression of meritocracy because of the uncompromising obligations an individual has to his social group. If there is a vacancy in a given agency, it is generally accepted that the employer will first look within his own group before considering anyone outside of that group. Guinean private entrepreneurs find it difficult to progress because of responsibility to their community. "A trader will only employ his relatives, whether they are qualified or not, and will be responsible for their welfare," an interviewee explained. "Responsibility to the community most times exceeds profit," another concluded.

Our inclusion of interethnic cohesion in this study is not to suggest that it is unique to Guinea, but to note that in Guinea such cohesion has not been destroyed by political manipulation and the "divide and rule" strategies that thrive in other parts of Africa. Guinea does not have a history of politically motivated interethnic hostility. While his Malinke ethnic group enjoyed preferential treatment from the state, Sékou Touré, the founding and longest serving president, extended patronage to all other ethnic groups. People perceived as threats to his authority were punished individually and not on the basis of ethnicity.

There are more homeless people in some of the richest cities in the world than in Conakry. It was nearly impossible, in fact, to find anyone sleeping in the street. This is essentially explained in the social security system of Guinea, with each family, kin, or community caring for its own. The integrity and success of any family is measured by the success, character, and fate of its individual members. This strong traditional system is undermined by capitalism in which the profit motive is the predominant value. External pressures from the World Bank, IMF, transnational corporations, and other market-oriented investors are pushing Guinea to structurally adjust, privatize, produce, and become current in servicing debt owed to rich countries. Indeed, Guinea may need to subscribe to market capitalism and turn its back on its more caring, humane, and civilized

value system. If that happens, its weak economic infrastructure will not be able to accommodate those who are left out, and the left out could turn to prostitution, theft, armed robbery, etc., in order to survive in the new system. Already, these vices are on the rise in Conakry.

In spite of the high level of interethnic coexistence, it has still not produced national cohesion in Guinea. Until faced with an external threat, Guineans are first Peuhls, Malinke, Sousou, Kissi, or Kono. This is explained in the loyalty paid to ethnicity-based political parties. Violent ethnic conflicts are caused by the politicization of ethnicity by politicians who exploit difference and fear for political gain. As long as politics are driven by ethnicity-based parties in Guinea, there is the potential of undermining and fragmenting the otherwise high level of interethnic coexistence, which is currently an important source of stability.

To imagine that African countries can become purely capitalist societies is to grossly disregard their social-cultural reality. Such a blatant disregard for Africa's values of caring for the weak and needy is to strip the continent of its identity, as well as a major source of stability. A people without identity are easily manipulated or can readily slip into anarchy. Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to name a few, typify a consequence of identity and institutional crises, resulting in disaffection, despair, frustration, and eventually, anarchy. So far these factors are not yet prominent in Guinea, but current political and economic trends suggest that Guinea's stability and cohesion are under threat. There is an urgent need to evolve a workable system, one that is inclusive and community oriented.

Religion

Religion is one of the most important factors responsible for social stability in present-day Guinea. Muslim traders from Morocco and Algeria introduced Islam in West Africa around A.D. 900 West African rulers of the famous Mali and Songhai empires easily accepted the alien religion. By skillfully combining aspects of Islam and traditional religion, these leaders made the new religion acceptable to the population, making Islam the predominant religion in contemporary West Africa.

More than 80 percent of Guineans are Muslim. Unlike other African countries that have seen a rise in fundamentalist Islamic movements and a corresponding rise in violent conflict, Islam is, at least for now, a stabilizing factor in Guinea. Influential imams in the Conseil Nationale Islamique (National Islamic League) have assumed the role of mediator in family and community disputes. The League also keeps a watchful eye on excesses such as Islamic extremism and safeguards against the imposition of *sharia* law, which has threatened social cohesion and state institutions in Algeria, Sudan, Egypt, and recently, Nigeria. Guinea has yet to produce reli-

gious extremists, demonstrating that it is not religion that produces extremists, but rather various forms of privation that cause individuals and communities to reinterpret their beliefs to draw inspiration and energy for the fight against oppressive regimes and systems.

According to the National Islamic League Secretary-General, El Hadj Mamadou Saliou Sylla, Islam is "peace." His organization uses prayer meetings and mosques to sensitize Guineans to the values of peace and living in harmony with all non-Muslims, especially Christians. The last Friday of every month, according to one interviewee, the League organizes prayer meetings along borders with countries suffering from civil war. These widely attended monthly ceremonies are used to pray for peace in Guinea and to sensitize people to the devastating consequences of war. Government officials, including sometimes the president, are seen on state television offering prayers for peace with the people along the borders.

In addition, the National Islamic League does not outlaw marriage between Christians and Muslims, and this has helped facilitate peaceful religious coexistence. Islam plays an influential role in the political life of the state as well. Politicians seeking state power at local, regional, and national levels are required to undergo apprenticeship with and/or acquire the benediction of the League. Political leaders consult the organization on any major decision-making process in the country. In a world where Islam is increasingly linked to those who perpetrate terror, the imam's task of preaching the Islam that means peace is even more noteworthy. Guinea could become recognized as a model state where Muslims and Christians coexist in harmony and could share this experience with other countries where the two children of Abraham cannot live in peace.

Conversely, some people at the roundtable conference indicated that the Sékou Touré and now Conté administrations have exploited this religious asset to their personal benefit. In this view, Islam is used as an opiate to keep the people in spiritual bliss, while the government exploits their fundamental rights. Messages such as "acceptance of the divine, love for fellow human beings, acceptance that the chief is appointed by God and is always a chief," are commonly heard in Friday sermons. Imams are not paid, and many of them depend on handouts from political leaders to subsist. Consequently, there is a tendency to overlook corrupt practices; as one interviewee succinctly put it, "there is a moralization of crime in Guinea."

At somewhat of a turning point, religion, especially Islam, will maximize its positive impact on the Guinean society if it operates independently of government. This does not suggest the separation of state and religion, which is not allowed in Islam. Instead, it means that to ensure that each plays its respective role in the sustenance of the state, imams should work against the temptation of being supported by individual members of government in exchange for prayers, a practice that currently prevails

in the country. At present Islam's moral and prophetic voice is fast eroding in today's Guinea, and moral laxity is replacing adherence to the values of the Prophet. Innovation will be required from the National Islamic League to address the increase in social vices and engage the government more constructively. In a society that remains attentive to the imams, Islam could become a potent force for the building and institutionalization of social justice and respect for the dignity and sanctity of life, provided the imams return to the values of the Prophet.

Economic Growth

Western economic experts believe Guinea has made more economic progress than most African countries. In 1996, with the help of the IMF and World Bank, the Guinean authorities began reforms to restore economic and financial equilibrium. These efforts were prompted by the need to revitalize Guinea's economy after years of upheaval due to a drastic drop in revenue, as well as poor management of public funds.

Guinea is blessed with significant mineral wealth. It possesses approximately two-thirds of the world's known reserves of bauxite, accounting for more than 80 percent of the country's export earnings, as well as iron ore, gold, uranium, and diamonds. Guinea is also endowed with exceptional potential for hydroelectric power.

Natural resources can be a force for stability or instability. With strong, creative, legitimate leadership and the right infrastructure, natural resources can bring not only prosperity but also peace to a country. Libya is an example of a country whose oil wealth has been used to keep society together and to extend altruism to parts of the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. In sub-Saharan Africa, however, the presence of natural resources has typically been a source of corruption and conflict, notably in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Angola, Cameroon, Sudan, and Nigeria.

In neighboring Côte d'Ivoire, former leader Felix Houphuet Boigny cultivated the agricultural sector as an instrument for stability and prosperity. Today, Côte d'Ivoire is the world's largest producer of cocoa, and food is in abundance. By comparison, Guinea is even more richly endowed with arable land, although no effort has been made to develop the appropriate infrastructure and policies to promote the agricultural sector. Guinea's agricultural potential cannot be overemphasized; a well-developed agricultural sector will not only ensure food self-sufficiency, but will also earn large amounts of foreign exchange in the subregional food markets.

One outstanding economic difference between Guinea and her Mano River neighbors of Liberia and Sierra Leone is the level of private ownership that is in Guinean hands. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, foreign nationals (especially Lebanese) own 90 percent of private investment in the

extractive industry and trading of imported goods, while in Guinea 70 percent of private ownership is in the hands of Guineans (especially the Peuhls). This concentration of national wealth in its own citizens' hands is, in Guinea's experience, a major source of stability given that the decision to go to war or to endorse violent confrontation can be largely contingent on how much one has to lose or gain in doing so.

If Guinea's full economic potentials were deployed, its young people would not be disillusioned as they are now, with some even daring to fly in the cargo bays of European planes in an attempt to escape to a better future. Guinea needs the appropriate infrastructure and a farsighted, accountable leadership system to gain from its plentiful endowments of minerals, land, and water.

A Culture of Silence

From the years of Sékou Touré until today, Guineans have been generally passive and demonstrate a nonchalant attitude to sensitive issues that would provoke massive mobilization and perhaps uprising in some other countries. Fear of constitutional authority and government officials is a strongly ingrained behavior for many Guineans. This apparent Guinean culture of silence and laissez-faire can be traced to ancient traditional and socio-cultural arrangements maintained over generations. Strict hierarchical structures, social classes, and the supremacy of certain families or clans remain largely unaffected by Western values of equal rights and individualism. The privileged dominate the underprivileged, and the latter unquestioningly accept their fate as predestined. Amongst the Malinke and Fullah, these class divisions have been cemented by the endorsement of a preferred interpretation of Islam, which supports strict loyalty to hereditary or "sacred" leaders. Sékou Touré's twenty-six-year dictatorship further contributed to this passivity. Dissent was violently suppressed, and traditional institutions and leaders were basically destroyed and silenced, making the state the only authority in Sékou Touré's Guinea.

Whether this attitude of submission in the face of provocation and hardship is a positive stabilizing factor is debatable. Some see it as a weakness and predict that sooner or later the situation will be reversed. The belief that everything is predestined and thus unchangeable may give way to the conviction that the freedom from socio-cultural or political bondage and domination that Western democracy promises is never a given but must be fought for. Passive societies can only be maintained in a dictatorship or, at best, a one-party democracy. Control of the masses through violence or the threat of violence or through socio-cultural manipulation is a gross violation of human rights, which is a universal law to which all societies must adhere.

The state system in Guinea still uses Sékou Touré's baton of violent control to govern. It seems resistant to change. In addition, the regime is finding it more and more difficult to adapt to the tenets of Western multi-party democracy. The society, on the other hand, has yet to engage the regime constructively so that both the society and the state can uphold the universal values of human rights and good governance. The tension between the social, cultural, and political inertia of the regime to adopt new rules of governance and democracy and an impatient external demand to pull Guinea into the world of democracy, free market, human rights, and good governance is becoming stronger and stronger. The success of human rights protection, peacebuilding, and other facets of civil society will depend largely on widespread and carefully planned popular education. Doubtless, the government and other power structures will resist these initiatives.

Confrontation with the government would be tragic. Constructive engagement that wins the government over as a partner for constructive change for sustainable peace and development is clearly the best option. This means targeting government institutions for the educational process as well. At present human rights organizations in the country emphasize reporting of human rights abuses by government institutions, which often antagonizes the government and leaves no room for engagement. We are not suggesting a compromise with injustice; rather, our argument is that in order to change a system that spans centuries, persuasion, education, and dialogue are the best tools.

PROPOSITIONS FOR PROVENTIVE PEACEBUILDING

Lessons learned from this study allow us to make the following propositions about proventive (or positive) peacebuilding:

PROVENTIVE PEACEBUILDING TAKES THE FOCUS AWAY FROM WHAT IS WRONG TO WHAT IS RIGHT, FROM CONFLICT-GENERATING FACTORS TO PEACE-GENERATING FACTORS. It identifies history or experiences, actors, instruments, structures, and systems that are the foundational bedrock for peace, justice, and social cohesion in a society and celebrates them. Proventive peacebuilding cultivates the constructive capacities and strengths of a society.

Our experience from Guinea and other West African countries where we have applied this approach to peacebuilding shows three immediate outcomes: First, it inspires hope in a society, and hope is an essential stimulant for positive change. Second, people become more independent and confident. Identifying a society's abilities and opportunities can engender positive attitudes towards change. Third, proventive peacebuilding allows one to have access to the whole picture of a society. When one enters a society to access risk, at least in West Africa, many things are kept from your view, either because your telescope is limited by a problem orienta-

tion or that stakeholders protect information that could threaten their credibility. Those who assess risks of society often overlook the potential that exists in that society. Emphasis is put on external intervention.

By pointing to the peace-generating resources—history, interethnic coexistence, economy, and religion—we helped mobilize a renewed spirit and engender self-appreciation, which was then demonstrated (in the story told above) as a massive, country-wide mobilization when in September 2000, just two months after the study was completed, rebels invaded the country from the Liberian border. Prominent leaders who attended the roundtable consultation had just been refreshed about their history, social, and economic assets. We do not want to claim that the consultation was the only impetus for the national mobilization, but the renewed energy, according to one participant, contributed to the mobilization of civil society groups. In any case, the national mobilization supported our analysis of the Guinean society as one that responds effectively to external threat.

PROVENTIVE PEACEBUILDING IS A PROCESS WHEREBY WE DISCOVER. The success of our study was in the fact that we went to Guinea with open, curious, and inquiring minds. Instead of asking questions about what was wrong with Guinea, we asked, "What gives life in Guinea? What do Guineans value about their society? What holds their society together?" We literally asked the people we met in Guinea to teach us about their peace, how they live together, who they are. Proventive peacebuilders are mere witnesses, not purveyors of change, therefore they must have inquiring minds. If we all agree that "positive" peace is essentially a healthy and whole relationship, we should also be guided by the truth that relationships are personal, relevant, and understandable only to those who own and experience them. Proventive peacebuilding is an exciting journey in which both the peacebuilder and the community discover exciting potentials about themselves. In our experience, no group or individual has ever travelled this road and emerged unchanged.

PROVENTIVE PEACEBUILDING IS A NEVER-ENDING PROJECT FOR ENHANCING AND BETTERING THE QUALITY OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIP. Peace is about human relationship. And the human story does not begin with violence or conflict. It begins with being, belonging, generating, sharing, and building. The essence of society is relationship, for society is a collection of relationships. This includes interlocking and interdependent groups, ideas, values, and physical, emotional, and psychological spaces. Peacebuilding is therefore synonymous with society building. The vitality and health of any society is peace. In Guinea Conakry, like other traditional societies, peace is synonymous with closely-knit and cohesive social groupings. The bond between the individual and community cannot be severed. Economic and political systems must speak to the social reality of Africa. The African is not an individual who must satisfy his own interests. He is a member of his

community, his society. He cannot turn his back on this demand for if he does, he will be stripped of identity, of personhood, of existence.

