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CROSS-CONFLICT PARTICIPATION IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AS BASIS FOR A  
CULTURE OF PEACE

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## CROSS-CONFLICT PARTICIPATION IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AS BASIS FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE

The problem addressed in this paper was posed to the UNESCO secretariat by the 51-nation Executive Board of the Organization at its 140th session in October, 1992. The Board recalled that UNESCO was established in 1946 in order to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture. At the present time, they were convinced, the Organization should help the international community to construct peace, in particular in areas where conflicts might arise and where peace-keeping operations are decided upon by the United Nations. Therefore, they requested that UNESCO establish an action programme aimed at promoting a culture of peace.

Cross-conflict participation in human development, as described in this paper, was formulated as the basis for a culture of peace programme in response to the request of the UNESCO Executive Board. It has been designed to link the processes of peace and development through a single, integrated methodology.

It is clear that there is a close relation of dependence between peace and development. Without peace, development cannot be sustained. And without an endogenous, sustainable, human development, peace cannot be sustained. Although this relationship is well recognized (see, for example, the Agenda for Development proposed by UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali), it is necessary to make it operational in practice.

The initial formulation of cross-conflict participation in human development was submitted to 37 specialists within a wide geographical distribution for their comments and suggestions on the basis of which the text was substantially revised. Although the text owes much to their contributions, they are not responsible for any errors or misinterpretations which are solely the responsibility of the author.

THE PROPOSAL - IN BRIEF

It is proposed that the culture of peace programme should be based on cross-conflict participation in projects of human development in the context of United Nations peace-building activity. It would consist of cooperative projects of human development that are designed to involve, at all stages from planning to implementation and evaluation, individuals and representatives of organizations who come from opposing sides of conflict in a country. The process would be facilitated by "peace promoters", field staff in human development projects of UNESCO or other international agencies who have received special in-service training in conflict management and other skills of a culture of peace. These peace promoters would help the actors overcome their differences and develop peace culture consciousness in the course of working together.

## THE THEORY

In order to place the proposed methodology upon a scientific basis, attention was given to the findings of social psychology in the field of conflict management. What theory is available? To what extent has the theory been tested in practice? Is there a consensus of opinion on the theory and evidence among social scientists in this field? And what advice can these experts contribute to the development of an action programme for the culture of peace?

One finding stands out in the social psychological theory of conflict management: the so-called "Robbers Cave" experiment conducted in the 1950's by the Sherifs at the University of Pennsylvania and elaborated by various other investigators since then. In that experiment it was found that two groups of boys in a summer camp, previously hostile to each other as a result of competition, were able to overcome that hostility by collaborating on superordinate tasks of mutual benefit. These included pulling the food supply truck when it had become stuck, and repairing the water system of the camp which had broken down. The Sherifs emphasized that the development of cooperation and conflict resolution did not come about as the result of a single event, but rather a cumulative series of collaborations on superordinate tasks (Sherif, 1979; Pettigrew 1986).

On the basis of the experiments of the Sherifs, it has been hypothesized that "when groups in a state of friction are brought into contact under conditions embodying superordinate goals whose attainment is compellingly desired by each group, but which cannot be achieved by

the efforts of one group alone, they will tend to cooperate toward the common goal." Further, it has been hypothesized that "cooperation between groups, necessitated by a series of situations embodying superordinate goals, will have a cumulative effect in the direction of reducing existing conflicts between groups and unfavorable attitudes of individual members" (Sherif, 1979). The finding that cooperation reduces intergroup conflict has been confirmed by many studies since then, both in laboratory and in field settings (Worchel, 1979; Blake and Mouton, 1979).

Studies by Blake and Mouton in the setting of industrial relations have found that it is important for the members of the group to participate themselves in the formulation of the superordinate goals. Also, they have found it best if the members of the group are aware of the theoretical as well as the practical aspects of the collaborative process (Blake and Mouton, 1979). Although it is usually assumed in European and American studies that the process of bringing two groups together should be done by a third party, it should be kept in mind that this reflects a Western bias towards the primacy of the state and other higher authorities in the process of resolving conflicts. In other cultures, such as African cultures, it is assumed instead that the process of resolving conflicts is the responsibility of the two parties themselves acting within a context of traditional procedures (LeRoy, 1990).

To be effective, cooperation should take place within a context of increased communication between groups, including dissemination of information, increasing social contacts, conferences of leaders and representatives, and even cathartic experiences (Sherif, 1979). This is important because the effect of cooperation may be mediated, among other things, by a reduction in the perception of "we-they differences" between the groups. In other words, it may induce the participants to conceive of themselves as having one superordinate identity (Gaertner et al, 1990). It has been pointed out that the development of such a superordinate identity should take place in such a way that the positive identities of the original groups are not threatened (Hewstone and Brown, 1986).

