



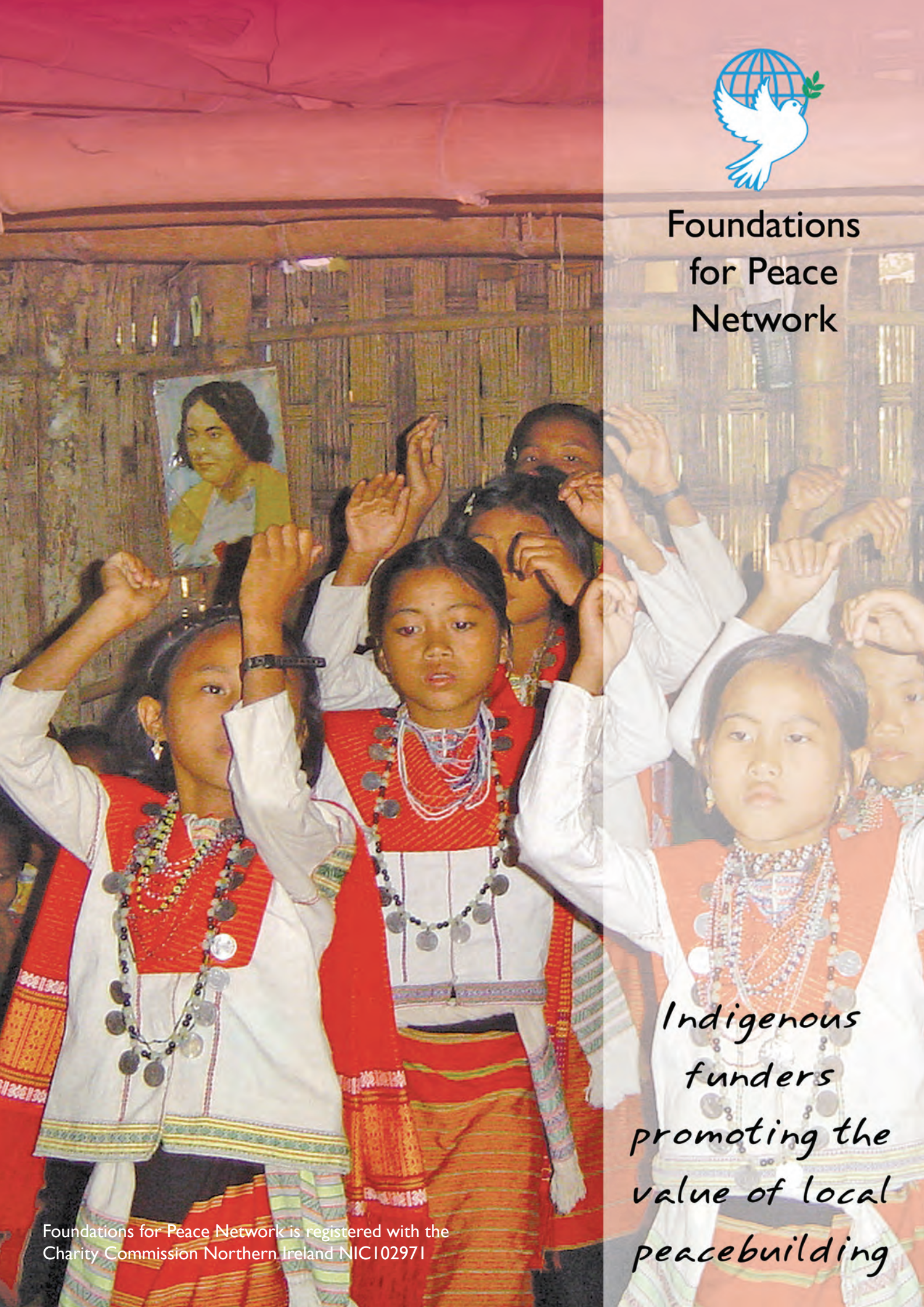
FOUNDATIONS FOR PEACE

Ten years of Peacebuilding
Work in Conflict Regions:
Reflections of Foundations for
Peace Network Members





Foundations for Peace Network



*Indigenous
funders
promoting the
value of local
peacebuilding*

CONTENTS

Anniversary Communiqué	3
Foreword by Chairperson: Marina Tabukashvili	4
The Foundations for Peace Board	5
Welcome to Foundations for Peace	7
About Foundations for Peace	11
FFP Launch, June 2006: UN Church Centre, New York	12
CHAPTER ONE:	14
Personal reflective thoughts from member representatives, past and present	
CHAPTER TWO:	23
Recalling some memorable small grants	
CHAPTER THREE:	36
The impact of war; the thoughts of three member foundations	
FINAL THOUGHTS:	43
The Way Ahead	

ANNIVERSARY COMMUNIQUÉ

TEN YEARS OF FOUNDATIONS FOR PEACE

In the past ten years, the world has changed beyond recognition. Alongside serious problems such as rising inequality and climate change, war has become the new norm, and peace and security issues dominate much of the globe. Many democracies are faltering with a rising prevalence of failed states, conflicted or deeply divided societies and stalled development.

Studies show that, despite the best efforts of many organizations, the architecture surrounding development aid does not contribute to lasting peace in conflict-affected communities. Indeed, the aid system tends to undermine the autonomy of local activism, which is essential to transforming conflicts.

Foundations for Peace, a network of ten local foundations rooted in their country's contexts, supports community activists at local level over the long term to open up space for the growth of civil society, to develop a new narrative, and to work on conflict transformation initiatives. Its values are based on respect for all identities and included are diverse voices and people who are often marginalized or demonized.

We wish to share with you our experience and learning over the past ten years, and our views about the imperatives for the future. Key presentations and a policy report on our work and reflections on the past ten years will be available to those who attend. The events and report will be of particular interest to philanthropies who wish to contribute towards conflict transformation. The convening will:

1. Discuss a new paradigm for development in contested or deeply divided societies.
2. Explore the role of different types of community intervention in peace and conflict transformation.
3. Explore new models of partnership working for community-based conflict transformation in contested or deeply divided societies.

Secretariat: opreymonina@gmail.com
Monina O'Prey
(p) 0044 74 9619 5174

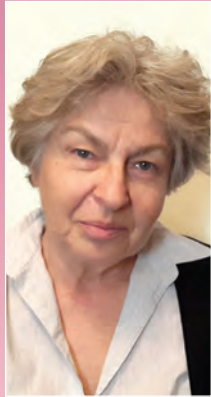
Chairperson: marina@taso.org.ge
Marina Tabukashvili
Taso Foundation, Georgia



Foundations for Peace Network

Indigenous funders promoting the value of local peacebuilding
www.foundationsforpeace.com

FOREWORD BY CHAIRPERSON: MARINA TABUKASHVILI



Marina Tabukashvili,
Taso Foundation,
Georgia, and
Chairperson,
Foundations for
Peace Network

Foundations for Peace Network celebrates ten years of working together in 2016. Launched in the United Nations Church Centre in New York in 2006, the Network has worked collaboratively on many peacebuilding and social justice projects since then. We have also shared with each other our experiences of working in conflict regions over that period and, in listening and reflecting, have learned a considerable amount from each other. This learning has enabled us to see more clearly what must be done if sustainable local peacebuilding is to be supported and further developed in regions either emerging from, or currently experiencing, violent conflict.

This short publication, *Ten years of Peacebuilding Work in Conflict Regions: Reflections of Foundations for Peace Network Members*, is a sister publication to our policy publication *Laying the Foundations for Peace: a Policy Contribution 2016*, and both will be launched during our conference in the European Foundation Centre (EFC) Philanthropy House, Brussels, in November 2016, to mark our 10th anniversary.

A snapshot of the combined experiences and reflections of the members of the FFP (Foundations for Peace) Network is presented in this publication. The member foundations are indigenous to, and proactively working in, societies that have been deeply impacted by violent conflict and communal division. All are deeply committed to the empowerment of local communities to develop sustainable peacebuilding and conflict resolution solutions to local conflict.

The members share a commitment to social justice and peacebuilding in difficult and complex situations. While each foundation operates in a unique conflict environment and seeks to support peacebuilding activities appropriate to context, we have found many commonalities in terms of impact and need. We have also learned and wish to share the story of the added value of using indigenous foundations to embed sustainable programmes in areas of conflict – we know the complexity, understand the political nuances, have reach and access, and we connect with those most impacted. We live with our decisions – we do not walk away when times are tough – and times do get tough.

The members have learned from each other and from other transnational conflict situations and wish to share this learning with those who have a stake in peacebuilding and social justice philanthropy or practice. We believe that philanthropists and development agencies can, and should, learn from our experiences and work in partnership with us and other indigenous foundations to ensure sustainable long-term benefits for local communities impacted by conflict and division.

More detailed information about our work is on our new website: www.foundationsforpeace.com

We welcome the opportunity to engage with others who have a key interest in social justice and peacebuilding at our November 2016 events and know the discussion and sharing of knowledge and learning will enhance the path of FFP in the future. We undertake to share our resultant Forward Plan – which will be informed by the discussion – with attendees and those who have asked to be kept informed, and hope to build on the relationships commenced in November 2016.

As Chairperson of the Network, I would also like to thank our members for their contributions to the two publications and, in particular, to thank Barry Knight for his input, continued guidance and invaluable support to the Network over many years. My thanks must also go to the Secretariat, in particular to Monina O'Prey, Avila Kilmurray and Claire O'Kane, for their continuing commitment and support to FFP since the outset.

Yours sincerely,

Marina Tabukashvili

THE FOUNDATIONS FOR PEACE BOARD

The FFP Network Management Committee comprises a nominated representative from each member foundation. The Committee commits to at least one meeting, including its Annual General Meeting, each year but, where possible, meets twice a year to work on collaborative projects. Members generally host meetings in their various locations. Meetings are also regularly enabled online and members keep in regular contact through the Secretariat.



The Network was very privileged to have SITHIE TIRUCHELVAM from the Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust in Sri Lanka as its first Chairperson. Sithie held the post for three years and chaired the FFP launch in New York in 2006 with many distinguished speakers and guests in attendance. She was a truly inspirational leader over our formative years and showed great commitment to FFP throughout her term as chair and thereafter. She was a firm supporter of collaborative learning and networking with others, chairing our first major peacebuilding conference in Derry, Northern Ireland, in late 2005, and steering the Network through its first collaborative project, the Victims' Empowerment project, which resulted in a major conference in Belfast in May 2008. The associated publication is available on our website.



Members were devastated by her loss when she passed away in March 2014 after a short illness. Her legacy remains an inspiration to us to this day.



SANTOSH SAMAL from Dalit Foundation, India, was our second Chairperson and, in October 2008, chaired a major convening/networking event in Colombia – Engaging Constituencies in Support of Social Justice – with the International Initiative to Strengthen Philanthropy (IISP) group. He also hosted a major conference event in New Delhi in 2010 for a range of grantees, funders and NGOs. During his term, Santosh oversaw the collaborative Small Money/ Big Impact project which was launched at the Delhi conference. Two related publications are available on the FFP website.