Proventive peacebuilding is about witnessing and understanding change. There are two basic sources of change: endogenous (from within) and exogenous (from without). Endogenous change is not imposed; it is a product of the inherent regenerative capacity of the society. Endogenous change happens out of encounters. Every encounter presents opportunity for learning, for growth, for development. It takes a reflective person or society to identify the lessons that that encounter presents. When the lessons are identified and the society learns from them, new meanings are constructed from which the society forms new attitudes, and eventually, new cultures and structures.

Often times the society loses the opportunities presented by encounters or challenges that confront them because people tend to put emphasis on the stresses or pains associated with the encounters and lose sight of the lessons to be learned and growth to be experienced. The Conflict Indicator for Foreign Policy of Carlton University in Canada, for example, devotes its risk assessment project to identifying stresses in society, referred to as structural indicators. These include demographic stress (increase in the number of people relative to the society's capacity to provide for basic needs), political stress (tension emerging from external demands for democracy and resistance of regimes to give up old systems), stress from refugee movements, etc. These are essential indicators that must be monitored to assure stability in any society.

When the focus is only stressors or causes of stress in a society, however, the usual reaction is to eliminate the symptoms, and not to strengthen institutions and social structures to alleviate the stressors so that learning can take place. For population increase, for example, more resources are directed to contraception, and for urban migration emphasis is placed on forced relocation of communities. None of these responses, however, have contributed to eliminating the stressors that produce the social patterns of high rates of birth and migration. Another example is the constant use of elections as the panacea for addressing civil conflicts in Africa. The assumption is that one can remove the stress of war by simply replacing a regime. Sufficient time is not given to understanding why civil wars proliferate and what opportunities for change these conflicts present to us. Because of our unwillingness to fully understand the dynamics of the endogenous evolutions in most African societies, the responses we have applied have often exacerbated the pain and anguish of the stresses. That is precisely what classical peacebuilding has been doing—building institutions to avoid the pain of encounter and even, sometimes, the encounter itself!

Another factor that affects the learning from endogenous processes of change is the role of bystanders. Bystanders or outsiders are

those who are not directly affected by the change process but attempt to describe and give meaning to what they observe. Instead of those who are experiencing the encounter naming what they are encountering, the bystanders or outsiders usually give meaning to that which they are *not* experiencing and thereby decide what should be done about the change. There is no way a bystander can adequately describe what he or she is not experiencing. This is not to say that bystanders' contributions are not important, but their interpretations or conclusions are rooted in their own experience and socialization and should not be imposed on those involved in the encounter. Making meaning out of an encounter is the exclusive right of those experiencing it, and the bystanders' role should mainly be to facilitate the discovery process for those directly involved.

Exogenous change, by contrast, assumes that existing cultures, instruments, structures, and systems are flawed and must be replaced immediately with new ones that are inherently different from the ones known by the society to undergo the change. Exogenous change comes from outside. It is drawn from the experience of an outside group which that group feels obliged to impose on the group facing change. Usually the outsider is terribly convinced that the change will be for the good of the other and is even surprised that the other is hesitant in embracing it. The British Empire, French expansionism, and recently, America's rights-based, individualistic, capitalist democracy are but a few examples of the imposition of exogenous changes on many states and nations, whether the society is suited and ripe for the change or not, and whether the society has the appropriate structures to support and sustain the change or not.

There are several sources of stress engendered by exogenous change processes. These include the outsider's demand for change versus the society's inertia resisting the change; the level of elasticity or responsive capacity of the society to be changed; the palatability of the change to the society; and the process by which the change is negotiated.

Guinea as a society has existed for more than two thousand years. Its peoples have had a tremendous number of encounters with both endogenous and exogenous conditions. Consciously or unconsciously, these encounters have shaped the understanding of Guineans about the world and hence their culture. Inquirers or bystanders are needed only for the community to discover itself and understand the change it is undergoing. Nonstructured interviews driven by curious and learning attitudes allowed WANEP to elicit tremendous amounts of information from which we have learned, not only about Guinea, but also about our own intervention strategies and ourselves. In the process Guineans and other communities with which we have worked have also learned about their assets and the challenges that threaten their stability and peace. Proventive peacebuilding is a journey of mutual learning. The roundtable conference at the

end of the process is the dialogue space where the body of knowledge is collated and joint-response actions are designed by the members of the community themselves.

CONCLUSION

My journey as a peacebuilder began with stories of tragedy. I witnessed a brutal civil war that tore apart the fabric of my home country of Liberia, a small country of just three million people. More than three hundred thousand people (one of every ten persons) were killed in seven years of barbarity. That war extended to neighboring Sierra Leone, the place of my birth. Since 1990 I have been working with communities ravaged by violent conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and many other parts of Africa. Everywhere I have travelled, especially outside of Africa, I become a prime recipient of sympathy. People hail me for my work simply because I work with people who are suffering the agony of violence. Yet deep inside I know that the source of the energy that drives my work is not from these terrible stories. My energy comes from the glimpses of hope, the stories of small, seemingly insignificant individuals and communities that show inexplicable courage and resiliency in the face of terror. Their smiles and their hope for a peaceful tomorrow sustain me and make my work possible.

These experiences forced me to begin to rethink the traditional peacebuilding processes that emphasize conflict analysis, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation. I realized that peacebuilding which was oriented towards conflict was not telling the whole story, nor doing justice to the concept. It seemed limiting to me and was not inspiring hope and mobilizing the energy needed for growth.

Three years ago I began testing the idea of positive approaches to peacebuilding. My emphasis was on resiliency. I wanted to know what accounted for the resilience of some societies in the face of adversity and what could be learned from that. My interest grew in societies like Guinea, Kenya, the Gambia, Ghana, and Cameroon, with high volatility quotients but yet still relatively stable. I increased my visits to those countries and started asking questions about their strengths. s

I identified two categories of resources that explain the relative stability of these countries. Conflict prevention experts call these conflict-carrying and peace-generating capacities. *Conflict-carrying capacities* are those social, political, cultural, economic, and religious structures that accommodate or absorb tensions in a society. They do not, however, promote peace. Instead, they ensure that conflicts are kept at the latent level. *Peace-generating capacities* are those social, cultural, political, and religious institutions that promote the values of positive, sustainable peace. They are the dynamic institutions that build peace continuously.

The strategic opportunities assessment study of Guinea highlights these two categories. The first four conditions—history, religion, economy, interethnic coexistence—can become generators of peace, while the culture of silence was considered a conflict-carrying resource. A number of societies have survived on their conflict carrying-capacity, which serves as a negative stabilizer but with no guarantee of preventing conflagration of violent conflict in the future.

At the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding we are currently applying this approach in two peacebuilding programs:

Through the Proventive Peacebuilding Program's Early Warning and Response Network (WARN) we are conducting numerous action-oriented studies in various countries. The inquiries we conduct have helped both us and the communities we study to discover potentials needed to change their conditions. Since the study discussed in this chapter, for example, civil society groups and government agencies in Guinea are cultivating healthy relationships to address their social, political, and economic problems. Guinea will need more work, however, to evolve a strong civil society that will hold the government accountable for human rights and political violations.

In 2000 WANEP launched its Active Nonviolence and Peace Education Program in seven West African countries. This program seeks to strengthen the social processes that promote justice, peace, and social cohesion in communities through the school setting. It is promoting the history, literature, and other arts in West African societies that advance the values and attitudes in support of these social processes. The first stage of the program focused on the "attitude of teaching." It has demonstrated the role teachers play in building society and how their attitudes contribute in building individuals who have either a positive or a destructive sense of their identity. Especially in Liberia, teachers are discovering that affirmation, giving constructive feedback to young people, and including them in decisions made in the classrooms are making a significant difference in the lives of children. Young people who benefit from the program show significant improvement in academic performance and social skills.

Our three-year experience in West Africa demonstrates that by building positive images, we are able to mobilize the resources needed to address obstacles and challenges in many communities. Proventive peacebuilding does not deny structural injustices that must be named and addressed. What it has done is to mobilize bolder and more courageous people. The courage they draw on to engage these structures comes from the hope that there is certainly a liberating future.

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O future Nagas, let's stop this evil
Let there be peace again
Stop the gun culture
It's not ours
For we cannot survive this pool of
Hatred, conflict, and corruption

NAGA YOUTH

CHAPTER NINE

IMAGINE NAGALAND:
THE COURAGE TO BE POSITIVE

Peter Delahaye and Bharat Krishnan[1]

The United Nations' Global Movement for Children (GMC) has heralded an unprecedented challenge to leadership to unite in the service of children. Listening to children speaking out was a central focus of the Special U.N. Session on Children in May 2002, as well as in many GMC projects all over the world. Independently, this work has also been going on through a series of "Imagine" projects around the world, which were inspired by the original Imagine Chicago, in 1992. Among them is Imagine Nagaland, which was created by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 2001. The intergenerational dialogue that took place in the complex setting of India's Nagaland inspired "imaginings" and hope for many parts of the world facing similar challenges. By involving children and youth in dreaming about the future, taking only the positive possibilities from history, a way for development for peace is created.

Nagaland, a small and remote state bordering Myanmar in India's North East, has had a troubled political history over the last fifty years. What began as a nonviolent struggle for self-determination in the 1950s later took the form of an armed conflict. The political issues remain alive even today. In 1963, Nagaland became the sixteenth state of the Indian Union. Since then, the situation of Nagaland's two million people has changed dramatically and a "see-sawing process has led alternately to despair and hope," according to Sanjoy Hazarika.[2] "With the coming of statehood, Nagaland entered the era of planned socio-economic development, ending centuries of isolation and neglect, although the wounds and hurts of the past still caused pain to those who had suffered or lost their loved ones in the armed struggle."

The situation has improved significantly since the signing of ceasefire agreements by the government of India in 1997 and 2001, respectively, with the two major groups leading the armed struggle. Although there are occasional complaints of ceasefire violations, the situation is noticeably better than in the past. What is reassuring today is that there is a genuine desire

among the people for ushering in lasting peace and a firm determination that all contentious issues should be resolved across the table in a nonviolent and democratic manner.

"I am never tired of saying that Naga society needs change," said Nagaland Chief Minister S.C. Jamir, the most senior political figure in the state, in his inaugural speech at the Dream/Design Summit of Imagine Nagaland in July 2001. "I say this with deep conviction, because I feel that we as a people tend to live in the past, while ignoring the present and the immediate future. Learning from the past and emulating the values which we have inherited is healthy, but living forever in the past is only a means of escaping hard realities and avoiding what needs to be done. Nobody can deny that Nagaland has been a very troubled place for many decades and has seen far too much violence for such a small society. The Naga people have suffered a lot. Many wounds are yet to be healed. There are many political issues that need to be resolved and many economic issues that trouble us. For a small state, we seem to have a disproportionately large number of problems. But living in the past will not help to solve any of our problems. They have to be resolved in the present and with strategies that are relevant today. Living constantly in the past will only reopen old wounds and cause more pain."

Caught between the imperative of asserting the rule of law while at the same time having to face the consequences of the continuous conflict and violence in the state, it has not been easy to maintain the balance between ensuring development while simultaneously maintaining peace. As a result, the alternatives of pushing forward an agenda of "peace for development" or "development for peace" remain a conundrum that begs an appropriate answer. A large presence of security personnel continues to be clearly visible in the state as a top-down means of strengthening the rule of law and ensuring security. A large number of peace rallies and peace resolutions by civil society are a bottom-up response that reflects the determination to make peace endure.

Government service is currently the major avenue for employment in this underdeveloped corner of India, as would-be investors are just beginning to understand the North East Region and its special developmental needs. It is a moot question whether their interest would be sustained even if the ceasefire holds, given the locational disadvantages and inadequacy of infrastructure. Nevertheless, Nagaland cannot stand still and remain caught in a time warp in relation to progress and growth the world over. It has to move forward from being a spectator to a participant in the global initiatives for improving the quality of life. In any blueprint for transforming Nagaland, a critical question—and indeed a serious challenge—is to reorient the attitude and approach of government employees and officialdom to play the historic role expected of them. Given the large number of govern-

ment employees in the state, it is imperative that they see themselves as lead players and strategic catalysts in the mission to transform Nagaland into a state that is responsive and sensitive to the needs of its citizens. Nagaland should aspire to become a model state, where development has a human face, is fair and equitable, and respects ecology and the environment.

Nagaland's key strengths are many and can be seen at three levels. The first level would include low population density; absence of caste and social discrimination; remarkable social capital made up of clans, villages, and tribes; strong community spirit; and social bonding. At the next level, one can see a highly literate population; an established and empowered local governance system built around village councils and village development boards; and strong religious bonds. At the third level, Nagaland has tremendous natural resources in terms of forests, oil, gas, and minerals, which await sensible, eco-friendly exploitation.

In early 2000, the chief secretary of Nagaland, the highest ranking bureaucrat in the state, initiated a loosely structured visioning exercise for his departments. Essentially a top-down process, "Vision Nagaland" was aimed at combating "fatigue and cynicism" in the state. At the same time, UNICEF in India (and globally) was in full preparation for the Global Movement for Children. A fortuitous lunch meeting between UNICEF personnel and the Nagaland chief secretary set the ground for the Global Movement for Children and a possible "Imagine Nagaland" to come together, as part of the Imagine series,[3] to meld with the top-down visioning exercise already in progress. This also provided an opportunity for UNICEF to work with children in Nagaland and amplify their voices as part of the consultative process that had been envisaged. It was therefore agreed with the government of Nagaland that children and their voices would be very much at the center of this project.

DISCOVERY PHASE

Peter Delahaye and Bharat Krishnan (the authors) constituted the core team and initiated a series of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) workshops in Nagaland, starting with the first Discovery Workshop in early April 2001. In their message to the chief secretary, the two facilitators requested his office to invite up to one hundred participants for the workshop, to constitute a "Nagaland glue,"[4] a Noah's Ark, representing all stakeholders of the state. In the final count there were seventy participants of whom more than thirty were children and youth. Using the Appreciative Inquiry philosophy (Cooperrider and Whitney 1999), participants were asked to inquire into "what gives life to Nagaland?"

