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**International Non-Government Organisations
and Peacebuilding - Perspectives from
Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution**

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Introduction

International Non-Government Organisations (INGOs) have been operating in areas of natural disaster and violent conflict for many years: (1) delivering emergency relief and humanitarian aid, (2) working for rehabilitation and sustainable development, and, (3) facilitating non-violent conflict resolution and peacebuilding interventions. These elements have not usually been integrated under a 'one programme' approach. It has also been acknowledged that humanitarian aid has the potential to fuel violent conflict. As a result of this, there have been initiatives by INGOs to integrate the relief and development elements of their work with peacebuilding initiatives in a more coherent and integrated way. This has the objective of, at the very minimum, 'doing no harm' (Anderson, 1996) and, at the best, promoting and contributing to positive and non-violent peacebuilding.

In the early 1990s the concept of peacebuilding received a boost in *Agenda for Peace* where the UN Secretary-General explicitly made peacebuilding a core concept for the UN to work with. Post-conflict peacebuilding was defined as:

....action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict (Boutros-Ghali, 1992)

A developing literature concerning peacebuilding can be identified (for example: Heinrich, 1996; Lederach, 1997; O'Reilly, 1998; Goodhand and Lewer, 1999). This paper will draw from these debates, other theoretical and conceptual frameworks, and experience from the field to illustrate potential for INGOs to integrate non-violent conflict resolution and peacebuilding into development and relief work in conflict zones. There is a rich area of experience to be accessed by these organisations from individuals and research centres that specialise in peace studies, non-violent conflict resolution, and peacebuilding, which would complement and enhance their programmes.¹

The purpose of this paper is twofold. Firstly, to review a selection of these key concepts and ideas from the literature, which may be useful for relief and development INGOs when they are thinking about techniques and methodologies for peacebuilding strategies. Secondly, to look in a little more detail at what the operational implications are when INGOs attempt to incorporate peacebuilding into their projects and programmes.

1. Understanding Peace and Conflict

1.1 *Positive and Negative Peace*

The first definitional problem comes with the very meaning of ‘peace’, which can be defined in negative and positive terms. In a negative sense peace can just mean the absence of violence and an acceptance of unbalanced power relationships, inequalities and lack of access to resources which may be associated with such a condition. In this case, the concept of ‘peace as order’ is prevalent. Positive peace, on the other hand, indicates an environment where people strive to *transform* society and communities into fairer and more just places to live. Not only is the ‘direct’ experience of violence tackled, but also the ‘structural’ elements in society which perpetuate potential sources of conflict. Working for a positive peace means empowering people to become involved in non-violent change processes themselves, to help build sustainable conditions for peace and justice. Such a transformative approach to peace is not without its dangers because it means people will ask difficult questions about their social and political situation. It is within the more process oriented concept of positive peace where we will locate peacebuilding.

1.2 *Community, Empowerment and Participation*

We have already used two contested terms that crop up regularly in peace and conflict literature - empowerment and community. Community can be used in the sense of an ‘international’, ‘national’ or ‘local’ grouping, and it is tempting to think of a community as an homogenous entity, where there is cooperation, harmony and a shared purpose. This, is not usually the case. Most communities are rife with relational and structural divisions associated with factors such as: access to wealth and resources, politics, religion, caste, mobility and power. Some of these are evident to a researcher, whilst others are only uncovered with a thorough understanding of the social fabric which makes up a community. For the purposes of this paper we will use the term community in the local sense, acknowledging that such an entity is, like conflict, complex and dynamic.

Empowerment has also been used for many years both in development work and conflict resolution, and we need to qualify what is meant by the term, be careful who it is we identify to ‘empower’, and why we should want to do this. It relates to our own understanding and analysis of what power is. Power is usually used in relation to having power over someone else, or of being able to control or influence others. Often power relationships are entrenched and exclusive of other individuals or

¹Similarly, cross-fertilisation from development practice can inform peace studies and peacebuilding, particularly in the areas of participation and community development.

groups, and there are important implications here relating to gender issues, and marginalised and discriminated against groups. Empowerment means power 'to' people' rather than 'over' people - in one sense it means people being able to take more control of their lives and be less dependant on others. Boulding (1989) talks of hard (coercive or threat) power and soft (exchange or integrative) power. It is in the area of soft power, associated with bargaining, compromise, persuasion and transformative long-term problem-solving, which peacebuilders must utilise to promote and create trustful relationships.

Another concept, and one closely linked with empowerment, which has been used by INGOs, particularly since the mid-1970s onwards (Oakley, 1991) when facilitating projects and programmes, is that of participation. For some INGOs this came as a result of a determination to move away from the patron-client relationship, and to involve 'beneficiaries' in a meaningful way in the design of programmes, decision-making processes, project implementation, control over resources, and the evaluation of programmes - so that their needs and values were protected and enhanced. As we will re-state in this paper, this has particular importance when INGOs design peacebuilding strategies and programmes.

2. Conflict Analysis

Fundamental to the process of peacebuilding is an analysis and understanding of the dynamics, structure and nature of the conflict environment within which the INGO is working. The next section will introduce some of the analytic frameworks which are helpful to ensure that this is done in a systematic and thorough manner.

2.1 Nature of Conflicts

Whilst the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the end of the cold war signalled a change in the nature of international conflict, the roots of many current conflicts can still be traced back to that historical timeframe and the colonial period. Many conflicts now seem to be more unresolvable and require intervention from the international community – both by violent means (UN and regional peace enforcement) and non-violent (peacekeeping and humanitarian agencies). These conflicts have been described in various ways including:

- *Intractable Conflicts* are conflicts that are described as being very difficult to influence or resolve, and ones in which the parties to the conflict stubbornly resist solutions (Kriesberg, Northrup, and Thorson, 1989);

- *Protracted Social Conflicts* are distinguished by the prolonged and often violent struggle by communal groups for such fundamental needs as security, recognition and acceptance, fair access to political institutions, and economic participation (Azar, 1990);
- *International-Social Conflict* is a concept which defines conflicts that are neither purely inter-state (international) nor purely domestic (intra-national, social) conflicts, but sprawl somewhere between the two. Such conflicts are usually deep-rooted, protracted and considered intractable (Lewer and Ramsbotham, 1993; Ramsbotham and Woodhouse, 1996);
- *Complex Political Emergency* (CPE) is a term used to describe a conflict crisis which is multidimensional, with large scale human rights abuses and profound human suffering. The root causes of the conflict are in part historical and political, and the conflict may be further complicated by natural disasters. One dimension of the emergency is that the state is contested or collapsed. It has been argued that:

.....an understanding of the role and nature of the state and of processes of state collapse are vital for understanding CPEs for various practical reasons and for drawing general lessons from particular experiences: CPEs are often rooted in prior state collapse; humanitarian assistance may have to contend with a fractured, ineffective or non-existent state; part of post-conflict recovery will involve reconstituting the state (Cliffe and Luckham, 1999).

