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Training for Conflict Transformation – An Overview of Approaches and Resources

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1. Introduction

A growing number of people who are interested or involved in conflict transformation are looking for opportunities to expand and refine their skills. They are faced with a variety of offers – and there is little guidance for choosing from the wide and diverse array of organisers and formats.

This article aims to offer an organising overview. It introduces different training agencies and approaches and provides an extensive reference section as a first step. The article adds to prior contributions to the Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation: Schell-Faucon (2001) investigated facets and challenges of peace education programmes. Sprenger (2005) reflected from a trainer's perspective on cornerstones of good practice for achieving social impact by training individuals. I take a step back and survey the field through the eyes of a prospective "trainee".[1]

Trainees usually come from either one of three groups (the boundaries admittedly blur):

1) People who engage in constructive, nonviolent conflict transformation, and who come from or work in regions in which conflict is, or has been, fought out violently. When considering training opportunities, this group of (local or international) "activists" generally looks for capacity-building which will prove useful in achieving a tangible transformation of violent conflict.

2) People who aim to become trainers for conflict transformation themselves (either as a local trainer or a trainer working internationally). This group of "potential trainers" usually looks for both content-based and educational skills-training and "training on the/for the job".

3) People who – in a more indirect, yet connected sense – work in the environment of violent conflict. They include staff of national and international agencies, donors, decision-makers, etc. This broad and heterogeneous group of "interested third parties" often takes to conflict transformation training in order to become more informed about, or sensitised for, conflict transformation work. Their expectations centre on conflict analysis and basic skills which may or may not be implemented in their day-to-day job.

While all these trainee groups are bound to have somewhat different expectations and needs, there are questions that arise for all of them: Who is offering training for which target audience? Which training designs, contents and methods are commonly applied? What are strengths and shortcomings of training in this field? Are there criteria that can help assess training for conflict transformation? What challenges remain, and what recommendations can be made for improving training offers? These are the organising questions of the following sections.

Section 2 reviews categories and examples of training agencies and takes a closer look at training design, contents and methods. Section 3 presents lessons learned and remaining challenges.

1 The emphasis here is on conflict transformation training, rather than on training for human rights, humanitarian aid or development cooperation in which conflict transformation may be a module among many.

Section 4 focuses on the most important next steps. Section 5, finally, provides an extended reference section on tools and methods, further information and contacts and analyses of training programmes.

2. The Market

The first challenge confronting someone who is interested in training for conflict transformation is to find a good trainer/training institute and a suitable training format. In order to do this, it helps to develop a sense for what types of agency offer trainings and an understanding of the basic components of training workshops. So here is a rough guide to these two areas. All agencies and organisations referred to in the following are listed – along with their websites – in the references section of this article (see 5.2 *Further Information and Contacts*).

2.1 Agencies

2.1.1 Training for Activists

Training in the area of peacebuilding and conflict transformation is offered by a great number of trainers and organisations. The following highlights typical examples and points to useful "marketplaces".[2]

In general, it is possible to distinguish professional training institutes – which specialise in delivering tailor-made training courses – and organisations in which training forms but one piece of their strategy. Examples of the former – professionalized training providers, often with an analysis and strategic consulting component – are the US-based NGOs *Conflict Management Group* (now merged with *Mercy Corps*) and *CDR Associates*, the internationally operating *Coverdale Institute*, Johan Galtung's *Transcend* based at different sites throughout Europe and the US, *Responding to Conflict* in the UK or *Partners for Democratic Change* (with a focus on South Eastern Europe). Examples of the latter – conflict resolution organisations which also provide training courses when circumstances call for it – are the US-based NGO *Search for Common Ground*, UK's *Conciliation Resources*, UK-based *International Alert* or the South African *Centre for Conflict Resolution* (CCR).

There are, moreover, freelance trainers with different specialisations. Many trainers (so-called scholar-practitioners) are affiliated with academic centres: such as *Harvard Law School* and the *Program on Negotiation* (PON), the *Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution* (ICAR) at George Mason University in the US, the Dutch *Clingendael Institute for International Affairs*, the *Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution* (ASPR), Bradford University's *Centre for Conflict Resolution* in the UK and others.

A very useful resource for exploring this large field is the directory of conflict resolution organisations published by the European Center for Conflict Prevention which was updated in

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2 Although care has been taken to include material of non-western provenience, the overview is, due to my own educational and professional background, more deeply informed about concepts and resources used in Europe and North America. All organisations stand as examples for their categories, the lists are by no means complete. Additional sources are welcome and can be submitted to info@berghof-handbook.net.

2005.[3] National platforms and umbrella organisations also provide good initial access to training resources and courses: the *Association for Conflict Resolution* in the USA, the University of Colorado's *Conflict Resolution Consortium* and its resource websites, the German *Plattform Zivile Konfliktbearbeitung*, the *Swiss Peace Foundation*, the *Conflict Resolution Network Canada*, or *CODEP*, *INCORE* and *INTRAC* in the UK.

2.1.2 Training for Trainers

"Training for trainers" workshops are also offered by many organisations or individual trainers. Most organisations that offer basic training courses have added such advanced workshops to their repertoire (see above). Analysis and lessons learned are available in particular for the work of *Responding to Conflict* (RTC) who have, over the years, trained a large number of peace practitioners from all around the world (Fisher et al. 2000); the *Centre for Nonviolent Action* (CNA)'s training for trainers programme (evaluated in Wils and Zupan 2004); and the South African *Centre for Conflict Resolution's* training for trainers programme in Burundi (Arnold 2001).