These exercises led to the development of six major themes, chosen by participants, for detailed inquiry across the state: "unity, peace,

and respect for all," "education and employment," "ecology and development," "equitable development," "respect for the rule of law," and "Nagaland of our future." (See appendix for interview guides.) For many of the adults this was their first experience of interacting on an equal footing with children and youth. The participants, comprised of children, government servants, probationers (trainee bureaucrats), nongovernmental organization members, legislators, media persons, teachers, doctors, human rights activists, etc., eventually set a target of twenty thousand discovery interviews to be conducted over a period of ten weeks, representing one percent of the Nagaland population.

In order to cover people in all eight districts of Nagaland, the team had to adopt a cascading interview method whereby each person interviewed was asked to interview two more, and so on, with the numbers multiplying geometrically. A need was also felt for enlarging the number of first-level interviewers and to ensure that all districts were adequately covered. A second Discovery Workshop was therefore conducted the next month in which one hundred people participated, nearly sixty of whom were children and youth. The themes remained the same in this workshop, but participants were given more intensive training in AI interviewing. This included first interviewing their best friend, then interviewing a workshop participant, and finally interviewing a significant segment of the "Nagaland glue."

DISCOVERY PHASE PROCESS HIGHLIGHTS

Culturally, Nagaland is a place where children are expected to remain silent spectators and speak only when spoken to. The first major challenge for the facilitators was how to get this mixed group of children and adults to interact on an equal footing in the Discovery Workshop and later to give children the confidence to interview adults. The workshop agenda was therefore designed like a DNA molecule, with separate streams of dialogue for children (who in any case could not be expected to feel comfortable with AI theory) and for adults. At appropriate times the two groups were brought together to share their findings.

Towards the end of the first day, children and adults were asked to "guess" what the other group might have captured as dreams, hopes, and expectations. Adults presumed their output would be more realistic and based on experience, while children were confident that they would have pictured a more exciting future. When the two groups came together, the resulting discussion was a turning point in the workshop. Adults were truly overawed by the power of the children's dreams, and the children felt adults had come up with "the same old thing." The group of adults openly admitted their respect for what the children had come up with and from

then on, adults and children decided to work in combined groups. A crucial barrier had been overcome.

The facilitation team had a person who had tremendous experience of working with children, and this also proved to be invaluable in getting them to participate fully.

Once the six themes were chosen by the participants, crafting the lead-in statements and the questions proved to be quite challenging. In the practice interviews, children needed special coaching, but in the end proved to be the best interviewers! One young boy needed a lot of guidance (and confidence building) to get through even the first interview. Having done that, he went on, as he proudly announced in the second workshop, to complete twenty-eight interviews with senior bureaucrats, police personnel, teachers, and community members.

One of the young participants designed a wonderful, brightly colored logo for Imagine Nagaland (see Figure 1), which became a symbol of hope for the participants and something of an icon for the entire state. To another of the participants, the colors in the logo symbolized the richness of Nagaland; the bonded hands—unity and strength; the hills—peace, serenity, and values upheld for ages to come; the birds—life; and the rising sun—the dawn of a new beginning.

Figure 1
NAGALAND LOGO

The dozen or so probationers became deeply engaged in the process, as did the Administrative Training Institute (ATI), the apex training institution of the state government. In the second workshop, the probationers developed into great co-facilitators—a natural, unplanned, and very welcome development! Participants in this workshop actually came from each of the districts and were to go back and interview hundreds of people over the next few weeks. The probationers felt the need to reach out further and deeper into districts and so led a one-day workshop, on their own initiative, in each of the districts. Local stakeholders—villagers, students, government officials, teachers, and student-union leaders, among others— partici-

pated and took the cascading interview process to new frontiers. The power of this "reach" could be seen from the fact that many village-level stakeholders were deeply influenced by the process. One example is that of a local church leader, who had attended a district workshop admittedly "with quite some reluctance." He was so taken up by the process that he ended up doing sixty-four interviews with farmers, village leaders, local government functionaries, and children, an invaluable contribution to the Discovery Phase of Imagine Nagaland.

A steering committee had been formed, consisting of representatives of all the major stakeholder groups in the first workshop. This committee led the review meetings in the period between the Discovery workshops and the Dream/Design Summit, and ensured that interviews and data mining were on track.

DREAM AND DESIGN PHASE

By the time the Dream/Design Summit was held in late July 2001, six thousand interviews had been completed and mined for stories, best practices, and dreams by a band of tireless student volunteers, probationers, ATI staff, and a few dedicated bureaucrats. Hundreds of interview forms were still pouring in each day at the time of the Dream/Design Summit. To enhance the state's capacity to continue the AI philosophy, ATI was strengthened in terms of literature and presentation materials and books on Appreciative Inquiry. An open invitation was sent out that the core team would train anyone interested in the art of facilitation, using AI. Nearly forty people signed up and were trained immediately prior to the Dream/Design Summit. Many of them acted as invaluable co-facilitators during the summit.

The Dream/Design Summit had nearly two hundred participants. Many of them were from the earlier two workshops, but about a third were new to AI, pulled in by the power of Imagine Nagaland. Nearly half of the participants were children and youth. The challenge was to facilitate the identification and ownership of a common ground between the dreams of children, adults, and also the government team that had been "visioning" for the past few months in the parallel, top-down Vision Nagaland process. The initial two days of the three-day event were spent, repeating the "DNA methodology," in working with these three sets of stakeholders separately and then developing the common ground through plenary sessions. Two new facilitation tools were used with great success in this workshop: mind mapping for group brainstorming and market stalls for plenary (see below).

Dream/Design Summit Process Highlights

Participants were asked to form teams for each of the six topics from the Discovery Phase, with children and adults in separate teams.

Each team generated a *mind map* to graphically organize and show the linkages among the mined data from the discovery interviews and their members' own aspirations and personal knowledge of the areas they came from. Once again, as in previous workshops, children and youth were astounding in their imagination, the power of their dreams, and the courage of their convictions. The younger generation overwhelmed the adults with their magical combination of exuberance and wisdom, and their "provocative propositions" about the future reflected the boldness of their dreams.

Combined teams of adults and children then merged their provocative propositions into one powerful proposition per team for each topic. These acted as a beacon for the Design Phase.

A challenge for the facilitators was how to hold a plenary for such a large number of presentations and participants and yet make it exciting and meaningful. The facilitators decided on a methodology called *market stalls,* in which each team was provided a space (pin board or wall space) to "display" their presentation in the most attractive manner, using decorated Naga shawls and handicraft items. Each team had the opportunity to present their own stall and visit other stalls to sell and buy ideas, within a stipulated time frame. This brought excitement to the plenary and a sense of healthy competition and cooperation amongst the presenters.

The market-stall methodology was used, first, to present the provocative propositions, and on the third day, to present ideas for development opportunities. In this final step in the process, participants were divided into teams for each of the eight districts and one for the state as a whole. The nine teams each created a "Tree of Achievement," a broad-brush prioritization of about a dozen development programs that each team felt were essential, keeping in mind the outputs from the Discovery Phase interviews, mind maps, plenary discussions, and the unique characteristics of the district, as well as the centrality of children's dreams. Project ideas that could bring early results were represented as low-hanging fruits, while those with longer-term potential were high-hanging fruits. The market stalls of these district-level trees, taken altogether, were seen as the "Garden of Achievement" and laid the foundation for further detailed work leading up to the Destiny Phase.

Since Imagine Nagaland was intended to feed into the state's tenth five-year plan, as well as ultimately to attract funds (private and corporate sector donors, etc.) for programs that could not be funded from the government resources, the pulling together of these "trees" into a "Garden of Achievements" was facilitated by a key functionary of the State Planning Department. This was an individual who had spent eighteen years in rural areas, visiting nearly one thousand of the eleven hundred villages in the state.

VOICES OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH ON IMAGINE NAGALAND

- "It is time to take education out of classrooms and bring it to our homes, villages, and communities."
- "Obviously what we are facing now would be the consequence of what our predecessors had already committed. So it is the right time to reshape our society again. Or else the future situation will again be the result of the present, and we will be held responsible for that."
- "If we neglect our ecology, then we are our own prosecuting lawyer, judge, jury, and hangman."
- "Any kind of human understanding is a two-way traffic."
- "Children are the leaders of tomorrow, so we must educate them properly if we are to be led properly."
- "A child should be allowed to focus and develop her emotional balance, and we should help to nurture their talents and abilities. A child should not be given importance only on the basis of 'intelligence,' based on academic performance."
- "I imagine a Nagaland where people have less complaints and criticism, children [are] eagerly involved in school because of the good facilities and extracurricular activities, villages [are] involved in their own development, and everyone [is] involved and aware of their cultural heritage."
- "Nagaland, with all its diversity, can still remain united because of the innate desire for harmony of our people."
- "Nagaland is a land of festivals, and that is when we are all 'one'—so why can't we be in that frame of mind all through the year?"
- "Let peace be forgotten for some time and preach for unity. Peace will come into the picture as unity is developed."

VOICES, continued

- "Better to light one's candle rather than cursing the darkness."
- "I'd like Nagaland to be a 'united nations'."
- "Women should be given chances to give and talk about their ideas. Also, women should be encouraged that their active participation is a must for the development of a society. This should start with their equal participation in all platforms."
- "Students should not be subordinated to the teacher—rather the teacher should coordinate (facilitate) to allow students to reach their real capacity."
- "Wildlife parks and sanctuaries tell more to a child than a thousand books."

One of the serendipitous events that came about as a bonus from the second Discovery Workshop was the "discovery" of a brilliant young artist who thanked the facilitators by quickly sketching out a beautiful visual image of how he saw the process of Imagine Nagaland. This young boy then produced a set of stunning paintings for the Dream/Design Summit—a painting for each of the topics of Imagine Nagaland.

Kelhousedenuo: The Beginning of Life

Mahesh Bhatt, one of India's top film directors, captured the Dream/Design Summit on video. The product, entitled *Kelhousedenuo: The Beginning of Life,* captures the dreams, the energy, and the participation of youth and children in visioning for the future. As part of the briefing of Mahesh Bhatt, who had not heard of Appreciative Inquiry before nor ever traveled to Nagaland, the facilitators asked him to just be "overwhelmed" by children and then let himself be led by the momentum of the process and its outcomes. He was asked to view the summit from the perspective of a three-tiered stage setting, with the front tier being the voice of children, the next one being the Imagine Nagaland project, and the last one being the reconciliation process that was on in the state.[5]

The film as finally envisioned by him has captured the experience of a person visiting the state for the first time, with all the trepidation created by stories of the Nagaland armed struggle. The film captures the exciting journey of entering a "dark tunnel"—a state and its people full of foreboding, hopelessness, fear, fatigue—and coming out into the light of energy, hope, confidence, and the strength and will to dream. The film has immortalized the indomitable spirit of the people of Nagaland and their determination to move forward with renewed hope and determination.

DESTINY OR DOING PHASE

As preparation for the final, Destiny or "Doing" Phase (at the time of publication), the state planning team has worked on getting a buy-in to the outputs of the Dream/Design Summit from more district-level stakeholders and to develop the program ideas on the "Trees of Achievement" into fundable proposals to take to prospective donors.

This strategic planning exercise, focused on children's dreams and expectations, has involved UNICEF and a team of consultants from the Australian Agency for International Development. The consultants spent considerable time with the state planning focal point and discussed how best to take this initiative forward. Their experience has shown senior government officials how to create a set of development-project proposals, in line with the "Approach Paper of the 10th Five-Year Plan for India," for potential fundraising. The recent novel creation of an ordinance for "communitization" of Nagaland's public institutions and services is one significant milestone.

The government of India has since led an effort to focus the attention of donors on the entire North East region by holding a donor conference, and Nagaland has been an active participant in this process. Areas like ecotourism, education, and HIV/AIDS have already attracted donor interest.

CONCLUSION

The journey begun two years ago by the people of Nagaland, as part of the Global Movement for Children, is as exciting as it is challenging. What Imagine Nagaland has triggered is a change in the "inner dialogue" (the somewhat stereotyped thinking of helplessness, fatigue, and cynicism that characterized the people's perception) of a large number of people who live in this area of conflict. Intensely Christian, the Naga society looks for the forgiveness and reconciliation needed to overcome this conflict. But instead of getting lost in the past, Imagine Nagaland has managed to focus the energy and attention of children, youth, and adults forward by drawing on the positive possibilities from the best of the past. Thousands of peo-

ple now dare to dream and design their future and look to a tryst with a destiny that they are co-authoring. A team of youth, led by a facilitator, participated in the "Global Imagine Meet" in Chicago in 2002, and the painting of the young artist (who was part of the team) was adopted as the logo for the meet. The Nagaland government is pursuing the planning and implementation process within its own framework. But what is more interesting is that other independent initiatives have taken root, using Appreciative Inquiry and Imagine Nagaland as a springboard. A chain of schools, for example, with branches in Nagaland and the rest of the North East is using AI for rethinking about their approach to education, as part of a long-term strategic planning exercise.

ENDNOTES

1. Imagine Nagaland was conceived by Peter Delahaye, deputy director, UNICEF India, and Bharat Krishnan, management adviser, as part of the Indian government's "Vision Nagaland."
2. Sanjoy Hazarika is managing trustee of the Centre for North East Studies and Policy Research. These comments were made on the occasion of the visit by Naga social reformist Niketu Iralu to Delhi in September 2001.
3. Involving citizens in sharing and working towards positive images of their community's future unleashes energy and commitment. Across the world, "Imagine" projects, inspired by the original Imagine Chicago, have begun in places as far ranging as West Australia, Scotland, Nagaland, Cape Town, London, Detroit, Denmark, and Vojvodina in Yugoslavia. These projects are discovering that hope can be cultivated through constructive dialogue, community engagement, and the forging of meaningful intergenerational connections.
4. The "glue" expression hails from Imagine Chicago's search for key people that made Chicago tick.
5. The Naga Reconciliation Initiative, begun in August 2001 by a resolution of representatives of various mass-based Naga organizations, called for "journeys of healing" internally among the Naga tribes and externally with other communities.

REFERENCE

Cooperrider, David L. and Diana Whitney. 1999. *Appreciative Inquiry.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Appendix

IMAGINE NAGALAND INTERVIEW GUIDES

NAGALAND OF OUR FUTURE

We all share a sense of great pride in our culture, our people's hardworking nature, and the abundant flora and fauna that Nagaland has to offer. There have been unceasing efforts for peace and unity in the state, and we are now at a very opportune time where we can begin to build a new and prosperous future for ourselves. As adults, we are trustees and custodians of a wonderful future that our children expect as their legacy. And as children, we owe it to our elders to build on all the good things they bring to us from their hard work and values.