Most conflicts exhibit characteristics of the above categories at some stage in their dynamics, moving in and out of phases of peace and violence over time. Often the phases are not so clear cut, and whilst one side or another may claim control over an area, in reality it remains contested. Whilst these macro analytic perceptions alter over time in response to local and global political contexts what remains the same, of course, is the lived experience of civilians caught up in the violence. This is not to suggest that all civilians are always innocent bystanders, they can be the initiators and perpetrators of the violence. But from the perspective of the ‘victims’ not much has changed – they are still on the receiving end of what is often deliberate, systematic and pervasive violence which invades every aspect of their lives. Many people are haunted by their savage histories and seem unable to break out of the cycles of revenge and hurt which often span generations. To mitigate this suffering and offer viable alternatives to help resolve the underlying roots of the conflict is the real challenge for peacemakers and peacebuilders.

2.2 *Conflict Mapping and Conflict Structure*

To help understand the multi-factorial and dynamic process of conflict, academics began to research in some detail the structure and context of conflicts. For example, in *The Structure of International Conflict*, Mitchell (1981) analysed in great depth the complex nature of conflict, both from

subjective and objective perspectives. Wehr (1979) described a conflict mapping and intervention guide to help analyse and understand specific conflicts. His scheme helps identify the origins, nature, dynamics and possibilities for peacebuilding interventions of a conflict during its various phases, and at different levels. Using such a guide it is possible to: systematically identify the key historical and contextual influences on the development of the conflict; identify the parties to the conflict; list the issues; explore the conflict dynamics (emergence, polarisation, escalation, psychological factors such as stereotyping and prejudice); analyse conflict resolution approaches; decide whether to intervene (accessibility, timing, alternatives, probability of success); consider concerns of neutrality and credibility; and check available organisational and individual peacemaking skills. An important element is a careful political analysis of the situation that should include identifying particular interests and the power constellations of different identity groups. Conflict can be categorised into four broad, but interlinked, levels: intra-personal, micro, meso and macro levels (See Box 1).

Box 1: Conflict Categories

Whilst listed here separately, the different categories are, of course, interlinked.

- Intra-personal: how we as individuals understand root causes, deal with, and resolve conflict.
- Micro-level: within (inter-personal) and between ‘communities’ (villages, ethnic groups, leaders and people, neighbours etc.), institutional conflict.
- Meso-level: conflict involving militant groups, local government, INGOs and LNGOs (including rivalry between NGOs), UN agencies; national coalitions.
- Macro-level: violent conflict at the national or international level.

Whilst peace building programmes need to be defined specifically for each level of analysis, it would be useful to develop contingent and complementary frameworks or schemes incorporating the above levels. In complex conflicts (which usually have many conflicting parties) this requires sustained co-operation and co-ordination between the various intervening international agencies. It is also important for INGO staff to consider the broader moral and ethical implications of such interventions (Lewer and Ramsbotham, 1993). It almost goes without saying that it is vital that the complex and detailed analyses of the historical, political, economic and social origins of violent conflicts, which lead to dysfunctional relations between groups and individuals in a country, should be borne in mind when considering peacebuilding activities. Equally important is a fine-grained analysis of the local ‘communities’ or ‘constituencies’ in which such interventions are planned. One would assume that this should be part of good development programme planning. Preliminary research, as well as including the techniques such as household surveys, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) surveys and other technical research,

should include conflict analysis and mapping and an understanding of the social relationships and fabric of the communities.

2.3 *Conflict Intervention Roles*

Within these conflicts, INGO personnel can take on many ‘peace’ roles such as mediator, arbitrator, advocate, trainer, witness, supporter, counsellor or therapist, and can tackle both relational and structural elements of a conflict. Examples are given in Box 2 below.

Box 2: Examples of Conflict Intervention or ‘Peace’ Roles

- Intra-personal: gaining personal knowledge of causes, general theories, concepts and approaches to understanding peace and conflict; personal change and transformation workshops.
- Micro: non-violent conflict resolution training; human rights awareness raising workshops; exchange visits and amity camps; cross-cutting programmes, trust building and conflict mitigation initiatives..
- Meso: national organisations and coalitions for peace and reconciliation including business, political and religious coalitions; systematic and national initiatives in peace education, development programmes, media monitoring.
- Macro: offers of mediation from the international community; attempts at persuading government and opposition parties to have a united and coherent strategy to the conflict, and not to use it as a political football (an example is how Conservative and Labour parties in the UK deal with the Northern Ireland/IRA conflict); involvement of peacekeeping and peace enforcement forces.

3. Theoretical and Conceptual Progress

The role of INGOs and other non-governmental agencies and individuals in peacebuilding processes has often been resisted by those in official, governmental circles. This section will place the development of ‘peacebuilding from below’ within the broader context of international relations, and trace the progress made by theoreticians and practitioners working in the field of conflict resolution. A review of this historical development is useful because it informs and shapes where we’re at now in our thinking about peacebuilding. The importance of culture will be highlighted.

3.1 *Track One and Track Two Approaches*

During the 1960s there was a growing awareness amongst some theorists and practitioners in peace and conflict studies and diplomatic circles, that the traditional ‘Track One’ (T1) or official diplomatic processes of international conflict resolution were unable to manage or resolve many of the protracted international social conflicts described in the preceding sections. These scholars realised that if the

roots of conflict were not addressed and understood, then the chances of achieving sustainable peace were slim. It was also acknowledged that a 'bottom-up' grassroots (peacebuilding from below) approach was needed to complement the 'top-down' diplomatic efforts. The term Track Two Diplomacy (T2) was first coined in the early 1980's by Davidson and Montville (1981) in their paper 'Foreign Policy According to Freud' in which they discussed contributions from the field of political psychology to foreign affairs in the area of conflict resolution. They acknowledged the close links between the psychological factors involved in the conflict process - such as misperceptions, fear, stereotyping, and enemy-imaging - and the fact that, in the end, a political solution must still be negotiated through political processes. Davidson and Montville suggested that evidence from their research indicated the need for a more pro-active 'non-official' diplomacy which could, they argued, contribute through two main avenues.