2.1.3 Third-Party Training

Over the last five to ten years, training for so-called "peace personnel" has received increased attention (Truger 2001). Nowadays, four main types of agency – into which individual trainers and institutes are often integrated on a contractual basis – offer training for international staff:

1. Seconding organisations and recruiting agencies (at national level), e.g. the *Canadian International Peace-keeping Training Centre* (CIPTC); the German *Center for International Peacekeeping Operations* (ZIF) and the Swedish *Folke Bernadotte Academy*; or the *Civilian Peace Service* in Germany (ZFD) which coordinates peace training and prepares staff for secondment mainly in the context of grassroots-level NGO work

2. International organisations – like the *Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe* (OSCE), the *United Nations* (UN) and its agencies, and, increasingly, the *European Union* (EU)

3. Development agencies like German GTZ (*Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit*), Britain's DfID (*Department for International Development*) or Swiss DEZA (*Direktion für Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit*), as well as humanitarian agencies like *Care*, *Oxfam*, the *International Committee of the Red Cross*, etc. who are in the process of mainstreaming conflict management[4] into their programmes

4. Training/research centres, e.g. the *Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution* (ASPR), the Swiss *Center for Peacebuilding* (KOFF) or the *United States Institute of Peace* (USIP)

2.1.4 Academic Institutes and Professional Schools

For some, conflict management also becomes a career choice. Academic and professional programmes in peace and conflict studies have therefore considerably grown in numbers over the last decades.

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3 The directory can be found on the website www.gppac.net, via "network" and "directories", or ordered on CD ROM. It allows searches by keyword, e.g. "training", and by country/region.

4 The field of practice that is associated with peace and conflict studies is plagued by a certain confusion of terms. For the purposes of this article, "conflict management" and "conflict resolution" will be used as the overarching, general category, while "conflict transformation" refers to a specific long-term attempt to shift the processes and underlying structures in dealing with differences towards nonviolence (see Austin et al. 2004, Glossary).

Useful substantive information about programmes can be found at various sources, and there is no shortcut to thorough, personal research. The above-mentioned directories of the European Centre for Conflict Prevention can serve as a starting point; in Germany, the websites of the *Peace Research Information Unit* (PRIUB)[5] present comprehensive information on German and international programmes. Babbitt (1997, 383-385, for the US-context) as well as Miall et al. (1999, chapter 2) provide a good first orientation. Information clearing houses such as the *Conflict Resolution Network Canada,* the *Alliance for Conflict Transformation (ACT)* in the USA or the *Plattform Zivile Konfliktbearbeitung* in Germany also offer information about programmes and prerequisites, as do the websites of the various schools (see references section).

For those who have a stronger interest in the practical than the academic side of conflict transformation or who discover the field later in their careers, programmes by non-academic organisations may present an alternative. Among those offering such programmes are *Responding to Conflict* (UK) or *Transcend* (Europe and USA). If you are looking for certified training programmes in specialised areas, e.g. mediation, the best source of information are umbrella organisations, like the *Bundesverband Mediation* for Germany or the US-*Association for Conflict Resolution*.

2.2 Design, Content and Methods

The design, content and methods applied in training workshops are the focus of this section, since they form an important indicator of what a prospective trainee can expect to learn. Workshop design encompasses timing, the selection of participants and trainers, and the choice and arrangement of the location. In terms of content, it will be most important to look at the mix of topics covered. Teaching methods and materials often mix elements from reading, discussion, simulation and role-play. Evaluation, finally, can be an indicator that the training workshop/seminar is taught with an intention to learn and improve. Each of these choices influences what trainees learn and what they are able to transfer to their personal work environment. In the following, I aim to give some insight into what is generally regarded as good practice.[6]

2.2.1 Workshop Design

Participants – Participants can come from a variety of backgrounds. They can be homogenous groups in terms of organisational or national affiliation. They also can comprise representatives of different parties to a conflict. There is no common recipe, except that most trainers prefer *small groups*, so that intensive interaction is possible, and *mixed groups* (in terms of experience, nationality or seniority), so that learning does not only happen between a trainer and his/her "pupils" but also between trainees/participants. Such learning and exchange is often cited as a particularly powerful and lastingly influential experience in participant feedback (Anderson and Olson 2003, 79; Babbitt 1997, 369/370; Fischer 2001, 59).

Trainers – Trainers for conflict transformation should possess several characteristics: One of the most frequently mentioned is the need to be a conflict-tested personality with their own international field experience. The idea behind this is that unless trainers "have been there" themselves, they lack credibility and authenticity. Beyond this, different groups and individuals will have different needs and preferences. Since it is impossible for any one trainer to be everything

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5 See www.priub.org.
6 The section draws on accounts of trainers and scholar-practitioners (International Alert 1996; Francis 2002a and b; Svensson 2001; Smith, Fisher and Abdi 2001; Babbitt 1997; Abu-Nimer 1998; Fisher 1997a and b), evaluations (Anderson and Olson 2003; Ogonor 2003; Fischer 2001; Charles Stewart Mott Foundation 1999), and my own experience.

to everyone, trainers often work in teams (Sprenger 2005; Francis 2002a; Babbitt 1997; Fisher 1997b). Carefully composed teams (from different ethnopolitical groups, female-male, local-external, prescriptive-elicitive, etc.) have the further advantage that they can model a central value of conflict transformation: respectful and creative cooperation across differences. In regions that have witnessed ethnopolitical conflict and violence, for example, it seems particularly powerful to employ trainer teams that span the ethnopolitical divide: A participant in CNA's programme states, "[t]o have one person from another country in the region in a training is very good. To have a 'Serbian' in the team, who is different than people expected, helps a lot to show that people are different, and that nationality does not matter" (Wils and Zupan 2004, 18).

