



HANDBOOK COMMUNITY-BASED MEDIATION, DIALOGUE AND RECONCILIATION IN NINEVEH



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To the people of Nineveh

*You have suffered so much
but you are more than your suffering*

*beyond violence and displacement
beyond hatred and grief*

are human beings

courage, humanity and love

Even the darkest night gives way to the dawn.

You have suffered more than any people every should.

*But you will overcome, and heal, and build a future in which every child, every parent, every
woman and man is safe,*

and in which people's identities, faiths and diversity are celebrated and respected.

In which our days and nights are filled with dreams, and the nightmare ends.

In which the rights of all are guaranteed and protected.

*In which healing, reconciliation and peace
And building a better future – for our children, our families, our communities, our selves –
overcomes the legacy and the causes of violence and war.*

*To the people of Nineveh
respecting cultures and communities which have existed over centuries and millennia*

and which will continue to exist long into the future

*in the knowledge
that you have the right, the power and the ownership*

to build peace and a future beyond war in Nineveh.

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A Message from Nineveh Paths

The real battle is not what is being fought with guns and bullets and weapons, but the struggle to overcome and end war in a country or a community. The real front line isn't where soldiers are facing each other, but in the seeds of war and hatred, in the demonization and creation of enemy images of the other that rests inside each one of us.

Wars don't begin with who attacks who, but with deep structures and problems built up over years and decades.

Peace isn't built with the signing of an agreement or "defeat" of an enemy in a battle or liberation of a town or city, but with fostering respect and dignity for all people regardless of their ethnicity or religion, and creating governance and a society in which all people's identities and needs are respected.

Peace is built not upon 'vanquishing' and defeating the other, but creating something better that gives hope, dignity and rights for all people. It is far, far more difficult than war to achieve, and takes far greater courage and commitment.

"...if the structures which caused the conflict remain unchanged there is no improvement in the relationship between the parties to the conflict."

Susanne Buckley-Zistel, *Transitional Justice in Divided Societies – Potentials and Limits*

There isn't one road or one formula for healing. For peace. The needs of a woman who's been raped, a mother or father whose child has been killed, or of a soldier who's been forced to fight and committed or seen atrocities may be different. Even for people who've experienced similar traumas or sufferings, what each person needs to be able to heal inside, to find a path beyond the pain and trauma, is rarely the same.

Still, there are some constants important for most people who have suffered devastating and painful loss and trauma. Community, being accepted, being heard and listened to. Empowerment is also important. Not only defining someone by their 'loss' or the violence they experienced, but *empowering* them as a human being – someone capable of doing, of mattering, of *living*. And giving people time. Not pressuring, not expecting or demanding, but letting them take the time they need. In different countries, breathing techniques, meditation, yoga, theatre, dance have all been seen at times as powerful tools that can help people deal with difficult experiences. Listening circles and spaces for survivors to come together have helped people find the tools and the power themselves to transform trauma into a force for healing and recovery. Local Peace Committees and mediation processes have helped communities and individuals experiencing conflicts to find practical ways of addressing and solving them effectively.

There isn't one solution, one answer. One thing we know is clear though: doing these things can help. It can help people recover, help people heal. Not doing them can mean the pain and suffering, the trauma someone has experienced, can continue a life time. Even if the bullets and fighting stops, the war inside people will go on. If that happens, war and violence can break out again in the future as well.

Real peacebuilding and real reconciliation require **deep** healing and transformation – healing of individuals, healing at the level of relationships between people, healing and transforming social structures, practices and relationships. It is not quick, it is not easy, and it cannot be fake. **Real** peacebuilding, reconciliation and healing are both **deep** and **broad** processes. People working for it need to understand that, and see what is needed, and what needs to be done to achieve that – not overnight, but over years of work and effort.

To the Reader

If you've picked up this Handbook it's most likely because you're interested in peacebuilding, mediation, dialogue and recovery in Nineveh or in community-based peacebuilding more broadly. This Handbook has been produced in the context of the *Nineveh Paths to Social Cohesion, Coexistence and Peace* project supported by UNDP and implemented by an alliance of civil society organisations, survivors, grass-roots activists, local authorities, and the Provincial Council and Governor of Nineveh. Its purpose is a practical one: to help those working for peace in Nineveh understand how mediation, dialogue and reconciliation can help. It's not comprehensive though. This is a 'quick guide' produced in the context of a 6-month project and to help participants and others in the long-term work that continues after. It is intended to be the first of a series of publications created to help build up the 'tool box' of practitioners, activists, organizations and local authorities working for peacebuilding, social cohesion and coexistence in Nineveh.

To Nineveh Peace Teams & Peaceworkers

The **Handbook** is first and foremost for local peacebuilders, activists, local authorities and civil society organisations *from* or working *in* Nineveh. It covers a number of key ideas, from giving a quick overview of 'approaches to peacebuilding' to looking at achieving change and impact in peacebuilding programmes and interventions. There are sections on dialogue and mediation and on reconciliation, trauma recovery and restorative justice. Much more is needed, but our hope is that the **Handbook** can help those really working for community-based peacebuilding to have a useful tool to identify different options, approaches, strategies and important issues to consider. Another goal is to bring forward how important community-based peacebuilding really is. Whatever is happening at broader national levels, community initiatives can help those most directly affected by and involved in conflict and violence heal from its impacts and effects, and transform conflicts in local communities that themselves could give rise to further violence and killing. Successful community-based initiatives can also help provide alternatives to violence and inspire people across Nineveh and more broadly to find effective, non-violent ways of dealing with conflicts and strengthening social cohesion, coexistence and peace. As the message on the page before suggests, this is not short term work. Community-based peacebuilding requires commitment, dedication, and consistent engagement over time. It is not easy, but it can be done. Your work, and the effort and initiatives of people engaging in peacebuilding across Nineveh, is part of what will make healing and recovery from the war possible, and lay the foundations for real, lasting, sustainable peace.

To international organisations and agencies working in Nineveh

A large number of foreign / international organisations and agencies are already working or planning to work in Nineveh. This can be good. At its best international engagement can bring support to local efforts and processes. There is a danger too though. Too much work in the past has been uncoordinated and often of poor quality. Too much funding has gone towards international agencies and foreign staff instead of to building real, standing capacity within Nineveh itself. For international organisations, agencies and staff interested or active in supporting peacebuilding, social cohesion, coexistence and reconciliation initiatives in Nineveh and more broadly across the country, there's a real need for improved coordination, joint planning, and greater focus on ensuring ownership and capacity lie with the people of Nineveh. If this is done, and built into the way programmes are designed and implemented, it can help to ensure that sustainable capacity for peacebuilding, reconciliation and healing, and

95 – 99% of funds which go into recovery and peacebuilding efforts normally go to international agencies and organisations, and only 5 – 1% to national organisations and structures, both government and civil society. This needs to change. Resources, investment and effort should go towards building real, standing capacity in communities themselves, not just to foreign agencies.

prevention of future violence is *owned* and *embedded* in the communities and people of Nineveh themselves.

Part 1: Community-Based Peacebuilding

Community-based peacebuilding is about peacebuilding that happens at the level that is most affected by violence and war: communities themselves. While attention is often directed towards what happens in capitals, meetings and decisions by political 'leadership' and conferences and trainings in hotels, it's in communities themselves that people have been most affected by violence, displacement and rape, and it's in communities themselves that peacebuilding, healing and recovery are often most needed. The challenge is: it can't be done by outsiders. A foreign organisation, national government, or even a national NGO may be able to help or support peacebuilding efforts within a community, but at the end of the day, for these efforts to be most effective, real peacebuilding and real healing and reconciliation have to be done, owned, embedded in and led by the people in a community themselves. 'Peace agreements' signed by leaders or the end of fighting may stop a war, but it doesn't heal the trauma in people's hearts, in society, or address the thousands of conflicts that exist at local community levels. It doesn't rebuild a community physically or rebuild and heal the relations between people in the community. All of that needs to be done at the community level itself – or the impact and legacy of one war may lay the seeds for violence and war in the future.

Where the violence and war happen

Communities in Nineveh have experienced mass displacement, physical destruction, killing, genocide, and trauma at both the individual and the community and social levels. It is here that the **wounds** of war and violence are deepest, and here that peacebuilding is most necessary.

Who can do it?

A range of actors. There's no one single individual who can do peacebuilding. Everybody can get involved. Youth, elders, women, men, local civil society organisations, local authorities, tribal leaders, religious leaders, journalists, teachers, survivors, even perpetrators – all have important roles and ways they can contribute to peacebuilding, healing and recovery at the community level.

Violence often makes people feel powerless. Hopeless. It rips apart peoples lives and dreams and leads them to lose confidence – in themselves, in each other, even in life. Peacebuilding is about empowering people – about helping them to recover their hope, their strength and their belief in life through helping them to gain the skills and tools to actually overcome conflicts, heal from trauma and violence, and build a future for their communities and for themselves without violence and suffering.

Basing Peacebuilding in Communities Themselves

Basing peacebuilding in communities means *empowering those who have been most affected by conflict and violence to themselves* be the owners of solving, healing and recovering from those conflicts – and being in charge of building their own future *beyond* war and division. It also means building up within communities the skills, capabilities and structures / institutions – like peace committees, healing circles, peace centres and more – that can help transform how that community deals with conflicts, not only helping to heal and recover from the war, genocide and displacement but helping to make sure that conflicts can be addressed effectively and don't escalate and become violent in the future. Empowering local peacebuilders and peace structures in communities can transform how conflicts are dealt with, and build standing, permanent capacity to address conflicts effectively, prevent future violence, and support the long-term processes of healing and reconciliation.

Local peacebuilders will often:

- ☐ Have a better understanding of the issues and needs in the community
- ☐ Be based in the community itself – not coming and going but *part* of the community
- ☐ Speak the language and better understand the local dynamics, context and culture
- ☐ Be more trusted by all of the community or certain parts of it
- ☐ Be better able to 'read' between the lines and understand early signs and indicators of conflicts and problems that outsiders may not be aware of

- ❑ Be survivors themselves

Peacekeeping – Peacemaking – Peacebuilding: *Reframing*

These are some terms that are important for us to know. Traditionally they have been used from the lens of international, *external* interventions. They're also relevant though to *community-based* approaches – and the *capacities* to do them should be built up in communities themselves. *Peacekeeping* is about preventing violence; *peacemaking* is about bringing about agreements on how to solve conflicts and disputes between parties, and *peacebuilding* is about addressing root causes and drivers of conflict and building the *capacity* for peace in our communities. How can we go about / approach these at the community-level in Nineveh?

Peacekeeping: *Preventing Violent Incidents*

Traditionally *peacekeeping* has been thought of as something that is done by an international (external) military force to stabilize and prevent acts of violence and critical incidents – using the presence of an international force to keep parties apart and prevent violence. *Peacekeeping* can also be done – often much more effectively and efficiently – by local actors, from tribal leadership intervening to prevent violence, locally trained peace teams, teams of youth, women or other groups, and unarmed organizations like Nonviolent Peaceforce. Police and security forces can also be trained for nonviolent peacekeeping and violence prevention. **Why is this important:** UN / foreign forces are often not deployed in all the areas/communities that may need them and cannot cover all local areas. Armed foreign forces can often become targets for attacks. Local peacekeeping capacities means that capabilities are developed and located in the community, creating mechanisms that can prevent violent crisis/incidents.



