Pieces of the Coexistence Puzzle: Part II

Problem-Solving Workshops
Brandeis University
October 7, 2007

Presented by:
Coexistence International,
The Slifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence,
and Theatre Without Borders

Summary Report

Written and designed by Kristin Williams
The problem-solving workshops you will read about in this report were conceptualized to follow up on a Coexistence International conference, *Pieces of the Coexistence Puzzle: Democracy, Human Rights, Gender and Development*, which took place at Brandeis University in March 2007. The March 2007 conference examined the relationships that exist among the fields of coexistence, democracy, human rights, gender, and development, and created a platform for exchanging ideas about the challenges and possibilities presented by a more integrated approach to peacebuilding.

The workshops in October 2007 created opportunities to bring this complementary approach to bear on specific conflict situations and coexistence initiatives from around the world. Cynthia Cohen, Executive Director of the Slifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence, provided leadership for the overall conceptualization: overseeing the composition of the groups, the selection of background materials, and the framing of guiding questions. Kate Gardner, founder and principal of WorldEnsemble, and Steven Burg, Chair of the Politics Department at Brandeis University, collaborated on the design of the gathering itself.

Our objective was to convene multidisciplinary groups that would consider a set of relevant, pragmatic, and challenging questions facing a particular region of the world. We were eager to learn what would emerge from robust and nuanced conversations between scholars and practitioners with differing expertise, but with a shared commitment to and knowledge about a particular place. These workshops were not about theory or theoretical solutions, but actual situations and real possibilities for change and action.

In this report you will read about the in-depth discussions, brainstorming, and planning that transpired in the problem-solving workshops. We hope that, after reading this report, you will share our optimism about the possibilities that emerge when we think creatively together across boundaries: professional, academic, and geographical. The problem-solving workshops confirmed an observation we made after the March 2007 event: that despite different terminology and approaches, many of us share a vision of socially inclusive societies and have innovative ideas about the steps required to get there.

CI convenes events such as these in order to inform and strengthen coexistence practice. We believe that enhancing linkages within the coexistence field and between coexistence and related fields contributes to a stronger, more cohesive effort towards peaceful and positive inter-group relations. Beyond the ideas and recommendations that emerged from the problem-solving workshops, which you will read about here, the sessions also contributed to the generation of new partnerships and new opportunities for addressing questions of diversity, coexistence, and social inclusion in societies around the world.

Jessica Berns
Program Manager
Overview

On Sunday, October 7, 2007, Coexistence International (CI), The Slifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence, and Theatre Without Borders convened six problem-solving workshops in which theatre artists, coexistence/peacebuilding practitioners, policymakers, and sustainable development workers met to think creatively about a problem in a particular community or conflict region, bringing together the theoretical and practical perspectives of their various disciplines. The groups generated action steps and/or recommendations that participants and others could act upon in order to improve conditions in a particular region or in relation to a particular problem.

The workshops explored the following regions/topics:

- Inter-ethnic Relations in Post-war Serbia
- Safety and Security among Immigrant Communities in Waltham, MA
- Improving Understanding between Tamil and Sinhalese Artists in Sri Lanka
- Iran/Israel/US Relations (Diaspora Focus)
- Transitional Justice Efforts in West Africa
- Creativity, Social Development, and Peacebuilding in East Africa

The body of this report summarizes the context in each region, as well as the discussions and action steps or recommendations that emerged from each workshop. The appendices include a list of participants in each workshop and, for each topic, a list of additional background readings available on CI’s website.

Pieces of the Coexistence Puzzle: Part II was just one session of a larger event, Acting Together on the World Stage: Setting the Scene for Peace, which was held at Brandeis University from October 4-8, 2007. Acting Together on the World Stage connected theatre artists, coexistence practitioners, scholars, students, and the local community to explore the potential contributions of the arts to building peace and coexistence around the world. A summary of this event can be found at www.coexistence.net.

The convenors of the problem-solving workshops would like to acknowledge the contributions of the following people to the conceptualization, facilitation, and documentation of this event: Asnia Asim, Mark Auslander, Leigh Branson, Amanda Brown, Ireen Bugingo, Steven Burg, Kevin Clements, Joni Doherty, Jennie El-Far, Zohar Fuller, Kate Gardner, Isabella Jean, Chris Kingsley, Leslie Kingsley, Susan Lanspery, Allison Lund, Sunil Pokhrel, Fernanda Senatori, Endah Setyowati, Dan Terris, Isha Wright, and Allison Young.

We also gratefully acknowledge financial support for this event from the Graduate Student Services Office, Politics Department, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Cultural Production Program, and the Heller School for Social Policy and Management.
Inter-ethnic Relations in Post-war Serbia

Background:
This workshop focused on the role of civil society and, in particular, cultural organizations and artists, in strengthening inter-ethnic relations in Serbia. It was animated by the experiences and the ongoing commitments of Dah Teatar Research Centre in Belgrade - whose motto is “In the contemporary world, destruction and violence can only be opposed by the creation of sense” - and the Project on Ethnic Relations, an NGO dedicated to reducing inter-ethnic conflict in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The workshop focused on complementary and creative approaches that can effectively engage theatre artists and coexistence practitioners in Serbia and their colleagues in the United States in an effort to improve inter-ethnic relations in Serbia.

Theatre in Serbia
As socialism came to an end in Europe, the Communist leadership in Yugoslavia feared losing power through democratization so they used ethnic nationalism to manipulate people and create a popular base for their continuing control. Ethnic nationalism was constructed on highly imagined communities by people whose identities had little to do with accurate history, geography, or real attributes. Over several years, old unresolved ethnic and national conflicts were given new life. They succeeded in pulling Serbs toward Serbia and pushing others toward their own nationalist groups, who then chose independence to escape growing Serbian nationalism and repression. It resulted in the disappearance of Yugoslavia, the formation of several new states, and three wars, including the NATO bombing of Serbia and Kosovo in 1999, thousands of dead, exiled, and left without any property or home.

In Serbia, it created an economic, social, and moral fall. The consequences included its exclusion and isolation from the European community, leaving an enormous feeling of guilt and grief mixed with denial. During that situation an eternal question of positioning art within society became even more actual, and different artistic groups and actions started to find their way of opposing the government. Parallel with them, activist groups emerged and some started to use art and theatrical actions as a powerful tool of opposition to the regime.

In that period the institutional theatres unfortunately showed complete oblivion and denial, and while being financially supported by the state they remained silent, producing weak and inadequate plays or cheap entertainment. While opposition on the streets was taking over the role of the theatre, Belgrade’s institutional theatres, safe behind their shields during almost three years of war, were not able to get out of a vicious circle of lethargy.

State controlled TV, radio stations, and print media produced piles of misinformation. They fueled hatred by positioning the “other” as the guilty one. They dug out the old, unresolved conflicts between ethnic groups (Serbs, Croatians, and Muslim populations) and they, instructed by politicians, denied any responsibility and involvement of the Milosevic regime in the wars that followed, one after the other. The majority of the Serbian population accepted that denial. While happening literally “under their windows,” a huge number of people felt that the conflict was happening somewhere far away and that they did not have anything to do with it. The level of denial and oblivion was frightening.

On the other hand, there was the part of the population that was in fear, afraid to search the truth about the situation

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1 Excerpted from chapter draft by Dijana Milosevic from Performance and Peacebuilding in Global Perspective
but feeling hopeless and helpless. They felt that huge injustices were happening but, being accustomed to listening to the voice of the state, they did not know where to turn or whom to ask. They feared the face of the other that was described by the officials as the face of the monster. And finally, there was the part of the population that was in constant pain, because they had friends and relatives in war zones.

The feeling of guilt was present and, while some buried it and denied it, some felt it directly and had a great need to address it. It was essential to create a space of mourning since even mourning was forbidden. It was essential to find others who thought alike and simply to share all the feelings and be together. All these needs formed the questions to be explored in the theatre work and work of activists that followed.