OSCAR ROJAS from AlvarAlice Foundation, Colombia, succeeded Santosh and chaired several key events over the following three years, including the FFP contribution to the EFC conference in Belfast in 2012 and the Youth Case Studies collaborative project – also available on the website. During his term as Chairperson, FFP participated in the Women in Conflict project emanating from Northern Ireland and FFP members contributed to several conferences there over its duration, culminating in a major conference, Women and Peacebuilding: Sharing the Learning, for more than 300 women in Belfast's Titanic Quarter in 2014. (A link to the associated Tool-kit on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and the conference publication is available on our website.)



MARINA TABUKASHVILI from Taso Foundation, Georgia, is our current Chairperson and has continued in the vein of learning and sharing between members and others. Her commitment to the work is outstanding and she will launch our publications and chair our anniversary events in Brussels in November 2016. She will also drive the way forward through the development and implementation of our future work plan which will be put in place in November 2016.



WELCOME TO FOUNDATIONS FOR PEACE

As activist funders, we believe that in societies living in a constant state of war or threat of war, religious or caste conflict, or who are at the early stages of recovery from violent conflict, people face hurt, anger and pain with feelings of betrayal, disempowerment and loss of both place and voice. Without direct support and resources, they find it difficult to build relationships based on trust, respect and pluralism.

We believe that it is imperative that philanthropic efforts and development funding, both national and international, take cognisance of this and invest more – strategically and substantially – in long-term indigenous peacebuilding work.

It is our view that sustainable peacebuilding work must build from within affected communities, societies or countries, in order for it to be sensitive to local needs, effective and progressive and more durable in the longer term.

We believe that activist funders who are local foundations are well-placed to play a constructive and vital role in delivering local peacebuilding and social justice programmes, whether in partnership with other stakeholder funders, or enabled to do so through support from philanthropy or development sources.

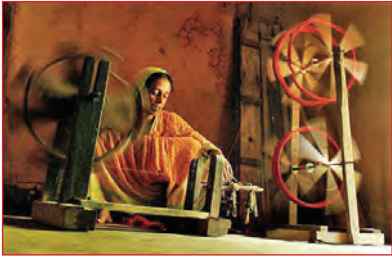
As of November 2016, Foundations for Peace is a network of ten local foundations across the globe that are rooted in their country's contexts, supporting community activists at local level over the long term to open up space for the growth of civil society, to develop a new narrative, and to work on conflict transformation initiatives to deliver peace. Our values are based on respect for all identities and included are diverse voices and people who are often marginalized or demonized.

Our added value is local knowledge, direct access to affected communities, and the potential to provide 'the bridge' necessary to build relationships and work towards building equality, diversity and interdependence.

Our network, therefore, works as a collective to raise awareness of the need for investment in indigenous peacebuilding work by a range of local and international stakeholders. We also create space to learn from each other and share good practice in peacebuilding and social justice work to enable this essential work to be delivered at local level.



“It is our view that sustainable peacebuilding work must build from within affected communities, societies or countries, in order for it to be sensitive to local needs, effective and progressive and more durable in the longer term.”



FFP:WHO WE ARE

We are a global network of independent, non-partisan local funders working to build peace and social justice within our respective communities, societies and countries. As a result of support from a Special European Union Peace Programme grant to the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland in 2003, the Network was founded and began to build. It currently has ten active members across the world and enjoys the support of many associated members and 'critical' friends.

Formally launched in the Church Centre for the United Nations (CCUN) in New York in 2006, much work and shared learning has developed since then. To celebrate our 10th anniversary in 2016, we intend to share our story and learning with others who are stakeholders in peacebuilding, social justice and philanthropy, in an effort to foster change in the approach to the support of indigenous peacebuilding work in conflicted societies.

As we move forward, we will encourage more activist peacebuilding foundations/funders from across the world to work with us so that we can build on the shared learning to support sustainable peacebuilding at local community level. We will continue to target regions and countries entrenched in communal and other conflicts.

Foundations for Peace strongly believes that conflicts cannot be resolved by violence; building peace is the only way forward to enable long-term sustainable solutions.

WHY FOUNDATIONS FOR PEACE?

Thoughts of Avila Kilmurray, founder member of FFP and Director of Community Foundation for Northern Ireland from 1994 to 2014.

“ Working as a foundation – even a small foundation – in a violently contested society places you in the eye of the storm. Foundations have resources that equate to power, and how they allocate those resources will be carefully scrutinised by all and sundry. Politicians, in particular, look to see if political preference is being shown, because division simplifies everything into 'us' and 'them'; a simplistic calculus of 'winners' and 'losers'. Local communities and groups are also automatically suspicious of funder motivation, given that they are surviving in uncertain circumstances and have experienced pain and grief as well as great hopes.

Established in 1979, the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (CFNI) worked to support local communities through the years of the violent conflict in Northern Ireland as well as during the years of transition to peacebuilding. At times, the latter were even more uncertain than the former, exposing the ethos and priorities of the foundation to question. When CFNI attended conferences with other trusts and foundations it was like a different world. Few of them had experienced the level of questioning, politically inspired scrutiny and self-reflection that was the norm in Northern Ireland. We wondered if funders like ourselves, working in violently divided societies, faced the same quandaries as us. A small

“We wondered if funders like ourselves, working in violently divided societies, faced the same quandaries as us.”



Avila Kilmurray

meeting was organized by CFNI in Northern Ireland in 2003; the question was posed; and Foundations for Peace was born.

What slowly emerged was a peer network that offered 'safe space' for discussion; an acute awareness that everything we did was 'political'; and an important need for solidarity. Over the years there were always one or two members who were facing oppressive local conditions and that needed courage to continue their work. The question of what is peace in circumstances of injustice was a golden thread in many conversations, as was the challenge of what could be realistically expected of civil society. FFP offers a framework for these and other considerations. It also captures examples of the power of community-based philanthropy in the most difficult circumstances.

”

IS FFP RELEVANT TEN YEARS ON?

Since the Second World War there have been more conflicts *within* states than *between* states, and the numbers have increased alarmingly since 1989. These internal wars leave permanent and deep scars which are carried over the generations, isolating and alienating individuals and communities. They eventually become islands of hate. If the violence is erupting from within, the peacebuilding also should emanate from within the community.

In the past ten years, the world has changed beyond recognition. Alongside serious problems such as rising inequality and climate change, war has become the new norm, and peace and security issues dominate much of the globe. Many democracies are faltering with a rising prevalence of failed states, conflicted or deeply divided societies, and stalled development.

Studies show that, despite the best efforts of many organizations, the architecture surrounding development aid does not contribute to lasting peace in conflict-affected communities. Indeed, the aid system tends to undermine the autonomy of local activism, which is essential to transforming conflicts.

“... wars leave permanent and deep scars which are carried over the generations ...”



It is in this situation that independent indigenous foundations, who understand local dynamics and are sensitive to political nuances, play a crucial role in providing resources for 'building bridges'. It is FFP's conviction that for any development to happen, peacebuilding should be the starting point.

There is a need for FFP as a global network because, while peacebuilding is essentially local, our efforts benefit enormously from transnational perspectives and sharing of experience and learning.

Foundations for Peace is registered as a Charity at Law in Northern Ireland with capacity to operate on an international basis.

CURRENT FFP MEMBER FOUNDATIONS AND REPRESENTATIVES AS OF NOVEMBER 2016:

**Community Foundation for
Northern Ireland: Sean Feenan**
www.communityfoundationni.org



**Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust, Sri Lanka:
Ambika Satkunanathan**
www.neelan.org

**Reconstruction Women's Fund, Serbia:
Slavica Stojanovic**
www.rwfund.org



**Taso Foundation,
Georgia: Marina Tabukashvili**
www.taso.org.ge

Tewa, Nepal: Rita Thapa
www.tewa.org.np

**Manusher Jonno Foundation,
Bangladesh: Shaheen Anam**
www.manusherjonno.org

Dalit Foundation, India: Martin Macwan
www.dalitfoundation.org



**Dalia Association, Palestine:
Aisha Mansour**
www.dalia.ps

**AlvarAlice, Colombia:
Whitney Cox**
www.alvaralice.org

**Indonesia for Humanity, Indonesia:
Kamala Chandrakirana**
www.ysik.org

ABOUT FOUNDATIONS FOR PEACE

www.foundationsforpeace.com

CHARTER FOR FOUNDATIONS FOR PEACE

At its first Annual General Meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 13 November 2004, Foundations for Peace adopted the following charter.

VISION

Foundations for Peace envisions a pluralistic society across the world that respects human rights and dignity and in which conflicts are resolved through peaceful means.

MISSION

Foundations for Peace is a global network of independent, indigenous funders working to advance equality, diversity and interdependence in areas of entrenched and persistent communal conflict with a history of, or potential for, violence.

STRATEGIES

Foundations for Peace has three strategies. These are:

1. To draw lessons from and share models of good practice in peacebuilding that have been implemented within and between local communities.
2. To promote and advance public policy to support equality, diversity and interdependence nationally and internationally.
3. To inform, promote and thereby increase the flow of philanthropic funds to support indigenous peacebuilding foundations across the globe.

OBJECTIVES

To advance equality, diversity and peacebuilding in areas of communal conflict with a history of, or potential for, violence by:

- a) promoting solidarity and providing individual and organisational support to enhance knowledge and experience of peacebuilding;
- b) enabling collaborative work to make a distinctive contribution to the peacebuilding practice;
- c) building individual and organisational capacity through sharing learning, ideas and experience and creating opportunities for collaboration;
- d) gathering, analysing and disseminating the collective learning for the public benefit from conflict-affected regions across the globe.

VALUES

Foundations for Peace values the sanctity of human life as set out in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

In particular, Foundations for Peace wishes to make a distinctive contribution to peacebuilding in areas of entrenched and persistent communal conflict with a history of, or potential for, violence. The values that underpin Network members' philanthropic interventions in areas of such conflict are equality, diversity and interdependence.

Foundations for Peace is non-partisan and shall not take positions on global political issues. Each member authority will have full autonomy to develop policies, positions and practices relevant to its mission and philosophy within its sphere of interest.

FFP LAUNCH, JUNE 2006: UN Church Centre, New York



In words that echo true to this day, Sithie Tiruchelvam, as Chairperson of FFP, opened the conference event pointing out that all of the member organisations are working daily with conflict situations in their own countries, including open hostilities, fractured peace processes, the abuse or denial of human rights and social injustice/exclusion issues. She emphasised the importance of the role of civil society in all of these situations and the need for indigenous, locally based funders/foundations to be supported on an international basis to deliver local peacebuilding work.

She also spoke of the importance of the local foundations meeting together in the Network for the purposes of sharing experiences, learning from each other and developing intercountry partnerships and projects to enhance learning. The need to develop policy and practice as a result of this learning is critical and the importance of sharing these lessons with others in the international framework is crucially important.