It is up to all of us now, whether we are adults or children, to work together for jointly creating a Nagaland that we will all be legitimately proud of—building on our strengths, learning from our mistakes, but all the time thinking positively about a common dream that we all share. We have a tryst with destiny, and it is our individual and collective responsibility to make sure that we undertake this wonderful journey of development of Nagaland in a spirit of oneness and optimism.

It is in this context that I would like you to share your stories, experiences, and dreams over the next hour or so. This will be a wonderful opportunity for you to be a partner in this exciting project of "Imagine Nagaland."

- As a citizen of Nagaland you do feel an attachment to it. What are the things that really make you feel a part of Nagaland?
- We all feel that perhaps if certain things improve, Nagaland would be a better place to live in. In your opinion, in what sphere do we have to concentrate to make our state better?
- Can you recall any incident that you have witnessed or heard of and that you wished for more of that kind to make Nagaland a better place to live in?
- Every child has the potential to develop his or her abilities. So how do you perceive the future of Nagaland where in ten years' time, every child with his or her potential can contribute towards the furtherance of the developed and civilized healthy state of society?
- Close your eyes and imagine you travel through a time machine seven to eight years into the future and see a fully transformed Nagaland. Can you describe what kind of a transformation (political, social, religious, economic, cultural) you see in this state?

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Even as the winds of peace blowing over our state bring with them a sense of hope for peace and well-being, they have also carried the anguished cry of our children and elders for the delivery of quality education, particularly in the primary level. The yearning is now to ensure that all children, especially the girl child, are not only provided the opportunity to enroll in schools, but are motivated to carry on studying by a caring, appreciative, and encouraging school system that imbibes uniformly a love for learning and desire to scale new peaks in all fields of endeavor, building on the traditional values of the Nagas.

Much needs to be done to transform our schooling and education system to make it more learner friendly, joyful, and to impart quality education. Students should be taught the value of dignity of labor and learn that theirs is the task and challenge of creating a vibrant, humane, and prosperous Naga society.

The vital role of teachers cannot be overstressed. The teaching community needs to be made conscious that theirs is the momentous and historical task of molding the young minds of today to grow to be tomorrow's responsible citizens. It is in their acceptance of the responsibility of imparting joyful learning and being accountable to the critical task entrusted to them that the future of our society hinges.

- Today there is widespread recognition of the fact that education should be made more joyful and interesting. In what ways do you think our educational system can be made to impart joyful, meaningful, and relevant education at all levels—primary, elementary, secondary, and higher secondary levels?
- As a community, do we encourage children (boys and girls) to continue their education? What steps do we need to take to encourage parents and community leaders to ensure everyone gets a proper education in urban and rural areas?
- We see a lot of entrepreneurs in our society. What made them think and act differently from the rest of us? If you know an entrepreneur, can you tell us his or her story? Are you proud to know such a person?
- If you were the minister for education, what three steps would you take to make the present system more employment and entrepreneurial oriented?
- If you were the leader of your tribe or community, what specific steps would you take?
- For everyone in Nagaland to have a meaningful and sustainable livelihood (job or self-employment), how can we prepare our students and young people to realize this dream?

EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

Equitable development is the need of the hour for Nagaland! That means benefits of development reach every part of our society, in a proportionate manner. It also means decision making, accountability and development go hand in hand at different levels of our social system, whether it be a village, a district, or the state. Each community has the responsibility to plan for its own development, with support from the state.

Emphasis and focused importance is needed towards a well-balanced development in the spheres of

- balanced regional/geographical development, starting with basic amenities;
- equitable representation in all decision-making bodies and strata, with devolution of powers at all relevant levels;
- economic development and employment opportunities;
- equal opportunities for girl children and women for all-round development.

We aspire to promote these. But this requires leadership and participation of everyone in Nagaland. This is the subject we have come to discuss with you, to share your stories and experiences.

- Looking back on your community and society, can you remember any occasion when people (men and women) of different backgrounds came together and participated in taking decisions?
- Are we satisfied with the present status of women and children in Naga society? If not, where do we begin?
- Balanced and equitable development cannot happen without fairness, justice, honesty, and transparency. Can you think of examples of this in your community?
- If you were made the head of your district development committee, what would you do to ensure balanced participation of your people and equitable distribution of the benefits thereof?

ECOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT

Nagaland is a beautiful land, gifted with a wide variety of rare and exquisite flora and fauna. The richness of Nagaland's ecological heritage sustains the people, but a need has come today to preserve, conserve, and protect this wealth that is under threat.

The cry of Nagaland today is for greater economic and social development, and the concern is that development has to be more

sustainable, while ensuring ecological sustainability as well. The balance between protecting ecology and sustainable development is the answer to promoting the quality and meaning of life in Nagaland, and that is the challenge before all of us.

It is on this subject that we would like to spend some time with you.

- Balance between ecology and development leads to a better living. Can you think of some examples in your area of this balance?
- What do you think is the role of the people and the community, other than the government, in protection of this ecological balance? Draw on your traditional history for some examples.
- In what way do you feel that this delicate balance can be restored and promoted?
- Development usually means taking something away from our land and other natural resources. How can we repay nature for all that she gives to us?

UNITY, PEACE, AND RESPECT FOR ALL

Unity is a feeling of oneness without barriers of tribalism, communalism, and regionalism. All of us, leaders and led, need to learn to forgive one another and stay united in the larger interest of our people, recognizing that as human beings, we have all fallen short of living perfect.

Peace is the most important ingredient for any kind of meaningful human or economic development. We need to build bridges of understanding to transform our hopes into reality. The setting up of democratic structures in our society has become imperative.

Given the current context, we need a collective approach towards social well-being. How can each one of us contribute in this effort of building a Nagaland where the unity of our people and peace in society will help us to march forward into the future with the rest of the world?

This is the subject we would like your valuable inputs on.

- What does "peace" mean to you, and when was the last time you remember such a time?
- When was the last time you really felt proud of being a citizen of Nagaland? Can you explain the particular circumstances?
- Does diversity mean richness to you, just like diversity in flora and fauna are seen as the beauty of nature? Then, why do we as people struggle to respect diversity amongst ourselves?
- What role can we as individuals play towards bringing peace and unity?

- If you went in a time machine to the year 2010, what do you see as Nagaland? What can we do to make your dream a reality?

STRENGTHENING THE RULE OF LAW

The rule of law is the hallmark of a civilized society. It signifies respect for the rules and regulations framed through democratic methods, following good traditions and customs, self-discipline, fair play and justice, tolerance towards dissent, concern for other people, civic sense, and a host of other values that enrich life. The rule of law is particularly relevant for more vulnerable groups like women, children, and the differently abled.

Nagaland has emerged as a modern, educated, and enlightened society in this new millennium. There is a sense of hope and optimism in the air. The cornerstone of this progress has been a deep respect for values, traditions, and the rule of law. This march towards happiness, peace, unity, and development, including conservation of our natural resources, will depend a great deal on harmony, tolerance, and concern for others, all of which come from adhering to the rule of law—whether written or unwritten.

Recent trends in efforts for peace are a cause of great hope to many of us, and we would like to interact with you on this crucial subject so that we can strengthen the rule of law in Nagaland for the common good of all citizens.

- How is the rule of law helping our society?
- We are all striving to ensure the happiness of our citizens and to build a healthy society. Do you feel that adherence to the rule of law will strengthen this process and improve the quality of our lives?
- Would you share with us the most critical areas where strengthening the rule of law would most benefit society?
- Can you recall a personal experience where you observed a positive impact of the rule of law?
- Could you give us some practical suggestions that would make the rule of law more attractive to people and more effective in its implementation?

Let us be realists, let us do the impossible.

ERNESTO "CHE" GUEVERA

CHAPTER TEN

TOWARD THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY IN COMPLEX PEACEBUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXTS

Mary Hope Schwoebel and Erin McCandless

This chapter discusses the potential applications of Appreciative Inquiry in complex peacebuilding and development settings and also in facilitating theory building and practice at the nexus of these two fields. The authors highlight common assumptions and approaches found in peacebuilding, development, and Appreciative Inquiry, which point to a potentially fruitful integration. They also address some of the epistemological and methodological critiques of Appreciative Inquiry, particularly as they pertain to contexts of structural and direct violence and poverty. An example from the Africa Community Publishing and Development Trust, a Zimbabwean nongovernmental organization, illustrates how appreciative approaches can be combined with problem-solving approaches to tackle such conditions in ways that empower people and communities to generate social and structural change, and to overcome some of the limits of appreciative approaches when used exclusively in such contexts. The chapter concludes by suggesting additional ways in which Appreciative Inquiry might be adapted to create positive peace and positive social change.

Within the fields of peacebuilding and development, there is a growing recognition that sustainable approaches to transforming deep-rooted conflict and overcoming development challenges are those that empower people through bottom-up, participatory, and context-sensitive methods. Both fields are also paying greater attention to best-practices cases, or what works, with the aim of replicating them in other contexts. Replication of models, however, has historically too often proved to not bring about desired results, where local conditions and cultures are not considered when transplanting the model into different situ-

ations. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a dynamic method that does consider these issues, while focusing on what works with a vision for what could be. This creates an active space for social change, something desired by many academics and policy makers in search of alternatives to the dominant paradigms built upon pessimistic assumptions and reifying practices.

Critics, however, might view Appreciative Inquiry as a "feel-good" approach rooted in naive idealism. As academics and practitioners coming to AI with critical-theory leanings and a strong concern for the ways in which structures too often create violence and maintain peoples' subjugation, we believe that AI must be theoretically and methodologically adapted to tackle these concerns. This will include some consideration of its epistemological foundations, lest its constructionist biases ensure it is only useful to those of this persuasion. Not all believe that everything is "constructible," or that we have ultimate power to create our life opportunities and re-create the circumstances that steer our experiences. Many of these, it may be argued, we are born with or born into. Such conditions can be structurally determined by the institutions, environmental conditions, or cultural practices that surround us.

This reflective article aims to lay foundations for the adapting of Appreciative Inquiry to address the above issues, even as it makes a case for the utility of AI methods for those working in areas of peacebuilding and development where there is an a priori concern about how to facilitate positive social change. A case study of the work of the Africa Community Publishing and Development Trust in Zimbabwe is discussed, which draws on many of the same assumptions as AI, and employs strategies similar to AI to bring about personal and social change among participants in a context of unrealized human development and structural and direct violence.

Through the case study and accompanying analysis, we argue that Appreciative Inquiry is appropriate for addressing structural and direct violence as long as it remains dynamic and adaptive to particular contexts. This may require a comprehensive discussion by AI enthusiasts about which assumptions and principles are to remain as an unchanging core that defines AI and which are open to contextual adaptation. One such consideration, for example, is the question of problem solving, which AI theorists have argued is not within the realm of AI. As our case study illustrates, however, "positive" approaches and problem-solving approaches are not necessarily diametrically opposed. In this case, where economic, political, and social problems prevail, they are viewed as complementary. Impoverished and marginalized communities are first empowered to recognize and acknowledge their strengths and talents (the positive approach), which enables them to expand and hone the skills to tackle the enormous structural problems surrounding them (the problem-solving approach). Visioning new possibilities and creating new opportunities is a part of this process.

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY'S APPROACH TO CHANGE

Appreciative Inquiry is defined as a cooperative search for strengths, passions, and life-giving forces that are found within every system and that hold potential for inspired, positive change. It is a process of collaborative inquiry based on interviews and affirmative questioning, which brings out and celebrates the best and highest qualities in a system, situation, or human being. These "good news stories" serve to enhance identity, spirit, and vision, eliciting strategies for intentional change that draw upon the best of what is to pursue dreams and possibilities of what could be (Cooperrider and Srivastva 1987).

A number of assumptions underpin Appreciative Inquiry, including: reality is co-created through peoples' language, thoughts, images, and beliefs about reality; the act of asking a question influences a system's reality in some way (questions are themselves a form of intervention); the types of questions asked determine the types of answers received; people manifest what they focus on and grow toward what they ask questions about; AI actively involves people in changing their organizations, communities, and societies; and AI is a holistic and systemic approach to change, which asks who is affected and who has a stake in the process (Cooperrider and Whitney 1999).

Fundamentally a dialogic process, AI carries such questions and concerns through to the planning and implementing of social change. An AI process is comprised of four stages, known as the 4-D Cycle. Once the focus area or topics of interest are selected, interviews are conducted to discover strengths and passions within the system and to identify patterns, themes, and possibilities. This is the Discovery Phase, which concerns appreciating and valuing the best of "what is." The second stage is the Dream Phase, which involves envisioning "what might be," and creating bold statements about ideal possibilities. The third stage is the Design Phase, which includes dialoguing about "what should be," particularly in terms of principles and priorities. The fourth and final stage is the Destiny Phase and involves innovating "what will be" by taking and sustaining action.

A central principle and epistemological foundation of Appreciative Inquiry is that of constructionism—the idea that human beings construct realities based on their experience, so that their knowledge and the destiny of the system are interwoven. Cooperrider and Whitney write:

> Constructionism reminds us that the "world out there" doesn't dictate our inquiries; rather, the topics are products of social processes (cultural habits, rhetoric, power relations). AI makes sure we are not just reproducing the same worlds over and over again through simple and boring repetition of our questions. . . . AI also says, with excitement, that there are great gains in linking the means and ends of inquiry. (1999, 26–27)

This *constructionist principle* is one reason why AI practitioners and theorists assert that the principles underpinning Appreciative Inquiry invest in it the potential to produce radical social change. Contrary to those who benefit from the current reality and the status quo, AI proposes that a better world is realistic, that there already exist success stories of positive change, and that people already have (at least some of) the resources necessary to bring it about. By recognizing and appreciating "what is," Cooperrider and Whitney argue, "future dreams are grounded in reality and hence believable" (1999, 21).

AI's radical social change potential is secondly attributed to the *principle of simultaneity,* which maintains that inquiry and change are simultaneous. AI engages all levels and all types of stakeholders in a cooperative learning and co-creation process. "When everyone's awareness grows at the same time, it is easier to believe that fundamental change is possible" (Cooperrider and Whitney 1999, 18).

Other change-promoting principles underlying AI are the *poetic principle,* the *anticipatory principle,* and the *positive principle.* The poetic principle states that the story of the system is constantly being co-authored, and the anticipatory principle, that what people anticipate determines what they find. The positive principle posits that as an image of reality is enhanced, actions begin to align with the positive image.