Timing – Conflict transformation training can last from one or two days (workshops on specific methods, e.g. negotiation) to several weeks; from one-off events to sequenced programmes with multiple modules. What format to choose depends on a trainee's qualification and experience, a needs assessment and the purposes of the training. 5- to 10-day training workshops seem to be most frequently used. In terms of timing sessions within a training workshop and breaks between sessions, most often we find 90 minute segments with 15-30 minute breaks. Breaks and free time are extremely important for the flow of energy and concentration during a workshop and should be generously built into a good curriculum. Especially when training is held for mixed groups from different sides to a conflict, breaks and free time provide an invaluable space for personal encounter.

Location – The choice of where to attend a training workshop can send clear messages about ownership, inclusiveness and empowerment. Johan Svensson (2001) thus advises [training organisers] not to "shy away from the difficult spots". At the same time, it can make as much sense for trainees from areas where violent conflict rages to look at things from a distance or learn from comparative experience, and gather outside the conflict region. More remote locations offer the advantage of allowing for more concentrated group-work, whereas urban locations may be easier to reach and more exciting. A second set of choices relates to the immediate physical surroundings of the training venue: Seating arrangements, sources of light and air, variety of presentation modes, break rooms, food and drink, accessories (pictures, flowers or the like) – all influence the level of energy and concentration of participants and trainers. While only some of these can be assessed ahead of time, it is worth asking organisers for their planned set-up before deciding where to attend training.

2.2.2 Choice of Contents

Introductions and goal-setting, focused sessions, daily feedback and final closure form cornerstones of each workshop. Since conflict transformation explicitly aims to address root causes of violent conflict, conflict analysis has a prominent role in almost all training programmes. Basic/ introductory workshops usually cover the whole set of potential conflict transformation activities. These activities can be grouped along different structuring principles: One such set of principles are the four steps of analysis, strategy, action and learning (Fisher et al. 2000); another are the conflict phases of latent conflict, open conflict, settlement and conflict prevention together with the related skill-sets of awareness raising/group formation and communication, preparation for and implementation of dialogue/negotiation/mediation/reconciliation, and monitoring/reconstruction/ community (re-)building (Francis 2002a and b). Advanced workshops can focus on a great variety of different specialisations. Capacity-building for the internationalised world of conflict transformation can usefully be complemented by modules on advocacy, media-relations, fundraising and proposal writing (Wils and Zupan 2004).

2.2.3 Methods and Materials

Methods – Two methodological ideal-types can be distinguished: the elicitive and the prescriptive approach (Lederach 1997; Fisher 1997; Francis 2002b; Sprenger 2005). *Prescriptive methods* assume the trainer to hold expert knowledge, which can be transferred through lectures and examples (i.e. "a best way to do it"). *Elicitive methods*, on the other hand, assume that both trainers *and* participants hold relevant knowledge and share responsibility for the learning process. The role of an elicitive trainer is to facilitate a joint process of finding the most appropriate response to address a given conflict system. Most trainers and workshops these days apply a mix of elicitive and prescriptive elements.

In this context, a number of general insights have emerged on how to ensure transfer in experiential learning.[7] Basic requirements include "a structured experience, reflection on that experience, and a subsequent experience in which behaviour may be altered based on the prior experience and reflection" (Susskind and Corburn 1999, 16). Learning from analogy – in particular using case studies and simulation – is limited if the context of learning and context of use differ greatly (Gillespie et al. 1999). Comparison, recognition of similarities (which would trigger the newly learned response), and transfer are thus more likely if the difference between teaching material and real-life context decreases and if practice opportunities increase – characteristics of training workshops that can be assessed by a trainee ahead of time.

Materials – Numerous training manuals have been published (see references section, 5.1 *Tools and Methods – Workbooks and Manuals*). Materials for the non-English speaking world are increasingly available. Fewer collections of visual or audio materials or other creative methods (like story-telling, for example) are available internationally.

There is still a shortage of original or thoroughly adapted (i.e. not merely translated) materials for different regional and cultural settings.[8] In a concrete setting, the joint selection of cases and training examples – or their flexible adjustment – is essential, as sloppy work will always backfire. Mohammed Abu-Nimer (1998, 115, fn4) recounts such a case, where Middle Eastern participants could not relate to US-based conflicts:

> "On at least one occasion, participants shared their experience about a North American training team that only changed the names of the parties involved in the conflict. For example, Hasan would not play baseball, Mustafa and Ahmad would not be drunk in a university in Gaza or Jordan, and they would not date different women casually and have conflict around that issue be mediated!"

2.2.4 Evaluating Learning and Impact

Evaluation of trainings often forms the final activity that organisers/trainers and trainees engage in together, yet ideally it helps both partners to discover useful next steps and adjustments to their ways of teaching and learning.

Feedback – Regular feedback (i.e. getting a sense of how things are going, comparing intentions and impact) is a way of staying responsive to trainees' needs. Some trainers hold daily feedback rounds, asking what has worked well and what could be improved. Almost all trainers include feedback rounds and questionnaires at the end of a training event.

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7 The issue of transferring concepts from seminar contexts to real-life situations, and the challenge of ensuring transfer from individual learning and change to social learning and change, are among the most pressing issues in training for conflict transformation (see below and Sprenger 2005).