Peacemaking: *Bringing about agreements and resolving conflicts between parties*

Internationally *peacemaking* is often defined as foreign political and diplomatic interventions directed at bringing fighting parties to agreement. In reality, *peacemaking* is often done by people *within* a country – from tribal and community leadership to civil society organizations, business leaders, religious leaders, women's groups and others, and covers a range of measures and efforts aimed at bringing about negotiations, talks, dialogue, and mediation processes to help parties arrive at agreements to stop fighting / violence and to address the core issues in the conflict. Also: peacemaking isn't only done to bring *fighting* groups to agreement, but can be used to bring communities affected by conflicts together to agree on how to resolve/address issues in dispute. **Why is this important:** High-level talks usually focus only on 'senior leadership' and often only on armed parties and state actors. Communities and those most affected are often left out. Many conflicts exist *directly at community levels*. Creating local mediation and dialogue processes, local peace committees, and other instruments for bringing communities and individuals together to resolve conflicts peacefully, embeds capacities within communities themselves. Good local mediators often understand the context, language, needs and culture better than external actors.



Peacebuilding: *Addressing Root Causes & Impact and Building Capacity for Peace*

Peacebuilding was once defined as the promotion of institutional and socioeconomic measures including physical recovery to assist countries in recovering *after* war. It has generally been seen as being driven by *external* support / assistance and **intervention** into

a country. Peacebuilding though can be done before, during and after war. It is about addressing the actual root causes and drivers of conflict and war as well as the *impacts* of the war on society; laying foundations for real, lasting peace; and *building* the capacity of the society and government to handle conflicts constructively, effectively and through peaceful means. **Why is this important:** Because *real* peacebuilding has to be owned by the people, communities and countries affected – including decisions on what and how to do it – and requires *real* capacity (infrastructure for peace) built up *within* the community; not just depending or relying on external agencies and engagement.










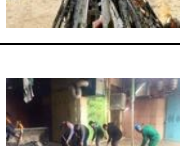



Importantly: doing peacebuilding *before* situations escalate/worsen and *reconciliation and healing* after previous violence also helps to prevent future wars from happening.

A Spectrum of Approaches to Peacebuilding, Peacemaking, Peacekeeping

How many different approaches to peacebuilding, peacemaking and peacekeeping are there? Here's an overview of some approaches that are often used in community and national contexts around the world. To really build sustainable peace, address the root causes and drivers of violence and conflict, bring about healing and reconciliation, and prevent future violence, several of these approaches may be required:

	Mediation & Peacemaking Bringing parties together to bring about a resolution or agreement on addressing key issues in conflict. Can address conflicts at any / all levels and be done by a wide-range of actors, including trusted inside mediators, local peace committees and peace teams, and community mediation.
	Peacekeeping Through presence, intervention and accompaniment to help mitigate or prevent acts of violence. Can be carried out by international, national or local actors and includes non-violent peacekeeping, intervention and accompaniment often performed through local peace teams.
	Peacebuilding Measures to address and transform conflict dynamics, root causes and drivers, and improve relations between parties. Also addresses building state and societal capacities for handling conflicts effectively, preventing violence, and healing and recovery after violence and war –such as local peace committees, community-based reconciliation processes, peace circles and more
	Violence Prevention & Early Warning Measures to address root causes or drivers of conflict in order to prevent violence. Includes conflict analysis and monitoring to understand conflict and identify situations before they escalate to violence – enabling early intervention to prevent violence from happening.
	Reconciliation / Healing Includes a broad spectrum of measures and approaches working to address the visible and invisible impacts and effects of violence, harm and suffering on societies, communities and individuals. Can be <i>within</i> or <i>across/between</i> groups and communities. Covers everything from Truth and Reconciliation Commissions to one-on-one personal counseling and psycho-social support.
	Trauma Recovery Both for individuals and communities / the broader society for recovery and healing from traumatic experiences. Can include both one-on-one processes (counselling); self practice (meditation, yoga, breathing); and community recovery processes such as survivor groups and healing circles.
	Dialogue Processes aimed at deepening mutual understanding and awareness, overcoming enemy images and stereotypes, and enabling stakeholders to jointly address issues of mutual interest and concern, creating inclusive processes for hearing, listening and deepening understanding together.
	Training Programmes & Workshops Often used by local, national and international organizations on a wide range of issues both for capacity building and to bring parties together. Can develop practical skills as well as the confidence for engaging with conflicts effectively – including preventing violence and addressing root causes.
	Capacity Building Can include training programs but also much more, including support to institutional development, engagement in decision-making processes, building institutional capacity, and <i>ownership</i> of peacebuilding engagement. Often implies longer term focus rather than simple individual trainings.
	Needs Assessments and Peace & Conflict Analysis Both a key foundation for any peace building program or intervention, as well as a peace building intervention in itself. Peace & Conflict Analysis can be used to help bring parties together and, through joint analysis, foster mutual understanding, overcome demonization/blame of the other, and empower action to address key conflict drivers / issues
	Institutional Change / Reform Can include institutional change and reform of state institutions and/or key sectors in society. Examples include: reform of police services (as in Northern Ireland); security sector reform; judicial reform; reform of media; educational reform; and reform of state structures and how they function, including local authorities. This is a key area for peacebuilding and peace consolidation.

	Strengthening / Building Peacebuilding Capacities (I4P) Specific focus on strengthening both state and societal capabilities for handling conflict effectively. An increasing number of examples worldwide, including in Kenya, Ghana and elsewhere. Includes the creation of National Peace Committees, Local Peace Committees, Peace Teams, Rosters of Mediators, Early warning and response systems, Reconciliation Circles and much more
	Advocacy Working to advocate for specific changes on conflict issues, societal norms, state policies, etc – can be directed both towards state institutions and to different stakeholders such as tribal and religious leaders, armed groups, international organizations, and our own communities.
	Awareness Raising Can be targeted towards a single actor, group or sector or to society more broadly. Working to raise awareness for example about the causes of conflict, costs and impact of conflict, what can be done, or working to overcome enemy images and demonization of the other and improve relations between conflict parties. Requires deep engagement sustained over time to have impact.
	Solidarity & Support Providing direct solidarity and support – for survivors, for other communities – not aimed at increasing or escalating conflict but at assisting them in finding peace building approaches and solutions or in healing and recovery while showing solidarity for their experience, hopes or suffering.
	Peace Media / Peace Journalism Can include working with existing media and/or establishing new media to improve coverage and reporting on conflict, overcome demonizing and sensationalist violence escalating reporting, and make visible what is being done and what can be done to address conflicts constructively
	Peace Education Includes both the carrying out of peace education towards different sectors in society as well as the introduction of peace education into schools. Peace education efforts traditionally focus on primary and secondary as well as non-formal community-based education. Can include education and training of youth and society in constructive approaches to addressing key conflicts / conflict issues.
	Gender & Peacebuilding May include almost all approaches to peace building. Gives focus to the gender dimensions of conflict, gender roles, and empowering stakeholders in society to address the gender dimensions, drivers and impacts of conflict. Often also include specific focus on empowering, strengthening and supporting the role of women in peace building. Should also address the role of men as primary perpetrators and largest category of casualties of war and violence
	Youth Empowerment & Mobilization Supporting, empowering and mobilizing youth and young people to actively engage in peace building and conflict transformation and resist drivers to violence. Creation of youth mediation and peace teams, youth peace centers, and youth alliances linking youth involved in different efforts to advocate and work together for peace are important pillars of this work.
	Security Sector Reform A specific example of institutional change and reform addressing the role and functioning of the security sector to bring about necessary changes to support peace and improve their role in addressing conflict effectively. Can include focus on making security forces inclusive and accountable, and to improve non-armed means of realizing security and preventing violence.
	Development, Recovery & Peacebuilding Primary focus is often on addressing root causes and drivers of the conflict, frequently at community levels or most violence affected areas. Also includes working to provide peace dividends and can create benefits to communities to reduce attraction and drivers towards violence. Development, recovery and provision of services should both 'do no harm' and actively support peace connectors / stabilizers within and between communities.
	Improving Peace Practice A critical area of peace work is <i>improving</i> peace practice – helping each other learn what works and what doesn't, improving coordination and seeing how to really achieve <i>impact</i> through programmes, activities and interventions. Involvement and <i>ownership</i> by communities and countries affected by conflict is essential.

Ideas for Community-Based Peacebuilding in Nineveh

So what could this look like applied to Nineveh itself? Here are some ideas developed by local authorities, local communities, peace workers, the Nineveh Provincial Council and civil society activists in Nineveh:

Nineveh Peace Council

A Nineveh Peace Council bringing together respected community, tribal, religious and civil society leaders from across Nineveh, including women and men, youth and elders, providing an example and promoting messages, vision and leadership for social cohesion, coexistence and peace.

Coordination Mechanisms

At the provincial and local community levels to help different organisations and initiatives to better coordinate, share information and analysis, and do more together than can be done apart.

Identify Conflicts / Risks of Violence: Participatory, Community-Based Early Warning

Embed within communities on-going identification and mapping of conflicts and risks to provide early warning *before* violence might break out, and to enable local authorities, community peace workers, Local Peace Committees and Peace Teams to take *early* action to prevent violence.

Local Peace Committees

LPCs in each community using dialogue and mediation to help resolve and address local conflicts and disputes, preventing violence and improving relations within communities.

Community-Based Reconciliation, Healing and Trauma Recovery Processes

Developing community-based processes for healing, trauma recovery and reconciliation directly at the community level. These could include listening circles, survivors circles, trauma recovery processes, and community healing and reconciliation processes.

Women's Peace Alliance

Women have been amongst the worst affected by the conflict but they are often not as included or supported to take leadership and ownership or to participate in peacebuilding and reconciliation processes. A Women's Peace Alliance has been suggested for Nineveh, and supporting women's empowerment and participation directly at the community level is also essential.

Youth Peace Alliance & Youth Peace Centres

There are many initiatives to engage youth in peacebuilding, social cohesion and coexistence. Imagine if youth across Nineveh themselves were supported to come together in a Youth Peace Alliance to strengthen their empowerment and support for each other and to encourage, mobilise and engage more youth to be involved. Youth Peace Centres directly in communities can also help to provide spaces for local youth to come together, learn about peacebuilding and peace work, and become involved and empowered to engage in peacebuilding in their own communities and more broadly.

A Nineveh Charter for Peace

Work has already begun on drafting a **Nineveh Charter for Peace** as well as local **Peace Charters** in local communities. **Peace Charters** provide the *vision*, values and principles for what people want – the type of *peace* people want – beyond the war. They can provide a base for hope, confidence and trust in the future – and engage people to work together for peace and coexistence.

Peacebuilding: Achieving Impact and Change

Before we get into **mediation**, **dialogue** and **reconciliation** specifically there are a few more ideas important for us to understand to do peacebuilding well. These include: **impact**, **'From What to What'**, **Types of Change** and **Achieving Change**. This section goes into these ideas.