CASE STUDY: COMMUNITY PUBLISHING IN ZIMBABWE[1]

Gervase Bushe and Thomas Pitman (1991) define appreciative process as a theoretical and practical approach for affecting social change, which is based on the concept that change can be created by attending to what people want more of rather than attending to problems, but which maintains a balance between appreciative approaches and problem-solving approaches.

The Africa Community Publishing and Development Trust (ACPDT) in Zimbabwe is a nongovernmental organization that has developed a unique and highly successful methodology for empowerment of people and communities within difficult social contexts, where poverty and structural or physical violence prevail. They describe their work in the following way:

> . . . through a community based, participatory process of publishing, organizing and development, [community publishing] aims to enable marginalized groups to use their creative energies to build dynamic leadership, tackle poverty, take charge of their lives and make the decisions that shape their future (Bond-Stewart et al. 2002, 1).

While ACPDT does not directly refer to the terms Appreciative Inquiry or appreciative process, their work draws upon many of the same assumptions and employs many similar strategies. Comfortably falling

into the realm of appreciative process, their work also often involves action research along the lines of the research inquiry processes involved in AI. ACPDT Director Kathy Bond-Stewart explains:

> Community Publishing works best in extremely difficult circumstances, as the creative energy it releases is directly proportional to the degree of oppression that its participants have experienced. (2002)

Zimbabwe is currently experiencing severe economic and political crises, which manifest in pervasive poverty (approximately 80 percent) and conflict that cuts across political and ethnic lines. The state-owned public media are used for propaganda purposes, and the ruling party foments political violence to generate a culture of fear and disempowerment, stifling activism and opportunities for social change amongst Zimbabweans.

Within this context, the Africa Community Publishing and Development Trust has developed an innovative method of development education, which builds the skills, confidence, and creativity of marginalized communities by involving them in the collective production and distribution of books. The starting point of transformation, they believe, is helping those with the lowest incomes and least power overcome mental oppression and dependency. In the process, people discover and develop their own capacities and skills. This enables them to enter into new, more equal, and enabling relationships, while contributing to the building of strong political and cultural organizations (ACPDT 2000, 28).

ACPDT's innovate approach evolved out of their research on poverty, which involved 150 youth (eighteen to thirty-five years of age), and culminated in the 1995 publication, *The Suffering are the Cornerstone in Building a Nation*. Through the process it became clear that while material deprivation is painful, psychological deprivation is much more painful. A critical first strategy, then, was to give people a sense of their strength and place in the world. The process for participants was developed and practiced through many of ACPDT's projects. This involves:

- writing about their life stories and self images (often of oppression);
- analyzing how their strengths allowed them to overcome such difficult circumstances and naming the skills and talents that enabled this;
- learning research, writing, and organizing skills;
- identifying and promoting all local forms of creativity with a positive focus, where a positive sense of self and potential is activated.

Utilizing this process, ACPDT has developed many books on critical developmental and peace issues with its hundreds of community researchers. Their books are accessible to popular and academic audiences, as well as policymakers. They are simple and yet profound in the way they

handle complex ideas, with meanings derived from local people and contexts. In addition to the product, the process of community publishing has catalyzed processes of positive individual, community, and social change. According to one community activist:

> Those of us who are involved in the production of these publications ended up discovering within ourselves talents which had not been tapped. The world began to open before our minds. We began to see more clearly, think more creatively, reason more logically, and analyze facts more critically. Our minds became liberated. (ACPDT 2000, 28)

Guided by the same vision and in conjunction with community publishing projects, ACPDT runs local leadership trainings for village youth. The main vision of the program is to "transform marginalized communities from poverty to prosperity through an integrated economic, social, environmental, and organizational development process." In the first local leadership program in Chiyubunuzyo in Gokwe North, communities have been able to successfully campaign for a clinic, a community hall, improved roads, a greater role in wildlife management, and the introduction of preschools. Moreover, "the use of their own well-researched documents assists them in negotiating with local authorities and other service providers" (Bond-Stewart et al. 2002, 4).

At the national level, their civic publications were used by the National Constitutional Assembly civic social movement to ensure a "no" vote to the government's proposed authoritarian constitution—the first time in twenty years that citizens challenged the government. "Our low budget, community publishing constitutional pamphlets and imaginative debate process had more impact than the state's multi-million dollar media campaign, with unlimited use of radio, television, and the government newspapers" (Bond-Stewart et al. 2002, 5).

Bond-Stewart emphasizes that the approach builds people's confidence and skills, whereby they emerge from the process with new tools to analyze problems deeply and develop strategies to address these problems. She therefore emphasizes the complementarity of "a positive, confidence- and skills-building approach with the problem-solving approach" (2002).

Community publishing gives people an alert, energetic, critical, and creative set of skills that are useful in dealing with structural developmental and conflict issues. At the core of ACPDT's philosophy and method is a value of respecting the dignity of all—a foundational assumption in both peacebuilding and development work. The causes of violence and uneven development begin with prejudices and faulty assumptions, which ACPDT community researchers strive to address. They also learn how to give and receive criticism, particularly towards authority figures, and the

importance of having respect for your opponents—that you can learn the most from those who oppose you. The process elicits and develops other skills complementary with peacebuilding and development, which include:

- motivation
- mobilization
- shared leadership
- communication
- democracy planning
- participatory community development

Community publishing as practiced in this way illustrates the utility of positive approaches in complex and structurally violent peacebuilding and development contexts. ACPDT's collaborative inquiry process, combined with the practical production and dissemination of concrete outputs of their work, reflect Bushe and Pitman's understanding of appreciative process. ACPDT's work shows how the principles of appreciative process, in accessing the strengths and building the positive capacities of individuals and communities, can produce meaningful research, as participants also learn new practical skills and contribute towards profound social change. In Zimbabwe, where the vast majority of the population are overwhelmed with poverty and lack of human development—in particular, lack of opportunities and choices—the practical skills and community-building aspects cannot be overestimated.

Theoretically, the case points to the need for contextual sensitivity and adaptation of AI methods and approaches and to the usefulness of these approaches where peacebuilding and development are transformational goals of the communities involved, as well as those offering some sort of intervention. In Zimbabwe as well as other conflict-ridden and structurally violent contexts, people need to work together in tackling problems, challenges, and traumas in new ways. Thus, while the concept of good-news storytelling is important in AI, with ACPDT people are encouraged to write, draw, act out, or in any other creative way tell their life stories, which are often not good news but rather stories of oppression and pain. This is part of a transformative healing process—learning to communicate, remember, forgive, and reconcile.

We now turn to a discussion of both of these aspects—the peacebuilding and development nexus and some of the theoretical challenges of AI—in an effort to illuminate ways in which AI can be utilized in complex peacebuilding and development contexts.

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY'S APPLICATION TO PEACEBUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT

As academics, policy makers, and practitioners are recognizing the important linkages between peacebuilding and development, the need for new methodological approaches to facilitate coordinated understanding and action between the two fields grows. AI has the potential to be a powerful methodology for peacebuilders and development scholars and practitioners—and one that can facilitate greater understanding and better practice between them. To develop these ideas, we start with a discussion of peacebuilding and development and the intersections between them.

Peacebuilding is generally understood as

> . . . a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict towards more sustainable, peaceful relationships. It simultaneously seeks to enhance relationships between parties and to change the structural conditions that generate conflict. The term thus involves a wide range of activities and functions that both precede and follow formal peace accords. (Lederach 1997, 20)

As we have written elsewhere, peacebuilding focuses on the context of the conflict—the experiences and socioeconomic circumstances of ordinary people who are affected by war and who will build the peace, rather than the on the military and the issues that divide the parties. Peacebuilding activities have come to include: generating contact and dialogue between communities; reconciliation; identifying overarching goals between communities; confidence-building; institutionalization for the respect for human rights; promoting political pluralism and the rule of law; accommodating ethnic minorities and ethnic diversity; strengthening the capacity of state structures and promoting good governance; and participatory community and human development (McCandless and Schwoebel 2001).

The human-development paradigm aims to enlarge people's choices. This begins with the formation of human capabilities, including improved health, the acquisition of knowledge, and access to resources for a decent standard of living. Secondly, human development encompasses the freedom for people to use their capabilities for being active in cultural, social, political, and economic affairs, as well as for their leisure. The human development paradigm is comprised of four essential components: productivity, equity, sustainability, and empowerment. In the development context, empowerment means that "development must be by people, not for people. People must participate fully in the decisions and processes that shape their lives" (UNDP 1995:12).

Understanding the nexus between peacebuilding and development requires some awareness of the relationship between develop-

ment and conflict. Protracted, deep-rooted social conflicts usually have an economic, or development, dimension to their evolution and dynamics. Conflict may result, for example, from an abundance of resources (e.g., minerals in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) or resource scarcity or unjust distribution (e.g., land and natural resources in Rwanda and Burundi). Conversely, unwise practices of development often create greater inequality within society, which can lead to destructive forms of competitiveness and even violent conflict. Violent conflict also prohibits sustainable human development, where the livelihoods of ordinary people are destroyed or disrupted, health and education services are disrupted, and public monies are spent on militaristic approaches to problem solving.

The emerging nexus of peacebuilding and development is particularly concerned with structural violence, as described by Jeong:

> Poverty, hunger, repression, and social alienation constitute another way to characterize situations causing human misery. Quality of life is reduced by denial of educational opportunities, free speech, and freedom of association. These conditions are associated with uneven life chances, inequitable distribution of resources, and unequal decision-making power. Given its indirect and insidious nature, structural violence most often works slowly in eroding human values and shortening life spans. It is typically built into the very structure of society and cultural institutions. (2000, 20)

In other words, the peacebuilding field is concerned with any form of violence—direct or structural—that prevents sustainable human development. Studying the aims, methods, and values of sustainable human development, peace researchers would also find great convergence with the concept of positive peace.

Appreciative Inquiry converges with peacebuilding and development and becomes useful as a methodology for the academic and practical pursuits of both, because it is based on assumptions about the desirability and the possibility of fulfilling peoples' potential for human development. At the same time, it assumes (like both fields) that win-win solutions to problems are possible. This contrasts with dominant peace and development paradigms, in other words, the realpolitik approach to peace and the modernization approach to development, which rest on the acceptance of "winners" and "losers" in the social-change process. AI theorists view change systemically, and AI practitioners seek win-win solutions for all parties in post-change environments. These are principles adhered to by those who aspire to the notion of transformative conflict resolution, which views conflict as an opportunity rather than merely as a problem-to-be-solved.

In addition to common principles, peacebuilding and development intersect with Appreciative Inquiry at another critical juncture—the processes that embody those principles. Both fields, for example, are

increasingly recognizing that for development and for peace to be sustainable, certain conditions must be met. These include process and outcome ownership by the population and productive use of existing local resources and indigenous capacities. Processes that are viewed as being effective at fulfilling these conditions combine participatory, elicitive, strengths-based, bottom-up, and system-wide approaches. Sustainability has also been linked with approaches that focus on empowerment (as a catalyst for, and result of, development) and transformation (as a result of conflict resolution). These processes appear to be valued in the AI discourse and practice.

A theoretical underpinning of the field of peacebuilding is that the sources of a given conflict are to be found at all levels and in all spheres of a system. Peacebuilding activities should therefore be undertaken at all levels and in all spheres, in a coordinated and integrated manner. This is a departure from quick-fix approaches that seek a panacea involving only one level or one sphere. Another way of articulating this is by saying that interventions must be integrated both vertically and horizontally within the system. More importantly, meaningful participation at all levels and in all spheres makes interdependence explicit.

Yet, the bureaucracies that design and implement peacebuilding and development initiatives tend to compartmentalize both the problems and the solutions. People living and working in conflict settings do not necessarily experience the sources or the impacts of conflict on their lives as compartmentalized. Appreciative processes, because of their elicitive nature, can facilitate integrative approaches based on people's experience of the problems and the solutions that they have already identified. Appreciative processes can also assist those charged with designing and implementing interventions in recognizing the strengths that each level and each sphere can bring to bear in peacebuilding and the building of human development. AI methods can facilitate the integrated practice and interdisciplinary growth of the fields of peacebuilding and human development. This would be an important contribution to the critical merger of these fields.

AI is a useful methodology for those working in both the fields of peacebuilding and development precisely because it assumes many of these best-practice notions in its application. It is thus a compatible method for those who want to ground their practice on a similar starting point and with a positive social-change vision, to which both peacebuilding and development policy makers and practitioners aspire. Moreover, this is useful to those working from post-positivist persuasions, such as critical theory, postmodernism, poststructuralism, where there is dearth of suitable methodological tools considered legitimate for academic research.

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL CHALLENGES TO AI

As with any methodological tool, challenging questions arise that, if well answered, strengthen it and enable its wider usage. What follows are some substantive, epistemological, and application-based critiques that we propose need further inquiry.

The social sciences have long grappled with the debate about how structures and ideas determine and/or motivate social change. In the conflict resolution and peacebuilding literatures is found a similar debate around relationships versus structures as the primary source of conflict. This debate has been summarized in a way that is useful to our discussion:

> Proponents of the structure-as-primary-source identify social structures as the source of conflict, as it determines the distribution of valued resources and positions, denying particular groups access to power, resources, or other human needs (for example, Mitchell 1981; Azar 1986; Galtung 1996). Relationships-as-source proponents alternatively focus on psycho-social explanations, in particular, *perceptions* of difference as conflict-causing (for example Kraybill 1996; Lederach 1997). Many nationalism and identity theorists, as well as social psychologists, would agree.
>
> This debate has implications for praxis. . . . Van der Merwe notes that identity issues can be structural also, arguing for a complementary approach that steps beyond issues of causality (1999). Lederach and Galtung both illustrate this complementary approach in recognizing the importance of both relationships and structures in their transformation pursuits (1997; 1996). (McCandless 2001, 211)

Jeong agrees, writing that efforts to resolve conflict need to be assessed in terms of an outcome as well as a process. "Subsequently, conflict resolution has to be geared toward finding solutions to the structural causes of problems that are responsible for contentious relationships. . . . Negotiation for peaceful relationships would not be effective without confronting the structural origins of problems" (1999, 15–16).

Given the importance of this debate within the social sciences, and in particular, with all fields addressing social change, Appreciative Inquiry will need to be much more explicit about the Design and Destiny phases of the process. These are where the psychological changes generated during the Discovery and Dream phases catalyze actions that create political, economic, and social change.