8 The Handbook on Nonviolent Action (Centre for Nonviolent Action/ Nenad Vukosavljevic 2000) which was published in Serbian/Bosnian/Croatian, Albanian and Macedonian is a remarkable exception.

Evaluation – Evaluation, defined most generally, judges the success of an activity in terms of goal achievement, efficiency and impact (looking at both intended and unintended consequences). These issues have been of growing concern in the field of conflict transformation (Anderson and Olson 2003; Church and Shouldice 2002 and 2003). Both internal evaluation (i.e. by the organising team/organisation) and external evaluation (i.e. by an independent evaluator or evaluation team) are practiced. All forms of evaluation rely on interviews with, or written feedback by, trainees who have participated in training events and implemented training concepts.

Supervision & Individual Coaching – Supervision and coaching (i.e. team or individual reflection guided by a counsellor) are spreading slowly. They create opportunity, space and qualified company to reflect on what is going on in a conflict context, how we try to affect it and how it affects us (trainees, trainers, support staff, donors, etc.) in turn. If tight budgets do not allow for professional coaches (or supervisors) to be brought into a programme, creative and inexpensive alternatives can be used, like networks of peers or Internet chat-rooms.

2.2.5 Special Needs of Training for Trainers Programmes

As Arnold (2001) observes, "there is no shortcut to becoming a good trainer". Training for trainers programmes thus take significant time. Several phases of training and practice can be spread over one or two years to allow for sufficiently deep learning and supervised practice. On-site training phases can last anywhere from 5 days to 10 weeks. The length and depth of single components are usually tailored to the needs, qualifications – and practical constraints (resources, availability) – of participants.

The *number of participants* ideally is small and stable: 8 to 20 per course, trained by a team of two trainers, emerges as a good number.

In training for trainers, opportunities for supervised practice are very important, including safe spaces for experimenting with what has been learned, feedback and coaching in order to develop experience, gain security and develop one's authenticity as a trainer. Alternating joint training and phases of 'homework' back in the trainee's individual professional context ensures that issues of transfer, re-entry, practice and reflection can be addressed.

While these ideals have become more important as conflict management training has been professionalized over the years, it should not be forgotten that in many situations where violent conflict actually is waged, trainers take up the challenge of spreading skills of dealing with conflict nonviolently under precarious conditions. Circumstances often do not allow for the luxury of learning slowly in a safe environment but call for immediate engagement.

Still, as the field of conflict management and transformation has evolved considerably in the past decade, it is useful to turn next to the lessons that have been learned, the good practice that has been implemented, and the challenges that remain.

3. Lessons and Challenges

Training has an important role in the conflict transformation repertoire for several reasons: It can a) sensitise for conflict causes and dynamics in the environment in which one works; and b) strengthen skills for dealing with conflict and the sensitivity for (intended and unintended) consequences of specific activities. Training local activists, training other trainers and training third-parties can, in addition, contribute to a) supporting and strengthening people who work for a shift

towards constructive conflict management, b) build networks of support and empowerment among such people who otherwise may work in isolation from each other, and c) spread sensitivity and skills to more strategically placed people, contributing to creating what is metaphorically referred to as critical mass or critical yeast (Lederach 2005).

In reviewing the quality of training workshops and programmes for conflict transformation, it must be noted that there has been considerable effort to improve the design, implementation and evaluation processes for training events over the past decade. This has resulted in much improved knowledge and occasionally improved practice.

Ten **cornerstones for good practice** have emerged across all contexts:

1) *Baseline Analysis and Needs Assessment* – with the participation of prospective trainees, trainers/training organisations and funders – must shape all of the following components
2) *Goal Formulation* – ideally by all involved – can help to improve strategic focus and appropriate context-sensitivity
3) *Trainee Selection and Preparation* needs to address expectations and commitments and should be transparent to participants
4) *Choosing/Creating an Environment* that is safe, creative and connected to participants' realities is key
5) *Curriculum and Methodology Development* must be tailored to needs and purposes that should be jointly explored
6) *Characteristics of Trainers/Teaching Teams* should model diversity and respectful relationships
7) *Flexible Implementation* should be practiced, i.e. trainers and trainees should come prepared, yet ready to adjust if necessary, and learn to recognize when adjustment is needed
8) *Feedback, Monitoring and Evaluation* need to become regular programme activities that enhance creative learning and further development and evolution of training formats
9) *Supervision and Coaching* can improve individual and team support and reflectiveness
10) *Follow-up/long-term support* is absolutely necessary to improve the sustainability of training interventions

With respect to these cornerstones, a number of **key elements** generally enhance the effectiveness of training (see, among others, Anderson and Olson 2003, chapter 10 and Fischer 1999, 30-38):

- In terms of participants, training *key people* seems more promising than indiscriminately training more people (see below)
- *Smaller groups* allow for work with more lasting effects
- *Joint learning* of those across the divide of conflict who have similar tasks, or work in similar organisational environments, can be very powerful and should be employed more often
- *Cross-cultural* education and training lay foundations for culturally sensitive and informed practice, i.e. mixed groups are generally "richer" (but can also be more challenging to accompany and train)
- It is necessary to *think broadly about relevant skills* (strategic planning, project management, communication, curriculum development, group dynamics, etc.) and integrate them creatively into training for conflict transformation
- *Interactive/participatory/elicitive training methods* are seen as more powerful (yet in some cultures and contexts they may be met with more resistance)
- Building *trust, respect and relationships* between trainees is necessary in order to lead to effective training, especially in contexts of violent conflict

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- *Strategic embedding* of training is absolutely necessary: training workshops that are not part of a broader vision at best remain inconsequential, at worst they can discredit the whole enterprise of nonviolent conflict transformation

While these insights and elements are increasingly well-known and often implemented in training design, there remain a number of crucial shortcomings and challenges. These become particularly pressing if we recall that training for conflict transformation does hope to have an impact on the way in which conflicts are dealt with and transformed: between individuals, within organisations, and in societies in violent conflict. Training, after all, forms the backbone of one of conflict management's primary strategies: capacity-building.