Firstly, they proposed that by exploring suggestions, policies and other alternatives, which government leaders could not risk, the chance that adversaries would misperceive reasonableness as a sign of weakness, and so become more aggressive and escalating the conflict spiral, would be reduced. They supported the view that open-minded and strategically altruistic approaches, which held the underlying assumption that conflict could be resolved or mitigated by appealing to common notions of humanitarianism, could play an important part in conflict resolution. T2 was designed to assist official leaders by:

...compensating for the constraints imposed upon them by the psychologically understandable need for leaders to be - or at least to be seen to be - strong, wary and indomitable in the face of the enemy" (Montville, 1991).

Formulas for the resolution of the conflict could be sought, in a co-operative environment, which might satisfy the basic security and esteem needs of the parties to the conflict. Secondly, political psychology could contribute by promoting and encouraging tension reduction measures (these could include such activities as cultural and scientific exchanges).

Another influential theorist and practitioner in the promotion of T2 methods was John Burton. Burton (1984) considered T2 as a type of diplomacy that sought to resolve problems on the assumption that the motivations and intentions of the opposing side are benign (best case analysis), whereas T1 or the official strategic track that was usually being pursued simultaneously, was on a malign assumption analysis. The two views should inform each other. Also, well chosen T2 intervenors or diplomats would be people in touch with the grassroots in a conflict but also be able to interact with 'authorities'.

This approach has been developed and built upon by Lederach and others in developing peacebuilding and conflict transformation processes in intra-state conflicts, as we will see later.

3.2 *Multi-Track Approaches*

McDonald (1989), a retired U.S. Ambassador, argued that interest in T2 was the result of a growing frustration with official governmental attitude of ignoring responsible citizen initiatives. He proposed that efforts to de-escalate conflict could be facilitated by what he termed 'Multi-Track Diplomacy'. This approach defined 5 'Tracks' of international diplomatic activity as follows:

- T1 Official government-government interaction.
- T2 Un-official, non-governmental, analytical, policy orientated, problem-solving efforts by skilled, educated, experienced and informed private citizens interacting with other private citizens.
- T3 Businessman-businessman, private sector, free enterprise, multi-national corporations.
- T4 Citizen-citizen exchange programmes of all kinds such as scientific, cultural, film, student etc.
- T5 Media-media based efforts designed to expose and educate large segments of the population in conflict to the philosophy, ideas, culture and needs of the other nation, society or ethnic group with which they are in conflict.

McDonald postulated that by working together, proponents of groups T2-T5 would gradually develop large power bases and exert influence on T1 bureaucrats to change their way of thinking into a more positive, problem-solving mode. The role of the media was seen as being particularly important in helping 'humanise' enemies. Saunders (1991), another retired US Foreign Service Officer, also stressed the important complementary role of non-official intervenors in bridging the gap between official diplomats and the wider grass-roots constituencies.

3.3 *Citizen Peacemaking*

Not all academics and practitioners were happy with the view that T2 was essentially a complement to formal intergovernmental diplomacy designed to assist official leaders. For example, Kavaloski, when talking about people-to-people peacemaking and peacebuilding initiated by citizens and NGOs, argued that:

...the main current of transnational citizen cooperation is not state-centric or ancillary to the intergovernmental system. It is not just a complement to official diplomacy in pursuing national interests. Much of it, in fact, is carried out, not to assist official leaders, but in opposition to them and their policies - policies that may appear to citizen activists as bellicose, short sighted and dangerous. Much international citizen activity, I argue instead, constitutes non-violent resistance, specifically non-violent social intervention. (Kavaloski, 1990, p.174).

Unfortunately, such non-violent social intervention can provoke a violent response from the state or local authority.

Kavaloski, who saw himself as a 'citizen-activist', used the term transnational citizen peacemaking' (TCP) to avoid the state-centric assumptions he saw inherent in the terms T2 and citizen diplomacy. TCP was defined as:

...direct or mediated contact and communication between private citizens of two or more countries with a general intention of increasing mutual understanding and world peace (Kavaloski, 1990, p.174).

The term 'transnational' instead of 'international' was chosen because the latter suggested, to Kavaloski, relations between nation-states whereas the former suggests a broader system of relations orientated beyond the existing nation state system.

Other disciplines were contributing to the field of conflict resolution. Particularly influential was the work of scholar/practitioners like social psychologists Herbert Kelman (1965) and Leonard Doob (1970); diplomat and conflict analyst John Burton (1969, 1987) who talked about conflict *provention* and the theory of human needs in relation to conflict resolution, and; analytic problem-solving experts such as Christopher Mitchell and Michael Banks (1996). All of these scholars were working on methods to help 'humanise' protagonists locked in conflict by devising methods of improving intergroup communications in conflict resolution through the use of interdisciplinary and interactive process-promoting and analytical problem-solving workshops.

3.4 *The Culture Question*

The concepts about outside T2 or non-official conflict intervention into conflict presented so far have their origins within a predominately western cultural perspective. Anthropologists like Avruch and Black (1991, 1991a) critiqued the work of Burton and others in conflict resolution and peacebuilding for ignoring cultural factors, and challenged them to take on a broader non-western cultural perspective. But some scholar/ practitioners such as Wehr and Lederach (1991) and Lederach (1995, 1997), drawing from experience working with communities in Nicaragua, were already articulating

important insights when attempting to relate T2 methods in non-western cultural situations, particularly during times of civil war. They acknowledged that the outside intervenor concept guiding peace research and peacemaking practice was too narrow to be used across disparate cultures and societies. They re-inforced the point that there are often cultural differences that make the 'western' idea of completely neutral, unbiased, impartial T2 intervenors inappropriate and often unacceptable. In the western model the intervenors are only connected to the disputants when their mediator role is being played, and the intervenor works hard to establish neutrality. To illustrate this, Wehr and Lederach explained the 'confianza model' in Central America where neutrality is not the primary determinant, but the legitimacy to act is invested through a personal, trusting relationship, which is often someone known to both parties, rather than in a functionary role as in the western model. The difference between the role of an 'insider-partial' intervenor in the confianza-based model of intervention, and the role of an 'outsider-neutral' in the western neutrality-based model is important:

Personal trust is always a concern in selecting any mediator. But with insider-partials it is the primary criterion for selection. They are recognised above all as having the trust of all sides. Unlike the outsider-neutral chosen for the absence of connection with the disputants, the insider-partial is selected precisely for positive connections and attributes, for what they are and do: they are close to, known by, with and for each side. This confianza ensures sincerity, openness and revelation and is a channel through which negotiation is initiated and pursued (Wehr & Lederach, 1991).