Another set of critiques that AI could more comprehensively address surrounds the question of "critical" versus "positive" thinking. Bushe has illustrated one way in which this manifests its potential to be indiscriminately applied. He has noted the potential for practitioners to develop

> a zealous attention to "appreciation" without any theoretical rhyme or reason to their practice. Promoting appreciation where there has been little can, of itself, generate a wave of energy and enthusiasm but that will go away just as quickly as the next challenge or tragedy to a social system rears its head. (Bushe n.d. [2002])

Bushe questions the blind ideological application of Appreciative Inquiry and calls for a "disciplined and reasoned approach." While it can be exceedingly helpful in the right time and the right place, he argues, a model for its application is necessary, as it will not always have a positive effect.

> From a purely practical standpoint I think researchers and consultants will find that systems full of deeply held and unexpressed resentments will not tolerate an appreciative inquiry until there has been some expression and forgiving of those resentments. From a theoretical perspective there is the question of what happens to negative images and affect if they are "repressed" from collective discussion by a zealous focus on the "positive." Experience from psychoanalysis, sociology, and medicine suggest repression usually results in some nasty side effects. (Bushe n.d. [2002])

Indeed, as accusations of being "unrealistic" can succeed in silencing proponents of social change, so too can accusations of being "negative" succeed in silencing victims of social injustice, since it shifts the focus away from the system and onto the individual. It is fine to seek out and acknowledge the positive, but it may also be insulting or insensitive to not fully recognize the realities that people face, which may prevent them from being able to consider only the good. Reconciliation and trauma theorists and practitioners have illustrated the need for people to share their traumatic stories as part of their healing process. Ultimately, we return to the problem of the limits of constructionism and the options and choices that are available to people who live under extremely oppressive political and economic regimes and/or under conditions of extreme poverty.

Related questions emerge with the debate about problem-solving paradigms versus AI's focusing on the positive, good-practice cases and possibilities. AI theorists critique the deficit-based orientation of problem-solving approaches, not unlike others from different epistemological persuasions. Cox writes:

> The ingrained beliefs and models from the dominant, problem-solving paradigm are not easy to overcome and people have a high stake in rationalizing what they have always believed and finding it hard to expand their vision to include a larger reality. The key is not to focus on saying the current way is wrong; rather, it is about freeing ourselves to see larger and more expansive realities that are right under our noses. (1998)

Cooperrider and Whitney have further argued that deficit-based change approaches "reinforce hierarchy, erode community, and instill a sense of self-enfeeblement" (1999, 22.) While we agree that problem-solving paradigms can limit options and close down creative thinking, this is not always the case. As our community-publishing case illustrates, the practice of problem solving, particularly at the community level, can empower people, build community, and erode hierarchy, depending on the methods that are used. Participatory methods, for example, can ensure that problem-solving paradigms bring empowering outcomes. At the same time, critical thinking enables individuals and communities to identify and confront the structural conditions and constraints that prevent their empowerment. According to the renowned development and education philosopher, Paolo Freire (1972), this is *conscientization*.

CONCLUSION

Appreciative processes, theories, and practices, and in some cases Appreciative Inquiry methods, are well suited to the investigation and transformation of complex problems within challenged peacebuilding and development contexts. The caveats, however, are important. Genuine and thorough consideration must be given to the context within which the method is being applied. In some cases or at certain times, AI may not be appropriate on its own, for example, where severe trauma has been experienced and needs to be recognized and the grief needs to be owned and processed. Alternatively, where people face overlapping, complex sets of problems, they can critically and creatively employ appreciative processes to seek to create new conditions that address the very real challenges they face. This can be done in ways that are empowering to themselves and their communities, and in ways that simultaneously confront and transform the violent structures that oppress them. As illustrated above, contextual adaptation of Appreciative Inquiry may come through a form where problem-solving and empowerment approaches are viewed as mutually beneficial and reinforcing in community and social change.

We also argue that AI's epistemological orientation needs to be reconsidered if it is to be useful to academics and practitioners of different leanings. This is also likely to serve its ability to tackle complex social and structural problems, such as poverty and other manifestations of structural and direct violence. Given that Appreciative Inquiry has been developed and for the most part theorized among those working in the fields of organizational development and international development, this is a natural direction for its theoretical growth and expanded application.

The fields of peacebuilding and development have moved towards context-sensitive, strengths-based, bottom-up, participatory

approaches and practices. AI, as a context-sensitive, strength-based, bottom-up, participatory process for planning and implementing social change, manifests the best practices identified by theorists and practitioners of both of these fields. While challenges related to structural and direct violence and structural resistances to change, which often characterize complex peacebuilding and development contexts, will continue to confront AI practitioners and theorists, we believe that Appreciative Inquiry offers inherent resources to address these. As a method designed to empower and transform, Appreciative Inquiry, specifically, and appreciative processes, generally, enable people to discover, dream, and design destinies that will sustain transformative action in their lives and in their communities.

ENDNOTE

1. Sources for this case study on the Africa Community Publishing and Development Trust (ACPDT) are primarily documents from the organization and several interviews with the organization's director. While this might seem limited, author Erin McCandless has also attended various workshops held by ACPDT, spoken with staff and participants of ACPDT programs in various parts of the country, and thus speaks with confidence about their work. Their highly favorable reputation with other civil society organizations in the country, which are in queues to work ACPDT and use its books, is an indication of the integrity and success of their methods and product.

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Change is not threatening, so long as we keep firm hold of the values by and for which we live. We can travel with confidence, so long as we have a map. We can jump with safety knowing there is someone to catch us as we fall. It is when we lose these things that change creates anxiety. It is when we think that, because technology is changing, our values too must change that we create problems we cannot solve, fear we cannot confront.

RABBI JONATHAN SACKS

CHAPTER ELEVEN

INITIATIVES OF CHANGE

Michael Henderson

This chapter documents the distinct and innovative approach to peacemaking adopted by Initiatives of Change (formerly Moral Re-Armament). It does so through describing the post–World War II interaction of a Frenchwoman, Irène Laure, and German participants at Mountain House, which has been for more than fifty years a center for reconciliation in Caux, Switzerland. Hallmarks of the Initiatives of Change approach include an emphasis on personal moral and spiritual change as the starting point for bringing change to relationships and to society as a whole, a stress on the importance of apology and forgiveness, and the use of personal stories of change to convey a challenge to conscience and present a positive model for change.

In 1946 a group of Swiss, at great personal sacrifice, bought the rundown Caux Palace Hotel overlooking Lake Geneva as a place where the warring nations of World War II could meet. It was the fulfillment of a thought that had come to a Swiss diplomat, Philippe Mottu, three years earlier: If Switzerland were spared by the war, its task would be to make available a place where Europeans, torn apart by hatred, suffering, and resentment, could come together. Mottu and the other Swiss were associated with a worldwide work for reconciliation that was then called Moral Re-Armament (MRA) and is now known as Initiatives of Change (IC).

Renamed Mountain House, this distinctively turreted building, which in 2002 celebrated its centenary, is set in restful grounds with a panoramic view of the peaks of the Dents du Midi and has, since 1946, been host to several hundred thousand people from all over the world, many of whom met across contentious divides—whether it be Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots; Muslims, Christians, and Jews from the Middle East; or Cambodians attempting to move beyond the killing fields.

It is only comparatively recently that the Caux center's role in world peacemaking has been appreciated by scholars, spurred by a study of the contribution of Mountain House to post-war reconciliation between France and Germany. The author, Edward Luttwak, had commissioned a search of

some ten thousand monographs and articles in the academic literature on the history of Franco-German reconciliation and found no mention of the role of MRA. There, he says, the matter would have stood for eternity "but for the existence of both unpublished documents and indirect evidence that prove beyond all doubt that Moral Re-Armament played an important role at the very beginning of the French-German reconciliation" (Luttwak 1994, 38).

A more recent book by Scott Appleby highlights the service of Caux in providing a neutral and secure place, where antagonists can meet at a physical and psychological distance from a conflict zone and in an atmosphere of civility and mutual respect, to discuss their differences and what they hold in common. Of the role of Mountain House as a forum for the discussion and exploration of personal, religious, ethnic, and political differences, he writes:

> Transforming attitudes on a person-by-person basis was the goal of such forums, which embodied MRA's conviction that peaceful and productive change in hostile relations between nations or ethnoreligious groups depends on change in the individuals prosecuting the war; that process, in turn, requires individuals representing each side to listen, carefully and at length, to their counterparts. This approach proved productive in settings where other sources of moral authority, hospitality, and disinterested (i.e., nonpartisan) conflict management had been discredited. (Appleby 1999, 225–226)

THE STORY OF IRÈNE LAURE

A look into the MRA/IC archives will help us understand this distinct, innovative, and positive approach to peacemaking touched on by Luttwak and Appleby. This might best be done by taking the example of that Franco-German reconciliation, specifically focusing on the visit to Caux of Madame Irène Laure from France, a visit that took place in 1947, the second year of the existence of Mountain House. Drawing from it some idea of MRA/IC's mode of operation. Joseph Montville singles out the change of attitude of Laure at Caux as "perhaps the signature event in terms of psychological breakthrough in the Franco-German conflict" and "one of the most dramatic examples of the power of a simple appeal of forgiveness" (1991, 161). And Harold Saunders, a former U.S. assistant secretary of state, said at Caux in 1992, "If the changes in the human arena involving the French and German people who came to Caux after 1945, if that human relation had not been changed, there would be no institutions of the European community today, or they would at least have taken longer in coming" (1993, 17). The journey of discovery of comparatively few individuals has led on to a greater vision of cooperation and coexistence among many Europeans.

That summer of 1947, five thousand people from some fifty countries attended sessions at Caux. They included the Swiss president

and the prime ministers of Denmark and Indonesia, Swedish U.N. emissary Count Bernadotte, a U.S. congressional committee, twenty-six Italian parliament members, U Tin Tut, the first foreign minister of independent Burma, and G. L. Nanda, a future Indian prime minister.

When Irène Laure arrived at the conference in September that year, she would have felt at home in the presence of dozens of Allied service personnel recently demobilized, and been reassured by meeting former resistance figures like herself. She would have appreciated the "physical and psychological distance from a conflict zone." She was not, however, prepared to meet Germans, even those who had been anti-Nazi or had suffered because of Nazism. Germans at that time were not welcome at other international conferences. She might have been appalled had she known that the first group of Germans was welcomed to Caux by a French chorus singing in German. She was certainly not aware that the first words of Frank Buchman, the initiator of MRA, on arriving for the opening of Caux the summer before had been, "Where are the Germans? You'll never rebuild Europe without the Germans" (Lean 1988, 341). And that, spurred by his challenge, high-level efforts had been made to break through restrictions that prevented Germans from leaving their country. Already in the first summer, 16 Germans had come and 150 in 1947, with 4,000 more to come between 1948 and 1951.

This was an early illustration of a basic approach of Initiatives of Change—that everyone should be welcome at the table. It is still emphasized today, for instance, in IC's work for racial understanding under the aegis of the U.S.–based Hope in the Cities, or for interreligious unity in India at another IC conference center, Asia Plateau, in Panchgani. Hope in the Cities, in language that would have been as appropriate in 1946 as it is today, calls for honest conversation that "includes everyone and excludes no one, focuses on working together towards a solution, not on identifying enemies, affirms the best and does not confirm the worst, looks for what is right rather than who is right, [and] moves beyond blame and personal pain to constructive action" (Corcoran and Greisdorf 2001, 23).

The Germans came to Caux as equals. The Hamburg *Freie Presse,* in a report from Caux, commented, "Here, for the first time, the question of the collective guilt of the past has been replaced by the more decisive question of collective responsibility for the future. Here in Caux, for the first time, Germany has been given a platform from which she can speak to the world as an equal" (cited in Henderson 1996, 24). Buchman biographer Garth Lean writes, "Buchman insisted that the emphasis at Caux must be upon Germany's future rather than her past, her potential rather than her guilt. Whether dealing with an individual or a nation he was only interested in reviewing past mistakes as a basis for discovering a new way forward. He simply treated the Germans like everyone else" (1988, 351).

Irène Laure, a nurse from Marseilles, was an internationalist. Between the two world wars she had had German children in her home. But her experience in the resistance when Germany occupied her country and the torturing of her own son had given her a passionate hatred. When Allied bombers flew overhead, Laure rejoiced at the destruction that would be wreaked on Germany. After the war, she witnessed the opening of a mass grave containing the mutilated bodies of some of her comrades. She longed for the total destruction of Germany; she never thought that understanding was possible and never sought it (Henderson 1994, 17–27).

At the end of the war, Laure entered the French Constituent Assembly and became a leader of the three million socialist women of her country. Invited to Caux, she hesitated at first because she knew at some point she would have to come to grips with the question of Germany's future. But she finally accepted, welcoming the chance of a break from the political wrangling in Paris and the opportunity of some good food for her children, malnourished from the privations of the war. The presence of Germans was a shock. Every time a German spoke she left the hall. Although she also noted that the Germans were saying things she had not heard them say before, that they were facing the mistakes of the past and their own nation's need for change, her gut reaction was still, "I will never stay under the same roof as Germans." She packed her bags to leave and then ran into Frank Buchman. "Madame Laure, you're a socialist," he said to her, and, echoing his remarks the year before, "How can you expect to rebuild Europe if you reject the German people?" (Piguet 1985, 9).

Her immediate response was that anyone who made such a suggestion had no idea what she had lived through. Her second response was that perhaps there might be hope of doing something differently. She retired to her room. "I was there two days and nights without sleeping or eating with this terrible battle going on inside me. I had to face the fact that hatred, whatever the reasons for it, is always a factor that creates new wars" (Henderson 1999, 146).

Emerging, Madame Laure was ready to have a meal with a German woman. She hardly touched her food, but poured out all she felt and all she had lived through. And then she said, "I'm telling you all this because I want to be free of this hate." There was a silence and then the German woman, Clarita von Trott, shared with the Frenchwoman her own experiences from the war. Her husband Adam had been one of those at the heart of the July 20, 1944, plot to kill Hitler. It had failed, and her husband had been executed. She was left alone to bring up their two children. She told Laure, "We Germans did not resist enough, we did not resist early enough and on a scale that was big enough, and we brought on you and ourselves and the world endless agony and suffering. I want to say I am sorry" (Channer 1983).

After the meal, the two women and their interpreters sat quietly on the terrace overlooking Lake Geneva. Then Madame Laure, the Christian socialist, told her new German friend that she believed that if they prayed, God would help them. She prayed first asking to be freed of hatred so that a new future could be built. And then Frau von Trott prayed, in French. Instinctively, Madame Laure laid her hand on the knee of her former enemy. "In that moment," she later said, "the bridge across the Rhine was built, and that bridge always held, never broke" (Channer 1983).