Challenge 1:
Addressing Underlying Assumptions, Theories of Change and Values

Training in contexts of violent conflict can serve many purposes: it can be seen as a relatively risk-free entry point for external actors to work with local activists, it can gradually train a "critical mass" of people to use nonviolent alternatives in inducing social change, or it can equip a wide range of actors, among them staff of international organisations, with conflict-sensitive eyes and ears. Training will always have some effect on the context, so at the outset of training workshops/ programmes, it is important to be aware of assumptions and hypotheses that guide training and capacity-building, as they – consciously or unconsciously – influence their shape and effect.

The most basic assumption is that training can further individual *and* social/political change that will create more peaceful and less violent societies (in terms of attitudes, behaviours and structures). The scope of such envisioned change can vary from small communities to cross-country relations.

There is an embedded assumption, too, that there *are* conceptual and behavioural skills that indeed will improve the way communities and individuals deal with conflict – and that while conflict is an essential dimension of human relationship, violence is not.

We assume that these skills can be taught and learned across cultures, and improved with reflection and practice. And we assume that the application of such skills by the right and/or by enough people will help create more peaceful relations (Anderson and Olsen 2003, 78, introducing the dimensions of More People and Key People; Babbitt 1997, 367/368).

On a different level, all trainees and trainers bring personal and societal values to the training setting that shape their expectations and interactions (Francis 2002b; Lederach 1997). External actors as well as local peacebuilders similarly bring with them diverse and implicit assumptions, aspirations and values. If one is not aware of such underlying assumptions, the training process may run into unexpected resistance and difficulties.

> **Box 1 – A Story on Understanding Differences**
> A trainer-colleague tells a nice story to illustrate what can happen if we do not address the issue of assumptions and interpretations during a training process. Imagine, he says, a cat and a dog meet. They are "natural enemies", speak very different languages and may often reach opposite conclusions from the same data: What does a cat do when she sees a stranger? Raises and swishes the tail to express caution and threat. What does the dog do? Starts wagging the tail, expressing curiosity and a happy greeting. The dog puts the ears back when satisfied – the cat puts them back when defensive; the dog crouches down to play – the cat to attack. Now if they encounter each other, given all the cat does, the dog reads, "yippee, a new friend", while the cat thinks, or so we imagine, "oh, s***". There are

two ways out of this initial miscommunication: a repeated encounter that teaches the "opponents" that things may not always be as they appear (exposure, unlearning/re-learning of attitudes); and the simple question of "What do you mean by saying this or doing that?" (communication). For both, training workshops can provide a relatively safe environment.[9]

So everyone involved in a training process needs some time and space to examine their sets of values and assumptions and engage in thinking about how they might influence the training process – as well as the long-term purpose of conflict transformation. In current practice, this is too rarely provided.

Challenge 2:
Rooting Training in Analysis and Long-term Strategic Vision

The foundations for good training results lie in a thorough initial analysis and strategy formulation that give preliminary answers to the questions of what is needed (in terms of skills and people) as well as what the objective of the training activity is. Regularly repeated analysis and strategy-building exercises should involve trainees, trainers, organisers and funders, and should focus on goal formulation and process planning. Still too seldom, though, do organisations or trainers in international contexts afford the "luxury" of thorough preparatory and follow-up work. In part, this shortcoming can be blamed on a lack of resources to invest in such staff-intensive programme activities. In part, though, needs assessment and strategy formulation are also willingly sidestepped in favour of ready-made training modules and programmes, which are assumed to work in any context. Awareness-raising about the problematic consequences of such ready-made approaches should be increased. It should also be noted that in some situations, initial analysis and strategy formulation might lead to an acknowledgement that conflict transformation training is *not* the appropriate way to engage, as other activities might be more important and efficient at that given point in time. This would also go some way to addressing the criticism that training workshops are often used as a 'default' option in conflict management.

Challenge 3:
Overcoming the Selection Bias

We do not see much comparative evidence published about specific experiences in working with groups other than the easily accessible or self-selected peacebuilders. In fact, a general criticism of conflict transformation work has been that there is a tendency to work with like-minded and like-situated groups, often targeting the urban, well-educated, English-speaking, and, in situations of violent conflict, 'converted' parts of society.

On the other hand, little is known, for example, about *working with armed or formerly armed groups*. Several factors are at play: For one, such groups are usually not predisposed to sign up for training workshops addressing conflict transformation with nonviolent means. Furthermore, they are often operating clandestinely, or at least in opposition, and are therefore more difficult to seek out. In many circumstances, it may be – politically or physically – unsafe for them to engage.