The question of cultural awareness is vital if foreign NGO personnel are to be effective, not only in peacebuilding related activities, but for all development or relief work. People's perceptions and concepts of factors such as time and communication styles vary widely so, for example, peace education programmes in some parts of the world may utilise drama, music or story telling to a much greater extent than is practised in western cultures.

Ideas about the place for an individualistic focus, rather than a collective approach to peacebuilding are sometimes key when designing programmes. This latter aspect has been particularly noted by practitioners of trauma therapy (such as rape or torture counselling, or healing post-traumatic stress disorder) where social aspects of trauma therapy which have relevance to local concepts of suffering, misfortune and illness (such as meditation or yoga), have been ignored by western therapeutic techniques that are based on individualistic approaches which have a scientific and technological orientation (Bracken and Petty, 1998). It should be an absolute requirement that elicitive approaches (Lederach, 1995), drawing on local resources and involving local people from the very beginning, are used when designing peacebuilding initiatives and programmes.

3.5 *Other Critiques of Conflict Resolution*

Other critics of international conflict resolution such as Jabri (1996), Duffield (1997), Shearer (1997) and Clapham (1998) have raised concerns that conflict resolution does not adequately address issues such as: gender; power; the danger that conflict resolution interventions (like those of relief and development) can fuel conflict; that it has an unbalanced focus on relational aspects; that the influence of outsiders on violent conflicts is minimal. These critiques, and others, are explored in some depth in *Conflict Resolution in Contemporary Conflict* (Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse, 1999), and in *International Conflict Resolution: Some Critiques and a Response* where Woodhouse engages the concerns of Duffield, Clapham and Shearer (Woodhouse, 1999). It is suggested that many critics of non-violent conflict resolution make little reference to, or are unaware of, the literature and practitioner experience related to conflict resolution.

4. **Non-Violence as a Strategy for Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation.**

INGO approaches to peacebuilding should be non-violent, and there is a long recorded history of individuals and groups working non-violently in war and other situations of violent conflict. Classic texts include Gene Sharpe's important work, *The Politics of Nonviolence* (1973) in which he explored the nature and dynamics of non-violence as a response to oppressive power and violence, and Bart de Light's *The Conquest of Violence* (1937), in which he put forward his 'Plan of Campaign Against All War and All Preparation For War', which some modern academics and practitioners of non-violent action still consider "the most systematic plan of a non-violent struggle against militarism available".² Non-violence does not mean a passive strategy offered by the meek, neither is it only effective against weak opposition³, as well-known non-violent practitioners of conflict transformation of recent times like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, have demonstrated. In *People Power: The Building of a New European Home*, Michael Randle shows how individuals and groups worked over 40 years using various means of non-violent social resistance to combat, and eventually overcome, undemocratic and oppressive regimes. In Eastern Europe non-cooperation and withdrawal of labour were also an effective way of practising non-violent resistance, and successful non-violent strategies have often incorporated local cultural and religious values. Gandhi's concept of *satyagraha* (holding on to the truth) and the practice of *hartals* (strikes) probably being the most famous. From within the

²see the introduction by Peter van den Dungen in the 1989 reprint of *The Conquest of Violence*, Pluto Press, London, 1989.

³ Nagler, M. *Nonviolence*. In Pauling, L (Ed) *World Encyclopaedia of Peace*, Vol. 2, Pergammon Press, Oxford, 1986.

‘peace’ literature there are also extensive texts which explore and describe peaceful ways of combating violence and the militarisation of society, reconstructing communities and building peaceful relationships from individual, group and social movement perspectives (Beales, 1931; Brock, P, 1972; Chatfield & van den Dungen, 1988; Carter, 1992; Curle, 1995). Most of these texts, as well as examining the national and international historical, political, economic and structural perspectives of conflict, also give some attention to the psychological and social causes of violence, and techniques of tackling them. Practising non-violence in war situations requires great courage because, as Perrin reminds us, the “priority for warring parties is their military operations, not the smooth operation of economic and social structures” (Perrin, 1998, p.320) and those who oppose their methods and aims are often quickly and violently dealt with.

5. Peacebuilding

The preceding sections reviewed a selection of ideas, concepts and experiences from peace studies and non-violent conflict resolution work which could be incorporated into relief, development and peacebuilding programmes. We will now explore the process and activity of peacebuilding in a little more detail.

We have already noted some definitional difficulties relating to peace and conflict. The very term ‘peacebuilding’ is also problematic in that it encompass a myriad of activities, both official (T1) and non-official (T2). It is not surprising that with agencies putting such diverse activities as providing emergency relief (medicine and plastic sheeting), development (digging wells and providing micro-finance programmes) and peacemaking (high-level political mediation) within the meaning of the term, that there is such confusion. The importance of peacebuilding has been recognised by major donors (Commission of the European Communities, 1996) and it is one of those phrases which has become ‘flavour of the month’ within some sections of the donor and NGO development community.

For the purposes of this paper peacebuilding by humanitarian agencies will be given a working definition as follows:

Peace building activities by humanitarian agencies include non-violent processes (such as advocacy interventions, development programmes and peace projects) which attempt to prevent, mitigate and transform

violent conflict, and contribute to building societies in which people have fair access to resources, which are based on social justice, and which respect fundamental human rights recognised under international law. The rebuilding of benign functional relationships is a vital part of this activity. Such processes should be rooted within the communities affected by the conflict and be sustainable locally. Peacebuilding usually requires a long-term commitment from local people and outside helpers, and can involve both cross-cutting (integrated into development and relief programmes) and stand alone approaches, and work at community or national levels, or both.

There is an important difference between programmes whose *principal* objective is to facilitate peacebuilding, and programmes which may *indirectly* produce similar results. There is a debate here about the conditionality of funding, and whether funding is tied to projects which integrate efforts to promote inter-ethnic relations, or whether the focus remains on, for example, building infrastructure and economic prosperity in the hope that improvements in dialogue, communication and understanding will follow.