The Network requires both financial and political support if it is to deliver on its goals. It will work to raise awareness of the need for support for local peacebuilding work among the wider philanthropic community as well as the United Nations and other international human rights organisations.

“ Last month, the second richest man in the world, Warren Buffett, gave the richest man in the world, Bill Gates, \$31 billion. But this was no ordinary investment. Buffett was not investing in Microsoft but, rather, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which works to reduce inequities, largely through funding health and education work the world over. The result was that the world's largest charity doubled its value and the foundation is now worth an estimated \$60 billion.

At the same time, I was in New York attending the launch of a more modest philanthropic cause, namely the launch of the Foundations for Peace Network. The Network brings

together funding organisations from across the globe. Members include foundations from Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, Colombia, Bangladesh, South Africa, Serbia and India. The reach of the organisation is impressive, the core idea behind it significant. The Network wants to ensure more funding for peacebuilding work and for this funding to be distributed by indigenous agencies like themselves rather than international organisations.

This sounds like a simple idea, but it is a novel one. The philanthropy of international foundations cannot be scoffed at, but there are criticisms of some international donors. The writer and activist Arundhati Roy argues that international funding can turn people into dependent victims and blunt political resistance rather than contribute to change. In addition, some foundations are criticised for not challenging those with resources locally, such as the business community, to contribute to development.

So what are the solutions for this? This is where the Foundations for Peace Network provides some pointers. At its core is the belief that donor money should be coming not only from the international community and channelled by local funders, but that local sources should also provide funding.

Dr Brandon Hamber on the launch of FFP. Brandon is a South African living in Northern Ireland, working internationally on conflict resolution and political transition issues.

“ I have a dynamic picture of foundations and the institutions of civil society that they support. It is a picture of a sector that goes beyond just the provision of services, important as that is, to one that challenges the status quo in society. It does this by analysing programmes to see if they deliver on their promises. It suggests new and innovative ways to deal with complex issues. It constantly holds us up to the yardstick of fairness and a level playing field and it gives voice to those that tend to go unheard in our society.

I would submit to you that these attributes and the larger picture it presents of the role of foundations in society make it imperative that the work of local peacebuilding be supported.

Extract from Barry Gaberman's address at the launch conference in New York, 2006. Barry was Senior Vice President of the Ford Foundation at that time.

CHAPTER ONE: PERSONAL REFLECTIVE THOUGHTS FROM MEMBER REPRESENTATIVES, PAST AND PRESENT

The following personal reflections give some insight into the struggles and dilemmas faced by indigenous foundations in a rapidly changing philanthropic and development aid environment. The FFP members are committed to working at local level to empower communities negatively impacted by conflict, communal violence, poverty, inequality, exclusion and injustice. They face an increasingly competitive environment, with many international NGOs and development aid organisations, often working to external or national government agendas, creating new dependencies and often ignoring the root causes of conflict and injustice.

KAMALA CHANDRAKIRANA: INDONESIA FOR HUMANITY, INDONESIA

About two decades ago, under an authoritarian regime, a group of pro-democracy and social change activists in Indonesia decided to set up a grant-making organization, now **Indonesia for Humanity**, to support the work of their compatriots on the ground. This initiative was given full support from a few donor organizations based in Europe, which provided financial resources for multiple years to act as their intermediary in making small grants. They were prepared to do this because the Indonesian Government had restricted their access to the country. The Indonesian foundation called itself a 'civil society resource organization'. Once Indonesia's political system opened up, the donor organizations were able to set up shop in the country and did so. As a result, the indigenous grant-making organization was left to its own devices which, in turn, meant that it had to work with a much reduced budget and, therefore, had less impact.

Meanwhile, in the years of donor abundance and direct engagement in the country, civil society organizations boomed and scaled up their activities. While important gains were achieved with the large resources, a situation of dependency on international donors emerged as initiatives and organizations were crafted with donor agendas, interests and politics. To the extent these were grounded in shared visions and values, all was well. But this model also had its price. A hierarchy developed within civil society: those with access to resources (usually in the capital city) at the top, and those who didn't (usually on the fringes) at the bottom. In some cases, organizations lost their autonomy and became project implementers of a plan designed elsewhere. It was also not without its contradictions, as donor organizations began to hire from the ranks of civil society and fundraise within the country or region, establishing themselves as competitors to national/local organizations despite the pretext of supporting them.

Now, seventeen years into Indonesia's reform process, the tides have changed again. Donor organizations are leaving the country while international NGOs are setting up shop to fundraise in the Eastern Hemisphere, including some of Indonesia's new rich. International development aid has morphed into a tool of trade and investment. Private-public partnership has become the 'big call' and corporations are now 'development actors'. For the next fifteen years, everyone in the world is expected to follow the path towards the '17 goals' – the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As governments are focused on economic growth and political stability, there is a surge in mobilizing the resources of corporations and private philanthropy on this path without addressing fundamental inequalities and divergences of interests and without genuinely democratic and inclusive accountability mechanisms.

“... organizations lost their autonomy and became project implementers of a plan designed elsewhere.”



Kamala
Chandrakirana

There is new relevance and urgency for the autonomous, indigenous ‘civil society resource organization’ that is rooted deep in community struggles for change and in constituencies for peace, justice and human rights. As Indonesian activists agree on this collective interest to build an appropriate and sustainable asset base for social transformation, there is realization that the existing resources, infrastructure and tools are inadequate for such endeavours. Even the language and connections necessary for productive engagement with the potential supporters are lacking. Moreover, this has to be achieved on an uneven playing field where structural inequality between national and international organizations within civil society persists.

For the effectiveness and sustainability of our struggles for peace, justice and human rights, we are called to find new pathways, create new language and develop new strategies and tools. We must be bold in our experiments and be ready to fail – as the risks are high – and rebuild, while staying true to our goals and principles. This is not a just a matter of choice in another changing of the tides. It is an imperative during this particular historical moment when the world – and the world order – is changing in a fundamental way.

AMBIKA SATKUNANATHAN: NEELAN TIRUCHELVAM TRUST (NTT), SRI LANKA

The personal tragedy of Neelan Tiruchelvam’s assassination spurred NTT’s founder Sithie Tiruchelvam, who, with a group of like-minded visionaries, conceptualized and founded a local grant-making entity that would support organisations on the peripheries and not always on the radar of donors. That commitment to community philanthropy is evident in NTT’s work since its inception. From war to the post-war phase – marked by a repressive state subverting democracy and disregarding the rule of law – to, presently, a more amenable government that is looking at ways to ensure justice and peace, however inadequate, community-based organisations have had to evolve, transform and adapt not only to the socio-political environment but also to shrinking resources for grant making.

Within NTT the discourse has also been about impact – how small grants can support innovative ideas and work that resonates within the community. This is based on the understanding that impact does not have to be immediate or widespread but it is about bringing change at the individual or community level to bridge the gap between those with decision-making capabilities and those without a voice.



Ambika Satkunanathan



We sometimes find it challenging to ensure the resources provided are within the absorptive capacity of our partners, while constantly seeking ways to encourage the spirit of volunteerism and non-financial support from within the community itself with the aim of strengthening 'sustainability'. One of the key questions we at NTT regularly confront is how we can expect sustainability when we are neither able nor willing to support beyond a certain point. How can we be different from other donors in the ways we provide support that will result in sustainability?

One of the ways we do this is by engaging deeply with our partners, accompanying them at every step of their journey, listening to their problems, whether programmatic or administrative, and providing the required support. It is clear to us we need to be different – perhaps by taking that huge step to provide core support or programme support so partners can not only survive beyond projects but also thrive and respond to immediate, emerging needs. However, that means our involvement with them has to be much more organic, building on the trust that is already in place, and, most importantly, convincing our own donors that this is the path we need to take.

MARINA TABUKASHVILI: TASO FOUNDATION, GEORGIA

People in Georgia, in rural Georgia especially, are poor and isolated from social-political life, although very politicized in relation to elections where the majority vote against the ruling political leader. However, they are not as yet ready to lobby 'for' political programmes that demand prosperity to be given from the top. Accordingly, political parties are lavish with promises but never address people with the offer of learning, thinking, deciding and working together for changes to build a better life.

However, through the attempts of civil society organizations, Western donors and UN agencies, state legislation is continuously harmonizing with the principles and values of democracy. But to have it implemented, the same actors have to work, lobby and pay for the change. Since the political changes



Marina
Tabukashvili



of 2012, the door is more open for the participation of civil society organizations but our democracy remains superficial because there is no participation of the wider public in the democratization process.

Working in rural Georgia since 2004, Taso sees how great the gap is between the legislation and its implementation in poor environments where people struggle for survival. Every violation of social justice, from severe violence to inefficiency of the spending of the Village Programme funds, goes on locally and it is only the empowerment of local people that can bring justice to their communities/homes. This emphasises the kind of advocacy needed – empowering people for change. Taso invests in women and youth, but also welcomes to our programmes those men who are honest and motivated. We work to strengthen communities with knowledge, delivering skills development, grant giving, and continuously consulting on need. When people are mobilized they see the complexity of problems and are able to analyse and respond with appropriate activism – they find local solutions to local issues. Investment in this work is labour-intensive and slow, but empowerment brings sustainable change and a lobby for inclusion.

Taso joined the Foundations for Peace Network in 2009. Soon after, we started programmes for communities that were internally displaced and affected by the 2008 war with Russia. FFP also connected us with the Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace network. We understood this concept of connecting philanthropy with social justice and continue to see the importance of our community mobilization work in the complicated but clear framework of social justice philanthropy traditions. From FFP, initiated by the Community Foundation NI, we learned of the concept and built our knowledge of how to develop community philanthropy. This is something we are now committed to and it helps build the sustainability needed for positive change. We also learned and built our confidence through being among co-thinkers, those who are value-based around social justice and peacebuilding, and share their experience and learning of how to make ‘big impact with small money’.

“We work to strengthen communities with knowledge, delivering skills development, grant giving, and continuously consulting on need.”

It is a privilege and a learning experience for an indigenous national foundation to work together with local communities impacted by conflict. Mobilization of rural communities is continuing with the support of our community philanthropy programme, which itself ensures the geographic widening of direct democracy development. This is what we need, want and will be doing as the main focus of the long-term programmes of the Taso Foundation.

AVILA KILMURRAY: CFNI, NORTHERN IRELAND

The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (CFNI) opened its doors in 1979 when ‘the Troubles’ were at their height. The focus of the foundation was social justice and community activism, but there was no escape from the death and destruction. From the word go there was an emphasis on sustainability, but the order of the day was small grants given with a personal touch that built relationships. Communities divided and beleaguered by conflict appreciated the respect and trust that a grant represented. Whenever possible, CFNI looked for opportunities to bring people together to discuss issues of common concern — it was mainly women who were prepared to take the risk; their priorities were ‘making ends meet’.