In 2000, the political situation changed with the fall of the dictatorship and the beginning of fragile democracy. For a short period, the hope started to live; but soon it was destroyed with the assassination of the new Prime Minister in 2003. Serbia is a highly traumatized society today that still tries to find its way and position within Europe, but still battles with the dark legacy of previous regimes.

In this situation, the focus from immediate violence has shifted to the questions of denial and facing the past - to recover memories and cast a light on the harsh truths. Art, specifically theatre, shows incredible power in facing and dealing with these issues – addressing the injustices, creating the space for people to share their memories, mourn, or simply be together, to connect and see the face of the “other.”

**Discussion:**

Participants began the discussion by acknowledging that not everyone believes in the importance of the arts. In Serbia, for a long time there was state-supported art that remained silent on political matters. Some people have only been exposed to that kind of art and are therefore pessimistic about its uses as a tool for peace. One participant felt that “theatre is not valuable when it doesn’t pose questions.” The opportunities must be created for art to flourish, especially over the long term. Artists and theatre groups must also reach out to poor and less accessible areas in order to bring the art to the people. One participant suggested reaching out to youth and creating a network for art between Serbia and the rest of Europe. Most importantly, theatre work needs sponsors and money in order to reach these diverse audiences and engage as much of the population as possible.

Speaking about the potential power of art for coexistence work, one participant mentioned an example of a play about Palestinian Arab women, which connected in a powerful way to other women in the audience, even those from the US. There was a connection between identity and gender regardless of the language or cultural context. Also, the process of art-making can break down boundaries when different groups work together to create something. This can help individuals involved in the process to understand the “other.”

Art can create connections between different groups to educate them about the oppression that is occurring so that, rather than remaining complicit, they will confront it. In coexistence work, this is also a goal: to bring groups into a dialogue with each other and promote a mutual understanding. Participants discussed how to combine these two approaches and find common ground between art and peacebuilding work. In Serbia, Dah Teatar created performances with Albanian characters to raise awareness about ethnic marginalization. Sometimes, however, art can be mobilized for the wrong reasons. Theatre must be authentic, and not contrived around a political issue for the sole purpose of creating debate. It has to be challenging in and of itself because it presents the truth.

**Major Themes:**

- The role of theatre in peacebuilding
- Reconciliation and the existence of multiple truths
- Seeing the “other”
- Measuring the impact of art
- The role of the international community in helping support the arts in areas of conflict
- Ethnicity invisibility in Serbia
- Collaboration between different organizations
However, participants also discussed this idea of “truth”: is it universal or does each person/group have their own truth? Since people and groups have different experiences and histories, there needs to be room for multiple truths to be present at the same time. Reconciliation occurs when multiple truths engage each other in a peaceful manner. In Serbia, the population is highly traumatized by ethnic nationalism and the oppression perpetrated by the government in the name of the Serbian ethnicity. The differing truths of the three ethnic groups must be bridged in order to avoid future conflict and to confront the conflict of the past. Another suggestion for overcoming ethno-nationalism was to create conditions for young people to travel and work with people from other groups and states. When you are exposed to other identities, you become less obsessed with your own.

In order to do this, artists and peacebuilders can work with different tools. Some participants advocated dialogue groups where people can interact to find common ground. Art can be used to open peoples’ hearts and heal their wounds. One participant felt that the peacebuilding work done by an organization like Project on Ethnic Relations would be more effective if, like art/theatre, it was built on deeply felt emotional experience. In theatre, one participant said, contradictions can live together. One participant questioned how you would measure the impact of cultural and artistic performances on coexistence. There are some examples: theatrical protests in Belgrade in the mid-1990s had direct political impact. However, in general, evaluation of the political/cultural impact of art is abstract and difficult. One participant suggested measuring the impact on society, i.e. “our work caused other artistic and activist groups to be founded and texts to be written.” However, the emotional impact of art cannot be measured.

Participants identified some of the challenges faced in collaborations between the arts and coexistence work. One claimed that “collaboration cannot be scripted,” because art that is too controlled or too conscious undermines the creativity. Creating synergy organically is hard to do. However, the idea that theatre itself is a collaboration because different artists with different personal experiences build something together was one way of moving past this dilemma. The audience is also involved in the process by experiencing a shared moment in time, so the energy of a performance has something to contribute to opening hearts and minds.

In terms of action steps, participants were inspired to go out themselves and seek out what artistic activities are happening in the communities in which they work.
Questions Raised:

- What roles do cultural and arts organizations play in fostering coexistence in Serbia? Could their contributions be enhanced? What challenges do they face?
- Could collaborations between coexistence organizations and theatrical/cultural organizations strengthen the impact of both sectors? What challenges would such collaborations face?
- How many young people are attending theatre nowadays in Serbia?
- What is the role of truth in theatre?
- How can one get the international community to help with funding theatre in Serbia and other areas of conflict?
- How do you evaluate the impact of art on society?
- Some people don’t believe in the importance of the arts with regards to peacebuilding. How can this be overcome?
- Are there people who are both theatre artists and peacebuilders?
- What role does government cultural policy play in supporting arts in Serbia at this time?
- Does government funding affect the role that arts organizations play in civic dialogue? Do we have recommendations to make in relation to government policy toward the arts and culture?

Recommendations & Action Steps:

1. Social change, especially with the arts, requires a long-term commitment and patience. Things take time, and it is recommended to not focus on measuring the direct impact of the arts. See each step as a catalyst for other actions in a larger process.

2. In order to inspire the government and donors to fund creative approaches to peacebuilding, the action must start with grassroots organizations. When the local population is moved by a piece there is a momentum that is more likely to elicit a supportive response from donors and government officials.

3. Both the artists and those that work at the policy level are important in the process of collaboration. If the different organizations work together then some great peacemaking efforts might emerge. One concrete example: PER might try to fund some of Dah Teatar’s shows to be performed in areas of Serbia where the population doesn’t normally get a chance to see theatre.

4. Create conditions for young people to travel. Or bring theatre from the rest of the world to areas of conflict. When people are exposed to the rest of the world, then they become less obsessed with their own ethnicity and open up to see other people’s identities.
Safety and Security among Immigrant Communities in Waltham, MA

Background:
Leaders of Waltham immigrant communities framed this workshop to explore creative ways to address pressing concerns about safety and security, particularly among women. The workshop built on a growing relationship between Brandeis University and the Waltham immigrant community. Conversation also drew on the expertise of theatre artists who have worked with immigrant communities in other parts of the world. This conversation generated ideas for effective action that can be taken to increase the safety of people in local immigrant communities and also strengthen the relationship between members of the Brandeis community and the university’s neighbors.

Waltham is home to many Latin American immigrants, as well as a significant African population, among others. Current policies in the United States focusing on immigration, as well as the potential for future U.S. policies, were discussed in the context of how they may relate to the use and abuse of policies and laws in the community of Waltham. Immigrant populations in Waltham are victim to forms of intimidation, terrorization, and enforced disempowerment by nonimmigrant populations as well as by individuals and bodies within the local, state, and federal governments. Individuals and families are also falling victim to the effects these community problems have on themselves and their loved ones.

Violence occurring in the home or on the street have a significant impact on Waltham immigrant communities, particularly women and youth. Teachers and employers are frequently unable to communicate with immigrants because of the language barrier. Tenants without legal status are often forced to live in substandard conditions because of threats from landlords and the fear of deportation. These factors can lead to increased isolation from the surrounding home community. Information and access to resources, however, can lead to empowerment. The focus of the workshop was therefore not how to change or directly challenge local, state, or federal policies, but rather how to work with, empower, and heal a community in the face of these policies and US xenophobia. Key challenges and problems were discussed, as well as possible solutions utilizing theatre and the arts.