Impact

Impact is a concept that is essential when thinking about community-based peacebuilding. It is used in the context of

achieving real / actual change on core issues, causes or dynamics in a conflict

In the diagram here, the box on the bottom left (1.) refers to the 'results' of projects, activities, programs and interventions ('the process'). Every project, activity, intervention results in **outputs** (quantifiable products/results of the intervention) and **outcomes** (*actual*, immediate changes resulting from the intervention). If you read the Annual Reports of most organizations and agencies it seems as if 'everything we are all doing is a success!' But: if everything we're all doing is succeeding, why did the war and genocide happen? Why are there still conflicts and divisions in our communities? The box in the top right corner refers to impact on the conflict: achieving or directly contributing to changes which impact upon, affect or change *key* dynamics, causes and conditions in the conflict contributing to its positive transformation or resolution – this can be at a very immediate, local level in the community or more broadly in overall dynamics of conflict in Nineveh or in the country. Very few organizations – local, national or international – can actually *draw a direct connection* between the work we are doing or have done and any *actual, real* change in conflict contexts and dynamics. In some cases around the world, despite or in the context of peacebuilding work (Sri Lanka, Israel-Palestine, the Caucasus, Mexico and elsewhere, and even in Iraq), the conflicts and violence have even gotten worse, not better.



So: how can we *design* and *implement* our programs, activities and interventions to at least 'better' contribute to achieving or contributing to *strategic impact* on a conflict – to overcoming war and building real and lasting peace? The concept of **'Types of Change'** [described more below] can be useful here. It looks at different 'fields' / areas in which *change is needed* to transform conflict context and dynamics, including: Environment / Context; Attitudes / Perceptions; Behaviour / Actions; Skills; Relationships; Strategies; Group Behaviour; Institutions; Root Causes; and more. From this, we can ask the questions:

- ① Have we properly i. analysed and ii. understood *what* needs to change – to go from *the current situation* / how things are now in Nineveh to your desired future? / how you would like them to be?
- ② Even if we *do* understand that: is what we are doing (our activities, programs, interventions) actually contributing to *achieving* those changes? and
- ③ Even if we do contribute to achieving those changes as a result of / through our programs, activities and interventions: are those *changes* (outcomes / results) we've achieved *then* contributing to bringing about an *actual / real* change in the conflict situation / context / dynamics in Nineveh overall – in overcoming and solving the real issues and factors that gave rise to the war and preventing it from happening again in the future?

There is also a fourth set of questions to consider:

4.a) Have the changes we *believe* have occurred *actually* taken place?

Organizations and individuals often wish to believe or do believe that our work (activities, events, programs) has contributed to significant, *real* change – even if only at the level of the individuals who have participated. In many cases that *does* actually happen. Often, however, it hasn't, and the perspective of 'participants' or those we've intended to *affect*, may differ from those of the organizers. This is why *evaluation* is so important – to see whether we have really achieved the change we believe we have.

4.b) Are the changes *sustainable*?

In a review of *community-based mediation* and '*peace council*' structures created in 5 countries in Africa as part of programs implemented by external / foreign organizations, it was assessed that: over 80% of the community mediation and peace council structures had ceased to function / disappeared within 3 – 6 months of the end of the project (and its funding). When we speak about *sustainability* in peacebuilding work we're not (or shouldn't) be talking about 'sustainability' of an *organization* or *project*, but: sustainability of *change / impact*. If the goal and intention of the project was that the mediation / peace councils should exist only during the duration of the project, and that was the need for them in the context, then it can be ok if they ended shortly after the project ended. If the intention, however, and the *need* in the context was for standing, durable mechanisms to assist/help/support local communities deal with conflict issues more effectively, then the mediation and peace councils should have *continued to exist* after the duration of the project. Therefore, when evaluating the 'results' (outputs, outcomes and impact) of a project or intervention, the focus should be not only on whether they have 'taken place' or been achieved, but whether they are *sustainable* i. beyond the duration of the project; and ii. according to *need* in the conflict/context.

4.c) Can the changes / results achieved be *maintained* in the face of challenge or crisis?

Three snapshots

1. A dialogue process in Northern Ireland had continued for ten years, with participants meeting weekly. Following one meeting, one of the participants went before the press and made statements that contrasted sharply with his statements in the process. This so significantly affected and damaged the trust of other participants that, even though a great deal had been achieved in transforming relations and improving mutual confidence and understanding, after this 'crisis' they refused to take part again in the process. **Yet this type of challenge in a dialogue / mediation process happens very frequently. Could the facilitators / organizers not have better prepared with participants' scenarios and what to do if such situations happen and had steps in place to address it?**

2. In Israel-Palestine there were dozens of dialogue processes between Israelis and Palestinians in the lead up to the start of the second intifada. Once the second intifada broke out almost all of these processes stopped. Participants on both sides felt either that it was unsafe to continue in the changed context (many thought they would be attacked by people in their *own* communities if they did continue), or felt hurt/angered/frustrated that those on the 'other' side did not better understand their own perspective and condemn the actions of violence coming from 'their' side (with each wanting the other to sympathize with their needs/perspectives and condemn the violence coming from that individuals 'own' group/side). **Yet the fact that the situation was potentially 'explosive' and something like the second intifada might happen was clear and obvious to anyone who might have taken the time to look at what was really happening in the broader conflict context. Could / should organizers and participants not have engaged more thoroughly in advance with what might happen and build in how they could continue/deepen their work in that context, or even take pre-emptive measures ahead of time to try and prevent/mitigate the crisis/escalation from happening?**

3. In Sri Lanka as conflict dynamics changed on the ground and the government moved clearly to resuming the war, many donors *cut back* funding for peacebuilding programming, saying 'now it's no longer the time'. Yet when conflict dynamics were escalating was that not when well coordinated joint efforts to prevent a resumption of war were most necessary? **Should organizations on the ground – local, national and international – who could see the direction the situation was moving in for well over a year in advance not have taken more coordinated, joint action to 1. try to prevent worsening dynamics and 2. worked with donors and partners to see what kind of strategies would be necessary in the changed context to i. prevent violence and ii. adapt and improve peacebuilding projects, programming and interventions accordingly?** As it was, the overwhelming majority of peacebuilding projects and activities that had been taking place were shut down / ended or dramatically reduced. The question could fairly be asked 'what impact' were many of these having before or in the lead up to the crisis, and if improvements could have been made, but certainly there was a need for more than just 'ending' nearly all peacebuilding programs and engagements as the path to war intensified.

In Nineveh there were hundreds of trainings, projects and workshops on dialogue, mediation and peace before the recent violence and genocide. How can we learn from those to make sure that what we do now has greater impact in really contributing to peace and preventing future violence?

From What to What

This is another idea that is central to designing, planning and *doing* community-based peacebuilding: *what* is the situation now, *what* are we trying to change it to and *how*?



There are 4 steps or sets of questions to think through:

- ① **What is the situation *now*** – or, more specifically: what is it in the *current* situation that is contributing to, driving, sustaining, or *enabling* the conflict, violence or war to continue? What is it in the current situation that is the *problem* or that *needs to be changed / transformed*?
- ② **What is the situation you wish to see *beyond* the current conflict, problem, violence or war?**
If the situation as described in 1 is what contributes to, enables, creates, drives or *fuels* the conflict, what **concretely** would it need to be *changed to* to be *beyond* the conflict/violence/war? What would be an ‘outcome’ or ‘changed status’ / future situation *beyond* that which is creating/driving the conflict/violence, and which meets the needs and legitimate interests of all the parties involved?
- ③ **What are you going to do to go from the *current* situation to the future you want to see?**
What’s your strategy for achieving change? This addresses both the *identification, assessment* and *analysis* of ‘*what*’ needs to *change* to move from 1 to 2 and **how**: what will you do to bring about that change / shift / transformation. This is where you identify your **strategy**: *how* you will go about working to achieve / contribute to that change *from* the current situation *to* your **desired future** and the specific **actions** and measures by which you will *achieve* that strategy – *do it* in the actual / real context on the ground in Nineveh.
- ④ Once you’ve gone through 1 – 3 and as part of your process for planning what to do in the community it can be important to take a moment and really double check:
 - a. Are you sure you correctly understand *what* needs to change?
 - b. Have you correctly understood and identified a *desirable future* that would transform/transcend/resolve the key issues and dynamics in the conflict?
 - c. Do you have a *strategy* for how to bring about that change *from* the current situation *to* the future you want to see (desired future)?
 - d. Do you know what practical steps you can take to make that happen?

Achieving Change

Peacebuilding interventions – including dialogue, mediation, reconciliation and healing – are always about either i. achieving a positive change or ii. *preventing* negative changes from taking place. As a mediator, dialogue worker or community peaceworker you need to think through the *change* and *types of change* you are trying to achieve in your community or Nineveh more broadly – and to understand **what type of change(s)** may be necessary to improve relations in communities, address the real root causes and drivers of violence, enable healing and reconciliation, and achieve real, sustainable peace and ending or prevention of violent conflict. *Communities* and those *from* affected by the conflict owning and deciding *what* change should be achieved and *how* is essential. This might include: changing patterns of communication from aggressive, hostile and dysfunctional to respectful and nonviolent to improve mutual understanding; bridging and bringing together people and communities that might be divided to understand how each party feels, identifying root causes, and creating the space for participants to explore ideas on how to address them to meet the needs and interests of all parties; improving participants' abilities to *hear* and *understand* each other; and much more. Peacebuilders should be aware of at least two central areas in which they may be seeking to achieve change:

1. Change in the *process*: how issues and conflicts are addressed
2. Change in the *issue / problem*: finding solutions to the actual issues / problems causing conflicts

These aren't the same thing. The *first* looks at changing *how* we deal with problems / issues in our communities. This might include replacing confrontational and adversarial approaches with collaborative and cooperative approaches, or transforming decision-making processes in which state institutions / local authorities are able to make decisions *without* consultation and inclusion of stakeholders to *participatory* and *inclusive* processes where stakeholders are actively involved. The *second* isn't focusing on *how* the issue is solved, but on the *solutions* themselves. For example: if there is a land dispute between two families in a village what would be the actual solution? If people from one religious, ethnic group or tribe feel excluded or believe their needs are not being respected or addressed, how can this be solved? If there are bad relations between people from the same community because some were driven out by the violence and approach of ISIS / Daesh and others remained, how can these conflicts between them actually be solved?

The *changes* being sought here may be: i. fair distribution of the land; ii. creating inclusive processes in governance in the community; iii. recognition of each other's experience and what was done, apology if needed, and enabling people's hurt and suffering to be heard while helping both parties identify what they need to live in peace in the community together. It may also be necessary to understand *what needs to change* in order for these goals to be achieved. For example, those in a conflict may be *angry* with each other or *blame* the other for what's happening, and find it difficult to hear or listen to them. Addressing this so that parties can actually engage together to find solutions to their conflicts is part of the work of mediators and dialogue facilitators. *How* stakeholders try to achieve change is important. Actually *achieving that change* and finding solutions to the conflicts and disputes in the community is also essential.