The concept of conflict prevention is intimately linked to peacebuilding. The Commission of the European Communities (1996) provided some helpful guidelines to understanding the relationship between the two terms. Conflict prevention can be understood in two senses. Firstly, as measures which ease or mitigate a situation where an outbreak of violence is imminent (conflict prevention in a narrow sense), and secondly as preventing the occurrence of such a situation (conflict prevention in a wider sense). In the Commission's use of the term, whilst peacebuilding activities apply in all phases of conflict and peace because, in their view, they generally embrace projects and programmes with the longer-term aim of the stabilisation of societies, their impact will be greatest in non-violent situations. This is an important point for NGOs and humanitarian agencies to consider - whether or not to try and implement peace building activities during times of violent conflict, when perhaps such activities may even hinder the provision of emergency relief projects. Peacebuilding is not a 'hit and run' approach and agencies should be prepared for a long haul (German Foundation for International Development, 1996). It is this long term institutional support which is crucial for the development and sustenance of peace NGOs (Kruhonja, 1997).

5.1 Challenging Power and Authority

Peacebuilding should be seen as more than just good development practice - it is an explicit commitment to the improvement of relationships and social conditions. Because this could involve advocacy work (such as human rights monitoring and reporting, promotion of good governance and democratic practices)) and linkage with issues of justice and freedom, INGOs must be aware that such activities could have far reaching implications as to how their 'partiality' may be viewed by the

various actors in a conflict or development environment. So, as well as dealing with the immediate effects of war such as destruction of property and the killing and wounding of soldiers and civilians, peacebuilding can open up questions of social injustice, economic exploitation, political oppression, gender and race discrimination, and abuse of human rights. Becoming involved directly in such issues by INGOs can lead to accusations of ‘interfering’ in the internal affairs of the host country, and of stepping out of the agreed parameters of an operational mandate. This may effect continuing permission from the host government to continue working in the country. Also, because in most violent conflicts there is a thriving war economy with ‘conflict entrepreneurs’ making large profits, peace related activities which challenge this could have implications for INGO staff safety. In some cases local organisations do not want to become involved in peacebuilding, and ask to be left alone, because they realise the political implications of such work.

6. Peace Building - Leadership and Entry Points

Within conflict situations, even those which seem the most violent and barbaric to outsiders, there are organisations and individuals who are potential sources for peacemaking and peace building processes. We know this from personal experience, and from the ‘peace’ literature which is full of such examples (see for example Curle, 1995). For NGOs the identification of individuals/groups to work with can be difficult, as many people will also have their own agendas for wanting to become involved in NGO sponsored work. Knowledge of local structures and sources of social energy and leadership are invaluable. Lederach (1997) identifies three leadership bases (levels) in a conflict-affected population, and he relates particular approaches to building peace to each level. Some examples are given below.

Box 3: Approaches to Building Peace

(Source: Lederach, John Paul. *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. United States Institute for Peace Press, Washington, D.C., 1997).

Types of Actor	Approaches to Building Peace
Grassroots Leadership (micro-level)	Local peace commissions Grassroots training Prejudice reduction Psychosocial work in post-trauma
Middle-Range Leadership (meso-level)	Problem-solving workshops Training in conflict resolution

Top Leadership
(macro-level)

Peace commissions
High level negotiations
High status and profile mediators

In Lederach's framework the middle-range (meso) leadership is seen as crucial for successful peacebuilding as a link between the elites (macro) and the grassroots (micro).

Bock and Anderson (1999) analyse peacebuilding from a different perspective which helps to identify possible entry points into conflict for peacebuilding and peacemaking initiatives. They describe two categories of approaches used by aid agencies to prevent and/or transform conflict, which are differentiated by their tactics as well as the timing of their use - the 'promotive' and 'pre-emptive' approaches. By promotive approaches Bock and Anderson refer to those aimed at:

.....creating a foundation of trust between people of varying identities and engendering an appreciation for communal harmony", and they aim to "lay a foundation for the prevention of further violence or to reduce the likelihood of escalation of an existing conflict (p.327)

They may be implemented before, during or after violent conflict. Pre-emptive approaches

....are actions designed to divert and prevent conflict when communal tensions are high and violence seems imminent. Rather than promoting good will for the long run as promotive approaches do, pre-emptive approaches are designed to prepare people to dispel communal passion when it flares up (p. 329)

There is of course no guarantee that promotive approaches will be effective, and much experience shows that many initiatives quickly break down when violence flares between and within communities, and it is here that 'pre-emptive' approaches may be particularly useful. An example of this can be found in Eastern Sri Lanka where there is a mosaic of villages of different ethnic groups living together. After much initial work and negotiation (sometimes facilitated with the help of an INGO) the people have organised a peace forum at which problems can be discussed, and potential flashpoints identified and investigated by members from the peace forum. It's not easy work, and tempers flare, but this interaction between the communities over a period of time has helped prevent a return to violence in the locality.

Another analyst and practitioner, Paul Stubbs (1999), who has worked extensively in Former-Yugoslavia, sees an entry point for peacebuilding by:

...supporting those individuals and groups who contributed to trust and a viable social order before the conflicts: church leaders, sports groups, leisure associations, and others, on the

grounds that most of the high profile INGO support for civil society, in the guise of peacebuilding, is as likely to produce mistrust between different groups as it is to rebuild trust (p.9)

Unfortunately, it is often the case that INGOs in their rush to find local organisations and individuals to work with, are not taking enough care and time to identify appropriate and genuine partners. This means that long term sustainable and trusting relationships cannot be built, and that the motives and agendas of local partners do not always coincide with those of the INGOs and other donors.

As well as identifying sources of leadership to support and promote peacebuilding, INGOs can also find entry points by working on issues with groups especially affected by violent conflict. For example, in the south of Sri Lanka as a result of the JVP⁴ uprising during 1989 many men were killed or disappeared leaving women as heads of households. Some INGOs, in partnership with local organisations, worked closely with these women helping them to get their entitled compensation from the government, and facilitating the formation of mutual support groups for the women. The issue of gender and, more specifically, the effect of war on women and their role in peace building and conflict resolution is an important one (Nordstrom, 1997; El-Bushra, 1998; Turshen & Twagiramariya, 1998). Also in Sri Lanka, NGOs have formed a peacebuilding coalition under the banner 'Children: Zones of Peace' which states that: children have the right to be protected from the effects of conflict, that children have the right not to be used in conflict in any way, and, that children have the right to be helped to recover from the effects of conflict. At a more general level in Sri Lanka, peace education curricula for schools have been promoted in close co-operation with the National Institute for Education. There have also been many non-violent conflict resolution and mediation training workshops for groups such as politicians, teachers, peace and human rights activists, Buddhist monks, and NGO personnel. Another possible entry point may be through linking micro-credit programmes more closely with the general economy, perhaps through building ties with local Chambers of Commerce to explore both job and wealth creation. However, the impact of micro-credit on interethnic peacebuilding needs to be studied further. For example, Guest (1997) noted that in Bosnia and Eastern Slavonia (Croatia) micro-credit programmes focussed on giving money to individuals or family enterprises, so that the impact did not reach beyond 'familial patterns'. Also socially vulnerable groups, such as female headed households, tend to be targeted, which also limits the broader impact. The greater impact occurs when individuals organise together to form solidarity groups, for mutual support and help in meeting loan