Discussion:
Participants identified the main barriers to empowerment of immigrant communities in Waltham, including violence, isolation, and problems with employment and education. The barriers were explored both as separate entities and in their cause-and-effect relationships with one another.

The issue of violence was discussed on three levels: structural violence, domestic violence, and gang violence. Structural violence referred to the federal and local policies which create fear and insecurity in the immigrant population. The lack of proper documentation or the inability to go through or understand the proper legal procedures is a huge obstacle for both legal and illegal immigrants. The laws sometimes create challenges to gaining education and employment. In Waltham, there have been sting operations to search and deport undocumented immigrants, some of whom were given false work authorization documents. These operations create fear in the community. Domestic violence was labeled as an internal contributor to the fear and insecurity experienced by immigrants, especially women and children. This is a danger to both the physical and mental safety of victims. Women with limited language skills or support networks outside of the immigrant community often cannot seek the help they need. Domestic violence also contributes in some cases to the prevalence of gang violence. The gangs become an acceptable and effective means of association and identification for youth in these situations.

The next theme discussed was isolation as a barrier to safety. The most significant form of isolation is that felt by those in the immigrant community who feel out of place and unsafe in Waltham. This has to do with the inability of immigrants
Major Themes:

- Violence against immigrants: structural, domestic, and gang
- Isolation of immigrant community
- Double vulnerability of immigrant women
- Barriers and challenges to integration/inclusion in the Waltham community
- Using the arts to empower individuals and communities

to settle and thrive in the community, due to the challenges in employment, education, etc. Public housing and judicial courts often exacerbate the feelings of isolation through inability or unwillingness to fairly assist immigrants. Even agencies which are supposed to help immigrants often end up enforcing isolation from former communities in the immigrants’ home countries. Another form of isolation is that felt by the immigrant community due to anti-immigrant sentiment in the US. Often, immigrants (particularly males) are labeled as dangerous in the national and local attitude. Young men often become angry and disaffected because of this, which in turn leads to more gang violence. Immigrants in Waltham discussed the pressure they felt to preserve a positive image all the time so that they were not in danger of being harassed or deported. Finally, the participants discussed the isolation felt by women in the immigrant community. Women are often in imbalanced power relationships with the men in their community, as well as with the outside world. Therefore, they are unable to seek help from trusted sources and are often taken advantage of. In addition, since women earn less wages and need to serve as the primary caregiver to children, they have added stress. The prevalence of domestic violence in the community, as well as harassment by non-immigrant populations, compounds the feelings of isolation and lack of personal safety.

Both men and women in the community face barriers to employment. This is often caused by a lack of proper documentation, but also by the unwillingness of employers to hire immigrants. Members of the immigrant community are also more likely to be employed in menial jobs with unfair pay. Even with proper education and training, which is often lacking, immigrants face challenges to equal employment. Immigrant children also face barriers to receiving proper education. They face unfair hierarchies and limitations in the classroom, and may be kept from attending preschool.

There is very little recognition of the strengths and capacities of the immigrant community. These will have to be acknowledged and utilized in order to facilitate better conditions for immigrants in Waltham. The group focused on the role that Brandeis University, and especially the arts, could play in helping to improve the lives of immigrants through community empowerment. Participants acknowledged that there is often a lack of community leadership in the Waltham immigrant population and that this may be due to the unwillingness to be scrutinized by the public. One participant thought that “the arts would be able to form a strong community in a way that is non-threatening.” One theatre artist in the group claimed that the arts can “restore a level of dignity to a human being who has been reduced.” A useful community theatre process would need a high level of ownership by the community itself, a process that would preclude the potential for backlash against a vulnerable population, and, most of all, financial and logistical resources.

Participants hoped that Brandeis University or other institutions in the area would be able to provide this last necessity. Some ideas for University participation and assistance were: providing translation devices, training classes, physical space, childcare, student manpower, and artistic expertise. It was proposed that the University should be approached through student clubs, in order to engage the student population and avoid major bureaucratic maneuvering. As an institution committed to social justice, Brandeis could also help with educating the larger community about injustices occurring in Waltham. With the help of the University, a collective of immigrants from the Waltham community could utilize theatrical or other artistic productions to open up multidimensional communication across linguistic, cultural, and other barriers. Working with fathers and men would be a good focus, in order to reduce the amount of internalized violence in the community so that immigrants can focus on engaging with the non-immigrant population in pursuit of fair and equal treatment.
Questions Raised:

- What are the barriers to security and safety among the immigrant community in Waltham? How can theatre and the arts assist in overcoming these barriers?
- In what ways do women and young people in Waltham’s immigrant communities feel safe and unsafe? What threats to their security do members of these communities experience?
- What resources within the communities exist to strengthen the fabric of the community? Can these resources be mobilized to strengthen safety and support people to address conflicts non-violently?
- What can Brandeis University or other local institutions contribute to this effort? How can the Brandeis/Waltham partnership incorporate creative and complementary approaches in projects designed to support local immigrant activists?
- What can be learned from successful community-building theatre projects in other parts of the world?
- How can particularly vulnerable populations (i.e. women and youth) be involved in this effort? How can they engage with the dominant male figures in the community?
- How can discussions about domestic violence and gang violence be framed in ways that don’t stigmatize the community or add to people’s vulnerability regarding their immigration status? How do we ensure that a social and artistic process causes no backlash against this vulnerable population?
- How can the arts be used as a platform for educating and advocating for social and political issues?

Recommendations & Action Steps:

1. The immigrant community in Waltham can potentially benefit from a strong relationship with Brandeis University. Opportunities for collaboration and for financial or logistical sponsorship should be explored, possibly through the undergraduate clubs on campus. The University can also offer opportunities for creative or artistic productions.

2. Due to the level of domestic violence, absentee or abusive fathers, and membership of youth in local gangs, social and artistic processes involving the Waltham immigrant community should ensure participation by men, who could help reduce the amount of internalized violence in the community and sensitize themselves to the issues faced by women and children.

3. Women face special vulnerability in immigrant populations, due to their isolation from support networks and inability to seek help for domestic violence or childcare problems. They are also likely to be paid less for work. These power imbalances can be addressed as women claim their own voices through creative processes in which they feel a sense of ownership.

4. Creative processes can be useful in and of themselves to empower the communities involved and enable them to create networks of cooperation. However, these processes should also be used to make connections to local government, educational institutions, and community organizations, in order to advocate for the rights of immigrants. Creative productions can educate the local community about the problems faced by immigrants in order to reduce stigmatization or stereotyping and foster coexistence in the community. Both the inter-community and intra-community relationships should be fostered through creative processes.
Improving Understanding between Tamil and Sinhalese Artists in Sri Lanka

Background:¹

As the level of violence in Sri Lanka has escalated over the past months, many people in the peacebuilding field ask themselves about points of entry: where is it possible to engage with this conflict in such a way that the level of violence might be reduced or that the prospects for peace might improve? This workshop took as a starting point a proposal emerging from Coexistence International’s theatre and peacebuilding project, namely that collaboration between the increasingly isolated and targeted theatre artists from the Tamil and Sinhalese communities in Sri Lanka might provide such a point of entry. A number of significant and influential theatre initiatives have been produced on this divided island, but very few Sinhalese and Tamil performance artists are able to find ways to collaborate or to have a collective impact on intercommunal coexistence issues. In fact, even pro-peace theatre artists on both sides are unaware of how those in the other community interpret theatrical works. Workshop participants considered whether or not creative and complementary approaches can be used to reduce the current escalation of violence and empower constituencies for peace in Sri Lanka.

The conflict in Sri Lanka dates back to its history as a colony of Britain. Although Ceylon (as it was then called) was colonized by the Portuguese in 1505, and later taken over by the Dutch, neither was able to establish complete control over the island. However, in 1815, the British extended control over the whole country with a centralized administrative and governing body in its capital city, Colombo. The Tamil community disproportionately benefited from many British policies. Ceylon gained independence in 1948 and changed its name to Sri Lanka in 1972.