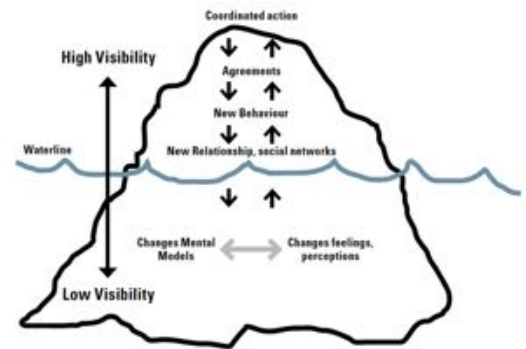
Bettye Pruitt and Steve Waddell identify what they call three 'orders' of change.¹ *First-order change* refers to adaptation *within* the current rules of the game. Here the aim is to find specific solutions to specific issues, but not to change the basic 'structures' and 'rules' of how governance, politics and development are addressed. *Second-order change* refers to *redefining* the 'rules' of the game: for example changing how decisions are taken and changing structures and processes of problem-solving, or bringing about structural change in governance and development issues. For example: if governance is too top-down or not truly inclusive of different communities (ethnic, tribal, religious; women, youth) then there may need to be changes in *how* governance is done to ensure greater inclusion. *Third-order change* is larger still. Here the focus is on

¹ Bettye Pruitt and Steve Waddell, *Dialogue Approaches to global Challenges: Moving from "Dialogue Fatigue" to Dialogue Change Processes*, DGP Working Paper 05-08-31. See also: Alain Gauthier, 2006

changing or **redefining** the game itself. For example, if previously (or currently) politics and governance were about *maintaining control* or *benefits for one's own group*, *third-order change* would seek to *transform* the way politics is done, and *what it's done for*. For example: to seeing how best to empower and enable all members and sectors of a society to achieve well-being; from seeing *how to divide the pie* or *get the most of the pie for yourself* to seeing how to *enlarge the pie* and focus on *improving opportunities, resources and cooperation for all*. All three lenses can be useful when thinking about change. Imagine for a moment the types of situations or issues you're dealing with. What 'order' of change do you think would be most appropriate to address these effectively? First, Second, Third? A Combination? What would this change look like in your community?

The Iceberg Model

Katrin Kaufer has spent years working to understand *how* stakeholders achieve change – often in contexts where there may be deep societal divisions or polarisation and adversarial relations. Adapting a model from Otto Scharmer she introduces what's known as the **Iceberg Model**.² This is helpful to bring attention to changes that may be *highly visible* and those that may be *less visible*. High visibility changes often take the form of: new agreements, new behaviour, new policies or *action* to address an issue. It can also include new *relationships, structures and networks* or partnership. Low visibility changes refer to what's not as easy to see – what may be 'beneath the surface': changes in participants' or stakeholders' feelings and perceptions towards the other; changes in 'mental models' and ways of approaching 'problem solving' or *attitudes* towards the 'other'. Why is this important for *community-based dialogue, mediation and reconciliation*? Often to achieve *highly-visible* changes like 'agreements' on how to deal with an issue or dispute, it is necessary to address issues that are 'below the waterline' (less visible), including: relationships between stakeholders, emotions, feelings, attitudes, past experiences of hurt, trauma or distrust, and cultural *ideas and values* that might re-enforce certain patterns of behaviour, structures, relations between stakeholders, and approaches to problem-solving. These *deeper* level changes can be important and may need to be addressed to achieve 'solutions' on concrete problems and issues. It can also take sustained engagement over time to really bring about change at this level. This is an important focus for community-based peacebuilding.



Types of Change

To make it even more concrete, let's go deeper into the idea of **types of change** introduced above. **Types of change** thinking lead us to *identify* exactly **what changes** are needed to move from (A) how things are now in the community during or immediately after the war, violence and displacement to (B) how you / members of a community want them to be. The *From What – To What* approach. Here are some examples of 'types' of change commonly sought in community peacebuilding processes:

Changes in	A few Illustrative Examples of Specific Changes Collaborative Processes may seek to achieve
Attitudes	<i>From</i> mistrust and demonization of the other <i>to</i> mutual acceptance, respect and understanding; <i>From</i> feeling powerless or 'there's nothing I can do' <i>to</i> feeling empowered <i>From</i> believing conflicts can only be solved through force, violence or 'bargaining' <i>to</i> understanding and believing in the importance of collaborative-problem solving
Behaviour	<i>From</i> violent or aggressive behaviour <i>to</i> non-violent and cooperative <i>From</i> demonising language and confrontational politics <i>to</i> respect-based peaceful communication and collaborative leadership and cooperation
Relation-ships	<i>From</i> confrontation and adversarial relations <i>to</i> cooperation <i>From</i> refusing to engage with the other or blaming them for everything <i>to</i> engaging together with people

² Katrin Kaufer, adapted from Otto Scharmer, *Organising Around Not-Yet-Embodied Knowledge*, in G. v. Krogh, I. Nonaka and T. Nishiguchi, eds, *Knowledge Creation: A new Source of Value* (New York: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 36 – 60. See also the *Democratic Dialogue Handbook* page 36.

	across communities to heal / improve relations and solve problems and conflicts
Skills	<i>From limited or no skills in mediation to having good skills for mediation</i> <i>From not knowing how to analyse conflicts and problems to understand their root causes and drivers to having good skills in conflict analysis relevant for dealing with community conflicts</i> <i>From low or no skills for dialogue and listening to highly developed listening and dialogue skills</i>
Processes	<i>From 'one party' or 'leadership' decides to all stakeholders are involved and decide together</i> <i>From bureaucracy / state structures have all authority to participatory problem-solving and decision-making involving affected communities and stakeholders</i> <i>From processes which focus on confrontation or winner-takes-all to processes which focus on finding practical solutions and meeting the needs and interests of all stakeholders involved</i>
The problem	<i>From the problem or issue remains unaddressed to finding practical solutions</i> <i>From imposing one-party's desired goal to solutions which meet the needs of all parties</i>

These are just a few examples. Think of actual issues or situations you're working with and identify: what *types* of change do you think would be necessary to solve them?

Achieving one type of change is often not enough. Several changes at different levels

– attitudes, behaviours, relationships, addressing root causes – may be needed to achieve the **goals** stakeholders want. Long-time peacemaker John Paul Lederach has developed a model focusing on **four dimensions of change**.³ **Individual – Personal**

change can include changes in attitudes, skills, knowledge, capacities, behaviour.

Changes in **Relationships** refers to changes in relationships between groups, for

example, replacing adversarial relations, blaming, demonization, lack of trust or hatred of other communities with respect, humanisation, trust and mutual confidence and friendship.. **Structural Change** refers both to:

1. Brining about change in underlying root causes / drivers of a conflict or dispute (solving the issues); and 2.

Reforming/Transforming or creating institutions, structures and processes which solve problems in the

society – like the creation of 'peace committees' or 'peace councils'. Change in **Culture** addresses cultural

ideas and values. This can mean replacing or overcoming cultures that promote violence, discrimination,

inequalities, or prejudice with those that promote respect, human dignity, peacebuilding, and empowerment

One purpose of this model is us realise that *to achieve real change* requires **change in more than one**

dimension. For example: if you bring about *change* in personal attitudes of individuals involved in dialogue

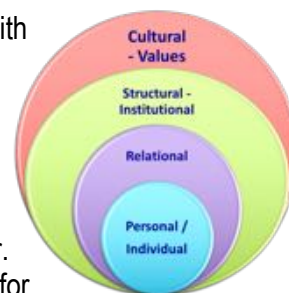
or problem-solving processes but the broader structures, cultures and relations between groups remain

unchanged, this may not achieve the goals (impact) you're hoping for. Or if changes are made in structures

(eg. establishing peace committees, peace councils) but these are not supported with *changing* skills,

relationships between stakeholders, and the *culture* of how conflicts are dealt with, the *impact* of these new

institutions (structural change) may not be as significant as it could be.



Understanding why change can be difficult or uncomfortable for some

Understanding why change may be difficult or uncomfortable for some people – and why it's often difficult to

achieve – is also important. Issues may be complex and difficult to solve, there may be a lack of trust or

negative / adversarial relations between stakeholders, *governance* and *decision-making* or 'problem-solving'

approaches may be dysfunctional or inadequate to deal with the problem. Stakeholders may not *trust* or

really believe that change can be achieved, or may prefer the current situation if it brings them some clear

benefit. The 'current situation', however, may be unsustainable, if some stakeholders feel it's unjust or fails to

meet their needs as well. The reality is: *change*, in one form or another, may be needed. The *task* of

peacebuilding is sometimes to help stakeholders become comfortable with and *own themselves* the

processes of: identifying and deciding on *what types* of change are needed and *how* to achieve them. In

community-based peacebuilding this includes fostering a *shared* vision and agreement on this change and

how to achieve it. So: bringing about change both in the *problem* (finding solutions) and *how* it's being

addressed (enabling mediation, dialogue, collaboration and problem-solving).

³ Reflective Peacebuilding Toolbox

Part 2: Dialogue & Mediation

Basic Definitions

Mediation

Mediation is a facilitated process to help parties resolve a conflict or a dispute. This is important: mediation happens when there is a dispute or conflict between parties, or a negative dynamic in their relationship together. Mediation also involves a 'mediator' – someone working to help the parties find a solution to their conflict or problem together.

The key things that make it a mediation:

- ☐ There is an issue, conflict or problem that parties are trying to resolve
- ☐ There is an individual or individuals working as a mediator or mediators to help the parties experiencing the conflict to come to a solution or 'agreement' together

The role of the **mediators** is to help the parties to arrive at a result or 'solution' to the conflict that is agreeable to all the parties involved.

Why is mediation important?

Mediation provides a process through which parties can find solutions to conflicts without using violence. It can help to make sure that:

- ☐ the needs of parties are met
- ☐ problems or disputes are practically solved
- ☐ relations between members of a community are healthy – if conflicts are not resolved or are dealt with badly, relations can worsen. Mediation helps to focus both on finding solutions to conflicts and problems but also on promoting healthy relations between those who have conflicts or disputes together;
- ☐ violence is prevented. If conflicts and disputes can be resolved healthily with the help of a mediator and a good mediation process, it can prevent conflicts from becoming violent.

When is mediation used? Some examples:

Mediation can be used to deal with many of the conflicts and disputes communities in Nineveh experience. Mediation is helpful in dealing with:

- ☐ disputes over land and property
- ☐ disagreements and conflicts between neighbours
- ☐ conflicts that can develop between communities who have been displaced and are returning and those that have remained during the violence / fighting

Mediation is a tool that can be implemented at the community level to help deal with conflicts effectively, resolve disputes, and prevent violence.

Dialogue

Dialogue is a deep process of listening and speaking that helps to improve mutual understanding, overcome misunderstandings, help parties have their voices and needs heard, and help individuals and communities deal with issues that are important to them. How is it different than mediation? The key differences are that

1. **dialogues** don't have to be about conflicts or problems between parties;
2. **dialogues** don't have to arrive at 'agreements' or 'solutions'

Dialogues are **deep processes of mutual listening and hearing the issues, ideas, hopes and concerns** of those in the community engaging in dialogue together. They are more than just 'discussions', 'speaking' or 'talking'. Dialogue happens when parties come together to gain a deeper understanding of each other's points of views – to improve *mutual understanding* – to *hear* and listen to the ideas, thoughts, feelings and perspectives of each party, and to explore options or ways of dealing with issues that are important to them.

Can dialogue be facilitated?

Dialogues can often be difficult – for example dialogues between people who have experienced hurt or suffering, or dialogues between people coming from different communities which may have conflicts with each other. It can help sometimes to have **dialogue facilitators** who can guide the process and help those taking part:

- ❑ **share** the issues that are important to them. It can sometimes be hard for people to speak about the issues they are really concerned about or what is important to them. Dialogue facilitators help participants to feel safe, to have trust in the process, and to have the confidence to speak;
- ❑ **listen** to what the 'other' is truly saying. Listening, really listening and hearing what someone else is saying and what they mean, is one of the most difficult things for people to do. Often we hear what we 'think' they are saying and we jump to respond. Dialogue requires building the skill to really hear and listen, and to be able to engage with what is important to the other i. without judgement and ii. *with* respect and empathy

Why are dialogues important?