⁴See: Alles, A.C. *The J.V.P. 1969-1989*. Lake House Publishers, Colombo, 1990; Chandrapena, C. *Sri Lanka: The Years of Terror. The JVP Insurrection 1987-1989*, Lake House, Colombo, 1991; Gunaratna, R. *Sri Lanka, A Lost Revolution? The Inside Story of the JVP*. Institute of Fundamental Studies, Colombo, 1995 (2nd.ed.).

repayments, and when they also make links with similar groups in different ethnic communities (perhaps for trade) - often with NGOs acting as facilitators.

So, INGOs should not only identify at what level their peacebuilding project is aimed, but also the complementarity (co-ordination and co-operation aspects) of their approach with the other leadership bases, and the contingency (timing) of their intervention. Both top-down and ground-up approaches are required in peacebuilding, and an NGO's particular choice at what level to work at will depend on their own resources and expertise, and the experience of their staff.

7. Relationships - Personal, Group and Organisational Implications

One of the most crucial elements in peacebuilding for an outside intervenor is developing functional relationships with the objectives of:

- facilitating communication, understanding and trust-building *between* conflicting individuals and groups;
- building communication and coherent strategies *within* groups;
- ensuring communication and understanding between NGOs, the host government (authority), and the host population.

Without commitment of time and resources to this 'process' aspect, peacebuilding initiatives will struggle to succeed. In regions where there has been a long history of violence, mutual suspicion and distrust this is a difficult task and initially, at least, the objectives of projects and programmes should be realistic in what they may hope to achieve. There are valuable insights and lessons to be learnt from the experience of specialist 'peace' INGOs, such as Quaker Peace and Service (QPS). Whilst organisations like QPS usually only play a small part in peacemaking and peacebuilding processes, their contribution in specific situations at particular times can be vital - of particular interest here are their 'witnessing' and mediation roles. Facilitating contact between antagonistic groups requires INGO staff to train in verbal and non-verbal non-violent communication skills, with particular attention paid to active listening skills and the influence of culture in dialogue processes.

There are often considerable dangers in attempting to bring people together in times of war. In Sri Lanka, for example, in some places local people reported that a Tamil militant group had actively discouraged such work, and even punished Tamils who persisted in keeping up friendships with

Sinhalese neighbours. The level of ‘sanctioned’ political violence generally in Sri Lanka is an important factor which influences whether people are prepared to become involved in peacebuilding work, and there are vociferous and sometimes violent chauvinistic groups who regularly oppose attempts at peace related activities. An important ‘anti-peace building factor’ that helps fuel the war is the involvement of Tamil and Sinhalese ex-patriate groups, whose violent rhetoric is often more extreme than that encountered in Sri Lanka itself.

In Sri Lanka, relations between the Government and INGOs have been turbulent, prompting one analyst to characterise the relationship as one of ‘suspicious co-operation’ (Van Brabant, 1997).

Sectors of Government (and the general population) seem to have the view that INGOs are pro-Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), that the LTTE exploits naive INGOs, and that the LTTE uses humanitarian aid allowed through into areas controlled by them to support their military efforts. This perception is supported by a media which is often hostile towards NGOs, and takes the ‘INGO = pro-LTTE’ line. There is a continual tension between the INGOs determination to keep their independence, and the Governments requirement that they are accountable, operate within the proscribed guidelines, and work in areas indicated by the Government.

As referred to earlier the question of complementarity (co-ordination) with other NGOs and humanitarian agencies also needs to be addressed, and for peacebuilding and conflict prevention work to be fully sustainable and replicable, NGOs must work closely together so that their efforts strengthen each other. This is often made difficult because there is competition amongst agencies for accessing funds. It is important to try to avoid contradictory approaches which may confuse, or even endanger, people. A mapping exercise of other NGOs working in the area should be undertaken before starting programmes.

8. Peacebuilding from Below: Impacts, Indicators and Evaluation

Because peacebuilding is both a structural and a relational process, the question of identifying indicators or measurements to evaluate programme effectiveness is elusive, and a methodology needs to incorporate a wide variety of factors. When analysing and evaluating the impact of humanitarian agencies some find it useful to look initially at the question from two perspectives:

- the effect of the intervention on the people caught up in the situation, and;
- the impact on the dynamics of the conflict itself.

Working in villages in Sri Lanka that were located in, or close to, the war zone, and using surveys involving PRA approaches, questionnaires and interviews, Goodhand and Lewer (1998, 1999) designed an initial methodology within which to start this process. Drawing from conceptual bases including concepts of civil society⁵, social capital, social energy, and social fabric a series of 'indicators' for what could illustrate a healthy and peaceful society were drawn up. *Social capital* are features of social organisation, such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit (Putnam, Leonard and Nanett, 1993). *Social fabric* describes relationships at the micro-level (as opposed to the more macro-level of civil society) of villages and smaller communities. In this sense it is about 'community building' and the complex and intertwined interpersonal relationships which exist in households and communities. Within this social fabric of communities there are often possibilities for mobilising underestimated and overlooked potentials in individual and collective endeavour - it is these openings which have been referred to as *social energy* (Uphoff, 1996). By helping reconstruct or build social capital, identifying local leadership (sources of social energy), and assisting in local community development (social fabric), NGOs can support local capacities for peace and strengthen civil society, thereby contributing to peacebuilding processes.

Table 1 (overleaf) gives a list of preliminary indicators which could help evaluate the impact of peacebuilding activities in a community, and the evidence which may support this. These indicators, which need not only be pre-set by the INGOs but can also be generated by the communities themselves, should be studied over a period of time and cross-checked.