Laure asked to be given the opportunity to speak to the conference. Many were aware of her background, but few knew what conclusion she had come to alone in her room or the effect that her conversation with Frau von Trott had had on her attitude. "Everyone was fearful," she remembers. "They knew what I felt about the Germans. They didn't know I had accepted the challenge" (Laure n.d. [1980]. It was a risk for the organizers. They did not believe that the best way to get across new ideas to Germans, who had lived all those years under Nazism, was to put them in the dock. It was not the best of days either for Laure to choose. It was to be a German-speaking session. At the preparation meeting it was suggested than an Austrian minister speak, but he refused: "I was in a concentration camp for four years. I cannot speak with Germans" (Lean 1998, 352). A young German said that if the Germans were guilty, the Austrians were no less so. Buchman, who rarely chaired a session, decided to chair this one.

Laure spoke to the six hundred people in the hall, including the Germans. She told them honestly and, as she says, disastrously, all that she had felt. Then she said, "I have so hated Germany that I wanted to see her erased from the map of Europe. But I have seen here that my hatred is wrong. I am sorry and I wish to ask the forgiveness of all the Germans present" (Lean 1998, 353). Following her words, a German woman stepped up from the hall and took her hand. To Laure it was such a feeling of liberation that it was like a hundred kilo weight, she said, being lifted from her shoulders. "At that moment I knew that I was going to give the rest of my life to take this message of forgiveness and reconciliation to the world" (Henderson 1994, 22).

Rosemarie Haver, whose mother was the German woman who took Laure's hand, said to Laure more than thirty years later, at Caux in 1984, "Your courage in bringing your hatred to God and asking us Germans for forgiveness was a deeply shattering experience. When I saw my mother go up to you, my whole world collapsed about me. I felt deeply ashamed at what Germans had done to you and your family. I slowly began to understand that these Germans who had also brought much suffering on my own family had acted in the name of Germany, which meant in my name also" (Channer 1983).

Peter Petersen, a young German who was later to become a senior member of the Federal German Parliament, also was in the hall that day. As he told the story:

> Ever since the age of seven I had been in a uniform of some sort so, at the end of the war, I had no civilian suit of my own. I arrived in Caux in an old suit of my grandfather's. It was too short in some places and too wide in others. My army coat I had dyed black so it was not too bad. I arrived in Caux with very mixed feelings. I fully expected people to say, "What are these criminals, these Germans doing here?" I was ready with counter accusations to whatever we were accused of. Instead, we were really made welcome. A French chorus sang, in German, a song expressing Germany's true destiny. Every door was open to us. We were completely disarmed. Three days after my arrival I learned of the presence in Caux of Madame Laure. I also learned that she had wanted to leave when she saw us Germans arriving. A violent discussion broke out amongst us. The question of guilt and who was to blame, the question that was so dividing Germany at that time, could no longer be avoided. We all recognized that this Frenchwoman had a right to hate us, but we decided that if she expressed her hatred we would reply with stories of the French occupation in the Black Forest. (Petersen 1947, as cited in Marcel 1960, 24)

When Laure spoke in the meeting, Petersen and his friends sat at the back, ill at ease and asking themselves if it would not be better if they left the hall. After her speech, Petersen said:

> I was dumbfounded. For several nights it was impossible for me to sleep. All my past rose up in revolt against the courage of this woman. I suddenly realized that there were things for which we, as individuals and as nations, could never make restitution. Yet we knew, my friends and I, that she had shown us the only way open if Germany was to play a part in the reconstruction of Europe. The basis of a new Europe would have to be forgiveness, as Madame Laure had shown us. One day we told her how sorry we were and how ashamed we were for all the things she and her people had had to suffer through our fault, and we promised her that we would now devote our lives to work that such things would never happen again anywhere. (Petersen 1947, as cited in Marcel 1960, 24)

Irène Laure could, with every justification, have blamed the Germans. She did not do so. In fact, she said many years later, "From the moment I decided to talk to them as friends instead of blaming them, the only thing I wanted to do was to apologize for my own hate" (1971). And as in myriad other examples over the years, this generous attitude on her part provoked a soul-searching in those to whom her words were addressed, whether they were Germans or other nationalities. Assessing the broader implications of Laure's experience, Bryan Hamlin writes, "One person apolo-

gizing to another is nothing new. Most people learn empirically that such exchanges are necessary for the maintenance of successful interpersonal relationships. And all religion teaches contrition. The further step is to take this same approach to the group and national level. To achieve that, strategies for such encounters between representatives of different countries or ethnic groups are consciously developed" (1992, 12).

THE CAUX EXPERIENCE

In her three weeks at Caux, Laure was exposed to many other aspects of the center's approach, which deepened her understanding, and she had the chance also to express her own convictions, speaking six times. Caux has the advantage, not always present in the work of Initiatives of Change in the field, of tending to draw people who are at least already predisposed to finding a new way of resolving conflict, even if they may not realize that some change may be needed in themselves.

Other elements that contribute to the center's effectiveness, along with the restful setting, are the nature of the meetings and workshops, the chance for leisurely talks at mealtimes, and the use of theatre and the arts to present universal truths. Undergirding it all is a gracious sense of hospitality, which expresses the esteem in which IC holds every person. Hospitality at Caux is expressed in the fact that Swiss families gave of their best to furnish the place, and by the teams of volunteers taking infinite care in the preparing of rooms, with fresh flowers there and in the public rooms, and meals that take into account the cultural sensitivities of different peoples.

In plenary sessions formal presentations are kept to a minimum, and the emphasis is on participants sharing their experiences briefly. In more recent times, it has become the custom to divide the conference into "communities," smaller groups where people can get to know one another better and explore conference themes. In sessions and conversations, Laure would have heard others tell personal stories of change, stories that were intended to inspire and motivate change in others, without preaching or advising, just as her own story has reverberated over the decades to far corners of the world.

As with Laure and the Germans, when adversaries meet at Caux, the IC approach may open the way to a change in relationship. Rabbi Marc Gopin observes, "Hearing the public testimony of parties to a conflict at Moral Re-Armament's retreat center is critical to its conflict resolution process. Empathy is evoked by the painful story of the other party, and, in this religious setting, both parties refer to God's role in their lives. This, in turn, generates a common bond between enemies that has often led, with subtle, careful guidance, to more honest discussion and relationship building" (2000, 20).

Unhurried meals are an integral feature in the IC approach at Caux, for meals are the prime venue for encounters. Meals are a means of "putting people in the way of others"— bringing individuals who are grappling with life's tough dilemmas together with others who have met similar challenges honorably—whether through careful planning by IC workers or by the chance "decisive encounter," as Marcel (1960, 17) called these interactions at Caux. Anthropologists tell us it is psychologically difficult to continue to hate someone with whom you have broken bread. As in the case of Madame Laure and Frau von Trott, many a mealtime at Caux has brought enemies to a place of new understanding and possibility.

Laure's own experience of a change of heart had been a soul-shaking one for her. Now she was to begin to believe that it could happen to others, even to employers. Another aspect of Caux would have been that she probably discovered early on that some of the persons serving her at table were from the class that she hated. It was through getting to know employers, particularly French ones with a new motive, that she was helped to move beyond her class-war attitudes. In fact, she had first thought Caux was "a capitalist trap." But by the end of her time at Caux, she was working with employers to plan an industrial conference in the north of France. The encounters he observed in Caux convinced the French Catholic philosopher, Gabriel Marcel, that he was seeing a new world conscience evolving: "What strikes me before all else is that you find there the global and the intimate linked together in a surprising way. For the first time in my experience, I sensed a true global awareness in the process of being formed. It is shaped through encounters" (1960, 17).

Some encounters will have been in the serving teams, which are a central feature of life at Mountain House. All guests are encouraged to take a share in the running of the house. Gopin notes: "The Caux center is organized by work teams, with the specific intention of creating relationships through shared work. This is cost effective, equalizing of relationships, and a powerful non-dialogic way of developing relationships" (2002, 253). He refers to the bonding that occurred between him and some Arab students at Caux in 1991, when they found themselves working together on a service team, having to cooperate to solve practical questions quite separate from the Middle East and being dependent on each other (173–174). At one point in its first years this aspect of life at Mountain House had a downside: A photograph appeared in the Italian press showing members of parliament washing dishes, and this put off some other members from attending! Laure's husband Victor, a merchant seaman, soon became a regular baker of bread in the Caux kitchen.

One of the first acts after the purchase of the Caux Palace Hotel had been to turn the hotel ballroom into a theatre. For, as Marcel observed, "Buchman and his associates have made a real discovery.

They have realized that people nowadays are far more profoundly influenced by seeing something acted than you could expect them to be by hearing a sermon" (1960, 13–14). Laure saw plays in the theatre, which sometimes presented vision, sometimes historical or biographical stories. One was *The Good Road,* a musical with humorous sketches of contemporary life and a moving pageant of history that proclaimed dramatically the basic ideas of freedom and the necessary conditions of a sound society. She saw *The Forgotten Factor,* an industrial drama that contained that basic principle of Initiatives of Change—it is not who is right but what is right that matters—and she recognized in the unfolding clashes between employers and workers something of her own experiences in Marseilles. Later she was to have that play staged in France, in French.

Also shown that summer was *And Still They Fight,* a dramatization of the life of a great Norwegian patriot, Freddie Ramm, who had helped his country be reconciled with Denmark and who died as he was being repatriated from a German concentration camp. With the horrors of the Holocaust shocking the world, Germans were very much on the defensive. After Reinhold Maier, minister-president of the state of Wuerttemberg-Baden, saw *And Still They Fight,* he slipped away from the theatre and threw himself on his bed "completely shattered" with shame at what his country had done. "It was a presentation without hatred or complaint and therefore could hardly have been more powerful in its effect," he later wrote (Maier 1964, 383).

PERSONAL STORY AS POSITIVE IMAGE FOR CHANGE

Laure had to return home from Caux for an election campaign. In a speech before leaving, indicating how far she had come in her thinking, she said, "I ask you to understand the suffering and needs of the working people, as I shall ask myself in campaign speeches to remember that employers are not always wrong either." To the Germans she promised that she would fight for reconciliation between France and Germany. "Here at Caux," she said, "my heart has been liberated from bitterness against Germany. I shall use my position in politics to see that France and other countries do not have any desire that Germany should starve. France, too, has been an occupied country just as Germany is today. We have all been wrong. Now we must build a bridge of caring across the Rhine" (MRA 1947).

Responding to Laure's words, Madleen Pechel of Berlin, who had been with her husband in a Nazi concentration camp, said, "I shall take Madame Laure's words to the women of Germany. Many times tears of joy have come to me at Caux. I do not think from 1934 to 1947 I have ever laughed with such a full and open heart as in the last eighteen days, here among people who would have every right to hate us Germans" (MRA 1947).

In 1948, Laure and her husband Victor traveled to Germany. For eleven weeks they crisscrossed the country, addressing two hundred meetings, including ten of the eleven state parliaments. With them went some of their compatriots who had lost families in the gas chambers, as well as men and women from other countries who only a short time before had been fighting against the Germans. Everywhere she repeated her apology. Laure reported that after hearing her speak, "Generals and other officers, politicians, and young former Nazis apologized to me" (Henderson 1996, 29). Of the travel of Laure and others to Germany at that time, Robin Mowat writes, "Such actions played their part in preparing the ground for the political decisions which made it possible for the statesmen to carry through on another level the work of reconciliation, and open a new way towards the future of Western Europe" (1991, 197).

In her lifetime Laure traveled thousands of miles to share her experience of the answer to hatred, sometimes alone, sometimes with her husband, often with small or large teams of people. This aspect of teams traveling together has continued to be a favored IC way of conveying to audiences the power and diversity of an answer, whether it is in recent years with senior Africans from the Horn of Africa visiting European capitals, or with a mixed faith team of Christians, Jews, and Muslims visiting Israel and Palestine, or with young people in "Action for Life" visiting South Asian nations.

In the decades that followed Laure's visit to Caux, the work of reconciliation on the basis of the principles outlined above continued. Appleby writes:

> MRA played important supporting roles in resolving dozens of conflicts in the decades that followed that impressive debut. Its loose organizational structure as a network of spartanly motivated professionals—"citizen diplomats"—based in Switzerland with small national branches operated by a few full-time staff and supported by local funds, was appropriate to its ethos of fostering personal relationships across battle lines. (1999, 225–226)

Caux became the hub of its peacebuilding work under the rubric Agenda for Reconciliation and through its NGO (nongovernmental organization) office at the United Nations in New York.

Around the world even today, fifteen years after Laure's death, there are men and women, active peacemakers, who owe their commitment to or were vitally influenced towards it by the life of Irène Laure, either by meeting her in person, by reading her biography (Piguet 1985), or seeing the film about her, *For the Love of Tomorrow* (Channer 1983). One is Renee Pan, now a Buddhist nun, whose husband, the deputy prime minister of Cambodia, was murdered by the Khmer Rouge when they took over her country in 1975. She escaped to the United States where she struggled to become economically independent. But over time she felt that her mind had

been consumed by what her Buddhist religion calls the "three fires of the world"—greed, anger, and foolishness. At a low point when she felt her heart was numb and her brain empty, she had a talk with Laure that gave her the key to overcoming her hatred of the Khmer Rouge: the taking time for *le silence* (Henderson 1999, 29–41).

Central to the experience of Caux and to the continuing work of Initiatives of Change is that of taking time in quiet, recommended to Pan by Laure. This is not a religious doctrine so much as a practical experience. Each person interprets it differently. Laure, who wrote down her thoughts in a notebook, saw this practice in a broad dimension (Channer 1983). She called the quiet time the strongest weapon of all. "Instead of dropping bombs or firing guns, be quiet and listen. For some it is the voice of God, for others the voice of conscience; but every one of us, man or woman, has the chance to take part in a new world, if we know how to listen in quiet to what is in our hearts" (Piguet 1985, 58).

Laure also stressed to Pan the importance of forgiveness. Her message on this was clear: "What I learned at Caux was how to forgive. That is a huge thing, because one can die of hatred. If I had continued as I was, I should have spread hatred right through my family. My children would have started off hating the Germans, then the bosses, and who would have been next?" (Channer 1983). Pan's meeting with Laure led her to treat the Khmer Rouge differently. "It was very hard for me to forgive the Khmer Rouge for what they did to me, my family, and my friends," she says, "and especially to my beloved country. But the burden of revenge that I carried for a decade was lightened from the moment that I did so" (Henderson 1994, 33).