At the same time, one of the values at the centre of nonviolent conflict transformation is to ascertain the shared humanity of those who have become used to seeing each other as enemies, so that approaching and working with more extremist groups does make sense. The necessity to integrate groups engaging in so-called 'spoiler' behaviour into peace processes to ensure their sustainability, for example, has gained many proponents over the years. Also, as more external

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9 Thanks go to Keith Fitzgerald, Managing Director of Singapore-based Sea-Change Partners (www.sea-changepartners.com).

actors become engaged in post-war environments and as post-conflict regeneration and reintegration gain prominence in peacebuilding, such groups become more accessible and are crucial for peace processes to move forward. The context of reintegration and reconstruction programmes makes, for example, ex-combatants and child-soldiers more likely recipients of conflict transformation training. Finally, fighters who give up their weapons and start supporting a different way of changing society, if they do so credibly, hold strong persuasive power.

Carefully balanced efforts should therefore be made to expand the remit of conflict transformation training to create spaces for encounter and debate among the whole range of forces that shape the course of the conflict – and its transformation.

Challenge 4:
Providing On-going Support and Follow-up

On-going support (access to a network, coaching or supervision, on-going contact with the trainer team) and follow-up opportunities are crucial factors for successful training programmes. If external trainers and agencies cannot be reasonably sure of providing these, their programmes might do more harm than is usually acknowledged. Disappointed expectations, insufficient preparation and nurturing, a sense of futility or frustration can discredit not only a training event and its organisers, but also the concepts and ideas of conflict transformation it was designed to spread in the first place.

Opportunities to reflect on the practice of what has been learned are most important in ensuring on-going engagement. This is particularly true for Training for Trainers workshops, as many trainees still experience a lack of "safe" opportunities to "practice" – both for the sake of their own development and for the sake of the (conflict) parties on whom they try their emerging skills. Here, mentoring and a form of apprenticeship would be welcome additions to training programmes. On-going, long-term financial, organisational and personal commitment on behalf of those working with local and international activists would go some way to ensuring empowerment and supportive networking which are regarded as crucially important in building capacities for peace.

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Challenge 5:
Transfer from the Individual to the Social Level

In training, individual changes – of attitudes and behaviours – come first. Such change involves seeing things in a new way, un-learning old patterns and learning and testing new patterns of thought and behaviour. Yet conflict transformation training also aims to bridge the gap between individual, micro-level and social, meso- or macro-level change. Through processes of "multiplying" (enhanced by a careful choice of participants) and "networking" (enhanced by careful group composition and continuous follow-up), social change – of collective attitudes, behaviours and structures or processes – is meant to follow personal change. Yet, we have only first indications of whether the ways we choose to manage transfer are actually working (Anderson and Olson 2003; Cuhadar-Gurkaynak 2006; Malhorta and Liyanage 2005).

Challenge 6:
Evaluating and Learning

Much has been invested into improving training for conflict transformation in the last decade. Lessons have been learned, materials have been developed, formats and methods have been adjusted.

Box 2 – A Checklist for Good Practice

One useful checklist for trainees to quickly assess the quality – and quality outcome – of a training has been compiled by Responding to Conflict's Richard Smith et al. (2001):

Effective Training for Conflict Transformation – How can you judge good practice?

During the planning stages

- Is the process inclusive, are all the stakeholders involved? Is there a checklist of stakeholders?
- Is the process reflective, i.e. not pre-decided?
- Is the process flexible? Are you able to change and adapt? Are stakeholders involved in monitoring the process?
- Are you breaking down traditional power groups and promoting those that are marginalized?
- Is your agenda inclusive of everybody's needs and experiences?
- If something goes exactly according to plan, is this an indicator of success or inflexibility?

During the training event

- Did your emotions change during the event?
- Ask yourself – did I learn anything?
- Look for indicators like body language, blank expressions, lack of interest, silences. Are people asking questions, are you being challenged?
- Is everyone involved?
- Does the facilitator become invisible? Do participants start dialogues among themselves?
- If people keep bringing up the same issues, is it because they aren't following the process or because they are not being heard?
- What kinds of open-ended questions are you using?
- Are you open to criticism? Are you receiving any?

Afterwards

- Have you achieved your objectives?
- Has the process led to changed practice or behaviour?
- Has there been an increase in the participation of previously marginalized groups?
- The next time you meet, is there continuity in the level of understanding?
- Are there any signs of progressive change?
- Are there any signs of sustained change?
- Are there any signs of positive thought or growing levels of confidence?
- Is there any evidence of a growing confidence to criticise?
- Is there any evidence of attempts to go beyond the immediate stakeholders, to initiate things independently?
- Are there any examples where attitudes or beliefs have changed?

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Yet, we will need more comparative studies to find out whether these adjustments have also increased the quality of conflict transformation training and practice. In particular, there needs to be more long-term "tracking": where do trainees go after having been trained, what do they do with their knowledge and skills? When do they find it sufficient to induce change in their conflict-affected environments, and when and why do they find they fall short?

Questions and the focus of further evaluation studies need to be tailored to the different trainee groups:

o In complex and dynamic conflict situations, where training is also an explicit attempt to create contact between warring parties, it is very difficult to assess a limited intervention's impact. What is needed is more long-term "tracking" (or reporting back) in order to find out who does what with training, with what effects and later insights. It might also be an interesting approach to turn this inquiry around and ask change agents in nonviolent movements for their personal development path. How many of those engaged will have come through conflict transformation training of one kind?

o Many training programmes for third-party staff have only recently been established. Curricula and materials are now available from many new sources (e.g., OSCE 2004; UN 2003; UN Peacekeeping Training Manual). However, a systematic review of theory and practice of standardised training for third-party interveners has not yet been undertaken, nor have there been broad impact studies.