Sri Lanka is populated by a variety of ethnic groups, the two largest being the Sinhalese and Tamil communities. As a result of state policies to affirm Sinhalese control over Sri Lanka, for example the ‘Sinhala Only Act’ of 1956 that established Sinhala as the official state language, Tamil speakers were excluded from government posts and further marginalized. This legislation contributed to a growing sense of antagonism between the Sinhalese and Tamil communities. Although non-violent protests were attempted, eventually disaffected Tamil youth formed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and engaged in fighting the Sri Lankan Government army forces to create a separate Tamil state in the North and East. After over twenty years of civil war, more than 70,000 people have been killed and 750,000 displaced.

July of 1983 is considered the moment when the war began. On July 23rd, the ambush and massacre of a military patrol by Tamil militants incited four days of anti-Tamil pogroms in Colombo. A spiral of violence ensued, during which the LTTE and government armed forces have been locked in a protracted armed struggle. Tamil and Sinhalese border villages of the North and East have been victims of more concentrated violence in retaliatory massacres between the warring parties. The armed fighting in this war has also included aerial bombing, trench-style battles, suicide bombings, and targeted assassinations. Hundreds of thousands of people in the North and East, predominantly of the Tamil community, have been displaced and have been living in camps for over ten to fifteen years.

In 2002, the most hopeful attempt at peaceful resolution was struck with Norwegian mediation. After two decades of intense fighting, the LTTE and government signed a ceasefire agreement (although the conflict continued sporadically). The country was put under further pressure in December 2004, when an Indian Ocean tsunami killed over 30,000 people and displaced approximately a million. In February 2006, peace negotiations began again briefly, under a newly elected Sri Lankan president, only to be suspended soon after. Subsequently, the country has experienced ongoing violence which has escalated to aerial bombardment in particular areas.

¹ www.inplaceofwar.net/pages/sri_lanka.html; and also see background reading by Palihapitiya
The role of artists in reducing violent conflict

The twenty-four years of violent conflict in Sri Lanka has been a great challenge for peacebuilders in this century. From armed fighting to abduction of civilians, involvement of children in fighting, aerial bombing in civilian areas, assassinations of non-armed people, guerrilla-style fighting, and suicide bombing have all been part of this violent conflict. A great deal of negotiation work has been done at the local level, national level, regional level (with involvement of India), and international level (with the help of Norwegian mediation) but the main focus was on political solutions. The negotiations did not focus on the values, relations, feelings, and identity of each side. These issues are sometimes the sources of violence, or at least allow violent behavior and violent structures to operate. Rather than structural solutions (which may not be long-lasting) the arts can be very strong tools to address the feelings, emotional relations, and values of individuals and communities in conflicted societies. In addition “artists can bridge the gap between official peacebuilding processes and people at the grassroots.”

In an area where space for open dialogue is much contested and outspoken comments on public issues are dangerous, artists can find a way to reach the people’s feelings and emotions through their performance. Lisa Schirch, Professor of Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University, describes ritual as involving “people’s minds, bodies, all or many of their senses, and their emotions.” Theatre may develop plays based on traditional stories or be involved in different social and cultural ceremonies which may help to diffuse animosity and develop coexistence between different ethnic groups. Symbolic processes such as ritual and ceremony can facilitate building more equitable relationships, or relationships of mutuality, across difference.

Discussion:

Participants began by outlining the key audiences for coexistence-oriented theatre initiatives in Sri Lanka:

- Local people (often in the countryside) who are directly affected by the conflict
- The middle class (often in the city) who may or may not be personally affected or are “on the fence”
- The dominant elite (again often in the city) who may or may not be personally affected or are “on the fence”
- The Sri Lankan diaspora
- The aggressive groups that are parties to the conflict (LTTE, JVP, IPKF, government, army, etc.)

The main problem in Sri Lanka, participants agreed, was to get communities to understand other groups’ points of view and experiences in the country, particularly since information flow about the conflict is so controlled. Many citizens, especially in major cities like Colombo and in the diaspora, have very little contact with the conflict on the ground. The exchange of information and connections to other groups experiences is inadequate. As the army is made up mainly of poorer people (besides the officers), it is difficult to mobilize the middle class and elites to a proper level of concern.

Of those who are working for peace in Sri Lanka, most are subject to fear and intimidation. The participants asked: how does one get past intimidation and fear to do what needs to be done? To date, many peacebuilding efforts in Sri Lanka have focused on political solutions, without giving thought to emotional engagement. Hostilities between the communities in Sri Lanka are so entrenched that emotional engagement must be integrated into proposed solutions in order to change attitudes. Participants felt that theatre can be a way to unearth history, help people accept aspects of their history, and to move forward and begin positive dialogue. Theatre would be especially useful in helping to stop the trend of dehumanizing the “other.”

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2 Yalen, L., Cohen, C. Focus on Coexistence and Arts: Complementary Approaches to Coexistence work. CI Publications July 2007.
3 Schirch, L. Strategic Peacebuilding (2005: 157); Also see Chapter 5, P 59
Some participants suggested that theatre leaders from each side should come together in a joint production. However, other participants argued that in the Sri Lankan context there are inadequate connections between artists from different groups and a lack of mutual vision. Basic trusts among artists from different groups may be lacking. The participants suggested that if two well-known artists from each group would consider collaborating, it might contribute much to cross-community dialogue.

The main question that participants grappled with was differences of opinion on when it is appropriate to merge the communities in a theatre initiative and when they should be done separately. To cross communities in Sri Lanka is so difficult that a better choice may be to do a theatre production in one community and then export it to the other community. Unfortunately, in this conflict situation it may not be possible to integrate the audiences right away. So the question is how to best engage each group separately and then bring the groups together in some way later on.

Participants acknowledged the difficulty for artists and others to take this kind of work on in Sri Lanka. There are powerful forces working to prevent dialogue and coexistence. Artists need to overcome a reasonable fear that violence may be used against them if they try to open up cross-community dialogue. In addition, local artists are often manipulated by NGOs and others in the quest for financial gain.

Participants also acknowledged that theatre should be considered in broad terms. A peacebuilding theatre process does not have to be in the form of traditional production, but could also be through street plays, soap operas, television, radio, interactive plays, facilitated dialogue, or any other dramatic process in which communities could find an outlet for expression. Some processes should be designed to appeal to all audiences, and some should be designed to target more limited groups. In general, participants agreed that productions should be followed by facilitated participatory dialogue in order to allow the community to process the emotions that are stirred up by the theatrical production.

The group then discussed how theatre can be used to reach populations that are sitting “on the sidelines.” What subjects might reach people and provoke them out of detachment? How might theatre highlight positive actions that can be taken by individuals? The group recommended that some productions can be put on that might be “safer,” i.e. plays that don’t talk directly about the conflict but that represent concepts that parallel what is going on locally. Some participants recommended that soap operas be embedded with coexistence themes, as this format is very popular in Sri Lanka. Although it may not be possible or appropriate to facilitate a post-production dialogue, the nature of soap operas as an ongoing series will allow processing to occur naturally among people who tune in regularly. Participants were unsure about whether or not it would be necessary to manipulate the message in this format. Finally, participants posited (though there was not time to answer) this question: how can theatre influence people externally, particularly in the diaspora communities, to fund more coexistence or peacebuilding activities in Sri Lanka?
Questions Raised:

- How can theatre influence people externally, particularly in the diaspora communities, to fund more coexistence or peacebuilding activities in Sri Lanka?
- How might theatre highlight positive actions that can be taken by individuals?
- Are there possible points of entry for peacebuilding and coexistence workers in the current Sri Lankan context? If so, what are they?
- Where can theatre artists come together to begin their dialogue on the most pertinent issues concerning their cultural work and its contribution to increasing mutual understanding and reconciliation?
- How can such a gathering and joint performance be structured in a way that would serve as a transformative experience for the theatre artists themselves and serve as a platform for creation of performance pieces that could be transformative for their audiences?
- What shape does this meeting/dialogue/collaboration take?
- When is it appropriate to merge distrustful communities in a theatre production, and when should the communities be served separately?
- How can you bridge separate communities without integrating them?
- Realistically, what are the possibilities for theatre collaboration in the current situation given the escalation of military activities and security context?
- How can artists get past intimidation, fear, and manipulation?
- What could be the role of the Diaspora and what work is required in the Diaspora in order to engage them and enlist their support for such collaborations?