Bad communication or the absence of communication often feeds conflicts. Dialogue processes can help people improve mutual understanding and enable a community to come together to address important issues. Dialogue processes provide people with the space to have their issues and needs heard and to share together ideas. Importantly: they can also provide mechanisms for **inclusion**. In contexts where certain communities or parts of a community – women, youth, minorities – might feel excluded from governance and decision-making, community dialogue processes can provide space and opportunity for people's voices to be heard and for all parts of a community to be included.

When can dialogue be useful? Some examples:

- ❑ when there is an absence of communication between parties that have shared concerns, issues or needs;
- ❑ when there are divisions and negative relations between people in a community or family and there needs to be a space for deep listening and hearing each other
- ❑ in addressing issues important to a community, for example:
 - having community dialogues on how to deal with healing, reconciliation and peacebuilding in a community;
 - having community dialogues or dialogue between neighbours not to arrive at a final 'agreement' but to explore ways of dealing with land issues and other needs

Dialogues are about connecting people and creating spaces for deep listening and hearing. Good dialogues improve the dynamics and relations within a community.

How is it done? Mediation

There are many approaches to mediation in different communities and cultures around the world. Some of the key elements include:

Beginning mediation: There are a few different ways a mediation process can begin.

- ☐ The people having a dispute or a conflict might approach mediators and ask for help resolving their dispute;
- ☐ People, family or friends who know about a conflict might approach those involved and suggest they try mediation
- ☐ People, family or friends who know about a conflict might approach a mediator and ask for them to approach the parties in conflict to offer help in addressing it
- ☐ Mediators in the community may identify conflicts and approach those involved to offer help resolving them

Important: the people actually experiencing and involved in the conflict or dispute have to agree to take part in the mediation process. They can also be encouraged to do so by family, friends and others in the community, encouraging them to find a constructive and peaceful solution to the conflict. People with conflicts may not always trust the mediation process to begin with. It's up to the mediator to earn that trust through how they engage with the parties and how they facilitate the mediation.

Doing mediation: There are many approaches to doing mediation. There may be one mediator or a few. The mediation process can happen in one meeting or a series of meetings. The actual 'design' and exact approach used needs to depend on the conflict and the actual needs in the situation. What's important though:

- ☐ The mediation process needs to earn people's trust and confidence that it will authentically respect and address the issues, concerns and needs that are important to them;
- ☐ Mediators need to earn trust and confidence of the parties. Making sure they listen fairly, respect everyone involved, don't take sides, and help the parties to really hear each other and work together to find a solution;
- ☐ The **mediation process** needs to practically help parties:

Case Study: Community Mediation in Nepal

Nepal has a long history of traditional dispute resolution. There are 102 different castes and ethnicities, and 92 different spoken languages. In 1999, the government passed the Local Self-Governance Act, which provisioned that such cases relating to land disputes, trespassing etc would be heard and settled either by mediation or 3-person arbitration boards.

Since the 2001, The Asia Foundation has facilitated community mediation in Nepal. This was done as the result of a study conducted in 12 districts across Nepal starting in 1993, which found that people prefer to resolve conflicts at the community level, perhaps because Nepal's formal justice system is weak and inaccessible to many. Starting as a pilot with six districts, TAF now operates its community mediation programme in 114 locations in 12 districts.

Community mediation uses 3 mediators, who disputants are able to select. Some cases that do not involve crimes committed against the state are referred to the program by local law-enforcement agencies such as the police or the district courts. Disputants are able to select their mediators, and the fact that women and minorities are available as mediators is empowering for many.

Mediators are trained and supported through the Asia Foundation but have been empowered to adapt mediation to a local context. They have now created a network of mediators to continue to receive support. The process of community mediation has resulted in positive changes in people's self-esteem, capacity to participate in community processes, and confidence - especially in women and low-caste participants. People no longer feel as isolated or afraid of disputes escalating uncontrollably.

Currently, 4,200 community mediators are offering dispute resolution services in 134 Village Development Committees and municipalities in the project districts. As of September 2013, the Foundation and its local partners have received over 22,400 mediation cases and have achieved a resolution rate of more than 85 percent. The Asia Foundation lobbied the Nepali government to pass the 2010 Mediation Act, recognizing the validity and importance of community mediation. The Act was passed in 2011.

See: *STAYING TRUE IN NEPAL: Understanding Community Mediation through Action Research*. (2012) John Paul Lederach.

- Identify what's important to them
- Discuss and share **why**
- Help parties go beyond their 'positions' to identify their real 'needs'
- Create a space for creative thinking to identify practical solutions that meet the needs of all the parties involved

After Mediation: What happens after the mediation is just as important as doing the mediation itself. Making sure 'agreements' or solutions reached are implemented and respected by the parties is essential. Mediators may need to agree to meet up with the parties after a certain period to check on implementation and make sure that all parties are satisfied with the results of the mediation.

How is it done? Dialogue Processes

Dialogue processes can be as small as between two people or carried out in communities across an entire country, sometimes involved tens of thousands of people. In a dialogue process it's important to agree 'what is being discussed' and to create a space where those taking part in the dialogue **feel safe** and **trust** in the facilitator and the process. Dialogue processes in local communities are often implemented by facilitators / community leaders *inviting* people to a dialogue. They may open the process in such a way as to **welcome**

people to the dialogue process, help people understand the importance of dialogue and why it is happening, and give the 'principles' or 'practice' – how things will be done – that guide the dialogue process. The most important thing in dialogue processes is to enable the sometimes difficult and challenging 'space' in which people are able to both find their voices and *speak* what is important to them, and to *listen to* and hear others. A dialogue process may happen once on an issue, or may be repeated several times, helping parties to go deeper in building mutual understanding as well as the mutual confidence and trust in each other that is so important to dialogue processes.

"Dialogue means we sit and talk with each other, especially those with whom we may think we have the greatest differences.

However, talking together all too often means debating, discussing with a view to convincing the other, arguing for our point of view, examining pros and cons. In dialogue, the intention is not to advocate but to inquire; not to argue but to explore; not to convince but to discover" Louise Diamond, Institute for Multitrack Diplomacy (in MediatEUR Dialogue Guidance Handbook: Lesson Learned, Concepts and Methodology)

Becoming Comfortable with Mediation & Dialogue: Promoting A Culture of Mediation and Dialogue at the Community Level

While all societies and communities have ways of dealing with conflicts that have been practiced sometimes over centuries, real mediation and dialogue that involves deep listening and hearing others may be new and challenging, particularly in the midst of or immediate aftermath of war. Peaceworkers, civil society organizations, women, youth, religious leaders, political and government leadership, media and others can all play important roles in helping to **legitimize** mediation and dialogue and promoting their practice. Ultimately, if mediation and dialogue processes are well designed and well implemented, their success will be the most powerful way of convincing communities that they work and are more effective ways of dealing with conflicts than violence. Right from the start though, it's important that the **approaches** and **methods** used for dialogue and mediation don't feel 'imposed' or 'imported' from abroad, but are deeply linked and connected with values, principles and 'roots' within the traditions and cultures within the community itself.

Building Capacity for Dialogue & Mediation in the Community

Facilitating dialogue and mediation processes isn't easy. Building capacity for community-based dialogue and mediation involves both deep *training* and *practice*. For this reason, many communities are now creating 'Local Peace Committees', where people who are *from the community* have been deeply trained in facilitating community-based dialogue and mediation processes. Local Peace Committees are then mandated and work to help resolve conflicts and disputes in the community.

Local Peace Committees

A **Local Peace Committee** is an inclusive committee, operating at sub-national level (a district, municipality, town or village), created for the purpose of addressing and transforming conflicts, preventing violence and resolving disputes at the community level through dialogue, mediation and conflict resolution and transformation techniques.

Peace Committees are often created specifically to include representation from different 'sectors' / demographics of a community. These can include community leadership, trusted members of civil society, representation of different ethnic, cultural or religious groups / communities, and – specifically – inclusion of women and youth. In some contexts Peace Committees may be created with just 'single sectors' / communities, such as only youth, only women, or only religious or other leadership. "Mixed" Committees may have the strength of being more inclusive and earning/holding the trust of different sectors of the community. Inclusion of trained mediators or training of members of Peace Committees in mediation, dialogue, peacebuilding and conflict handling techniques is seen as essential.

'Local peace committee' (LPC) is an umbrella title: in practice, a variety of names are used in addition to local peace committees, including: 'district peace advisory councils'; 'district multiparty liaison committees'; 'village peace and development committees'; 'committees for intercommunity relations'; and so on.

MANDATE

There is no 'single' universal mandate for peace committees. A Peace Committees mandate has to respond to the actual / specific needs and context in which it has been created. It should be robust enough for the Peace Committee to:

- ☐ Actively promote peace, coexistence and respect in the community
- ☐ Identify conflicts and possible factors that create negative relations
- ☐ Engage the community to transform conflicts constructively
- ☐ Be an example of and promote a message of peace and coexistence

In some countries Local Peace Committees have a formal, legal mandate. They may be empowered by legislation and / or by peace agreements. There are also many cases where Local Peace Committees are created informally by Local Authorities, local communities and NGOs even in before laws have been passed.

Experience has shown that what is most important is:

- ☐ How the Local Peace Committee functions
- ☐ Whether it is skilled in mediation and dialogue
- ☐ Whether it's members are trusted / earn trust
- ☐ Whether it engages effectively to address community conflicts

Local Peace Committees should

- ☐ Actively work to identify conflicts **early** and prevent them from becoming violent
- ☐ Proactively work to meet the needs of all sectors and members of the community
- ☐ Understand the needs of the community and promote reconciliation and healing
- ☐ Empower a vision and practice of peace – being both a model and a catalyst

The peace sought by local peace committees can include

- ☐ ending the violence of the past
- ☐ preventing any occurrence or recurrence of violence
- ☐ acknowledging that local patterns of exclusion and discrimination need to be transformed,
- ☐ and with all participants committing to collaborate and take action in that transformation to deal with the most threatening and urgent problems facing the community

Peace Committees should aim to be inclusive:

- ☐ Ensuring all genders, tribes, communities, ethnic and religious group are included is important.
- ☐ Individual tribes / groups may themselves want to create 'Peace Councils' for their own community – to provide leadership for peace from *within* their community.

Who should be involved?

Identifying mediators and dialogue facilitators

One of the first questions to answer when setting up a mediation or dialogue in a community is: who should mediate? Who should facilitate dialogues? Looking at different approaches, mediators or facilitators might be:

- Respected individuals, e.g. elders, religious leaders, former political or rebel group leaders, trusted civil society leaders, and men and women, youth or elders who have been trained or *earned* trust and confidence in the community because of their engagement for peace;
- Individuals or groups working as professional mediators or dialogue facilitators – from civil society organisations, local government structures, or local peace committees – who have also earned trust and/or been mandated by the community;

Facilitators can be **individuals** or **teams of mediators**. Mediation teams offer some advantages: they offer a greater chance for women and minority groups to be represented and feel that they are being listened to. They also provide an opportunity to include mediators / facilitators who are trusted by the different parts of the community involved in the mediation process.

Insider Mediators

The term “insider mediator” refers to somebody who is already part of the community; perhaps well-respected and connected to others, they are deeply involved with the community, they know the issues that their people face, and they already have the trust and respect of many people in the community.

Why use insider mediators?

They are people who know the conflict, the culture and the dynamics between groups well. Not only that, but they are highly committed individuals who will continue to remain in the conflict situation after international envoys have left. The legitimacy and influence that they already have in their communities make them powerful forces for change, and they are often able to liaise both with members of the community and with various levels of government.