A next round of evaluation, reflection and comparative research will have to find answers to these questions.

4. Outlook

Training for conflict transformation can generally fulfil some of three main purposes: 1) "conscientisation" and awareness-raising, including better, more integrative and comprehensive joint conflict analysis and a sensitivity for intended and unintended consequences of intervening in a conflict system; 2) providing local peacebuilders and potential conflict resolvers with skills, support, networks and empowerment; and 3) teaching new skills to potential – local and international – drivers of constructive social change.

Obviously, training courses – which may last, at most, a few months – cannot turn out fully-rounded peacebuilders. Lately, there has even been a gentle backlash against the professionalization and subsequent "technisation" of the field of conflict transformation:

> "Discussions have emerged between those who believe that responding to conflict and building social change in settings of deep-rooted conflict is primarily a learned skill and those who see it as an art. … Building constructive social change … requires both. But the evolution of becoming a profession, the orientation toward technique, and the management of process in conflict resolution and peacebuilding have overshadowed, and in too many instances forgotten, the art of the creative process." (Lederach 2005, ix)

Training for conflict transformation will, in the coming years, therefore have to address the dual challenge of testing the techniques it has developed and spread, and allowing some space for the messiness of the creative process of relationship-building and deep social change that peacebuilding is essentially about.

5. References and Sources

We welcome your recommendations and reactions to this section – it is the only way in which we can make sure that the references reflect a collection of current and diverse material. Please send any comments, amendments and suggestions to info@berghof-handbook.net. Thank you!

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5.2 Further Information and Contact – Websites and Internet-Resources

5.2.1 Local Capacity Training (Basic Training and Training for Trainers)

African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), South Africa: www.accord.org.za

Association for Conflict Resolution (formerly SPIDR), USA: www.acrnet.org

Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR), Stadtschlaining, Austria: www.aspr.ac.at

CDR Associates, USA: www.mediate.org

Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), South Africa: http://ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za

Centre for Education and Networking in Non-Violent Action (Bildungs- und Begegnungsstätte für gewaltfreie Aktion) KURVE WUSTROW e.V., Germany: www.kurvewustrow.org

Centre for Nonviolent Action, Sarajevo/Belgrade, BiH/Serbia: www.nenasilje.org

Clingendael – Netherlands Institute of International Relations, NL: www.clingendael.nl

Coverdale, worldwide: www.coverdale.com

Creative Associates, USA: www.caii.com

Educators for Social Responsibility, Cambridge, USA: www.esrnational.org

Institute for Integrative Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding (IICP), Austria: www.iicp.at

Institute for Multi-track Diplomacy (IMTD), Washington, DC, USA: www.imtd.org

International Alert, UK: www.international-alert.org

InWEnt – Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung (Capacity Building International, Germany): www.inwent.org, especially the Global Campus at http://www.gc21.de/ibt/GC21/opengc21/ibt/index.html

LEAP Confronting Conflict, UK: www.leaplinx.com

Partners for Democratic Change, USA: www.partnersglobal.org

Peace Action Training and Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR): www.patrir.ro

Mercy Corps' Conflict Management Group, USA: www.cmgroup.org

Nairobi Peace Initiative, Kenya: npi@africaonline.co.ke (contact)

Nonviolent Peaceforce: www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org

Public Conversations Project, USA: www.publicconversations.org

Responding to Conflict, UK: www.respond.org

Search for Common Ground, USA: www.sfcg.org

and its European Center for Common Ground: www.sfcg.org/eccg.htm

Transcend, USA: www.transcend.org

Training for Change, Philadelphia, PE (USA): www.trainingforchange.org

Vienna Conflict Management Partners, Austria: www.viennapartners.com

West African Network for Peace-building (WANEP): www.wanep.org (contact: wanep@wanep.org)

5.2.2 Training for Third-Party Intervention

Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden (Action Committee Service for Peace) (AGDF), Germany: www.agdf.de (lists professional training opportunities for civilian constructive conflict management).

Alliance for Conflict Transformation (ACT), USA: www.conflicttransformation.org

Canadian International Peace-keeping Training Centre (CIPTC), Canada: www.cdnpeacekeeping.ns.ca

Care International: www.careinternational.org/

Center for International Peacekeeping Operations (Zentrum für Internationale Friedenseinsätze – ZIF): www.zif-berlin.org

Department for International Development (DfID), UK: www.dfid.gov.uk

Direktion für Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit (DEZA), Switzerland: www.deza.admin.ch/

Field Diplomacy Initiative, Belgium: http://fdi.ngonet.be

Folke Bernadotte Academy, Sweden: www.folkebernadotteacademy.se

Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst (German "Civilian Peace Service"): www.forumZFD.de (German only!), especially

its Academy for Conflict Transformation www.forumzfd.de/akademie.0.html (available in English).