Recommendations & Action Steps:

1. Artists and peacebuilders should begin joint efforts to work from the grassroots to the national level, as well as in the Diaspora. A first step might be to reach out to two of the most respected theatre artists from the Tamil community and the Sinhala community. A joint production, with facilitated dialogue, would attempt to address community concerns of the Tamils, Sinhala, and Muslims.

2. The Sri Lankan diaspora has been a major driving force in the continuation of armed struggle. Over the years, the LTTE has built a large international network of support among the diaspora community. Therefore, performances should be used to reach diaspora communities, perhaps helping them encounter the feelings and experiences of those from “other” communities, and challenging them to reconsider their financial support of the armed conflict.

3. Children and youth should be a special focus of theatre/coexistence initiatives because their attitudes and hostilities will only foster the continuation of armed conflict in the future.

4. The United Nations should be a crucial partner in developing various audio, video, and theatrical productions around the issues of coexistence. As political negotiation has thus far failed to produce peace, the UN should focus resources on alternative processes. As most people on both sides of the conflict believe in the neutrality of the UN, its support would lend legitimacy and accessibility to creative projects.

5. Creative and theatrical processes in Sri Lanka should encompass a diverse range of activities, including political plays, street theatre, children’s theatre, television and radio soap operas, and educational/health campaigns in refugee camps. This will allow creative processes to filter down to a range of individuals from the various communities, age groups, classes, etc.
Iran/Israel/US Relations (Diaspora Focus)

Background:
Benedictus is a joint production of Iranian, Israeli, and American theatre artists who share concerns about the escalating tensions as evidenced by the harsh rhetoric coming from government officials in Iran, Israel, and the U.S. In this workshop, the theatre artists involved in this production welcomed interaction with coexistence practitioners and others with expertise in relevant history, culture, and politics, to assist them in assessing their work and its potential as a resource for re-humanizing members of these adversary communities in each others’ eyes and for influencing policy (US policies in particular) in order to minimize the possibility of a violent encounter between their countries. They also invited coexistence practitioners and peacebuilders to examine the possibilities of artistic expression in relation to peacebuilding in the region.

Summary of “Benedictus”

Asher Muthada, an Israeli businessman, arrives at a Benedictine Monastery, somewhere in Rome, for a secret meeting. His old friend, Ali Kermani, an Iranian mullah, arrives shortly afterwards. Asher and Ali circle one another. They have long nurtured the painful wounds and betrayals of their youth. Can they ever trust each other? First they cannot resist revisiting old and hurtful memories. But they have both come for a purpose and they resolve to move forward.

Asher has set up the contact. He offers Ali weapons in exchange for the release of his sister and her 31 family members. To Asher’s surprise, Ali isn’t interested in the arms. Ali suggests another deal. He is ready to release Asher’s sister and her family if Asher uses his connections in the Pentagon and arranges for a meeting for him with a senior American official in the CIA. Ali wants to negotiate an agreement that will postpone the American attack, to save his country from destruction but also to give him credit for preventing the war. Ali is sure that with such credit he will win the next presidential election in Iran and he can begin negotiations with the Americans on resuming inspections of Iranian nuclear facilities.

They remain wary of each other and their motives, although they treat each other as old friends. They agree that Asher will contact the Americans and Ali will explore releasing Asher’s sister over the day and they will meet later in the afternoon to report in. Asher leaves first. As Ali leaves, indicating his doubt, he asks one of the monks to request a meeting with the Pope, in hopes of assistance from the Vatican in contacting the Americans if the arrangement with Asher fails.

The scene shifts to the office of the US Ambassador to Italy, in Rome. Asher appeals to Ambassador Martin to talk with Ali, but Ambassador Martin has some history to recount – he was one of the hostages held in the US Embassy in Tehran for 444 days in 1979. Ali Kermani was one of the people who had mediated between the Iranian students and Ayatollah Khomeini. Ambassador Martin rejects any conversation with Ali Kermani. Asher, frustrated, reminds Martin that there are very incriminating revelations about their personal political and financial dealings, which Asher would be willing to expose to force a conversation between Martin and Kermani. Ambassador Martin, in apparent fury at the threat, dismisses Asher from his office.

The scene shifts back to the monastery. Ali and Asher return to the monastery in the late afternoon to report on their mutual progress. Asher enthusiastically tells Ali that the Americans will meet with him. Ali is surprised and uncertain, thinking it may be a trick. Asher makes clear that the bargain is simple – first his sister and her family must be delivered to the embassy in Pakistan, then the head of the CIA will fly to Rome to meet with Ali. Asher says this is the condition set by the Americans, because he insisted upon it. Ali is suspicious. He can’t understand why the Americans would attach such a condition. He wants to negotiate right away. He even mentions the fact that the head of the CIA knows him personally. They met when they were negotiating the release of the hostages in 1979. Asher

1 Synopsis edited from authors’ version
admits that the Americans don’t trust Ali because he has always declared nuclear weapons as an Iranian existential interest. Nevertheless, Ali must talk with the Americans, so he decides to compromise and make arrangements to free Asher’s sister. They agree to meet again the next morning, and Asher makes it clear that he expects his sister to be in Pakistan at that time. Ali leaves first. Asher, uncertain about Ali’s trustworthiness, talks to one of the monks and asks if the Vatican can help make an effort on his sister’s behalf, indicating that he is willing to make a substantial financial donation for that to happen.

The scene shifts to a room in the Intercontinental Hotel in downtown Rome. Ali, surprisingly in a Western business suit, meets with Ambassador Martin in a hotel room. Ambassador Martin contacted Ali directly, to avoid involving Asher. Martin offers Ali a counter-proposal – the US attacks Iran to get rid of the Ayatollahs and the Islamic Republic, then the US will help establish Ali Kermani as the president of the new free and democratic Iranian Republic. Afterwards, Ali as president will respect all international treaties on nuclear enrichment and weapons and normalize the relationship between Iran and the US. Ali considers this, but he cannot measure his personal ambitions against the destruction of his country and people. He refuses.

The scene shifts back to the monastery. Ali and Asher arrive for the morning meeting. The plane carrying Asher’s sister and her family never left the Tehran airport. Ali reports that it could not fly because the Prime Minister of Pakistan didn’t give permission for landing. Asher’s sister and her family are now in danger since their plans to flee the country secretly are in the open. Seemingly, the deal is in ruins. As the two men absorb their enormous disappointment, they begin to question the sincerity of the other. Ali suspects that Asher never meant to arrange a contact with the Americans, because he actually doesn’t want to prevent the war. On the contrary, Ali is sure that Asher wants America to attack Iran and destroy its nuclear facilities to protect Israel. Asher suspects the Ali is not representing the opposition in Iran, but that he’s actually representing the President, who sent him to manipulate the Americans into postponing their attack so Iran will be able to manufacture a nuclear bomb and destroy Israel.

Their underlying lack of trust rises, as does their resentment and frustration with enduring another betrayal at one another’s hands. They begin to accuse each other of acting in bad faith all along, of wishing for failure, and of desiring the annihilation of each other’s people and countries. Whatever remained of their fragile connection is completely destroyed. They begin to leave the monastery and in all likelihood will never meet again. In a last vain attempt, Ali, a religious man, asks the monk showing him out if there’s any hope that the Pope will assist in a final attempt to thwart an American attack on Iran. The monk replies sadly that the Pope cannot meet, but he will pray for world peace.