The foundation made a virtue of the fact that it was more than just a funder. Where possible, participative approaches to grant making allowed community inclusion in priority setting and decision-making. Attention was also directed at those groups and communities that were marginalised and/or



Avila Kilmurray

silenced, even to the point that they failed to apply for the funding available. Two proactive programmes were designed to address this issue: the Communities in Transition programme that employed development workers to encourage the establishment of self-help groups in disadvantaged communities; and the Voices programme which offered support to groups of people – such as abuse survivors – whose views were rarely heard. The approaches adopted included mentoring and empowerment to make the most of the small grants.

Although the foundation had a history of working with activists in those communities most affected by the conflict, often funding initiatives that opened up space for examining alternatives, the declaration of the 1994 ceasefires opened up the prospect for deliberate peacebuilding programmes. In agreeing to manage EU PEACE programme funds, CFNI focused on the reintegration of political ex-prisoners and support for self-advocacy groups of victims and survivors alongside working with women's groups and community-based organisations. Seeking to model its principles of inclusion and equality, Grant Advisory Panels were drawn from nominations offered by both sides of our divided communities, as well as representatives of the priority groups.

Where work was undertaken with political ex-prisoners, the Grant Advisory Panel comprised members of the five main paramilitary groups – three Republican and two Loyalist. This was a conscious modelling to offer the possibility of inter-organisational back-channel communication as well as informed grant making. Continuing its 'grant plus' approach, the foundation also drew on learning from other societies emerging from conflict in order to sustain an inclusive approach to the ongoing peace process.

Of course there were also issues of social justice to be addressed. One of the side effects of violence is the subjugation of other priorities and identities. Work with young people (particularly through the YouthBank model); advocacy on ethnic minority, gender and LGBTQ issues; and the perennial focus on poverty and deprivation were therefore also important areas to pursue. It was soon found that inclusive peacebuilding required a strong emphasis on human rights and social justice.

INDIRA JENA: NIRNAYA, INDIA

The idea of forming an organization is in itself a bold step that needs careful thinking, planning and teamwork. We have been very lucky in this respect since there was a lot of brainstorming and collection of ideas that went in before Nirnaya was formed in April 1998. From then on it has been an organic growth. In the past sixteen years there has been a huge leap forward insofar as information and communication technology are concerned. Opportunities, and therefore the working pattern itself, have totally transformed. This has had its own impact on the whole women's rights movement where campaigns and causes are carried out through Facebook, Twitter etc at the level of the educated, tech-savvy section of people. At the level of the rural and urban marginalized women we work with, the technological advancement has been limited to cell phones – practically all women, and specifically community women leaders, are accessible through their cell phone!

In the first eight years it was a situation where the resources sought us rather than us seeking resources. We always had a good staff team but also a fast turnover with the resultant problem of continuity of grantee relationships. There was a tremendous level of mutual trust, understanding and patience vis-à-vis us and our grantee partners on one side and our funders on the other. The 'invasion' of ICT brought in new and different methods of planning, monitoring and evaluation in the international women's movement. Impact assessment has taken on an overwhelming importance. So much work has



Indira Jena



been going on for so many years, so much money invested, and where are the results? Unfortunately, change in women's lives is not like hand pumps or irrigated land which can be measured in litres or acres.

Over the last sixteen years, Nirnaya has reached out to and touched the lives of over 250,000 marginalized women across the country. As we rejoice in this accomplishment, we also find ourselves in a contemplative disposition. Where do we stand as a women's fund today? A couple of important issues surface at this juncture. The first is concerned with building the capacities of the organization in a manner that empowers Nirnaya's fundraising and grant-making imperatives with respect to magnitude as well as geographic area and issue-based focus. The other is tackling the question of 'key person' risk so that there is a continued line of leadership.

SLAVICA STOJANOVIC: RECONSTRUCTION WOMEN'S FUND, SERBIA

We started a foundation five years after the wars. We relied on an antimilitarist platform which was built and proven essential by feminists in war times. The reason for the foundation's name is so we don't forget; it is also a statement that we are going to undertake the 'Reconstruction' in a way that is not corrupted politically, strategically or financially. Confrontation with mainstream narratives was envisioned. A local foundation is rooted in the times of its surroundings. The responsibility we take has its sources in the present but is influenced by its past and the direction of the future. It can be a burden but it makes us rich with reality, imagination and love of the world.



Slavica Stojanovic



As a result of the recent extreme development of technology, combined with the political and financial power brokers reaching a global consensus on their supreme rights over citizens, an atmosphere of catastrophe and fear has built up. Survival is the dominant narrative, humanity becomes superfluous and all options abandoned. It is not only troubled societies that are vulnerable to coercive powers and tendencies. A local foundation has a chance to choose its predecessors among the people, ideas, and movements who took the course of undeniable public good to establish continuity and confront revisionism. A local foundation is not a guarantee of progress. It is a critical combatant for facts and processes based on responsible actors, whatever their number, in a mutual search, hectic or neat, to build common good.

Annoying terminology:

Civil war – is a commonplace term. It is offensive to common sense, civilians’ and historians’ prudence. Maybe it happened in America. The wars we witness have power and might at their core, be that in a passively controlling or actively coercive way. It takes time and skills, and a lot of fear, to lead civilians into a mutual prolonged fight. Local experiences of these processes are precise cultural and political histories which recount enormous numbers of lost opportunities.

Equality – to me, it is a brain killing carrot. In the current times of official, legitimized, exclusive and self-protected capitalism, gender equality is included but is critically relative. Running with the language of equality leads to diversifying diversities, identities production and keeps everyone busy in the muddy waters. Truly thinking equality means building totally changed systems and relationships. To quote Athena Athanasiou, a Greek activist/philosopher: Could we think of solidarity beyond a precondition of wholeness, homogeneity, fixity and stability, and as a means for reflective and contingent sense of being together?

RITA THAPA: TEWA AND NAGARIK AAWAZ, NEPAL

Those of us who provide funds and resources given to us by those who have been gifted to gift know that it is in this act that we receive back what is most essential for our own sustenance – happiness and contentment. Therefore, the outer act of gifting inevitably becomes a journey of self-introspection and of deepening our connections with our source. But on the downside, without ongoing referencing or introspections any acts of giving can also be tied up with asserting power or nurturing one’s ego/s. Foundations, funds, philanthropists, and, in particular, development aid, need to connect with the source, the intended good, and its doing, in an ongoing way, to weigh up if the receiving outweighs the giving. If it is not doing so, then we are not paying attention to the ways we are gifting, or to our gifts. It is nature’s law that the good we put out always comes back to us – often in unseen, intangible ways, but more than expected. In my stated journey over twenty years, this has been my personal experience.

The 7.8 Richter scale earthquake that struck Nepal on the ill-fated day of 25 April 2015 took away almost 9,000 lives, injured over 22,000 people, destroyed historical world heritage sites and hundreds of thousands of infrastructures, and caused terrible mountain disasters. Multiple aftershocks of up to 6.8 on the Richter scale inflicted further damage. But my most precious learning on philanthropy has been during these immediate post-earthquake relief operations that Tewa and Nagarik Aawaz (NA) jointly undertook. The gifting of patience, appreciations and food by fellow affected Nepalis, which we experienced during the first two months of the relief operations, was remarkable. When I took the courage to gingerly ask if each recipient would like to make a small gift from the Rs10,000 each of them received from Tewa/NA for roofing their temporary shelters, not one declined. From then on, we built the ‘ask’ into our ongoing relief operations as we went from village to village in the affected districts.



Rita Thapa

Philanthropy comes from our inner core and our sources. We need to practise it for our own health and wellbeing. Good intentions are not enough. In order that this practice is mutually beneficial, it demands humility and authenticity from both those who receive and those who give. It can never be just one way. www.tewa.org.np and www.nagarikaawaz.org.np



“Philanthropy comes from our inner core and our sources. We need to practise it for our own health and wellbeing.”

Without the asking, the affected community organized to serve a hot meal to the Tewa/NA relief operations team in Masel, Gorkha District, May 2015.

SHAHEEN ANAM: MANUSHER JONNO FOUNDATION, BANGLADESH

She wakes up before everyone else. Cleans the house, fetches water, prepares food, wakes up family members, feeds them and then eats whatever is left over. As family members go about their business, she goes out to take care of her homestead farm; waters the plants, feeds the cattle and poultry, and makes sure they are well and healthy. As she starts to prepare the midday meal, her farmer husband, on his way out, tells her that since she has no work all day, she can clean the cattle shed and make sure the animals are washed and water collected from the pond.

This is the plight of the typical rural woman in Bangladesh. Her labour remains unrecognized and most of her work unaccounted. Recent research has shown that out of 22 activities required for rice cultivation (a staple crop) – from sowing to harvesting – 17 are performed by women. This startling revelation has not stirred family, community or policy makers to take action and give due recognition to women's contribution. Their work continues to remain invisible, bracketed under 'household work'. Women's unpaid work, however, is getting global attention over the last few years. Attempts have been made to quantify it and give it a monetary value. However, in reality, it has not amounted to any concrete change in systems that continue to remain patriarchal, male-dominated and insensitive to the contribution of women.

Proper scientific evaluation of women's work, both paid and unpaid, is necessary because the non-recognition of women's work has resulted in their devaluation in economic and social terms. The lack of importance attached to everything women do leads to their marginalization at home and society which, in turn, leads to lack of respect and ultimately violence and discrimination.

An agreed system must be developed to quantify women's work, especially unpaid agricultural and care work. These have to be included in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of a country. For this to happen, high-level national and international advocacy/lobbying is necessary. Economists have to start thinking



Shaheen Anam

differently. Women activists must join together to raise this issue and ensure that governments take notice, otherwise, the famous poster of a woman with 20 hands, each doing something, and the husband commenting 'MY wife does not work', will continue to be the reality for most women in our part of the world.

AISHA MANSOUR, CEO, DALIA ASSOCIATION, PALESTINE

During our last board meeting we discussed the difficult financial situation in the country. 'A large prominent organization has just notified its staff of their lay off,' explained one of the board members. An old friend who runs a community-based organization wrote me asking for advice: 'We have been forced to lay off staff,' she explained, 'and we don't have the funds to pay rent.'

We are also struggling with our financial solvency. It is disappointing to me. It would seem obvious that friends of Palestine would want to give directly to local indigenous organizations who directly serve the local population.

International organizations seem to be doing all right. I was recently approached by an international organization with a large EU-funded project. They wanted our help in community mobilizing. 'This is what we do ...' I explained. But they did not budget for any external consultancies. They had hoped that a small community foundation with less than three staff members would be able to support their work without any remuneration. They must know that we, too, despite being small and local, must pay the monthly staff salaries and rent. Another international NGO who received a large grant from their government recently partnered with a few local organizations in an effort to 'build their capacity'. We meet periodically and I answer their questions, explaining to them what I already know. They want to help us meet our needs and priorities. But we know our needs and priorities and these multiple meetings explaining our situation is taking away time and energy from the work that needs to be done.