German Agency for Technical Cooperation, GTZ: www.gtz.de

German Federal Association of Mediators: www.bmev.de

German Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation, BMZ: www.bmz.de

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC): www.icrc.org

International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC), UK: www.intrac.org
with (online) bulletin ONTRAC

Management Systems International, USA: www.msiworldwide.com/gral/core.trai.html

NTL Institute, USA: www.ntl.org

Oxfam International: www.oxfam.org

Program on Negotiation (PON), Cambridge, USA: www.pon.harvard.edu
with a clearinghouse for negotiation simulations and case-studies:
www.pon.org/catalog/index.php

Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research, worldwide: www.sietar.org
(membership organisation)

swisspeace/ KOFF, Switzerland: www.swisspeace.ch

Tavistock Institute, UK: www.tavinstitute.org and www.grouprelations.com

Trigon, Austria: www.trigon.at

United States Institute of Peace: www.usip.org

Verein für Friedenspädagogik, Tübingen e.V., Germany: www.friedenspaedagogik.de

zivik, Germany: www.ifa.de/zivik

5.2.3 International Organisations

EU: http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/opcm/cp.htm or www.eutraininggroup.net

OSCE: www.osce.org/training

UNITED NATIONS:

United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR): www.unitar.org

Department of Peacekeeping Operations Training and Evaluation Service (TES):
http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/training

Peacebuilding Best Practices Unit (PBPU): http://peacekeepingbestpractices.unlb.org

5.2.4 Academic Training Programmes

Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Friedens- und Konfliktforschung (AFK), Germany: www.afk-web.de (includes synopses of all graduate programmes in peace and conflict studies in Germany)

Arbeitsstelle Friedensforschung Bonn, Germany: www.priub.org (includes an index of German and international peace and conflict research institutes)

Bradford University, Centre for Conflict Resolution, UK: www.bradford.ac.uk/acad/confres

Brandeis University – Master's Program in Coexistence and Conflict, USA:
www.brandeis.edu/coexsistence/masters

Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland:
www.cidcm.umd.edu

Eastern Mennonite University – Conflict Transformation Program, USA: www.emu.edu/ctp/ctp.htm

Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, USA: http://fletcher.tufts.edu

Initiative on Conflict Resolution and Ethnicity (INCORE), Derry, Northern Ireland: www.incore.ulst.ac.uk

with information database on the Northern Ireland conflict CAIN (Conflict Archive on the Internet): www.cain.ulst.ac.uk

Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR) at George Mason University: http://icar.gmu.edu

Institute for the Study of Conflict Transformation, University of North Dakota-Conflict Resolution Center: www.transformativemediation.org

International Peace Research Institute (PRIO), Oslo, Norway: www.prio.no

Johns Hopkins University's School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS), USA: www.sais-jhu.edu

Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, USA: www.wws.princeton.edu.

Program on Negotiation (PON), Cambridge, USA: www.pon.harvard.edu

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Sweden: www.sipri.org

University of Notre Dame's Jean B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, USA: http://www.nd.edu/~krocinst/index.html.

5.2.5 Information Resources: Platforms, Networks and Research Centres

Alliance for Conflict Transformation (ACT), USA (membership network): http://conflicttransformation.org

Associations and Resources for Conflict Management Skills (ACRA): www.peacetraining.org

Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, Berlin, Germany: www.berghof-center.org, with its Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation: www.berghof-handbook.net

Berghof Foundation for Peace Support, Berlin, Germany: www.berghof-peacesupport.org

Coexistence Initiative, New York, USA: www.coexistence.net

Collaborative for Development Action (CDA), Cambridge, USA – Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) and Local Capacities for Peace / "Do no harm" projects: www.cdainc.com

Committee for Conflict Transformation Support (CCTS), formerly the Coordinating Committee for Conflict Resolution Training in Europe (CCCRTE) (1995-1997), UK: www.c.-r.org/ccts

Conciliation Resources (including the publication Accord Series), UK: www.c-r.org

Conflict, Development and Peace Network (CODEP), UK: www.codep.org.uk

Conflict Resolution Consortium, University of Colorado at Boulder, USA: www.conflict.colorado.edu, including CR Info: www.crinfo.org

Beyond Intractability: www.beyondintractability.org

Conflict Resolution Network Canada: www.crnetwork.ca (includes directories)

European Center for Conflict Prevention, NL: www.conflict-prevention.net (includes directories; an updated version is available on CD-Rom and accessible on the web through www.gppac.net. Go to website, choose → Network → Directory (searchable by organisation's name, keyword (e.g. "training") and region/country)

European Peace Liaison Office (EPLO), Brussels: www.eplo.org

Plattform Zivile Konfliktbearbeitung, Germany: www.konfliktbearbeitung.de

Peacemakers Trust, Canada: www.peacemakers.ca/education/educationlinks.html

Peaceworkers, UK (now part of International Alert): www.peaceworkers.org.uk

Reliefweb – Training Inventory: www.reliefweb.int/training/

5.2.6 Trainer-Pools

Action for Conflict Transformation Network (ACTION), established by Responding to Conflict in 2000, UK:

www.action-global.org or www.respond.org

BOND, UK: www.bond.org.uk/lte/index.htm (members network, focus on organisational development)

Coexistence Initiative, New York, USA: www.coexsitence.net

Committee for Conflict Transformation Support (CCTS), formerly the Coordinating Committee for Conflict Resolution Training in Europe (CCCRTE) (1995-1997), UK: www.c.-r.org/ccts

Conflict, Development and Peace Network (CODEP), UK: www.codep.org.uk

Conflict Resolution Network, Australia: www.crnhq.org

Conflict Resolution Network, Canada: www.crnetwork.ca

German agencies with expert pools for evaluation and possibly training: www.ifa.de/zivik; www.bmz.de; www.zif-berlin.org

German trainer collective for non-violence training: www.tk-windrose.de (German only!)

German trainer collective for nonviolent action and creative conflict resolution: http://chdilg.gmxhome.de/ (German only!)

Hague Development Collective, NL: www.thdc.nl

International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC), UK: www.intrac.org with (online) bulletin ONTRAC

5.3 Analysis – Articles and Books

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