Discussion:
Two participants involved in the writing and production of the play, Benedictus, familiarized the workshop group with their experiences participating with others in the development of the play. The process involved a group of diverse people who lived together for over a week. The play’s participants started by sharing stories of their lives, including work-life, art, and culture. They ate together every night, with food being an integral part of the experience. There was neither a pre-imposed ideology nor a structure for the play. Rather, the play evolved from those shared life stories. In this way, they also developed the ideas for Benedictus’ characters. They considered multiple styles for the play, including the traditional Iranian Ta’zieh style, which they ultimately chose not to use. They settled on the core approach of having two men, coming together. The play evolved from that core.
The question was asked of the workshop participants: “Would this group think in new ways from experiencing the play?” One participant, a photographer, spoke about his experiences with a show of photographs taken during the Iran-Iraq war. There were no labels on the pictures, just images of destruction and loss of life. Some people would see this show and think “Nothing has changed” and become hopeless. However, the hope was that with a wide range of people viewing the show, at least some would “do the right thing” after seeing it – namely, seek alternatives to violence. The participant wondered how Benedictus could reach the people who are hopeless and entrenched, as well as those who are in power in Washington, Tehran, and Jerusalem.

Another participant asked whether the big political divides faced by these three countries in relationship to each other could ever be bridged, and, if so, can it actually be done through art? There are powerful structural forces at play, such as a large domestic opposition. A real leader should be able to effect change and bring about alternative ways of handling affairs, but, in the participant’s opinion, this type of leader is currently nowhere to be found.

One participant found a flaw in the play, since the people involved in the development of Benedictus were unable to get an Iranian artist from within Iran to participate. Some participants agreed that the play showed more of America in 2007, presented by and for American intellectuals and artists, rather than the reality on the ground presented by and for those living through it. The participant was also disappointed that the play ended so hopelessly; much like the photography show, it appeared to present the “same old thing” rather than alternatives. The group agreed that more alternatives and more “change agents” are needed in order to bridge the divides. One participant worked with Iranian women, and saw potential for them to act as the change agents in this situation.

The fact that stereotypes were at the core of the play was also discussed. The main characters - the Iranian mullah and the Jew living in Israel – present distinct ends of the divide. The characters also represent the distrust and paranoia common on both sides. One participant saw this as a representation of the worst form of masculinity, the paranoia that keeps people in a box with the only solution being war. The inability of the characters to arrange a compromise represented our inability to imagine alternatives.

One participant looked at the play as a wake-up call for a mainly American audience. It could be used to shame and leverage the neo-conservative and Israeli lobby in the US to try to avoid war. It could also educate the general population and be used to get the word out through the media. The play expresses fear in an artistic way. However, since it is mainly geared towards American intellectuals, the participants felt that, in order to be an effective coexistence measure, the artists would need to think about how to get it out and make it palatable to a larger audience from all the countries. Some ideas were to turn the play into a series that could be put online. Another participant suggested using technology to formulate alternative endings to the play. Creating more workshops to discuss the play with diverse audiences would also be useful. There was a divide among the participants about whether the integrity of the art should come first, or whether the priority was disseminating information in a responsible and useful way. Some participants thought that a typical audience also might not possess enough knowledge about the situation to avoid current/circular thinking on the topic. The play could perhaps be staged in a way that contextualized it and educated the audience in a supplemental way, beyond the information that is in the play itself.

Major Themes:

- Art as a “wake-up call” for change in policies and attitudes
- Importance of artistic integrity vs. responsibility
- Process of bringing together different groups to form a product
- Overcoming stereotypes, distrust, and misinformation
- Importance of presenting alternatives to violence
Questions Raised:

- As we approach Benedictus from our respective disciplines and sensibilities, how do we assess this play? Is it a “responsible” work in peacebuilding/coexistence terms? Must artists be “responsible” to goals beyond truthful and aesthetic representation?
- To what coexistence purposes does the work lend itself? How does artwork fit into the context of societies facing violent conflict? What is the role of contextualization of art towards the goal of humanizing adversarial groups?
- Can the positive possibilities of this play be maximized without it becoming overly instrumentalized and losing its artistic power? What are the limitations or dangers of leveraging cultural productions into the public discourse?
- Does art have to represent reality?
- Could a play like Benedictus (and activities that could surround it) influence the spectrum of opinions in the Iranian and Israeli diaspora communities in the United States as they are struggling to make sense of themselves as neighbors, and of political discourses of their own and each other’s “home countries”? Could it help create more spaces for dialogue within and between these communities? How?
- Could the play influence American voters and policy-makers? How?
- What has been learned by the theatre artists through this collaboration about the process itself of bringing together individuals from three antagonistic countries and setting up a context for them to work in collaboration toward a common goal? What could the artists teach coexistence practitioners about the actual process of intercultural dialogue in practice?

Recommendations & Action Steps:

1. The process of writing and producing Benedictus provides a powerful example of the possibility of bridging divides through a collaborative process with a shared end-goal, involving people from opposing backgrounds. Coexistence practitioners and those in related fields should examine the effectiveness of this model of utilizing a collaborative creative process to bridge divides.

2. Participants were divided over the importance of artistic integrity versus social/political responsibility. Artists should strive to fulfill both of these commitments as much as possible and make individual decisions about priority on a case-by-case basis. However, it is important to avoid making a situation worse or inflaming tensions that could lead to violence.

3. The play, Benedictus, or similar creative productions, should be presented to broad and diverse audiences, focusing not just on intellectuals, but also those who are misinformed about or personally involved in a situation. By presenting the play with some informational context, the artists could also widen the discussion and potentially “change hearts and minds” regarding the conflict. This would have to be balanced with the integrity of the artistic process itself.

4. Artistic processes that are examining a delicate political situation should strive to involve individuals who are directly involved with the situation. In the case of Benedictus, the production would have likely benefited from the inclusion of an Iranian perspective from inside Iran. Art should also be mindful of including the voices of women.
Transitional Justice Efforts in West Africa

Background:

The workshop built on experiences and challenges of transitional justice practitioners in West Africa. Participants generated ideas for maximizing the impact of creative and complementary approaches among those involved in transitional justice, human rights, and coexistence and cultural work in several countries in West Africa that have recently emerged from violent conflict. The workshop explored and imagined how culture and the arts can strengthen transitional justice processes and make them more sensitive to cultural differences.

Transitional justice refers to a range of approaches that societies undertake to reckon with legacies of widespread or systematic human rights abuse as they move from a period of violent conflict or oppression towards peace, democracy, the rule of law, and respect for individual and collective rights. In making such a transition, societies must confront the painful legacy, or burden, of the past in order to achieve a holistic sense of justice for all citizens, to establish or renew civic trust, to reconcile people and communities, and to prevent future abuses. A variety of approaches to transitional justice are available that can help wounded societies start anew.

These approaches are both judicial and nonjudicial, and they seek to encompass broadly the various dimensions of justice that can heal wounds and contribute to social reconstruction. Transitional justice incorporates a realistic view of the challenges faced by societies emerging from conflict or repression, and an appreciation of their unique cultural and historical contexts, without allowing these realities to serve as excuses for inaction. All stakeholders in the transitional justice process must be consulted and participate in the design and implementation of transitional justice policies.

The major approaches to transitional justice include: domestic, hybrid, and international prosecutions of perpetrators of human rights abuse; determining the full extent and nature of past abuses through truth-telling initiatives, including national and international commissions; providing reparations to victims, including compensatory, restitutinary, rehabilitative, and symbolic reparations; institutional reform, including the vetting of abusive, corrupt, or incompetent officials from the police and security services, the military, and other public institutions including the judiciary; promoting reconciliation within divided communities; constructing memorials and museums to preserve the memory of the past; and taking into account gendered patterns of abuse to enhance justice for female victims.