Last November, I travelled abroad to connect to the Diaspora. I tried to explain the international aid system, and why supporting an indigenous community foundation would be more cost-effective, and yet I witnessed fundraising campaigns for the benefit of UN agencies! As a former UN employee, I am sure that my fellow countrymen in the Diaspora are not aware of the high overheads 'eaten' by such bureaucratic machines and the extremely generous remuneration offered to its international staff. Such organizations are so far removed from the local community and often must resort to local organizations for support.

Today, we find ourselves watching the international community discuss the sustainable development goals (SDGs) after a not so successful attempt at the millennium development goals. The SDGs call for addressing structural issues and the use of grassroots indigenous organizations to facilitate this change. I hope that leadership will be sought from those in the front lines to ensure real sustainable reform. Without relying on the wisdom and leadership of community groups, international organizations will waste too much time attempting to understand the local context. We cannot afford to go down this road again.



Aisha Mansour

CHAPTER TWO: RECALLING SOME MEMORABLE SMALL GRANTS

In our introduction to FFP, we wrote of the added value of sharing and learning together as grant makers working with conflict-affected communities. While we worked on many thematic projects together, and these will be referred to later, very often we simply took time out of meetings to share short stories of grants or experiences that had an impact on the individual representatives. Below are some examples from a recent workshop where each representative shared a short story of a grant that sprang to mind when thinking about making a sustainable difference.

AMBIKA'S STORY

NEELAN TIRUCHELVAM TRUST (NTT), SRI LANKA

One of NTT's focus areas is promoting and protecting the rights of people with disabilities, particularly in conflict-affected areas, as this issue was largely ignored by the state following the end of the armed conflict in May 2009. In the post-war phase it was difficult to collate statistics due to the restrictions placed by the government on civil society organisations working in the conflict-affected areas, which hampered data collection. In this restrictive environment, NTT supported a local NGO to gather information including statistics and area/individual profiles. In addition to enabling persons with disabilities to access services, as well as lobbying for policy change, this NGO spent considerable energy in raising the awareness of the community on the needs of differently abled people, and encouraged them to engage more in civic and community life.

NTT also supported the hiring of sign language interpreters to ensure persons with disabilities could access social services. In addition, they provided for the installation of talking books for the visually impaired. These local projects fed into advocacy processes that focused on bringing about policy and legislative reform, which was a really important part of the project, as recognition of the needs of those



with disabilities and resultant appropriate responses had to be strengthened. While a lot remains to be done in this area of work, the foundation for continued advocacy work has been built and the aim of making a broader impact is now firmly established.

Most importantly, NTT ensured its support was not of the 'hit-and-run' variety but instead understood that their involvement needed to be long term to be really meaningful and to enable the advocacy organisation to become sustainable.

Ambika Satkunanathan, Chairperson, NTT

KAMALA'S STORIES INDONESIA FOR HUMANITY (IFH), INDONESIA

Women Ex-prisoners

More than half a million people were killed during the anti-communist pogrom of 1965-66, and tens of thousands were imprisoned for more than a decade without trial including women who were politically active and socially engaged during that time. For three decades following, there was total silence on what happened during those tumultuous years, as Indonesia's authoritarian regime created its own version of the past and penalized anyone who dared challenge it.

Released in the late 1970s, the women ex-prisoners continued to face the stigma of 'the immoral woman' who betrayed the nation. Despite being free, they continued to face discrimination and were effectively excluded from the possibility of playing a leadership role in society. In the late 1990s, when the dictatorship ended, Indonesia's civil society was revitalized and efforts to address the rights of the victims and survivors of 1965-66 began to develop.

It was in this context that, in 2005, IFH provided support to groups which were seeking out the women ex-prisoners who, by this stage, were aged in their late sixties and seventies. This small grant enabled the women who had shared a decade of their lives in a women's prison colony to have a reunion for the first time since being freed. This, in itself, was an incredible experience and brought with it caution and fear yet permission to talk and share experiences of the years since their release.

They subsequently began to meet as a collective, with IFH support, and, using a small seeding grant, developed a savings scheme to enable their mutual support system to continue. When IFH recently accessed a government programme to tackle poverty and social exclusion through access to public services, it made KIPER, the group created by these women ex-prisoners, one of its local partners. This group of approximately 15 women are now making contact with other ex-prisoner women from that period with a view to extending support to them. While they have no legal status as a group, they have begun to connect with a range of different civil society organizations to support them in their efforts to meet the needs and interests of their fellow survivors in their post-prison lives – including to challenge the stigma against them and to advocate for truth and justice in relation to the gross violations of human rights which occurred in 1965-66 and thereafter.

For both IFH and KIPER, it has been crucial to be part of a larger coalition of civil society organizations in carrying out their respective work, as this provides better protection and access to sources of power and resources. It strengthens advocacy and social mobilisation. This is particularly necessary in the

context of rising Islamist extremism and vigilantism, as several attacks have been made against meetings of the elderly survivors of 1965-66 on the pretext of preventing a revival of communism in Indonesia.

Both IFH and KIPER are very much aware that there is a fine balance with sensitive work like this – while it needs to be done, care must be taken to ensure that it doesn't result in exposure to new threats or further exclusion of the individuals involved.

Land grab

For almost twenty years, Indonesia has struggled to transform itself from an authoritarian past under a military regime called the 'New Order' (1966-98). For those thirty-two years, acts of repression and violence had been justified in the name of economic growth and political stability.

Indonesia for Humanity (IFH) has begun working with communities that were victims of such gross human rights violations by accessing a government programme designed to achieve 'inclusive development'. Sidomukti, located inside a palm oil plantation, is one such community trying to secure government recognition of its people's land and rightful status as a self-standing village.

“ Losing land and village for palm oil

My wooden shack was demolished to the ground. Our farm land was taken from us. We were evicted like chickens. In fact, chickens have it better, as they are provided with a coop for shelter. From then on, we have carried out this struggle to take back our land ... [Otherwise] where will my children live? I have joined the struggle for my children and grandchildren.

Syamsiah, 76 years old

”

Syamsiah lives in a village located inside a palm oil plantation in North Sumatra (Sumatera Utara), Indonesia. She is recounting her experience of forty-five years ago when she and her community were forcibly evicted from their homes and land. The eviction was particularly traumatic, not only because of the violence and mass disappearances, but also because it occurred on the heels of a nationwide anti-communist pogrom in the latter half of the 1960s in which an estimated half a million people were killed and tens of thousands detained without trial. To this day, impunity prevails. The land was handed over to a palm oil company but the community continued to regard it as theirs. Before the New Order, Syamsiah and her fellow villagers had received a certificate legalizing their tenure inside this plantation area. However, the local government took these documents away from them after the eviction. Those who objected were threatened with being branded as 'communists', which became illegal under the New Order regime.

Reclaiming Sidomukti

The resignation of the New Order's President Suharto in 1998, marked the beginning of a new era of political openness. Syamsiah and other members of her community formed a farmers' group which, with support from civil society organizations advocating for agrarian reform and farmers' rights, has since succeeded in reclaiming approximately 800,000 square meters of the plantation area; 165 households currently live and work there. They consider this their village and have named it Sidomukti, which means 'lasting prosperity'.

Kamala Chandrakirana, Chairperson, YSIK

RITA'S STORY TEWA, NEPAL

This story is about the resilience of communities and the altruism in the hearts of people that bonds communities in time of need. Tewa's recent work in the aftermath of the Nepal earthquake in April 2015 showed how much communities cared about their people. International aid is of great importance but the local work undertaken has been crucial, accessible and is meeting real and immediate need.

Teams of Tewa volunteers have worked with local villages and communities to bring much-needed aid and resources. All of this work has been delivered with dignity and respect for those in need. As part of the intervention process, Tewa asked the villages to add to the funds they brought and this was met with a positive response on all occasions – even where need was huge. They helped local communities to establish village funds which local people are contributing to and managing on an ongoing basis. Self-help is of the essence in situations like this and Tewa worked to enable local people to think of themselves as survivors rather than victims and to use language appropriately when dealing with need or requests for help.

The Nepalese people have proved they are a dignified and caring people by pulling together to support each other during this time of great need. International aid agencies should look to, and learn from, the processes that were put in place so quickly by Tewa volunteers with local knowledge, in such a targeted and effective way, using their limited resources to augment local giving to build up village funds and enhance the self-help capacity of local people to organise on their own behalf in a sustainable way – rather than creating competitive and potentially corruptive processes.

Rita Thapa, Founder, Tewa



SLAVICA'S STORIES

RECONSTRUCTION WOMEN'S FUND (RWF), SERBIA

Women in Black: This is a story of relatively new work with Women in Black, a women's anti-war movement. RWF has a strong allegiance with them in terms of their gender and advocacy work but don't usually financially support them, unless for something really new. Their learning from the Women's Court project (a previous grant) showed that there was need to develop 'convenings' to enable women from various genocide areas to meet and talk together. There were a lot of restraints to be considered, including fear, stigma, war symbols and national pride, but there was also an opportunity to explore, learn and develop safe space to talk. The connections, experience and local knowledge of Women in Black put them in a position to enable this ground-breaking work.

RWF supported Women in Black to invite women from the genocide areas to meet with them in Belgrade for a joint commemoration of women from Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia. The discourse was about how victims and their families see things and who they blame – the regime or the participants in the genocide.

The commemoration took place in April 2015 and was wonderful in that women recognised each other, their experiences, their hurt and their suffering, and they trusted enough to talk. They understood themselves as women and mothers and that their loss was deep but also political; they needed to look at this further and agreed to meet again in September, just to talk and explore where their conversations might lead.

RWF understood that Women in Black had the local contacts and trust that was crucial to enable the gatherings to happen. They also understood that many of the women from the three regions had long histories with Belgrade in the past – many had given birth there or attended hospital there in different days. For some, it was like permission to come 'home'.

This work is new but represents important steps being taken on the road to healing.

Roma Women's Centre: RWF gave a grant to the Roma Centre for Women and Children – DAJE – in Belgrade in January 2014 for urgent assistance to enable Roma women to seek access to their rights following enforced eviction. They went to live in social flats in the settlement of Kamendin which houses 170 families and was established for vulnerable families forced to migrate. Following the trauma of forcible eviction, the Roma families were left to fend for themselves in terms of survival and accessing new identity documents. The Roma women, mostly single mothers, did not have a residence permit and encountered major problems in trying to access new ID cards, which had the knock-on impact that health cards could not be certified nor medical records from their previous residence transferred to their new addresses. This, in turn, meant that their right to social welfare was either totally abolished or significantly reduced.

The consequences were an inability to access their right to health and social care, including the right to subsidised payments for utilities, and it was impossible to obtain health certificates for the children. While



this chaotic situation was ongoing, a skin rash spread rapidly in the settlement but, without medical documents, ambulances refused to carry those needing treatment. An epidemic of 'mange' was declared in the settlement and the Roma families were blamed, exposing them to intimidation and violence. In this situation, the Roma women were powerless to access the necessary medical treatment for their children and, without Identity papers, they could not report the violence.