Another person influenced by Laure's life was Eliezer Cifuentes of Guatemala, who is lucky to be alive. One night in 1980, four carloads of attackers ambushed his car and shot him. With a bullet in his arm and crouching low in his car, using the outlines of houses to steer by, he managed to evade his pursuers, then jettisoned his car, and ran and found shelter in a shop for five hours. At midnight, borrowing the shopkeeper's car and disguised as a woman, he drove back to Guatemala City where he found asylum in the Costa Rican embassy. After four months of negotiations he was allowed to fly to San José, Costa Rica (Henderson 1999, 143–144).

In exile, Cifuentes' hatred of his would-be killers grew. He could not bear to see a policeman; he had terrible headaches. Then one day after seeing the film about Irène Laure, he had an experience that transformed his life. He recognized "the tigers of hatred" in his heart for the military and for the United States, which he felt was backing them. He realized that he had not practiced the love that he had repeatedly preached. "I found a renewal inside that began to change my feelings of hatred and my desire for vengeance. . . . Giving up hatred is a wonderful, personal experience, but my danger was to leave it at that" (Henderson 1999, 143–144).

Cifuentes decided to go and see a former Guatemalan intelligence officer, who he thought responsible for drawing up the lists of intended kidnap victims. Eventually, as they had further meetings, Cifuentes was able to be honest about his hatred of the military. This led to changes of attitude on the part of both men and to a meeting outside the country with senior army officers, who expressed their readiness to work with him for national reconciliation. After a struggle, his wife Clemencia and their children also decided to forgive. Of the experience of seeing *For the Love of Tomorrow,* Cifuentes says, "What the Germans were for this Frenchwoman in the film, the military were for me. God has laid on my heart a task—the reconciliation of the military and the civilian population of my country" (Henderson 1999, 145).

A third person influenced by Irène Laure's story was Abeba Tesfagiorgis, an author from Eritrea, who was suspected by the Ethiopian occupiers of her country of being in the underground resistance. She was imprisoned and at one point faced a firing squad as a ruse to extract information, but was spared. In prison Tesfagiorgis came face to face with the man who had betrayed her. She forgave him. She then tried to help the other prisoners see that it would be a disservice to their fallen comrades if they did not forgive their enemies. "We all pray together for our release and peace," she told them, "but God will not answer our prayers if we keep on nursing resentment and hatred for one another" (Henderson 1999, 43–53).

After her country's independence, Tesfagiorgis set up a center for human rights and development. Speaking to a symposium on regional cooperation, Tesfagiorgis said, "Let us get rid of our enemies not by imprisoning or killing them, as many African regimes are known to do, not by belittling them or humiliating them, but by resolving the conflict." It was the Frenchwoman's story that Tesfagiorgis told the other prisoners in her cell: "Just as Irène Laure could not hope to see a united and peaceful Europe without Germany, we could not say we love our country and then refuse to understand and forgive our fellow Eritreans" (Henderson 1999, 51–53).

We take for granted that hatred can be passed down from generation to generation. The experience of Laure suggests that love, too, in all its supposed softness, can have that same permanence. People who never met her have been moved by her example and taken her experience forward in unexpected ways. Peace dividends continue to come in long after she has passed from the scene. The idea that one day her actions would inspire not only these three people but thousands more around the world would have been far from Laure's mind during those nights in 1947, when alone in her room she wrestled with the question of whether she would give up her hatred for the sake of a new Europe. Her life is but one example of IC's strong conviction that the ordinary person can be used by God to do extraordinary things.

More than fifty years later, Mountain House continues to operate on the same principles as it did in those first years. An honest facing

up to the past still today evokes a dramatic response. One example comes from Lebanon.

In February 2000, just ten years after a civil war in which seventy thousand Lebanese died and seventeen thousand are still unaccounted for, a remarkable letter appeared in Beirut's dailies (Sennott 2000). It was an apology by Assaad Chaftari, a high-ranking officer in the Christian militia, for what he had done in the name of Christianity. For ten years he had wanted to make this apology. "We were all responsible," he said, "those holding the guns, those giving the orders, even the civilians applauding it." Charles Sennott, writing in the *Boston Globe,* said that Chaftari had "stunned Lebanon with a statement extraordinary in its simplicity and honesty" (2000).

Some months later at a conference in Caux, Chaftari repeated his apology before an international audience. He outlined his previous beliefs to the conference. Chaftari had regarded Muslims as a danger. They were brothers, yes, but of a lesser God. Because they looked toward the Arab world and he toward the West, Muslims were traitors for him. In the war he shelled Muslim areas or passed sentence on adversaries who had relations with Muslims, with what he thought then to be a clean conscience. "After a week of mischief I could go to church on Sunday at ease with myself and with God" (MRA 2000a; MRA 2000b).

Toward the end of the war, however, Chaftari had met some Lebanese who were associated with Caux and Moral Re-Armament and who were providing a forum for dialogue between Christians and Muslims. Here, again, there was a link with Laure, for one of the things that played its part, "perhaps subconsciously," he says, was the film about her life (Chaftari 2002). In these occasions for dialogue he heard about the dreams, the hopes, the grievances of the other Lebanese people. In March 2000, he had prayed in a mosque. As Chaftari told the Caux audience, "For the first time it felt like we were praying to the same God." He concluded, "I am ashamed of my past. I know I cannot change it. But I also know that I can be responsible for the future of my country" (MRA 2000a).

As the audience in Mountain House rose in a standing ovation, another Lebanese man, Hisham Shihab, came up to the platform and embraced Chaftari, shouting out, "I am a Muslim who was shooting at his countrymen from the other side of the 'green line'. I also apologize and accept his apology and will help him in any way I can." Shihab said that he had been trained as a young man to shoot straight with the admonition, "Imagine there is a Christian in your sights." He had shelled Christian areas and sniped at Christians. But his conscience had told him that all political causes were not worth the bloodshed. "I pledge to walk hand in hand with Chaftari," Shihab promised (MRA 2000b).

The next year, in 2001, on the same platform, Muhieddine Shihab, an elected official from Beirut, apologized for atrocities he had committed as a leader of a Muslim militia in the civil war. "Nothing in the world is more dangerous than a man who fears for his life and property," he said. "Self defense can quickly turn into vengeance and the wrongful taking of life. What motivated me and people like me to take up arms was absolutely evil." He was followed to the platform by Jocelyn Khoueiry, who had led a corps of Christian "girl soldiers" on the other side of the barricades from Muhieddine Shihab. Khoueiry, too, had found her attitude to the enemy shifting (Lean 2001, 5).

In 2002, Lebanese from different sides and different faiths, including Chaftari and the two Shihabs, came to Europe to speak together of their experiences of finding healing and unity. These former enemies had become friends, with an impressive depth of honesty and trust built between them. Wherever they spoke they gave moving accounts of their involvement in atrocities, not just against the other community, but also between rival groups of the same faith. For each one there had been a defining moment when they came to the realization that violence was not the way forward. At risk to themselves, they each had reached out to meet someone from the other side, discovering "they were a human just like me." Chaftari is still worried about his country's future, but welcomes these signs of hope. "Asking for forgiveness is difficult," he says, "and forgiving seems impossible, but is essential for the reconstruction of a country" (MRA 2002a).

IC'S PRINCIPLES FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

What, in essence, does Irène Laure's change and commitment and that of the others who followed tell us of the methodology of MRA/IC? Some who work with it would even deny there is a methodology. They would caution against reducing to a formula what is often spontaneous and driven by care for people. Certainly there is a serendipity about some activities, even coincidences or encounters that IC adherents might put down to God at work. They would definitely suggest that an openness to unexpected ways is vital. "One of their great strengths," writes Gopin, "has been the model of informal networking and relationship building, which has important theological roots for them, for it is in the 'surprises' of human connections and chance meetings that they see the Divine Hand guiding human beings toward reconciliation with others and with God" (2002, 161). Nonetheless, certain principles do stand out and are there whenever you meet IC's committed people and try to learn what it is they do.

It is no surprise that the word *change* should be enshrined in the organization's new name, *Initiatives of Change*. MRA often speaks of the "full dimension of change." As early as 1921, Buchman defined his aim as

"a program of life issuing in personal, social, racial, national, and supernational change." In 1932 he stressed, "Lives must be changed if problems are to be solved. Peace in the world can only spring from peace in the hearts of men. A dynamic experience of God's free spirit is the answer to regional antagonism, economic depression, racial conflict, and international strife" (1961, 3).

Archie Mackenzie, a British diplomat who has been long associated with Initiatives of Change and with Caux, writes in his recently published memoirs that when at international conferences, he often reflected that the problems on the table were not so difficult as the problems sitting around the table, and yet no one was doing anything about the latter. A feature of his contribution to diplomacy was that he did try to do something about them, and in some cases succeeded (2002, 54).

From the outset the heart of MRA's philosophy has been that if you want to bring a change in the world, the most practical way is to start with change in yourself and your country. Laure often made the point in later years that if you have less to put right than the other person, then isn't it easier for you to start first? The emphasis on starting with yourself and your own group can help break the endless cycles of blame and retribution. It is certainly extraordinary that at the Caux conference just two years after the end of World War II, blaming of the Germans and Japanese happened only when someone was overcome by their wartime experiences. Instead, British ex-servicemen, for example, went out of their way to express their regret for the way Germany was treated by the Allied governments after World War I. Buchman's question to Laure about rebuilding Europe reflected an element of vision for the Germans, despite all that had happened.

Initiatives of Change puts forward the practice of taking a time of quiet, alone or in community—*le silence* of which Laure spoke to Pan—helping each individual find for himself or herself the right course of action. As aids to identifying the next steps forward, and as standards for private and public life, IC recommends universal benchmarks of honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love. Laure said of these standards, "It is this that gives strength to the quiet time. Otherwise one comes out of a time of meditation with a vague feeling of personal uplift, but without having faced the reality of life. It is through these times of silence and in obeying what was deepest in myself that I have been able to accomplish things that were humanly speaking, for me, impossibilities" (Marcel 1960, 26).

Gopin, who has studied the subject thoroughly, writes that MRA's methods of peacebuilding and relationship building involve

> a profoundly persistent pattern of relationship building with key individuals on either side of a conflict, and the use of spiritual awakening to provoke self-examination and transformation of one's relationships.

> It also involves support for and evocation of a spirit of personal responsibility that recognizes primarily one's own part in the failure of one's relationships. Further, awakening to the "spirit of God" within you as well as between you and others is critical, in addition to a very strong focus on personal morality. Indeed for many associated with this society, personal morality and the morality of one's culture are at the heart of their message and teaching, with peacemaking taking a secondary role. (2002, 110)

Wanting the best for the other person does, indeed, take precedence over the results, whether political, social, or economic. In other words peace is a fruit of change in people. A vision is held before people of the wider part they can play in their countries and what could be different as a result. Those surrounding Madame Laure, for instance, wanted to build on her desire to see a new Europe and her compassion where there was suffering. It was not for them to tell her that hatred was wrong or to suggest that she should apologize to the Germans. No one had any idea of the dramatic form her change would take. It was Laure's spiritual growth that would have been the priority for those who lived alongside her, helping her to be ready to accept the next step God had for her, whatever that might be. Of her encounter with Buchman in the hallway as she was preparing to leave Caux, Laure said: "If at that moment he had pitied me or sympathized with me, I would have left. He gave me a challenge in love. It was the quality in him that arrested me. One felt his life corresponded exactly to his belief. He transmitted the feeling of certainty to you, that if you accepted change, you could have a part in the transformation of the world" (Lean 1982, 353).

Montville sees the experience of Madame Laure as a model for relieving a sense of victimhood and the violence associated with it, which usually defies traditional diplomatic attempts at a solution. Although it is rare for national leaders to admit past national misdeeds, he believes that individual representatives like Laure can assume such responsibility. By their acts of forgiveness or contrition, they then become spokespersons for a new way of thinking and a new image for their respective nations (1991, 161).

Laure's readiness to apologize not only for her own hatred of the Germans, but also to admit to failings by France in North Africa and Southeast Asia, was a key to helping nationals from those parts of the world break free from their bitterness about the past. Such readiness has been encouraged at all levels by MRA over the years, in the belief that an individual prepared honestly to acknowledge his or her own country's failings may defuse the antagonism felt by a person from another country, whose heart has been closed to any form of dialogue. As we have seen with the Laure example and also the Lebanese, Caux conferences have often witnessed such unofficial apologies. They are said to have had significant influence in issues as varied as Tunisia achieving independence without bloodshed

and the resolution of the conflict between German- and Italian-speaking people in South Tyrol (see Henderson 1996, 37–43; 148–160).

The role of MRA has traditionally been an enabling one. A French Member of Parliament Georges Mesmin says that political figures who come to Caux find three things:

- *A respect for all opinions.* "Despite certain remarks which could be hurtful, people have not become angry. We have listened to everyone, and we have all benefited."
- *An openness to others and to forgiveness, even when one thinks another is wrong.* "We politicians are inclined to battle at the level of personalities. One thing we slowly learn at Caux is to distinguish between the battle of ideas and the battle with a person who is an adversary now but who tomorrow could become a friend."
- *An atmosphere of friendship.* "In this building you make friends who want nothing from you. Here we have a vision of a world of goodwill, a world where one cares for the real interests of others and not one's own. It is a well of living unselfishness" (cited in Henderson 1996, 15).

Hamlin puts it this way:

> It should also be emphasized that after these intense animosities are removed or alleviated, all the political and economic differences remain to be negotiated. MRA has seen its role as enabling those who finally have to sit down to negotiate a settlement, to be better able to negotiate or even be willing to negotiate. It is therefore a precursor work to the formal diplomacy, rarely involving negotiation itself, but rather working privately behind the scenes at the different ends of a dispute, to prepare or enable the parties for negotiation. (1992, 14)

Richard Ruffin, executive director of Initiatives of Change in the United States, believes the challenge before positive peacemakers is to build long-term relationships of trust with people on all sides of a conflict. He adds: "For the first time in modern history, those shaping policies in the major nations recognize that traditional concepts of international relations no longer explain the interdependent world in which we live. Nor do traditional instruments of policy reliably produce the expected results. This . . . led to a recognition that current reality requires an approach to the resolution of conflict that involves the healing of wounds and the building of new relationships across a broad spectrum. This recognition, in turn, brought an understanding of a moral and spiritual dimension to statecraft, a dimension that should prompt the foreign policy community to draw on the resources and experience of spiritually motivated individuals and groups in quest for solutions" (1993, 10).

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