To manage conflicts through cooperation, it is most effective if the two groups have equal status and that they work under conditions in which the social norms within and surrounding the situation favor group equality and egalitarian intergroup association, e.g. with support from authority figures (Cook, 1978; Stephan and Brigham, 1985).

Finally, there is evidence that collaboration on superordinate goals is most effective in managing conflict if the results of the collaboration are successful (Hewstone and Brown, 1986; Worchel, 1979).

Although the literature on this subject usually speaks of "conflict resolution", it will be noted that this paper uses the term "conflict management", instead. This reflects the philosophy of UNESCO's Culture of Peace Programme that "conflicts are unavoidable, necessary and they can even have their benefits in innovation and activity, identity and reflection. But the benefits will depend on our ability to manage conflicts, to resolve them fairly, and to prevent their violent, destructive manifestations."

In summary, social psychology theory suggests that the best method of conflict management between groups is to enable them to collaborate under conditions of equality and effective communication in the joint planning, execution and successful completion of a series of superordinate goals whose attainment is compellingly desired by each group, but which cannot be achieved by the efforts of one group acting alone. For want of another term, this will be called "cross conflict participation for superordinate goals" or "cross-conflict participation" in brief.

#### THE TWO COMPONENTS OF CROSS-CONFLICT PARTICIPATION

Cross-conflict participation is a combination of two components: the social psychology approach of conflict management through work on superordinate goals; and the United Nations development approach of projects of human development. Neither of these components by themselves are sufficient.

Conflict resolution by itself is not enough, but it needs to be engaged in tasks which can produce tangible benefits to the participants and their communities through cooperation. The activities must be real and benefit them in both the short and the long term. Only in this way can the results of conflict resolution be established and maintained.

Projects in human development are also not enough by themselves to bring peace. To develop a culture of peace they must be accompanied by changes in consciousness and in the nature of the relationships among people.

#### COMPONENT ONE: PROJECTS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The proposal calls for cross-conflict participation to take place within projects of human development, because only through collaboration on concrete projects with demonstrated benefits for the participants and their communities can conflicts be managed and remain non-violent in the long term.

Some of these human development projects may be set within the context of a broad, multi-sectoral UNESCO Culture of Peace National Programme, such as the one initiated in 1993 in El Salvador. In this case it is the field staff who administer the various projects of that Programme who will receive in-service training as peace promoters.

Others may be set within projects of human development supported and/or administered by international agencies such as UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, the World Bank, WHO, etc., intergovernmental organizations such as the EEC, and non-governmental organizations. Although the initial development of cross-conflict participation may take place largely within UNESCO programmes, if it is to achieve its full potential, cross-conflict participation needs to be integrated with the projects of these other institutions as well.

In addition to involving participants from both sides of the conflict, the projects of human development should have the other qualities that are now generally recognized as important. They should promote self-sufficiency and endogenous sustainable development rather than prolonging a state of dependency of the recipients or degrading the environment. Also they should promote the equality of the participants, and, by extension, they should benefit all the people of a country or region and not some at the expense of others.

#### COMPONENT TWO: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND PEACE-CULTURE CONSCIOUSNESS

The culture of peace cannot be measured in terms of economic or traditional development indicators. It is not something outside and external to people, but rather it is a consciousness that has been internalized into the value systems, knowledge and practical aptitudes of people on the basis of real experience. It must be part of everyday behavior. This consciousness can only develop in the context of working relationships structured on the basis of equality, complementarity and respect for multiple ways of knowing, thinking and deriving truths. Change and conflict must be accepted and conducted constructively and non-violently. Power must be exercised in terms of the capacity to achieve common goals, not by coercion and imposition.

Whereas the culture of war is characterized by authoritarian power, hierarchy, competition, instability, violence, and secrecy, the culture of peace is characterized by horizontal or "bottom-up" participation and decision-making, equality, cooperation, sustainability, non-violence, and openness. It does not deny conflict but provides for its channeling into constructive dialogue and change.