Selecting Mediators/Facilitators

The most effective people to facilitate a mediation or dialogue process might not be immediately obvious. It is important to take the time to select individuals who possess the right qualities for facilitation. This is ideally somebody who:

- Has connections/relationships in the local community
- Is well respected and trusted;
- Has the ability to be impartial and speak honestly to each side of a conflict;
- Is a good listener;
- Is empathic, able to understand several points of view and uncover the true needs and feelings of involved parties;
- Is able to explore and help parties themselves explore multiple solutions to an issue or conflict;
- In certain societies, has enough status and reputation to be able to influence members of the community;
- Are as impartial or multi-partial as possible, not taking sides but ensure the needs of all involved are fully brought forward and respected (for example, appointing a mediator or member of a peace committee who is also the leader of a political party would be problematic)⁴.

⁴ These points are largely adapted from *Supporting Insider Mediations: Strengthening Resilience to Conflict and Turbulence*. (2014) UNDP.

Women, Mediation and Dialogue

While it is common / standard to identify women as being affected by war and violence – and in Nineveh by extensive abduction, rape and sexual violence – far less is done to respect, support and empower women as leaders in peacebuilding, mediation, dialogue and recovery. United Nations Resolution **1325** stresses the importance of women's full and equal participation as active agents in preventing and resolving violent conflicts and in peacebuilding, peacekeeping and peacemaking. UN Resolution **1889** calls for concrete measures to strengthen women's participation at all stages of peace processes – including direct involvement in planning, preparation and implementation of disarmament, demobilisation and integration programmes.

Around the world women have played leading roles in bringing about mediation, dialogue and peace processes – at local and national levels, and in processes of healing and recovery between former enemies and combatants. Inclusion of women in mediation and peace processes has been shown to increase both the chances of success, and the durability of agreements reached.

Youth, Mediation and Dialogue

United Nations Resolution **2250** recognises the tremendous importance and role youth play in mediation,

dialogue and peacebuilding and calls upon all governments and member states to give active support for the participation, empowerment and engagement of youth in peacebuilding. Whereas youth make up both the majority of combatants and the overwhelming majority of those affected by armed conflict and violence, they have also shown – in conflicts all over the world – the incredible role they can play in preventing violence, engaging in mediation and dialogue, and supporting recovery, reconciliation and healing *during* and *after* war.

Whereas traditional structures and values in communities may often limit or reduce the role women and youth play in governance and decision-making structures and processes and conflict management processes, *historical experience* around the world has shown that the empowerment, participation and leadership of women and youth in peace processes is critical to ending war and violence, strengthening community cohesion and reconciliation, and consolidating lasting peace.

Case Study: Kenya, Women & Local Peacemaking

“Kenya’s 2008 peace agreement strengthened and formalized the role of local peace committees in identifying and addressing emerging tensions. Many of these structures emerged from local concerns and initiatives, but were able to draw upon State resources following the agreement. The support provided by the State, especially through independent commissions such as the National Cohesion and Integration Commission, was non-partisan and fair, and strengthened the capacities of local leadership. During the constitutional referendum of 2010, for example, local mediators identified and responded to up to 200 potential flashpoints that could have generated violence.

The work of the local peace committees also provided an opportunity for the Mandeleo na Wanawake Organization – Kenya’s largest women’s network – to contribute to local peacemaking initiatives through their relations with committee members, or through membership in the committees themselves. The Organization identified roles that women could play, especially in the area of trauma healing and advocacy for peace, and systematically teamed up with local peace committees to implement these roles.

Case Study: Women, Mediation & Return of IDPs

“In Timor-Leste between 2010 and 2013, UN and bilateral partners provided assistance to help train local level mediators – primarily women and youth. These local level mediators were then deployed to help resolve land-related conflicts precipitated by the return of Internally Displaced Persons (IPDs) and refugees. The mediation process assisted nearly 13,000 families to return to their communities. Subsequently, international assistance was provided to the Ministry of Social Solidarity to establish a Department of Peacebuilding, where these mediators now form part of the country’s standing capacity to address such challenges.”

See: *Supporting Insider Mediations: Strengthening Resilience to Conflict and Turbulence*. (2014) UNDP

Part 3: Reconciliation, Healing & Trauma Recovery

There is no handy roadmap for reconciliation. There is no short cut or simple prescription for healing the wounds and divisions of a society in the aftermath of sustained violence. Creating trust and understanding between former enemies is a supremely difficult challenge. It is, however, an essential one to address in the process of building a lasting peace. Examining the painful past, acknowledging it and understanding it, and above all transcending it together, is the best way to guarantee that it does not – and cannot – happen again.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu



Healing, Trauma Recovery and Reconciliation are amongst the most difficult things to discuss, and even more difficult to do. They're also some of the most important. Unfortunately, very often after war governments and leadership prefer to 'move on' and not address what has happened during the war, or seek 'victor's justice' where all blame and responsibility is placed on the actor / group / community that has been 'defeated', rather than seeking to address the extremely difficult and challenging task of healing from conflicts, divisions, violence and injustices which may have deeper roots and background, and working for reconciliation and healing for all parties. How these issues are dealt with cannot be 'imported' from the outside – they have to come forward from the efforts of people in Nineveh themselves, and have roots in the soil, culture, identity, needs and hopes and dreams for the future of the people of Nineveh. There is no easy answer or solution. Finding how to deal with what happened during the war – including genocide, rape, killing, and displacement – and how to do so in ways that are fair, just, and lay the foundations for lasting peace and coexistence, takes wisdom, courage, empathy and perseverance.

A Starting Point

There is no single 'roadmap' or 'approach' for how to do reconciliation, healing and trauma recovery in the aftermath of wide-spread and sustained violence. There are, however, some things that have been learned that can help communities think through how they wish to approach these issues.

1. Failure to develop approaches to reconciliation and healing after violence can often lay the seeds for future war. No matter how difficult it may be, if real reconciliation is not attempted than anger and blame from one war can fester and become the foundations for the next;
2. There is often no 'black' and 'white' or simple division between 'perpetrators' and 'victims'. While there may be very clear victims – those who have been killed, raped, abducted, tortured, displaced – often 'perpetrators' – those who have carried out violent acts – have themselves suffered, possibly having lost loved ones or been directly or indirectly affected in previous incidents of fighting and violence;
3. No single structure, process or institutions is 'sufficient'. Even the best 'Truth and Reconciliation Commissions' have not been able to deal with all of the visible and invisible impacts and effects of violence on the society. Multiple structures and approaches at different levels are necessary.
4. There's no 'one path' to healing and reconciliation, and it cannot be forced or imposed upon people. Providing the right space, ensuring safety, recognition of people's needs and experiences, and not demonizing or ostracizing survivors and those affected are important. Promotion of a *culture of healing and reconciliation* by leadership, survivors and societal leaders (women, tribal, religious leaders, media, civil society) can play an important role in enabling communities – and individuals – to heal and recover
5. Community-based reconciliation, healing and trauma recovery processes are *essential*. National processes or processes based in capitals cannot reach everybody. Developing community-based processes gives greater space and opportunity for people to take part.
6. Apology and recognition matter. Without them, reconciliation and healing is often much more difficult if not impossible.

The Record

While there have been some extraordinary successes, often at local community levels, there is no 'golden' formula or recipe for reconciliation and healing. Not all processes work – some may even increase antagonism and hostility or enemy images between communities. **All** processes have challenges and face difficulties. As noted above, no single institution or process is enough to deal with the full spectrum of needs for healing, trauma recovery and reconciliation in a community or country that has faced such extensive violence. Importantly: the approach to healing and reconciliation *within* a community or country **needs to come from that community / country**. It has to be embedded in and grow from the culture, hopes, aspirations, ownership and work of the people themselves. At the same time, 'home grown' often isn't enough, and may lead communities to adopting approaches that can have dangerous and serious risks. Given the breadth of experiences there have been globally, it is important to learn from what has 'worked', what hasn't, and why, to try and help communities create their own approach that is right for them.

The Absence of Reconciliation Can Create the Conditions for Future Wars⁵

Countries with no reconciliation process: 91% went back to war

Countries with reconciliation process: 64% did not return to violent conflict

Goals of Dealing with the Past⁶

Communities may have different 'goals' when developing how they wish to approach what has happened during war, violence, genocide and displacement. These may include (but are not limited to):

1. National / Community Reconciliation
2. Inter-Personal Reconciliation
3. Personal / Community / Societal Healing
4. Ending Impunity
5. Putting in Place Protections Against Future Abuses & Preventing Future Violence / Atrocities
6. Outlining the roles / responsibilities of all actors (including the state and broader society)
7. Acknowledgement of what was done, what people experienced, what happened
8. Knowledge / truth about what took place
9. Peace
10. Enabling survivors and communities to move forward
11. Improving how the community deals with diversity, difference and conflict

What types of 'crimes' can reconciliation and healing approaches address?

Communities sometimes feel that what they have experienced is too terrible for healing or reconciliation to ever take place. In different contexts though, healing and reconciliation have been used to address⁷:

<input type="checkbox"/> Crimes against humanity <ul style="list-style-type: none">• murder• extermination• enslavement• deportation• severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law• torture• rape• sex slavery• forced prostitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• and all other forms of severe sexual violence, persecution enforced or other inhuman acts of a similar nature <input type="checkbox"/> Genocide <input type="checkbox"/> War crimes <input type="checkbox"/> Gross violations of human rights (torture, disappearances committed by state or non-state agencies) <input type="checkbox"/> Associated violations (violating a corpse after death, sexual harassment including threats of rape, deprivation of essentials such as medical attention, ruin of business, intimidation by dismissal from work)
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⁵ William J. Longe and Peter Brecke *War and Reconciliation: Reason and Emotion in Conflict Resolution*

⁶ International IDEA *Reconciliation After Violent Conflict: A Handbook*

⁷ International IDEA *Reconciliation After Violent Conflict: A Handbook*

- forced pregnancy and sterilization

Dealing with Trauma & Trauma Recovery

The word “trauma” comes from the Greek word “to wound”. Trauma can be seen as an emotional - psychological wound that results from highly stressful or horrifying events, for example war, violence or rape. When individuals experience a lot of suffering and are overwhelmed by/unable to cope with what has happened to them, they may experience traumatic stress. Trauma can be caused by a single event, or by ongoing or repeated events. The “memory” of this crisis can stay in the brain for years afterwards, leading to a range of reactions. Symptoms and experiences of **Traumatic Stress Syndrome (TSS)** can include:

- ☐ **Re-experiencing** the traumatic event (e.g. flashbacks and dreams);
- ☐ **Avoidance** (e.g. avoiding any thoughts, feelings or physical reminders of the trauma);
- ☐ **Negative cognitions** (e.g. self-blame, loss of interest in activities, memory problems)
- ☐ **Arousal** (e.g. aggressive, reckless or self-destructive behaviour).⁸

Other conditions can include: panic attacks, insomnia, phobias, depression, low self-esteem, eating disorders, substance misuse, neglect/violence towards one’s children, suicidal conditions.

Rape, Sexual Violence and Trauma

Survivors of rape and sexual violence are often more prone to extreme or severe traumatic stress than those who have experienced other forms of conflict-based violence⁹. As well as traumatic stress syndrome the psychological consequences of being raped can include: fear, sadness, guilt, anger, anxiety, physical symptoms with no medical explanation, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, and self-blame.