Attendance at school or pre-school education is obligatory for all children but, without documents, the Roma children couldn't get school places, yet failure to attend could have led to the families being evicted from their apartments. DAJE advocated for the Roma families with the relevant institutions and brought the necessary information and knowledge to them while supporting them to take the necessary steps to get their new documents leading to a realisation of their rights.

Slavica Stojanovic, Programmes Development, RWF

VIVIANNA'S STORY ALVARALICE (AA), COLOMBIA

AlvarAlice supports a skills training programme for young people (mainly young women) aged 18-25 in their Technocentre Cultural outside the city of Cali. This Cultural Centre was itself an earlier AA initiative to provide much-needed community resources to an area affected by the conflict in Colombia but which had fallen off the government radar. The focus of the training programme is on personal development, work skills and employability. The participants are from a large, sprawling, outlying neighbourhood which experiences high levels of violence and is home to many poor families displaced from other areas of Colombia as a result of violent conflict and land grabs.

The neighbourhood is highly stigmatised as a result of high numbers of residents having criminal records, many violence related. A sense of lawlessness and alienation exists. Poverty, anger, hopelessness and social exclusion are major barriers to social participation and access to services. Many of the participants in the programme are young single mothers who have never had access to work opportunities and who dropped out of education early.

The programme initially focuses on psychosocial support and draws on needs and aspirations to enable bespoke training packages to be developed for each participant. A designated support social worker/mentor stays with the participant throughout the programme. AA has also developed a social labour network of companies in Cali who were persuaded to provide opportunities for the trainees on an exploratory basis.

“Poverty, anger, hopelessness and social exclusion are major barriers to social participation and access to services.”

To date, out of 150 young people participating in the programme, 95 have finished their training: 84% have gained internships and 67% are now employed in Cali with job contracts and access to formal social security benefits, something which they did not have previously. They report that they are much more confident and their expectations have been raised – economic security has made a huge difference to how they feel about themselves and their community. They understand more about the systemic injustice that ensures their community has consistently low expectations and makes acceptance of criminality a fact of life. Although the programme participants only lived fifteen minutes from Cali, most had never visited it previously – it was alien to them – an exclusive city.

When the human resources staff from the companies involved were interviewed about their involvement in the programme, they admitted that their perceptions about the neighbourhood and the people coming from it had changed significantly and that their involvement with the programme had been a learning experience from which they had benefitted significantly. When the young people were evaluated by their workplace bosses on a scale of 0-5 on issues related to personal and work skills, they obtained an average of 4.2. The more striking results were those concerning relationship skills with an evaluation of 4.6 out of 5.

The programme broke new ground for AA and for the areas/employers involved and is due to be repeated and expanded, having attracted resources and support from employers and other agencies. It has been relatively expensive to establish and run when compared to other local work undertaken by AA but it has been valuable and very productive for the participants and employers alike and a cost-benefit analysis shows it to be much more cost-effective than many other government employment initiatives. The investment has enabled long-term change to the lives of the participants and much learning has arisen and been shared.

Vivianna Echeverri, left as CEO of AlvarAlice in Jan 2016

SHAHEEN'S STORY

MANUSHER JONNO FOUNDATION (MJF), BANGLADESH

Some village girls had heard Shaheen speak at an event where she talked about young women seeking to fulfil their potential and of the need for them to be brave and courageous. They took her at her word and applied to MJF for a grant to play football. This may not seem ground-breaking, but the context was that this group of 20 young women aged 15-18 were field workers in villages who had never had the opportunity to try sport or do anything outside of what was directly expected from them in terms of working for their families.

The grant was awarded to an intermediary NGO which appointed a local coach and a journalist to work with the girls to build skills and knowledge of the game. It took about a month to get them used to wearing shoes and think about using the tracksuits and trainers that the grant had purchased for them. But they soon began to practice regularly and even played a neighbouring village boys' team; something unheard of in the villages.

Their project initially attracted negative attention from the respective village committees who felt that participation in the project had the potential to 'destroy' the girls by distracting them from early marriage and their other day-to-day chores. Playing football was viewed as un-Islamic. However, despite this, the project continued to grow and has reached the stage where two of the girls now play on the national team and have travelled to Pakistan to play internationally. The village committees and the families of the girls now see that there was merit in the project as it has attracted a lot of external support to their villages and brought positive publicity for the girls. They have become proud of their achievements.

Initially, as the project started, MJF had to deal with a lot of complaints from elected representatives and other bodies but Shaheen, as CEO, met directly with them to deal with their concerns on an ongoing basis. This was an important part of the process as it helped to deal with fears, rumours and misperceptions as the project developed.

The grant project spanned five years and eventually resulted in MJF and others being enabled to lobby the Minister of Sports to open up more opportunities for girls, especially girls from the villages. He

responded positively and this has filtered down into the villages which gave their permission for even further development. MJF also lobbied for the participation of young women in many other activities to enhance their lives and learning, slowly breaking new ground.

Shaheen acknowledged that the action taken was seen by conservatives as un-Islamic and contrary to traditions and beliefs where the norm is for girls to marry on reaching puberty. However, the girls involved are now economically active and bringing much-needed earnings to their families which has had many positive benefits beyond health and sport. To enable the development of the project, MJF used a known NGO as the intermediary grantee and appointed a local journalist who was able to write about the progress of the girls – both were positive decisions taken as a result of local understanding of the political and community nuances.

The grantee NGO and MJF both responded directly to the negativity and concerns expressed in the early stages of the project but they did so in a culturally sympathetic yet determined way. MJF stayed with the project throughout and supported the young women to deal with the resulting pressures, as well as developing the more strategic advocacy necessary to ensure that the progress and opportunities arising were supported at government level, ensuring change in the longer term.

Shaheen Anam, CEO, MJF

MARINA'S STORY TASO FOUNDATION, GEORGIA

Marina spoke about attending training delivered in Budapest in 2000 to raise awareness of domestic violence and the kind of measures needed to support women while tackling policy relating to the issue. Taso then supported the development of a Domestic Violence network across Georgia in 2004 to raise awareness and, in 2005, supported the development of a network of Crisis Shelters for women experiencing violence in the home. Their advocacy work prompted a number of donors to come on board and enabled a number of capacity-building grants to be made at local level to further strengthen the network.



In 2009, the work extended to the victims of violence of the war and this phase enabled the development of a network of eight community foundations across Georgia to support women in this situation. A parallel approach was to continue their advocacy strategy to raise public awareness and take action against gender-based violence whether happening in the home or as a weapon of war.

There is now a real synergy across the various foundations and networks which, while it took fifteen years to develop, is having an impact on policy and practice. A Community Philanthropy Forum with a gender anti-violence agenda is growing in strength and attracting modest investments; women are no longer passive on this issue. The success of the initial investment was enhanced through the decision to deliver the initiative using the outreach contacts and grounding of locally based community foundations. This is often referred to as the 'spider' model of development – a process with a multiplier effect – delivering results beyond the grantor reach. The grant has provided many lessons about the resilience of local communities and their capacity to learn and develop self-help support mechanisms.

Local government has seen and acknowledged the results of the initiative and is now supportive by helping with buildings or resources. However, much remains to be done to get national government recognition and further policy change, and this will remain part of the Taso grant focus and strategy.

Marina Tabukashvili, Director General, Taso

“There is now a real synergy across the various foundations and networks which, while it took fifteen years to develop, is having an impact on policy and practice.”

GIRIJA'S STORY NIRNAYA WOMEN'S FUND, HYDERABAD, INDIA

The grants made by Nirnaya since its inception have a uniqueness which makes each one memorable. The impact that each has had on the final beneficiary, the implementing partner and us as grant makers, fills our hearts with pride and reinforces the staunch belief that grant making for women's issues is a core need for women's empowerment.

Our grant to Shaheen in 2014 stands out as a truly memorable one for several reasons but mainly as one made for focused work on communal harmony and peacebuilding. The total grant given to Shaheen Women's Resource and Welfare Association was \$3,400.

Shaheen Women's Resource and Welfare Association began its journey in response to the extreme religious violence of the Gujarat riots in 2002. Shaheen established its core location in a Hyderabad neighbourhood known to be at the heart of communal tensions – Sultan Shahi. The sensitive nature of the area can be traced back to a long history of poverty, discrimination, exploitation, and neglect of its various caste and religious minorities – Muslim, Dalit and Other Backward Castes (OBC). Women and young girls of these isolated communities have taken the brunt of the communal conflicts and are still subject to various forms of violence and discrimination. Recognizing this, the primary focus of Shaheen's work, initially, was to provide interventions for the women and young girls in these communities and to create a strong women-led presence in one of Hyderabad's most conflict-ridden areas.

It started its intervention with the innocuous Tailoring and Embroidery Centre for girls and women in Sultan Shahi, in a house which was abandoned after communal riots. However, the vision and confidence



of bringing positive changes were deep, unshakeable and pursued with single-minded devotion. Jameela Nishat, a feminist poet, writer and activist working for women's rights for the past twenty years founded and leads Shaheen.

Shaheen believes that women are harbingers of secularism and that neutral spaces need to be built, protected and expanded for the nurture of this secular fabric. At Shaheen today, women/girls from all communities work, learn and fight their struggles together and express solidarity for other common causes. Anyone who visits Shaheen experiences this harmony, sisterhood and camaraderie amongst the various communities of women and girls who come to learn, seek support or work for the organization. This change in perspective has been incremental and achieved with support from many individuals and organisations who believed in Shaheen's work and who were committed to the need for breaking the ghettoization that is prevalent in the old city of Hyderabad. The support has been in various ways – investment of financial, technical and human resources.

Shaheen recognizes that if you empower one girl/young woman, she, in turn, can empower another. By providing young girls and women with the tools to become leaders in their communities, Shaheen has facilitated a sustainable system of social agency. The 20-plus young women's team of Shaheen have emerged from these communities and today are leaders in their own right. These young women have been trained in feminism, law and leadership, and provide the hand-holding to fight for their rights and the rights of other women. Today, these young firebrand activists/team members of Shaheen work with the police towards breaking the trafficking networks, uncovering massage parlours facilitating sex work in the old city, exposing false Arab sheikh marriages, and highlighting many other contentious issues.

Shaheen gradually expanded and today works in 21 ***basthis*** (localities) of the old city. The basis for selecting these ***basthis*** for development lies in the fact that they are neighbourhoods with typical features of domestic violence, religious oppression, sexual abuse, school dropouts, densely populated areas, congested housing, scarce amenities, and predominantly Muslim and OBC communities. These communities are isolated from the dominant society in terms of access to resources, political participation and economic opportunities.

The major focus of Shaheen's interventions has been to create awareness on rights for the girls in Sultan Shahi. Recognizing that livelihood is threatened by the lack of modern schooling, it focused on ensuring continuity of school education for girls and, wherever suitable, building their capacities in vocational courses.

Shaheen recognizes that sexual health and violence are interlinked. The misconceptions amongst young girls/women regarding their sexual and reproductive health are not only addressed but young girls become more aware about their bodies and rights regarding control over their bodies. Issues like consent, pregnancies, and healthy vs. unhealthy relationships are discussed in workshops.