Although the process of peace culture consciousness needs to become internalized by an entire people in the long-term, it must begin at the level of working relationships among individuals, through a series of steps which can only develop through an extended process of cross-conflict participation. Although these steps will need to be confirmed and elaborated by evaluation of the practice of cross-conflict participation, it is hypothesized that the following will be their general pattern:

1. Direct working relationship in a setting of equality and in a climate conducive to peace
2. Recognition of both common values and differences among all team members
3. Planning of collaboration with a vision that it can produce mutual benefits
4. Cooperative action and achievement of success in common tasks
5. Development of skills of cooperation and teamwork

6. Integration of preceding perspectives and skills into other social relations including family, work and political participation

7. Development of a global perspective of peace culture through participation in its global extension

## THE ROLE AND TRAINING OF PEACE PROMOTERS

Cross-conflict participation will not be easy and will not develop spontaneously. Therefore, the field staff of each project, especially staff at the middle level, should receive in-service training as peace promoters. This will enable them to promote peace culture consciousness and cooperation in all project participants. These peace promoters must not only be highly skilled, culturally sensitive experts in conflict management, but also good facilitators and team builders.

As far as possible, peace promoters should be recruited and trained locally to ensure that they have the necessary cultural sensitivity. This cultural sensitivity is essential because deriving a peace culture must take into account the deep cultures of the local people, and the participants should be involved in creating cultural forms which enhance reconciliation and involve a deep exploration of values, assumptions, and fundamental social purposes.

Because of the need for peace promoters, it will be necessary that the culture of peace action programme put a priority on training, including the establishment of national or regional training institutions and the development of a curriculum for cross-conflict participation and a corps of master trainers. For the most part, trainees should come from human development projects in which they already have experience as animators, and after being trained in cross-conflict participation they should return to these projects in order to exercise their newly obtained skills. Therefore, an additional aspect of the training programme will be the long-term follow-up to training, including field supervision, periodic reunions and refresher courses, and a system of evaluation which ensures that the training programme will be continually revised and updated on the basis of the field experience of its graduates.

The formation of peace promoters should be posed as a developmental sequence in which the trainers and peace promoters learn as they go and adjust accordingly. Although it should take advantage of mediation skills that have been developed in recent years (Bonafé-Schmidt, 1992), it cannot be established with pre-set techniques. As pointed out earlier, even the role of the "neutral" third party may not be appropriate in some cultural settings (LeRoy, 1990). Instead, the training should be based on local experience and tradition, building on the knowledge that is in place about how conflict operates and the resources for conflict management that people already have available to them. This type of training has been called "the elicitive method" by John Paul Lederach, from whom the following example of an exercise is taken:

Open the exercise with a statement like this: "I want everyone to think back to a time when you found yourself experiencing problems with someone else. You know things are not right. This can be a problem in your family, among friends, at work or in your neighborhood. Now, I want you to think through this question. If things got difficult and you felt you needed help with this problem, who would you go to for help? Get the image of this person or persons in your mind. Then here is what I want you to work on and share with your small group. Why did you choose this person? What characteristics does he or she have? What do you expect from this person?"

## THE ACTORS

The participation in cross-conflict projects should be broad, including both traditional leaders and those who have been previously excluded from leadership.

The involvement of recognized leaders is essential. By involving teachers, political leaders, religious figures, mass media workers, and others who influence public opinion and cultural change, it can be ensured that peace-culture consciousness does not remain isolated but becomes the possession of all the people.

At the same time, it is clear that others besides leaders must be given a high priority as actors. Youth and women, who are often excluded from power, need to be empowered, and they,

in turn, have the potential to transmit the values of peace-culture consciousness to future generations. Thus, for example, in the culture of peace programme in El Salvador it has been stipulated that each project must devote a minimum of 10% of the budget to specific activities to benefit women and youth. It is also important to involve people who are engaged in the process of production because they most directly with the basic questions of poverty and development. In general, it is essential to involve those who have been disadvantaged in the past, who will have the greatest motivation for social change.

Sociological theory suggests that cross-conflict teams and projects should be heterogeneous in composition, including not only people from both sides of the primary conflict in the society, but also participants of both genders, different ages, occupations, religious faiths, etc. In this way each member of the group will have multiple identities so that conflict, when it occurs, will not always occur along the same lines.

#### CROSS-CONFLICT PARTICIPATION AS BASIS FOR EDUCATION AND MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Education and information campaigns for culture of peace, to be successful, should not deal only in abstractions, but in concrete events which directly effect the lives of the people concerned. Education and media campaigns are successful to the extent that they address something already in the experience of the audience.

The activities of cross-conflict participation are ideal material for such campaigns. These programmes involve the friends and neighbors of the audience, be they students, listeners or readers, in concrete projects located nearby and working for goals of direct benefit to them. By basing campaigns on information from these projects, the peace-culture consciousness of participants in cross-conflict teams and projects can be extended to the people of an entire area or country.