In societies where virginity is highly valued or mandatory for marriage, the loss of virginity in young girls can cause a great deal of distress. As well as these psychological effects, it is important to consider that survivors may experience physical injuries from their rape, STDs, and pregnancies¹⁰. The trauma caused by rape can also have devastating effects on personal relationships. Those who have experienced rape can lose the ability to function sexually, which can cause issues within a marriage. A baby conceived through rape may also end up with an insecure attachment style as the mother finds it difficult to bond with her child - a constant reminder of what happened to her.¹¹ Sexual violence or rape may never be discussed within a marriage due to the social consequences. In many societies, rape victims are blamed or seen as unclean, with fiancés or husbands leaving them. This leads to their exclusion and rejection from society, which can in turn lead to poverty and further danger.¹² Additionally, many women who do report their rapes end up being blamed, shamed or even ostracized, even when societies may at first ‘take up’ and ‘champion’ their cause as victims – causing further trauma.¹³

The lack of an outlet to talk about their experience and the lack of redress can cause **secondary torture** for many victims, as they burn for justice and redress but are unable to act.

An issue that is often not spoken of is of **male** rape; Freedom From Torture describe the devastating consequences that being raped can have on a man’s sense of sexuality and manhood, leading to a loss of identity and a feeling of emasculation. Men may then feel the need to “prove” their manhood against either women or men, and the desire to restore their honour can make revenge attacks more

⁸ <http://www.dsm5.org/Documents/PTSD%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

⁹ Kuwert, P., Glaesmer, H., Eichhorn, S., Grundke, E., Pietrzak, R. H., Freyberger, H. J., & Klauer, T. (2014). Long-term effects of conflict-related sexual violence compared with non-sexual war trauma in female world war II survivors: a matched pairs study. *Archives of sexual behavior*, 43(6), 1059-1064.

¹⁰ Freedom from Torture: Rape as a Method of Torture - http://www.freedomfromtorture.org/sites/default/files/documents/rape_singles2.pdf

¹¹ From Bowlby’s attachment theory, this means the child would be either overly dependent or overly independent in their relationships with others - <https://internal.psychology.illinois.edu/~rcfrale/attachment.htm>

¹² Freedom from Torture: Rape as a Method of Torture - http://www.freedomfromtorture.org/sites/default/files/documents/rape_singles2.pdf

¹³ Campbell, R., & Raja, S. (1999). Secondary victimization of rape victims: Insights from mental health professionals who treat survivors of violence. *Violence and victims*, 14(3), 261-275.

of a likelihood. If **children or adolescents** are raped, their development can be stunted, fear and anxiety can become ever-present, and they might also dissociate from themselves.¹⁴

Societal Trauma

Trauma is not just something that happens to individuals. Entire communities and societies can also be traumatised by events. Collective or societal trauma can cause widespread fear or anger and calls for revenge – which can be transmitted to the next generation if not dealt with properly.¹⁵ Particularly, when a group shares an identity - ethnicity, religion, nationality - identification with this group can lead to sharing its glories and its traumas. Stories passed on through generations can feed old hatred and make reconciliation increasingly difficult. Sometimes trauma is even “**woven into the canvas of the ethnic or large group tent, and becomes an inseparable part of the group’s identity**”¹⁶ or seen as something sacred, not to be released or desecrated¹⁷, enhancing the group’s feelings of victimhood and resentment/anger towards the other group. The emotional pain caused by trauma can be turned inward, leading to damaged self-esteem or self harm. It can also be turned outwards, leading to a desire for revenge and further violence within families and the community.¹⁸

How to heal from trauma

It can be difficult to recover from trauma if one’s basic needs are unmet, for example in situations of continuing displacement, poverty or danger. However, a vital part of reconciliation is to work on healing the wounds created by trauma. If these wounds are not addressed, they can fester and lead to resentment, further violence, and make true, sustainable peace impossible. In this sense, any attempt at reconciliation must honour and acknowledge the role of trauma and work towards healing it. According to Judith Herman, there are three key factors required for healing from trauma:

1. **Safety** - not only physical and material security, but emotional safety. For this reason it is important for participants in any healing or trauma recovery process to feel safe and for boundaries to be clearly set. Participants should never feel pushed to do or say anything they do not want to do. It is also difficult to heal from trauma while danger is still present;
2. **Remembrance and Mourning** - especially relevant to those who have lost a loved one, but also includes being able to come to terms with what happened. In war and conflict situations, people often do not have time to adequately mourn their losses; and
3. **Reconnection** - creating a new identity and new relationships after being affected by the trauma. Identity can be seriously wounded by trauma, so it is important to focus on integrating the trauma into a new identity¹⁹.

Other key elements for trauma healing include:

Knowledge and understanding - the Healing and Rebuilding our Communities initiative²⁰ in Burundi and Rwanda have found that learning about trauma and its consequences can help people to relate to others and to realise that they are not alone; it can be a relief to know that others are suffering in similar ways and make it easier to open up to a group about their experiences.

Reintegration of body and soul - trauma can often cause dissociation between the body and the mind. A large part of therapies focusing on trauma healing look at “refinding” the damaged soul and

¹⁴ Freedom from Torture: Rape as a Method of Torture - http://www.freedomfromtorture.org/sites/default/files/documents/rape_singles2.pdf

¹⁵ Volkan - Opening Address, XIII International Congress for International Association of Group Psychotherapy, August, 1998.

TRANSGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSIONS AND CHOSEN TRAUMAS - <http://www.vamikvolkan.com/Transgenerational-Transmissions-and-Chosen-Traumas.php>

¹⁶ Volkan - <http://www.vamikvolkan.com/Transgenerational-Transmissions-and-Chosen-Traumas.php>

¹⁷ Rutayisire - Rwanda: Repentance and Forgiveness – Pillars of Genuine Reconciliation. (in Kalayjian & Paloutzian, Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Psychological Pathways to Conflict Transformation and Peace Building)

¹⁸ Kalayjian - Forgiveness in Spite of Denial, Revisionism, and Injustice. (in Kalayjian & Paloutzian, Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Psychological Pathways to Conflict Transformation and Peace Building)

¹⁹ Herman, J. L. (1997). *Trauma and recovery*. Basic books.

²⁰ HROC – Healing and Rebuilding our Communities: TRAINING MANUAL - A Guide for Leaders. Friends Peace House/Urugo rw’Amohoro (Rwanda), Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities (HROC) (Burundi) and African Great Lakes Initiative of the Friends Peace Teams – USA. <http://agliftp.org/publications/articles/hroc/pdf/HROCTrainingLeaders.pdf>

integrating it into a new identity, into part of the individual - and also the family's and community's - narratives²¹ (see case study: Dance Therapy in Sierra Leone).

Acceptance - pushing somebody to accept or forgive a traumatic experience can have extremely negative consequences. However, a key part of healing involves being able to acknowledge and accept what happened. This may take years and is a very personal decision that must come from a deep commitment to moving forward²². Similarly, for perpetrators, being able to confess to their actions can bring feelings of peace and release.

Faith/Hope/Meaning – faith, religion, hope or a sense of purpose and meaning – such as engaging in peacebuilding – can play a big part in healing. Humans are naturally meaning-making, trying to make sense of the world around them - war, conflict and sexual violence can destroy this sense of coherence and seriously challenge one's beliefs about the world. Hope and purpose can provide a sense of meaning when nothing else makes sense.²³

Compassionate listening - asking probing questions can re-traumatise a survivor/victim. Effective, active listening can be a powerful way to deepen understanding, rebuild relationships and help somebody to heal. This means true listening without judgement, not waiting to interrupt or speak.²⁴ Listening Circles and Survivors Groups often play important roles in helping survivors feel heard and listened to.

Case Study: Dance Therapy in Sierra Leone

David Alan Harris works with former child soldiers in Sierra Leone. After the civil war, many ex-soldiers struggled with violent impulses and trauma, while their community feared and shunned them. The horror of what they had done caused many ex-soldiers to dissociate from their bodies and their experiences. Using dance therapy to restore the dissociation these children had been forced to create between their minds and bodies, they were able to begin healing from the trauma caused by the violence they had been part of.

“Enhancing mindfulness, or reunifying mind with body in a way that cultivates awareness of being in the present moment, the here- and-now, is thus posited as an act that both precedes and informs symbolization, and in turn opens the way to recovery” says Harris. Over time, these young people put together a play which demonstrated what they had experienced and which asked the community to take them back as their own children. A very emotional reunion followed, where the community were finally able to see the ex-soldiers as humans, as children, and as wounded members of their community.
[http://www.global-](http://www.global-peacebuilding.org/)

Who are Survivors / Victims?

The definition of who are ‘survivors’ / ‘victims’ can have significant implications for reparations, legal redress, and healing, trauma recovery and reconciliation processes. Some often included as ‘survivors’/‘victims’ are:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Those who have been killed (victims) | <input type="checkbox"/> Bereaved / Loss of Loved Ones |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tortured | <input type="checkbox"/> Forcibly Displaced – Internally & Refugees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sexually Assaulted / Raped | <input type="checkbox"/> Threatened, Intimidated, Humiliated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Injured, Wounded, Maimed | <input type="checkbox"/> Impacted by systematic discrimination |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kidnapped, Abducted, Detained | <input type="checkbox"/> Perpetrators |

Some important points:

1. Be aware of the many consequences of selecting a particular political and legal definition of a “victim” / “impacted”
2. Respect the effected person’s very personal perception of what has happened to them.
3. Recognize that an effected / impacted person’s recovery proceeds through several different stages.

²¹ Freedom from Torture: Rape as a Method of Torture - http://www.freedomfromtorture.org/sites/default/files/documents/rape_singles2.pdf

²² Puljek-Shank, Amela. ‘Trauma and Reconciliation.’ In Helena Rill, Tamara Smidling & Ana Bitoljanu, eds. 20 Pieces of Encouragement for Awakening and Change. Peacebuilding in the Region of the Former Yugoslavia.

²³ Green. Reconciliation and Forgiveness in Divided Societies: A Path of Courage, Compassion, and Commitment; in Kalayjian & Paloutzian, Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Psychological Pathways to Conflict Transformation and Peace Building

²⁴ Handbook on Human Security: A Civil-Military-Police Curriculum (2015). The Alliance for Peacebuilding, The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict and The Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame. / ²⁴ Machel, G. (2001). The impact of war on children. London: Hurst & Company

4. Provide for collective measures in the areas of health care, education and housing that assist whole communities and thus include the many who fall outside reparation programmes.
5. Listen to the needs of effected / impacted who stay as refugees in neighbouring / foreign countries.

Importantly, victim-survivor empowerment can sometimes become an obstacle to peaceful coexistence and mutual trust. Those who perceive themselves as victims may organize opposition to measures that are aimed at reconciling former warring parties, become trapped in the past and the suffering they experienced, and encourage sectarian divisions or partisan groupings. Working to ensure the needs of survivors and what they have experienced are recognized, understood and authentically addressed is important. Taking measure to ensure this can happen in a context of broader reconciliation and peacebuilding is essential.

Too often, the experience of being a victim / survivor, if not addressed, can give rise to future cycles of aggression and violence.