It is proposed that the effectiveness of peacebuilding projects can be compared with the 'peacefulness' of a community, and this can be measured against observable and recordable evidence. Using this measurement of peacefulness is somewhat problematic in that the understanding of the term is dependant upon the situation. Again, using Sri Lanka as an example, how people perceive peacefulness differs in the north, east and south of the country. This relates to their ethnic identity and/or the level of their experience, whether current or past, of violent conflict. However, with that in mind, in Table 1 lists some indicators and evidences. For example, free access to markets and public services indicates a stable community and lack of harassment from armed groups. Such an indicator

⁵There is an extensive literature associated with civil society. For example see: Clayton, A (ed). *NGOs, Civil Society and the State: Building Democracy in Transitional Societies*. INTRAC, Oxford, 1996; Gellner, E. *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals*. Penguin, London, 1994; Harris, C & Dunn, E (Eds). *Civil Society: Challenging Western Models*. , Routledge, London, 1996; Pearce, J. *Civil Society: Trick or Treat?* Keynote address to CIIR AGM, London, 18 October 1996; Tester, K. *Civil Society*. , Routledge, London, 1992; Van Rooy, A (Ed). *Civil Society and the Aid Industry*. , Earthscan, London, 1998; Whaites, A. 'Let's get civil society straight: NGOs and political theory'. *Development in Practice*, Vol.6, No. 3, August 1996, pp.240-244.

can be measured using mobility mapping techniques, interviews, and wealth ranking. The development of social capital can be evidenced, for example, by the number of organisations active in the community. Lessons can be learnt from the experience of INGOs who have been working in the area of social development (Marsden and Oakley, 1999).

Table 1. Examples of Indicators and Evidence.

Community 'Peacefulness' Indicator	Evidence
Stability of Community	Regular employment Presence and acceptance of displaced people Historical continuity Presence of young people
Mobility	Access to markets and public services Freedom of social association
Domestic violence	Within families (suicides) Between neighbours Between castes Anti-social behaviour – drinking, drugs, beatings
Social Capital (Organisations)	Organisations within village such as: temple societies, savings societies, rural development society, sports clubs, pre-school, fishing society, etc. <i>Links with organisations outside village</i>
Economic activity	Investment in land and local businesses Long term planning Variety of livelihoods and micro-enterprises Markets
Media	Free press - variety of media sources
Political activity	Election thuggery Opportunity for opposition- public participation Corruption
Security	Presence of armed groups from outside

	Intimidation, disappearances/extra-judicial killing Rape and theft Coping mechanisms/conflict resolution methods
Human rights	Torture and disappearances Accountability/behaviour of security forces Access to arrested Judicial procedure
Infrastructure	Roads, schools, hospitals, houses, water
Need for outside NGOs	Local capacity Presence of community based organisations Dependence on outside agencies
Government Services	Availability of entitlements such as food stamps, health clinics, education, local government officials, police etc.
Local leadership	Independent leaders Businessmen/women Religious leaders/elders Armed groups/warlords-Army/local government

There are difficulties with evaluation because the indicators are often qualitative and subjective, and may concern subtle changes of relationship and behaviour which are not always evident (a) in the short term and (b) to a foreigner. Further problems are caused by the large number of unanticipated factors in conflict situations, and the fact that communities are usually not static. Spencer (1998) produced a synthesis report of evaluations of peacebuilding interventions by humanitarian agencies which pulled together 15 country case studies. Some general findings, which reinforce issues already raised in this paper, include:

....the central argument of the paper is that peace building is not simply a technical exercise and, as such, requires new ways of viewing and assessing it

.....they [peace building interventions] produced mixed results, though mostly positive, at the local level, reaching a small proportion of the population

...agencies and evaluators need to acquire specialist skills and knowledge in order to be more effective at understanding and affecting peace processes

Another helpful discussion on the evaluation of peacebuilding is found in Lederach's work. One of the points he makes is about the terminology of evaluation, and he talks about *initiatives* rather than projects, and *outcomes* rather than results.

Initiative" points to the idea that something begins, we enter the stream of activity, but it does not assume a time-bounded approach. "Outcome" suggests that we look at "what we have come to". In other words, outcomes should be understood as dynamic - as a process of understanding and learning - rather than as static results that are seen as products and end points. (Lederach, 1997, p.132)

This relates well to our analysis that conflicts are multi-factorial and dynamic, and that peacebuilding should be seen as a *long-term process*.

9. A Peacebuilding Framework for INGOs

Because of the eclectic nature of peacebuilding, INGOs should build multi-disciplinary, co-ordinated teams which incorporate expertise from the relief, development, and peace and conflict studies fields. A comprehensive peacebuilding framework also needs to incorporate and link the different interests and levels identified when a conflict is analysed (see section 2). Such a framework should incorporate the following T1 and T2 elements:

- *INGO HQ Policy Group* – formulate the INGO's general approaches, policy and strategies relating to peacebuilding within the context of other humanitarian work. Articulate ethical and moral positions regarding violent conflict (both general and specific).
- *INGO 'In country' team*– analyse and map the conflict. Identify openings (both stand-alone and cross-cutting projects) with potential partners. Consult local research institutes and other INGO and local NGOs in the area.
- *Community level peacebuilding teams* – with the local community identify needs and appropriate peacebuilding activities. Design and implement projects. Set up evaluation and monitoring.
- *'In-country' multi-level strategic and overview forum* – to ensure accountability, complementarity and transparency. Forum to include T1 (host government and military, donors, UN agencies) and T2 (INGOs, LNGOs, CBOs, research institutes, local leaderships).

The *multi-level strategic and overview forum* is vital if peacebuilding initiatives by INGOs are really to take root, so that a sense of 'common ownership' is to be arrived at. Whilst such a forum (however skilfully facilitated), is fraught with dangers, it could be of immense value even if only as a 'talking shop'. It would link the micro, meso and macro levels of conflict intervention and the 'peace' roles adopted by the various agencies engaged in peacebuilding work. The interests and needs of key actors could be shared and identified, differences acknowledged, common ground defined, and even prototype peacebuilding projects involving the different levels discussed.

Some may consider all this wishful thinking but, as many would acknowledge, for peace to succeed it is necessary to take some calculated risks and be adventurous. This requires courage on the part of military leaders and senior politicians who, when it comes to 'serious' matters, usually do not communicate in any meaningful way with citizens. Involvement by T2 actors is often seen as amateurs

meddling in affairs which they do not understand. But behind this attitude often lie more sinister motives, for example when conflicts are manipulated both for personal and political gain, and challenges to power bases are vigorously resisted. So, participation in such a forum also requires courage on the part of the T2 actors to be able to contribute on a equal footing with the T1 participants. There maybe a role for INGOs here in helping to ‘empower’ both T1 and T2 participants in this area.