Shaheen continues to run vocational programmes in its office premises. Girls are trained in skills like mehndi designing, pot painting, fabric painting and garment embellishment like *zardosi* and *karchop*. Of late, computer education is also imparted in web design and hardware maintenance.

Access to proper legal advice and government entitlements is another top priority. Navigating the legal system is often confusing and intimidating for women but crucial in order to file for divorce, report domestic abuse or claim entitlements. With the support of a lawyer, Shaheen is able to undertake this arduous work.

Cooperation with the government and law enforcement authorities towards proper implementation of laws that protect the rights of women is also a high priority. Shaheen organizes meetings with officials from the judiciary and police to discuss with the community about gender-based violence and safety. This exposure has been productive for both ensuring cooperation and building trust. The outcomes of such partnerships have resulted in the emergence of vigilance systems where local women are working with the police to prevent and/or report violence against women in public spaces.

Girija Boddupalli, left as CEO of Nirnaya, August 2015

SAEEDA'S STORY

DALIA ASSOCIATION, PALESTINE

As early as 2008, the Dalia Association engaged in a pilot initiative in community-controlled grant making in the small Palestinian village of Saffa. Located to the west of Ramallah, the village has a population of some 4,000. Information about local community priorities, needs and capabilities was gathered by representatives of Dalia during a number of visits to the village. The grant-making resources allocated to the pilot programme, the Village Decides, amounted to \$12,000, reflecting both the limited resources of the Dalia Association itself, and the belief that small grants can unleash community creativity and facilitate risk-taking.

The approach adopted involved the following steps:

- Invitations were issued to village residents to attend an open meeting to discuss community priorities;
- Some 38 people turned up for the meeting and were told that they would be deciding which four local Saffa community organizations would be funded (this information was not shared in advance in order to prevent lobbying) – 34 agreed to participate;
- Representatives of Saffa-based community groups were given ten minutes to present their current work and their plans for the future, as well as to answer any questions from their audience.

Every person in attendance voted for their four preferred organizations (those chosen included the Saffa Sports Club, the Farmers' Committee, Morooj Cultural Center and the Saffa Women's Committee). The available \$12,000 was divided amongst the meeting's participants (each controlled \$353) who could then allocate their holding to one, or more, of the four selected organizations.

The ballots were opened in front of the audience and the grant amounts calculated (they ranged from \$1,768 to \$3,600). Follow-up took the form of visits and workshops to support the local activists in thinking through issues from planning to budgeting, and from community engagement to evaluation. A report-back meeting was also organized to ensure transparency and local accountability, with grant recipients reporting on the work funded and carried out.

Over the following years the Dalia Association refined its methodology and extended the approach to the Al Zawiya village in Salfeet and Sanour village, one of the historic 'throne' villages, located 14 km from Jenin. Each village is home to some 5-6,000 residents and both are heavily dependent on agriculture, although Al Zawiya is particularly disadvantaged, losing over 40% of its agricultural land to the nearby Israeli inclusion wall. The selection criteria identified for participation in the Village Decides programme included the number of active community-based groups operating at village level and the likely acceptability of the consensual grant-making approach. Another addendum was the election of a local village Monitoring Committee during the course of the open meeting in order to ensure complete transparency.

Saeeda Mousa, left as CEO of Dalia in 2015

SANTOSH'S STORY DALIT FOUNDATION, INDIA

Dalit Foundation recognizes the victimisation Dalit youth face due to their disadvantaged position in the Indian social structure and its detrimental impact on their growth and development. From their early years in school, Dalit children face multiple deprivations in comparison to other social groups. The most overt discrimination manifests in segregation in sitting arrangements in most classroom situations. In many places, 'untouchability' in regards to drinking water and midday meals has been documented. In addition to their experiences of 'untouchability' in school, Dalit children and youth often experience traumatic incidences in their communities – such as unequal treatment and abuse by the dominant community – which create a cloud of fear. Even with the affirmative actions taken for the social inclusion of the Dalit community, widespread prejudice against the Dalits continues to exist.

Dalit Foundation, therefore, aims to capacitate youth and build a strong line of leadership for the Dalit movement. We believe that youth represent the future, therefore early engagement of them in the process of social justice is important. Bringing their perspective, their experience and resources, not only helps in having access to a new set of knowledge but constitutes an important experience of inclusion.

One of the grant programmes established by DF in 2006, and still ongoing, is The Young Professionals programme, with the purpose of capacitating Dalit youth to spearhead the Dalit Movement. The programme entails a holistic development of the Young Professionals (YPs) through perspective skill and knowledge development, exposure to grassroots-level work, and training in systematic and objective research methodologies. During the course of the training, the YPs develop an understanding of diverse



global issues and movements. This perspective gets translated in the field when the YPs work with local Dalit activists and groups to address issues of social justice and social inclusion affecting local Dalit communities. The opportunity to spend time in the field helps them form stronger linkages with the community, thereby enabling them to play a more proactive role in taking leadership initiatives and engaging as essential civic society reconstruction and development partners.

This has helped the YPs to understand community issues, learn from them, and grow as leaders. They have gained perspective on Dalit issues and needs. Many of them have been encouraged to work for the Dalit community. Several have pursued higher education and completed doctorates, while others are ardent practitioners and workers in the Dalit Movement. They learnt to understand the role they each needed to play in order to eliminate caste discrimination and ensure equality and equal rights for all.

Santosh Samal, left as CEO of DF in 2015

CHAPTER THREE: THE IMPACT OF WAR; THE THOUGHTS OF THREE MEMBER FOUNDATIONS

The views of three FFP member representatives.

PALESTINE: AISHA MANSOUR, DALIA ASSOCIATION

Palestinians have been living under Israeli occupation for nearly seventy years. Those Palestinians residing within the 1948 boundaries of the State of Israel are forced to exist within a system that discriminates against Arabs and deems them second-class citizens, while those Palestinians living in East Jerusalem are not provided citizenship, and struggle to remain in their city as temporary residents as the occupation's policies aim to push them out. It is important to mention that Palestinian Jerusalemites pay taxes to the State of Israel similar to their Israeli/Jewish neighbours, yet receive fewer services from the municipality. And finally, Palestinians residing in the West Bank and Gaza remain under Israeli military occupation.

Since 2007, Gaza has been under virtual siege whereby the movement of people and goods in and out of the area is minimal, making Gaza an open prison. The West Bank is populated with Israeli colonies that are eating up much of the West Bank's countryside. Palestinian movement across the West Bank is controlled by hundreds of Israeli checkpoints. Frequently, the Israeli Occupation Forces enter West Bank towns and villages, as well as refugee camps, to arrest Palestinians. Such invasions usually occur in the middle of the night and result in clashes between the youth and Israeli soldiers. In essence, the Palestinian society and economy is completely controlled by the Israeli occupation and its policies.



Since the Oslo Accords of 1994, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza receive one of the highest rates of international aid per capita. Despite the high levels of aid, the standard of living has not increased in any substantial manner. The impact of the international aid is complex and has had a detrimental impact on Palestinians in multiple aspects. A strong civil society has deteriorated with the inflow of aid and the NGO-ization within Palestine to receive this aid. The accountability amongst these NGOs is towards the donor rather than the Palestinian community. While much of the aid has focused on the 'economic development' of Palestine, such initiatives have, in turn, focused on integrating the Palestinian economy even further with the Israeli economy and with the global market.

As a result, the Palestinian market is easily open to cheap, low-quality goods from Israel and other countries. The Palestinian products cannot compete in such a market and results in a weaker local economy. Because of these neoliberal economic and free-trade policies, the agricultural landscape has changed as agribusinesses are replacing small-scale farmers and producing foreign produce for an external market rather than local produce for the local market. The health situation of the Palestinians is deteriorating rapidly. A recent survey found that nine out of every ten Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza have at least one risk factor for a non-communicable disease (cancer, cardiovascular).

The Dalia Association aims to mobilize local resources, as well as Diaspora and solidarity resources, to support local communities and their priorities through local community-controlled decision making and grant making. We believe that the community itself best understands its priorities and how to address them to ensure real development.

“... agribusinesses are replacing small-scale farmers and producing foreign produce for an external market rather than local produce for the local market.”

SERBIA: SLAVICA STOJANOVIC, RECONSTRUCTION WOMEN'S FUND

Serbia was the crucial force which led to the violent dissolution of the former Yugoslavia. Serial wars against previous parts of the same country lasted from 1991 to 1999. A specific feature was the parallel destruction of the social, economic and political systems since Yugoslavia was a federative socialistic republic. Social and common property was transformed into state property and then robbed by the power structures. During the wars, on top of the costs of war, large amounts of public money were smuggled from the country and a system of profiteering was built during the period of international economic sanctions. This continued after the toppling of the warmonger regime through the system of extensive privatisations, resulting, currently, in the wide misuse of credit and other public and national resources through 'investments'.

In twenty-five years, as a result of these corrupt actions, national resources from the past, present and future were grabbed. Hence, it would be correct to call the wars an 'armed robbery'. Explanations that this was civil war, ethnic war, or the most recent profiling as a religious war, are the post-wars constructs which justify the consequences of the wars.

Most victims died outside the borders of Serbia. Within were men who were forcibly mobilised; those who obeyed 'the service' and were put under the command of the army in paramilitary units; deserters who were chased, threatened and punished; and, especially, refugees who escaped the wars and were forced to go back as combatants. Next to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which is taking its toll, the visible manifestations exposed until now are the massive possession of war weapons in some border territories and massive drug addiction in other parts of Serbia where forced drafting

was intensive and the soldiers were kept on drugs, instigating addiction which has been transferred to younger generations.

There is a long list of civilians who have been direct victims including hundreds of thousands of refugees and IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) – many of them still lacking human space in Serbia – and Roma people who have been chased around and pushed into deep poverty. In the intensive and connected war and post-war processes, the most massive attacks and losses were suffered by the workers who used to be called subjects – ‘working people’, who are now called, simply, ‘people’, or, euphemistically, ‘losers of the transition’. And women are belittled and referred to as losers, whether they are winners or losers.

In the system of impunity, violence and hatred, anti-discriminatory corrections are insufficient. It is good that any notion of human rights does exist; but human rights being entrusted to national powers that are the primary source of violations bear strange fruit. The never-ending struggle against violence against women is a vital one, but one which is obstructed systematically. There are, to give an example, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) rights which have been distorted into the trap of homo-nationalism. Or similarly, the corrupting of the Roma elite and culture on the grounds of ‘ethnic minority rights’.

To summarise: the national protective systems – health, education and judiciary (with their respective significance) – have crashed. The circle of war/post-war/back to the wartime players, which is not a Serbian delicacy, has the facade of authoritarian power. We move rapidly towards a totalitarian society.

“The never-ending struggle against violence against women is a vital one, but one which is obstructed systematically.”