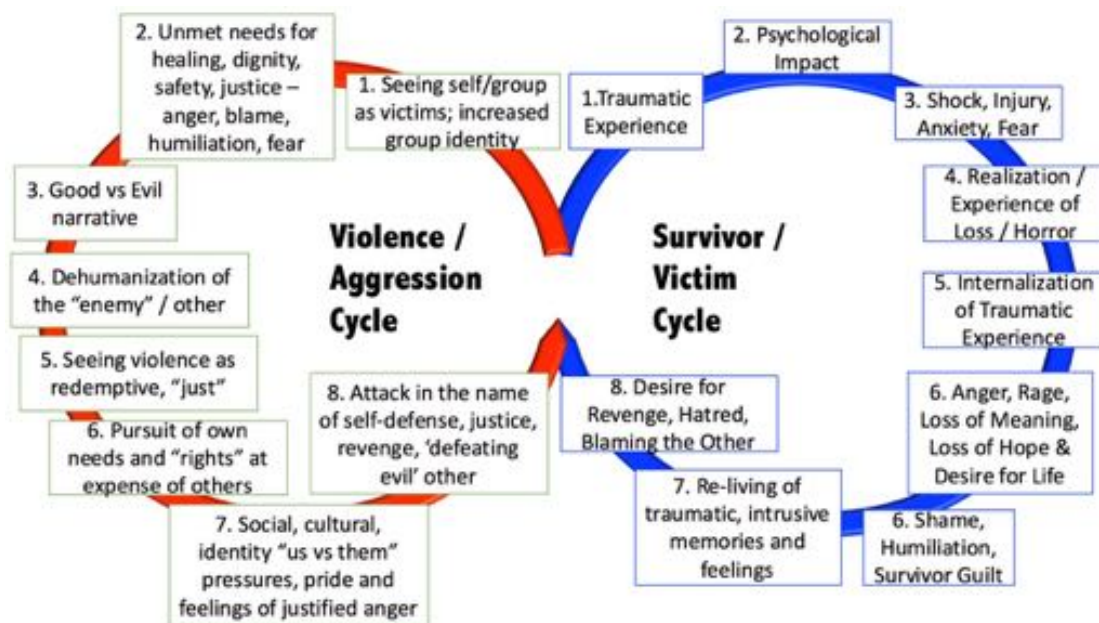


Figure 1 Aggression Cycle (Adapted and Developed from Yoder 2005)

Approaches to Reconciliation²⁵

Approaches to *reconciliation* in a community may draw on several perspectives, including:

1. **RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE:** focus on truth-telling, forgiveness, apology, confession and repentance, healing, a re-birth of society and moral reflection of individuals as well as communities
2. **PEACEBUILDING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION PERSPECTIVE:** focus on building new and peaceful relationships, bridging divides, establishing trust, among others, through processes of accountability and acknowledgment of responsibility of the past.
3. **HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE:** focus on justice (holding perpetrators accountable through prosecution) prevention of future occurrence of violations through the reform of abusive institutions, and the promotion and respect of the rule of law.
4. **NATIONALISTIC, POLITICAL AND DEMOCRATIC PERSPECTIVE:** focus on building societies, connecting with one another in the spirit of democratic citizenship, promoting political culture, power-sharing, and legitimacy of political institutions, including political opposition, constitute reconciliation.
5. **ECONOMIC WELL-BEING PERSPECTIVE:** focus on of reparations, restitution and/or broader provision of economic goods (employment, infrastructure, and industries)

²⁵ Developed from Oduro, 2007

Communities may also take different orientations to how they approach reconciliation and dealing with the past. 4 that are often identified are:²⁶

State Oriented Approaches	Focusing on the responsibility of the state in perpetrating or carrying out crimes and atrocities or the actions or inactions by the state which have created the conditions for war, violence or genocide to take place
Societal Oriented Approaches	Includes restorative and community-based approaches to reconciliation, recovery and healing – focusing on addressing and overcoming the divisions and trauma in society and healing relations between communities as well as identification and recovery of the truth: what happened, how and why
Survivor Oriented	Focus on healing and trauma recovery for survivors; psycho-social support; compensation and symbolic measures; truth recovery; medical, economic and other support as required
Perpetrator Oriented	Can focus on a wide range of measures for accountability, acknowledgement and reparations including prosecution; conditional amnesty; reparation measures; acknowledgement and apology; rehabilitation and even reintegration programmes as well as psycho-social healing and trauma counselling and recovery for perpetrators

Approaches may also include some form of combination of these 4.

Approaches to Justice²⁷

One thing many survivors and communities are very clear on is ‘there can be no peace, no reconciliation or forgiveness without justice’. The question is what ‘justice’ do you mean, and what justice do you want to:

1. Recover and heal from what has been done; and
2. Build a future beyond war and violence and with just and lasting peace, social cohesion and coexistence between and within communities

Four different ‘types’ or approaches to justice are commonly identified. All or more of these in varying degrees may be relevant.

Retributive	Focuses on ‘punishing’ wrongdoers without attempting to reconstruct relationships or restoring cohesion and coexistence in the community where conflict has occurred.
Restorative	Focuses on accountability and reparations for what has been done together with seeking to heal the wounds, injustice or pain and suffering caused by violence between those directly involved/affected <i>and</i> (often) the broader community as well.
Regulatory	Seeks to prevent future occurrence of violence / unjust acts through establishing fair ‘rules’ (laws) and norms of behavior and interaction that are accepted, seen as just, and meet the legitimate needs of all parties.
Social	Focuses addressing the actual <i>structural</i> and <i>institutional</i> factors, root causes and drivers of conflict, injustice, inequality and abuse of power that may have given rise to the conflict and ‘acts’ of violence / war crimes / crimes against humanity in the first place – includes addressing legal, political, economic, and social structures, processes and systems to ensure inclusion, fairness, rights and justice for all communities.

There is no simple answer to how to approach reconciliation and healing within Nineveh. There are not enough prisons to imprison all of those who have committed crimes, nor would that necessarily achieve real

²⁶ Adapted and developed further from: Reyhner L., Paffenholz, T. (2001). *Peace-building: A Field Guide*

²⁷ Developed and Adapted by DPO from Bloomfield, *On Good Terms: Clarifying Reconciliation*

justice and healing. Should only those from 'one side' be accountable for what they have done or should all? How will we deal with 5, 8, 9 year old children who have been forced to fight and even kill, while also experiencing extreme violence themselves. How can we deal with all these questions and more, while going beyond the war and violence and laying foundations for real, sustainable and just peace for *all* the people of Nineveh.

Case Study: The Agape Project - Colombia

A reconciliation project among victims of the armed conflict in Colombia and child-soldiers who, legally in Colombia, are also defined as victims of the armed conflict. Initiated by a group of Colombians living in Canada, the project was realized fully by volunteers, who are kidnap victims, refugees, students and other members of the Colombian community in Montreal. Members of the Colombian community directly affected by the war and who had arrived in Canada as refugees were also invited to participate.

*The Agape Project was based on the belief that **peace in Colombia is the responsibility of all its citizens**, including those who have emigrated.*



Agape refers to the **love that is universal and unconditional**, regardless of the merits of the recipient. This love is not necessarily a feeling; **it is an act of will**, an intention and an action that looks for the wellbeing of others. It is this attitude of acceptance that Agape aspires to encourage.

Objectives:

- to provide a space for reconciliation among different victims of the armed conflict in Colombia;
- to promote training opportunities for the child-soldiers in an area of their interest;
- to break the pattern of rejection that often accompanies these youngsters;
- to offer the former child-soldiers an opportunity to experience life in a context of peace;
- to facilitate reconciliation amongst child-soldiers and members of the Colombian community.

The Agape Project

- ❑ Different organizations, institutions and enterprises have provided their facilities for the training of the former child-soldiers in areas of their interest.
- ❑ Companies owned by Colombians and Canadians have opened their doors to welcome them. To date the participants on the programme have had access to an organic farm, a tropical juice factory, a leather shop and different restaurants.
- ❑ At first the Colombian community viewed the former child-soldiers as potential threats and shunned the project as well the youngsters. By the third year the community started to participate actively in the programme by getting involved in fundraising, providing training opportunities, attending meetings in the presence of the youngsters, participating in reconciliation workshops and ultimately opening up their homes to the former child-soldiers.

Agape's approach to reconciliation

- ❑ reconciliation is a part of a set of different issues like social and individual suffering, forgiveness, witnessing, reconstruction of the social fabric, healing and restitution of human rights.
- ❑ while being at the opposite end of the armed conflict, share common grounds, as both the refugee families and child-soldiers are legally considered victims
- ❑ reconciliation as proposed by Agape searches common grounds where refugees of war and former child-soldiers can meet to share their experiences. Indirectly the families as well as the child-soldiers are also victims of the state that failed to protect them. On the other hand the under-aged soldiers are also victims of the conflict but from a different viewpoint

Agape's approach to reconciliation

- ❑ the reconciliation process takes place by facilitating the understanding of the emotional realities and circumstances of the former child soldiers as well as those of the other victims of the war.
- ❑ the child-soldiers are not only beneficiaries of the project, but also active agents and promoters of

Source: Serna, D.R. & Ines Marchand, I., *Agape: A reconciliation initiative by members of civil society and former child-soldiers*

Case Study: Mozambique – Traditional Community Healing²⁸

After a prolonged and costly war (almost one million civilians killed), both the political elites, soldiers and victims ‘tactically’ agreed not to talk about the past but to reconcile by way of talking to one another and living together. Instead of instituting formal transitional justice mechanisms to address the past, a **traditional community healing process** (involving traditional healers) was promoted to **repair wounds, facilitate reintegration of soldiers into communities** and perform **ceremonial cleansing** in order to set the stage for reconciliation between individuals (victims and perpetrators) and also between individuals (perpetrators) and their returning communities.



Case Study: Peru – Combatants, Survivors & Returning Refugees



²⁹At the end of the war in Peru survivors, returning refugees and members of the former “Shining Path” guerrilla movement – which had been called a ‘terrorist organization’ by the government – were disappointed in the absence of proper national measures for reconciliation and addressing what took place during the war. They took it upon themselves to improve relations between parties on a local level. In doing so, former combatants subjected themselves to the judgement of village elders, who refrained from imposing punishments and who focused instead on reintegrating of combatants back into the community.

Case Study: Khulumani Victim Support Group – Survivors Changing Society³⁰

“The Khulumani (Speak-out) Victim Support Group was formed in anticipation of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to assist survivors to gain access to the TRC. It was founded on the premise that encouraging people to “speak out” about the atrocities of the past was psychologically beneficial and would advance their goal of being recognized as victims of apartheid violence. The group had a strong focus on advocacy activity with the intention of keeping the TRC and the reconciliation process victim-centred. At the height of the TRC process there were 35 Khulumani groups operating as a powerful voice for victims in the TRC process. As the group developed, its work became broader than simply focusing on “speaking out” and influencing the TRC process.



In some areas, local people were trained in basic counseling and small-income generation skills (e.g., sewing and gardening to grow food); some projects now even help victims of ordinary crime and not only “political” victims. This pattern, whereby the work of the group broadens as the environment changes, is also typical of similar groups in other parts of the world. In 1997 the Khulumani Group developed a play entitled **The Story I am about to Tell**. Three members of Khulumani acted along with three professional actors, and the play was taken to communities as a way of educating people about the past.

²⁸ Hayner in *Unspeakable Truths: Confronting State Terror and Atrocity*

²⁹ Huhle (2004)

³⁰ International IDEA http://base.modop.org/en/corpus_entretien/fiche-entretien-10.html

Such activities are linked directly to a healing agenda, where social justice is an integral part of the process. “Speaking out” was not simply about making the individual feel better, but was aimed at changing society.”