Different combinations of these approaches are appropriate in each transitional context. What works well in one country or region may not be as effective in others; therefore, local ownership and involvement in planning is necessary for successful transitional justice processes. This problem-solving workshop focused on West Africa, where transitional justice processes in some countries have already concluded, while in others they are just beginning or have not yet been formulated. Some examples of these processes are:

Ghana

Since attaining independence in March 1957, Ghana has experienced a difficult political history characterized by authoritarian and military rule with accompanying human rights abuses. In January 2001 – for the first time in Ghana’s 44 years of independence – a change of government was effected by a general election instead of by military coup. In his acceptance speech, the newly elected president, John Agyekum Kufuor, promised an active policy of national reconciliation designed to heal the wounds of the past. In January 2002, he signed into law a bill creating the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) to examine decades of human rights abuse. The NRC for the first time provided Ghanaians the opportunity to publicly relate their experiences of abuse, uncover the truth about the past, and seek redress. During the course of its operations, it took more than 4,000 statements from victims and witnesses and convened more than 2,000 public hearings. It also convened thematic hearings on a range of issues critical to Ghana’s human rights history such as civil-military relations. The NRC report, submitted in October 2004, exposes the complex

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1 Some text adapted from the International Center for Transitional Justice (www.ictj.org)
interplay between various institutions that led to the disintegration of democracy in Ghana. Further, the report also considers the impact of socio-economic disparities and colonial policies on the rise of widespread human rights abuse in the country. In October 2006, the government commenced the payment of reparations to victims of human rights abuses, although not without difficulties and unmet expectations.

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone is emerging from a 10-year conflict marked by intense and cruel violence against civilians, corruption, a struggle for control over diamond mines, and recruitment of child soldiers. The civil war has left the country in physical and economic ruin. Tens of thousands of civilians are dead, and the number of persons raped, mutilated, or tortured is much higher still. The war captured international headlines over a prevalent policy of forced amputations, which were carried out even on very young children. In July 1999, after close to a decade of civil war, the government of Sierra Leone and the leadership of the main rebel group, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), signed a peace agreement in Lome, Togo. The peace accords included an unconditional general amnesty for all parties to the war, which was strongly criticized by local and international human rights groups and others. The government and RUF also agreed to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that became operational in late 2002. The TRC submitted its final report to the Sierra Leonean government in October 2004. Several months after the Lome peace agreement, conflict broke out again. In May 2000, some 500 UN peacekeepers were captured by RUF forces, leading to British intervention. Subsequently, the Sierra Leonean government asked the UN to help it establish a Special Court. In August of 2000, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1315 mandating the creation of the Special Court to prosecute “those persons who bear the greatest responsibility for the commission of violations of international humanitarian law.” The first officials arrived in Freetown in July 2002. Trials have been ongoing for the past several years and are expected to be completed in 2009.

Liberia

In 1989, the onset of the bloody and ruinous Liberian civil war ended almost 10 years of authoritarian military rule under Samuel K. Doe, backed by members of the Krahn ethnic group. Doe’s former procurement chief, Charles Taylor, led a band of rebels to the outskirts of Monrovia, but ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) intervention prevented him from taking the capital. Taylor continued to fight until 1992, when he agreed to the formation of a transitional government. A peace agreement was signed in 1995. In the 1997 elections, Taylor and his National Patriotic Party won a large majority of the vote, which many attributed to a fear among Liberians that Taylor would simply resume fighting if he lost. Conflict continued to rage, and in 2003 Taylor was forced to resign and flee into exile in Nigeria, under pressure from the international community and rival factions. In August 2005, the governments of Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea formally requested that Taylor be extradited from Nigeria to face criminal charges at the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Following mounting international pressure, in March 2006, Nigerian officials apprehended Taylor as he tried to flee the country, and delivered him to the Special Court, where he was held for several months. Following a decision by the United Nations Security Council, he was transferred to The Hague in June 2006, where he is being tried by the Special Court for Sierra Leone in a special chamber of the International Criminal Court. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was launched in June 2006 as part of the comprehensive peace agreement reached by stakeholders to promote national peace, security, unity and reconciliation. While the launch marked a significant step toward a search for lasting peace in more than a decade of brutal civil war, it also raises challenges for the peace and democratization process in Liberia. There is a credible fear amongst the civil society community in Liberia that the TRC is likely to be ineffective because many of the perpetrators continue to serve in the current government and may escape scrutiny under the guise of constitutional immunity.

Discussion:
The workshop began with a presentation of background information from two participants, one from Sierra Leone and one from Ghana, who have had hands-on experience with the transitional justice processes in their countries and in the region. The participant from Sierra Leone thought that the simultaneous nature of the TRC and the Special Court was problematic. In addition, it was hard for people to talk publicly about their experiences for fear of reprisal. The organizers of the TRC in Sierra Leone did not look at differences in culture or in the conflict itself, according to the
participant; they simply transplanted the South African model. Victims and local communities often felt neglected by the TRC, and Western “experts” ignored local practices and cleansing rituals that could have assisted in healing the country. In addition, the participant had not seen many examples of theatre or other arts being utilized in the transitional justice process.

The participant from Ghana focused on lessons from the work of the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD). CDD found that governments and practitioners tend to see transitional justice as a short-term event, but it actually requires a long-term perspective on reconciliation. Reconciliation and transitional justice efforts also must be linked with peacebuilding, as they often tend to be disconnected. As demonstrated in Nigeria and other countries in the region, there is a lack of follow-through on report recommendations from transitional justice processes. There is also a lack of gender inclusivity in the formation of transitional justice processes, as well as a lack of respect and incorporation of local cultural context. This includes theatre and artistic efforts, which have rarely been included in the transitional justice processes in the region.

Following this introduction, the group was asked to consider this question: “What are the strengths to build on in terms of incorporating arts into transitional justice processes in the region?” One participant pointed out an example in Ghana, where both music and television dramas had influenced positive non-violent behavior during recent elections. Other participants had also noticed an increase in the number of musicians in the region attempting to address peace issues. However, music has also been used in some cases as a political tool or propaganda. Participants thought that the positive uses of the arts, as an educational tool to teach about HIV/AIDS, development, non-violent communication, etc. should be transferred to educating communities about transitional justice processes. In Nigeria, for instance, a film festival in the run-up to a recent election created a space for public conversation that engaged all sectors of society.

Participants discussed the fact that transitional justice processes typically engage privileged political and civil society leaders, but very often do not consult with the larger public, particularly at the grassroots or rural levels. Transitional justice processes present an opportunity to educate the population about respect for human rights and other socio-economic development issues. Participants felt that the arts offered one avenue to educate and challenge people. By blending international expertise with local knowledge and resources, processes can be more sustainable and effective. Working with groups of people on an arts project could also simply be a way of bringing those groups together. The collaboration itself could be the goal of an arts project, rather than a political or social issue.

Considering the aforementioned possibilities and challenges of utilizing creative approaches to transitional justice processes in West Africa, participants envisioned a hypothetical artistic/cultural ceremony that could integrate transitional justice into the local context. The basis would be a traditional cleansing ceremony, created in consultation with a large cross-section of the society. The ceremony would include representatives from the country itself, but also from former colonizers and from the international community, in order to acknowledge the role of these outside forces. The ceremony would include major participation of women, and could also include local music or artistic groups. The ritual would be performed and broadcast to the whole country and incorporated into curricula that would teach about reconciliation and unity. Dialogue and grassroots involvement would be critical to the entire process. Since local contexts would differ from country to country (or even at a smaller scale on the community level), this idea would only be a framework that would need to be adjusted for each context in consultation with all stakeholders. It could be considered a “national epic” that would engage groups previously in conflict in rebuilding their society and reaffirming interdependence and unity.