GEORGIA: MARINA TABUKASHVILI, TASO FOUNDATION

Georgia, like other republics, lived for over seventy years within the borders of the Soviet Union. Different periods of those years were characterized by repression and atrocity as the Soviet regime made its presence strongly felt. Under the terms of Stalin's constitution, the republics were free to leave the Soviet family and become independent states at any time. However, we in Georgia knew that this would be very difficult and, if the Soviet Union collapsed, our country would also end up ruined. Many states struggled to make the progression to become free, democratic entities.

Clearly, the populations of the majority of the newly established states were not prepared for independence or for the challenges of progressive democratic development.

The Soviet military units stationed in the so-called post-Soviet space took advantage of this and distributed weaponry widely in order to have people, who were united in accordance with their political interests, religious or ethnic belonging, slaughter each other within the newly established states as they grappled with the path of democratic development.

Despite generous aid from the West to help build democracy and political independence, the impact of global political processes contributed to the poverty of the majority of the populations. Bloody conflicts and a range of related problems regularly threatened stability. This, in turn, caused a complete depreciation of democratic values in people's minds. When the bloody conflicts were halted, the West entrusted the mission of peacemaking to Russia's military. Like the many prudent and honest individuals working to support those impoverished by war in the 1990s, civil society organizations at the beginning of the 21st century wound up sharing the role of executors of emergency aid and rehabilitation works for the victims of the many conflicts. And so it was with the work of the Taso Foundation at that point.

“Despite generous aid from the West to help build democracy and political independence, the impact of global political processes contributed to the poverty of the majority of the populations.”

Since April 2008, however, the Taso Foundation has been screening *Pray The Devil Back To Hell*, a remarkable movie by Abigail Disney and Gini Reticker, to various audiences consisting of civil-society activists and journalists. The movie tells how Liberian women stopped a war. On 22 April 2008, during a regular screening of the movie in the hall of the Georgian foundation Open Society, it was proposed that action be taken to respond to the militaristic media rhetoric related to the ever-increasing exchange of gunfire. The agreed action was to develop a Peace Appeal and collect signatures of support. We were in the middle of this activity when on the night of 8 August, the increasing exchange of fire, as part of the conflict in the Tskhinvali region, Kartli, paved the way for a bloody war. The war spread and in a just a few hours, the Russian army had entered East and West Georgia by way of crossing the administrative borders of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, bringing with it the punitive forces of Ossetian and Chechen militants, to set up and fortify a military camp.

Needless to say, it was mainly civilians that were killed and wounded and had their houses burned down. Georgia lost 122 villages, including those near Abkhazia, in the Kodori Valley. During the first day of the five-day war, more than 100,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) flocked to Tbilisi, the capital. In the following months, the majority returned to the villages of the Shida Kartli region that were 'ceded' by Russia, but 35,000 joined the IDPs previously displaced as a result of the conflicts in the 1990s.

From 11 August 2008, we began to work with Georgian citizens and other NGOs to provide food for IDPs and supply children and women with primary necessities. Everyone who helped us in this matter, be it a foreigner or a Georgian, is to be sincerely thanked for their generosity.

By September, we reassessed the situation and began to develop projects in order to solicit funds for victims of the conflict. We developed our activities in two core directions:

- Economic empowerment of the population to start income-generating endeavors/small businesses by means of grants;
- Stimulation of the population's social activity.

The truth is that, throughout almost two decades of conflict, the voice of the population of the war zones has been absent in the Georgian media and is only carried when fire/conflict rages and journalists become interested in seeing the damage caused and interviewing people about the scale of the gunfire. These are also the only stories that reach the external media and little attention is paid to the misery of the daily lives of people affected by the conflict.

Two of our projects successfully attracted funding. The first was the project for economic empowerment of women in eight villages of the Shida Kartli region and a camp for IDPs (Donor: Bank of Georgia Aid Fund for the Victims of the Conflict in Georgia). The second project followed a few months later: Karaleti Women's Center for Combating Violence and Community Development (Donors: Norwegian Refugee Council and Eurasia Partnership Foundation).

We started to work in the conflict zone on 12 March 2009. By the end of 2009, we had conducted the monitoring of the 53 grants that were issued. It is always extremely interesting and vivifying to work directly with rural women and one can imagine how emotive was our interaction in villages where people had just recently experienced the death of a family member, torture and loss of home and livestock. The women were able to point at the surrounding hills from where guns were aiming at them and explain to us that while their homes are on this side of the hills, their orchards and livelihoods are 'on the other side'. Some villages even had their cemeteries end up 'on the other side'. Everyone is a victim here; and as victims, they are all passive members on the humanitarian aid distribution list.

“We worked with them to explain that our project was not about ‘aid’ but rather about empowering them to build projects that would help them in the longer term to survive and develop.”

In almost every village where we presented our project for the first time to crowded gatherings of women we were told: ‘If you have money, distribute it evenly among the population of our village and leave.’ We worked with them to explain that our project was not about ‘aid’ but rather about empowering them to build projects that would help them in the longer term to survive and develop. We supported them to set up projects and bank accounts, develop accountable systems and to understand how they could benefit and control their own resources.

We listened to the stories about their hardship and tribulation, shared our stories, too, socialized with priests who were invited to the meetings by the participating women and distributed books and information about projects/opportunities provided by other civil society organizations. Thus, in the course of almost three months, we gained the trust of women who were victims of the August War. We also taught them to write up their own projects and 122 projects were submitted within the timeframe of the grants programme. After a complicated period of

evaluation/selection, we financed 53 projects. Grant contracts were solemnly signed in Gori, in the Gender Resource Center opened with the support of UN agencies.

A further significant development was that UNIFEM, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, with support from the Association of Young Economists of Georgia, involved all applicants to our project in a one-year educational programme in small-business development, adding further to the empowerment of the village women. The recent monitoring of the projects showed that endeavors supported by us (ranches, pig breeding, rabbit breeding, poultry farms, etc) are vital for the families of the grantees. It is difficult for people in this gardening region to sell their harvest and the income from gardening crops rarely ensures the means to make it through a long and cold winter, so the farm diversification enabled by our support was very important to them. This, therefore, is a different story altogether, a story about education to improve the country's agricultural policy, a story to empower women to change things for themselves.

At the same time as the above mentioned, our second project was launched. After significant renovations, a facility was built with multiple aims ie: to create space to provide services for individuals and the



mobilization of the community; to conduct an educational programme in human rights/women's rights; to facilitate a series of meetings of community representatives with guest speakers; to connect communities with organizations/agencies that provide relevant support; to provide a workspace/facilities for other civil society organizations and government officials; and, most importantly, to enable the formation of groups of socially active women. We are thankful to the Open Society Institute which enabled us to develop and intensify this project through its general support grant.

The project completed in May 2010 and its outcomes are already very evident. The most important among them is the establishment of a group of motivated women representatives from several villages. The group already operates independently and implements humanitarian activities for internally displaced persons and socially vulnerable members of the population. Together with us and other civil society organisations it: participates in advocating on behalf of victims of the conflict and of domestic violence; identifies problems and plans future activities; hosts events within the frame of the campaign, 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, a human rights festival; and organises humanitarian actions, with support from other organisations, for the population of their own and neighbouring villages.

Our grant programmes, therefore, went far beyond the delivery of humanitarian aid. Their legacy is the empowerment of women to help themselves and their communities, and the enabling of women to develop livelihoods and community services which can sustain them in the longer term – in essence, the development of skills for life.



FINAL THOUGHTS: THE WAY AHEAD.

Foundations for Peace will continue its work at both local and network level. It believes this work is even more important now in a world crippled by war and instability. We will listen and learn from guest participants at the anniversary events in Brussels. We will involve them in our forward planning and explore with them how to better build the partnerships and relationships of influence so badly needed. We recognise that working with others will add strength and further depth to the future work that is now needed.

We are aware of the need to build further partnerships beyond those with people who are already committed to the values and ideas that we hold. To do this, however, we need the guidance and counsel of those who share our views and this is what we seek to do at our 10th anniversary events.

Sharing learning with a range of other stakeholders and partners is of key importance to us. So, too, is reaching out to other local foundations working in regions of conflict or those emerging from conflict. We have a wealth of knowledge and experience to share with them and will continue on our own learning path by doing so.

It is our intention to learn from the November 2016 Brussels events and to develop a Forward Plan over the following months to share with those who will join us over those few days and those who have sent messages of support and asked to be kept updated on our work and future plans. We will be developing further collaborative projects, including a gender and peacebuilding/leadership project, and offer peer exchange opportunities for others to come and learn from us.

We will enhance our communications and build our profile and take every opportunity to build partnerships to advance our approach, values and reach.

Our thanks, in advance, to all who will contribute to the discussions in Brussels and who will share their knowledge and expertise. We undertake to keep you informed of our future plans.



Foundations for Peace Network is registered with the
Charity Commission N Ireland: NIC102971

Chairperson: Marina Tabukashvili
Taso Foundation, Georgia
marina@taso.org.ge

Secretariat: opreymonina@gmail.com
Monina O'Prey
c/o Ráth Mór Centre
Bligh's Lane, Creggan,
Derry City BT48 0LZ
Co. Londonderry
Northern Ireland

www.foundationsforpeace.com

(p) 0044 2871 371547
(m) 0044 7496195174



WHAT INDIGENOUS INDEPENDENT FUNDS AND FOUNDATIONS CAN OFFER IN TERMS OF ADDED-VALUE INCLUDES –

- Acting as a knowledge hub of the local conditions and bringing particular sensitivity to the adverse impact of violent conflict and social injustice on specific communities and groups within their society.
- Being open to a range of different approaches – both grant-making and development roles – in order to proactively support work around peacebuilding and social justice.
- Being both practical and innovative in delivering support to grass-roots communities impacted by conflict, using knowledge of local political and environmental nuance to enable urgent needs to be met.
- Offering a convening role to bring groups together across sectarian, ethnic, caste and other divides, and working with partner organisations and initiatives to ensure that this can happen safely.
- Networking at community level with marginalised or excluded groups and testing ways to support their active participation in alliances for change.
- Acting as a bridge between different levels in society.
- Offering flexible and timely grant delivery – in situations of rapid change, as often occurs during peacebuilding or conflict, a small grant made in a timely and flexible manner can be more effective than a larger grant.
- Helping to develop broad platforms/alliances to build cooperation and solidarity around issues of social justice and peacebuilding. This can entail indigenous Funds and Foundations using their position in society and their reputational capital to stand by advocates for change.
- Acting as a channel for external philanthropy and/or Development Aid either through a partnership approach to the delivery of funding or as a source of active consultation.
- Offering a signposting service for external funders, particularly advising on how planned interventions might be interpreted (or misinterpreted) and applying a peace and conflict impact assessment with regard to proposed initiatives.

c/o Ráth Mór Centre
Bligh's Lane, Creggan,
Derry City BT48 0LZ
Co. Londonderry
Northern Ireland [www](http://www.foundationsforpeace.com)

foundationsforpeace.com

(p) 0044 28 7137 1547

(m) 0044 74 9619 5174