If education and information campaigns are not based on concrete events, they run the risk of being counter-productive. The repetition of abstractions about peace without any substance in reality can lead ultimately to a state of cynicism which may be worse than if nothing had been done at all.

## LONG-TERM INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF A CULTURE OF PEACE

In the long term, if it is to become permanent, the process of cross-conflict participation needs to become institutionalized in the form of a culture and practice of democracy. This requires both the development of effective democratic institutions and the internalization of a culture of democracy which includes the active participation of all citizens in the decisions which affect their lives, whether those decisions are taken at the local, national, regional or international levels.

Therefore, one of the tasks of the culture of peace programme will be to establish a close relationship with programmes designed to promote a culture of democracy.

## EVALUATION AND MEASUREMENT OF PRODUCTIVITY

As in any such experimental programme, an effective and continuous process of evaluation is essential so that it will be possible to learn from errors and improve the methodology of the programme at every step of its development.

However, cross-conflict participation and the culture of peace present special problems for evaluation and measurement. They are not a product; they are a process. How can their results be measured?

In the short term, traditional measures of human development productivity may indicate negative results. This may be expected because it will be more expensive and time-consuming to engage peace promoters and to require participation by all sides of the previous conflicts. Conflicts will not be avoided but will be confronted and managed in a process that will not be simple or easy. This process may require compromises and delays in the implementation of projects, whereas it might seem simpler to carry them out in a top-down manner.

In the long term, the productivity measures of human development may turn out to be more favorable, because of the broad participation of those who benefit from the projects. And in any case, if the programme helps avoid a return to conflict, it will certainly support traditional productivity measures. After all, there is nothing which is more destructive to human

development than the systematic violence of civil war! However, traditional measures of productivity do not usually take this factor into account. And it is always more difficult to claim a benefit from preventive actions, because they are hard to measure in an objective fashion.

Therefore, the development of new types of measures to evaluate progress towards a culture of peace will be a critical first step for the programme in its early years. Only by obtaining concrete results and evaluating them in an objective way will the programme be able to convince other agencies to cooperate in establishing the projects and funding them.

## DIFFICULTIES

Cross-conflict participation, being a new process, will face many difficulties. These include violence and deep fears and animosities among the people concerned, problems of cooperation and funding of development programmes, lack of experienced personnel, and practical problems of programme implementation.

Implementation of cross-conflict participation requires conditions in which people from all sides of previous conflict are able to begin working together. This assumes that war has been replaced by a peace accord which is respected, and that the people are ready for dialogue and cooperation. Implementation can also take place in situations where violent conflict is threatened but has not yet broken out. It cannot be implemented, however, where conflict has escalated to a point of no return or where war has become inevitable.

Implementation also requires the extensive cooperation and funding of development programmes, including their willingness to include peace-promoters and cross-conflict participation as an integral part of specific human development projects. This, in turn, requires the acceptance of a new approach to productivity measures, as proposed above.

This proposal also requires a renewed commitment on the part of the international community to support endogenous human development in areas of the world where conflicts have torn apart the social fabric of the culture. It will require a reordering of priorities away from the funding of the military aspects of peace-keeping and towards the funding of non-military aspects of peace-building. Without extensive development support as the context in

which cross-conflict participation can occur, it will become a hollow and fruitless exercise which can only lead to cynicism and the return to structural and overt violence.

Because cross-conflict participation is new, there is no pre-existing cadre of skilled and experienced personnel ready to put it into operation. Instead, it will be necessary to develop these personnel through training and field experience over a period of time, during which the programme will have to be considered as experimental. As indicated above, there is reason to emphasize the training of local peace promoters; once they have become experienced, some of them would be available to help develop programmes elsewhere. For this reason, the emphasis of the programme for the first few years will need to be on the training of peace promoters and the development of the training process.

Finally, specific culture of peace programmes will encounter many practical problems on the local level. For example:

- Do people speak the same language, or will interpreters and translations be necessary?
- Can external volunteers be used, even without knowing the local language?
- What types of cooperation projects can benefit from external assistance and what are better left to local actors to develop for themselves?
- Whose interests may be threatened by programme activities, and how can this be avoided or how can they be persuaded to cooperate?
- How available are basic infrastructural services such as electricity, roads, telephones, printing paper, etc. and can projects be developed which do not depend upon them?
- What categories of people in a community must be involved for a programme to get started, and what social restrictions must be respected, e.g. in terms of age, gender and religion?

Like any new approach, cross-conflict participation will need to be revised and improved through practice. Continuous self-assessment and action research are needed. The results of

monitoring and evaluation should be used to improve the quality of the work being done to build a culture of peace.

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