10. Conclusions

This paper has only highlighted a few of the more immediate issues associated with the role of INGOs in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. INGO staff need to engage with these before designing programmes which have peacebuilding objectives. This will require them to ask difficult questions about what the normative values are upon which they think a healthy society should be built, especially with regard to issues of peace and justice. Because activities which have been put under the peacebuilding banner cover such a disparate set of projects and programmes, INGOs must be quite clear how they, as an organisation, understand the term.

INGOs often work in places where violence (political, military and social) is pervasive and invades all aspects of people’s lives, and where fear and terror are tools deliberately used by oppressors for social control. Whilst having to be pragmatic and realistic about what can be done, INGOs should keep hold of the larger idealistic and hopeful view of how people should have the right to live – in a peaceful and just society where a rich and benign social fabric of communities can be built and strengthened.

At one level, peacebuilding can be viewed as an integrative approach which permeates all development and relief programmes, a process which acknowledges that peace with justice is a necessary pre-requisite for societies that aspire to the ideals of democratic values. This requires INGO staff committed to such ideals, who realise the risks which may be involved in pursuing such objectives within the context of their mandated relief or development work. At a less ‘political’ level peacebuilding is about helping to maintain and improve peaceful functional relationships, and to facilitate dialogue and communication with individuals and groups who have a history of violent conflict between them. This may involve, for example, implementing ‘cross-cutting’ programmes, organising non-violent conflict resolution workshops or facilitating exchanges and visits between opposing groups.

The paper introduced a small sample of the literature from peace and conflict studies. Relief and development agencies would probably find it helpful to access this literature and also refer to the

experience and long history of individuals and groups who have worked specifically in the non-violent peace arena. It is evident that what INGOs can do is create humanitarian spaces and contexts to help people disengage from violence and increase the probabilities for peace. With careful preparation they can be catalysts, facilitators and enablers for non-violent initiatives in situations of violent conflict. By continually looking for ways of rebuilding civil society and social capital they may act by “putting a foot in the door to keep it open” (Kruhonja, 1997) and help preserve memories and knowledge of healthy society.

Within the complex protracted conflicts in which NGOs work, peacebuilding activities usually cover a wide spectrum of initiatives at both Track One and Track Two levels. A checklist of factors that should be used by donors and NGOs when analysing a conflict prior to designing, funding and implementing programmes with a peacebuilding or conflict resolution element are given in Box 4.

Box 4: PRELIMINARY PEACEBUILDING CHECKLIST

Development and relief NGOs planning to incorporate peacebuilding into their programmes need a perspective and determination:

which, regards conflict and peace as multi-factorial dynamic processes, often moving in and out of phases of peace and violence, and with actors who change over time. This means conflict is not linear and predictable.

which, whilst seeing particular conflicts as unique and specific, look at the experience of other violent situations and learn from peacebuilding and conflict resolution attempts in those places. A mix of appropriate, ‘western’ and ‘non-western’ methods should be utilised, where possible incorporating local and traditional conflict resolution and peacemaking processes.

which, gives equal importance to relational influences as well as structural factors of conflict when designing programmes (especially psychological, social and cultural factors).

which, incorporates in depth surveying, analysis and understanding of the social fabric and relationships within a community where a ‘peace’ related programme is planned. Ensure that not more harm than good is likely by such an intervention.

which, engages and involves local people at the beginning of peacebuilding projects and programme design, and identifies indigenous sources of social energy and leadership.

which, ensures that interventions are contingent and complementary with other official (T1) and non-official (T2) initiatives. Co-operative and co-ordination mechanisms should be established, and peacebuilding networks supported.

which, is clear about ‘normative views’ of society, about positions on human rights and justice, and encourages discussion of possible tensions between advocacy work and ‘peace’ related work like conflict resolution and peacebuilding programmes.

which, trains and prepares their staff and those of their partners in non-violent conflict resolution methods and techniques appropriate to local conditions (an eclectic approach). This has implications both for funding and longitudinal research and evaluation plans.

which, is not afraid to take an eclectic approach, and draw freely from different disciplines. Building peace requires creative thinking and a need to break out of rigid conceptual and theoretical frameworks.

which, is based on internationally accepted codes of conduct and operational behaviour (for example the SPHERE project)

Activity by humanitarian agencies needs to be put in perspective, and outside/foreign agencies are only one part of the humanitarian aid, development and peacebuilding context. Some see peacebuilding activities by NGOs as, at the best, damage limitation, and that ultimately:

Primary responsibility must rest eventually with local governments and where governments fail to address their basic responsibilities aid is rarely more than a palliative...synergy between aid and political intervention is essential (Chalker, 1996).

Because of its multidisciplinary nature, peacebuilding is not about either/or but also/and strategies, involving T1 and T2 initiatives, and co-operation and cross-fertilisation between development, relief and peace INGOs. Peacebuilders need a broad knowledge base and an ability for creative thinking. If taking on board this concept, INGOs should build multi-disciplinary teams for programming across development, relief and peacebuilding projects in order that coherent in-country policy and strategy can be formulated - the teams, when planning to implement programmes, must include the people who are most directly affected by the conflict, those who live in it. Whilst the focus of this paper has been on a role for INGOs as peacebuilders, it should be remembered that much peace and conflict resolution work goes on outside this forum, and is located with national NGOs and community based organisations (CBOs). There is most likely an extensive amount of activity that we are just not aware of.

Peacebuilding by INGOs cannot go on in isolation from the encompassing political context, and agencies should be prepared to spend considerable effort persuading and convincing local power structures of the value and worth of such interventions. Without the support of such local authorities it is unlikely that 'peace' related initiatives are sustainable.

Views about peacebuilding within INGOs are mixed. Some staff, particularly in the emergencies departments argue against inserting peacebuilding into relief programmes because they feel such activities could affect perceptions about their impartiality and neutrality. However this paper has argued that INGOs must tackle the question of conflict in a direct manner and implement, where

possible, peacebuilding elements into their relief and development work. This can be done using sensitive and carefully strategised approaches, which may incorporate some of the frames suggested above. As one Sri Lankan project officer working for an INGO in Sri Lanka commented:

.....it's a case of sublimely subverting the pro-war messages, you might call it the *murmurings of peace*. Peacebuilding is counteracting the demonisation of the other and helping redevelop links. We have to start at individual level.

Peacebuilding requires INGO staff who are committed both at organisational levels and, as importantly, as individuals. They must be trained in non-violent peacebuilding methods and skills, and be aware of the dangers inherent when taking on such roles.

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