[Questions and recommendations for Part I and Part II of the West Africa workshop have been combined below.]
Transitional Justice Efforts in West Africa (Part II)

On November 27, 2007, students in Professor Cynthia Cohen’s course on “The Arts of Building Peace” conducted a follow-up to the October 7th workshop on Transitional Justice Efforts in West Africa. Building on the discussion and action steps constructed during the original workshop, the students, professor, and outside guests used the knowledge gained from their coursework on creative approaches to peace in order to brainstorm additional issues and recommendations that can help foster reconciliation in divided societies in West Africa. *Questions and recommendations for both Part I and Part II of the West Africa workshop have been combined, and follow the discussion summary below.*

### Discussion:

The facilitator framed the discussion by reminding the group to be conscious of local contexts in West Africa. In order to do this, participants who were present at the first workshop were asked to remind the group of what was discussed. The first workshop, participants said, brought together a group of people with various backgrounds in the subject matter, including a significant portion with knowledge of theatre and the arts. The focus was to discuss completed and ongoing transitional justice efforts in the West Africa region, particularly the extent to which the arts and creative approaches had been utilized and incorporated into these efforts. The main idea that came out of the workshop was to incorporate traditional ritual practices of healing and reconciliation into a large-scale community event. This was stemming from the fact that the group identified the insensitivity of some external attempts by the international community to address transitional justice without being aware of local mechanisms already in place.

The participants in this second West Africa workshop then discussed in depth these local resources and mechanisms that exist in the region, which are rarely utilized for this purpose in a post-conflict situation. The first thing that the participants from the region wanted to focus on was the human resources. While it is good to bring international experts into a post-conflict situation, it can also send the message to local people that their opinions are not going to be part of creating the system for reconciliation. As one participant emphasized: “The problems are local, so the solutions should be also.” Another participant focused on the potential of the local chieftain systems in some West African countries in addressing conflict and healing. In some parts of Ghana, for instance, when a person commits violence the chieftains are responsible for meting out justice, which may include punishment, reparations, community service, and a symbolic cleansing ritual so that you can be accepted back into society. This system has somewhat waned in strength in many parts of the region, but could be revived through involvement in reconciliation processes after violent internal conflict.

In northern Ghana, in response to a conflict over succession to power, the government set up both a judicial body to deal with the criminal aspect and a committee of chiefs to deal with the cultural issues associated with the conflict. The chieftain committee was very successful, and this represents a good example of integrating the traditional system with the modern one to address complex conflicts. Ghana also has a national house of chiefs which discusses issues of concern in all of the administrative areas and communicates them to the national-level government. This is one resource that should be engaged in transitional justice efforts because of its power and respect on both the local and national levels. In some countries, the chieftain system also has important gender implications: since many of the traditional societies are matriarchal, this can be one area where women can have a voice in the transitional justice processes, which have generally not addressed gender concerns in a substantial way.

### Major Themes:

- Resources and traditions in West Africa
- Cultural processes to promote dialogue
- Utilizing local mechanisms and knowledge
- Coordination between official and grassroots processes
- Engaging stakeholders at appropriate stages
Participants also talked about the potential of traditional music, which frequently takes the form of lessons to encourage people to live side by side in peace. This form of music is fast dying out in the face of modernity, but, like the chieftain system, could be revitalized through strategic engagement with transitional justice processes. There is, for instance, a musicians association in Ghana which has played a significant role in disseminating messages of peace through music, as well as fighting corruption and election problems. Particularly in the rural areas, performance festivals are a highly respected way of getting out a message. Radio programs can function in the same way, reaching a large and diverse audience.

Participants could not think of many instances of artists who were specifically and explicitly attempting to use their art to build bridges across difference in the region. This could be one reason why creative approaches have not generally been incorporated into the transitional justice processes in West Africa. One participant who had worked with the Special Court for Sierra Leone helped to train a group of local artists in community theatre and music to talk about the Special Court in different communities and conduct outreach. However, these examples are rare. One participant highlighted the example of using drama to educate about HIV/AIDS - this was very successful in the region, so why could they not do the same with justice issues? The problem is a lack of coordination between artists and the official transitional justice processes. Ideally the official and grassroots processes should both happen and can be linked. At this point though, the efforts remain separate. Another potential problem is the difference in the type of information that is being transmitted in talking about HIV/AIDS versus talking about reconciliation. The first one involves changing behavior, while the second involved changing attitude towards a former enemy. The arts can give people not only the message, but a kind of experience that can be transformative on many different levels. The process of art-making can help to change relationships.

One of the most important stakeholders is the civil society actors on the ground, who are effective in reaching out to the local traditional structures, such as the chieftains. Other potential staging grounds would include the education system (through art exchanges or competitions in schools) and sports (through friendly competitions involving all groups). Working with children is particularly important in order to ensure non-violent communication and interaction in the future. Another type of creative process that could be utilized would be oral history projects. The region has a strong tradition of storytelling and community gatherings that were disrupted by the conflicts. If these were brought back, and perhaps modernized through dissemination on TV or radio, participants thought that the response would be positive. Theatre artists could take the stories from the truth and reconciliation commissions and create performances to share with local communities who would not necessarily have much access to the commissions otherwise. In that way, the “story” of the conflict and of reconciliation could be told throughout the country. One participant also proposed the idea of mural-making as a communal effort, and another suggested a small-scale farming or gardening initiative to bring groups of people together to work toward a common goal.

Participants agreed that most of these suggestions would work in the West Africa context, but it would depend on ensuring involvement and ownership by the local people. In many of these countries, transitional justice has been headed by external actors who come in with their own ideas and biases, and who generally do not involve the local grassroots. The effectiveness of mural-making to promote dialogue, for instance, would depend on an understanding of the traditional roots of this form of art (in some countries in the region it is tied to initiation rituals). The process could be coordinated by an official body such as the Ministry of Culture, but it would need to involve councils of local leaders, artists, and grassroots representatives who were aware of the cultural implications of that art form.

Understanding local contexts is the greatest obstacle to using creative approaches to further reconciliation in West Africa. Other obstacles include lack of financial and infrastructural resources, engaging people in each stage of the process to ensure ownership, and sustainability of the project for long-term effects. These obstacles underscore the need for local involvement on all levels from government to traditional chieftains to civil society to the population on the ground. If all of these levels are not involved in proper ways and at the right stages in the creation of creative reconciliation processes, the initiatives will not be considered legitimate by the people who need them most.
Recommendations & Action Steps:

1. Transitional justice workers should use creative/artistic approaches to educate public about transitional justice processes, reconciliation, peace, and unity. This could include drama, music, or other initiatives, modeled on the “theatre for development” method which educates about HIV/AIDS, disease prevention, etc.

2. It is important to utilize local strengths, such as traditional chieftains, storytelling, or music forms, to bring communities together. Local models for dealing with conflict and for dispensing justice can provide possibilities for sustainable, effective, and legitimate transitional justice processes.

3. States in West Africa must engage with the international community to acknowledge its part in internal conflicts in the subregion. This includes former colonizers, international governments, civil society, multinational corporations, etc. In turn, the international community must not enforce its own forms of transitional justice on a community. Processes should engage local knowledge and mechanisms to ensure ownership.

4. Artists should ensure gender and group inclusivity in artistic productions to bring together individuals and groups in a collaborative way that fosters recognition of interdependence and unity. The relationships formed through cooperation on a project can model positive behavior in the larger community.

5. In the formation of transitional justice processes, it is necessary to reach beyond the elite government and civil society leaders and engage grassroots and marginalized parties. This ensures wider participation, understanding, and legitimacy of transitional justice processes. Different stakeholders should be engaged at the appropriate stages.
Creativity, Social Development, and Peacebuilding in East Africa

Background:
This workshop focused on potential ideas for creatively addressing social development, peace, and reconciliation in the East African countries of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi. The history of colonialism, authoritarian governments, and ethnic or civil conflicts in these countries have contributed to varying degrees of socio-political problems. Among these is the need for reconciliation, development, and education in order to engage the region’s youth in the struggle for a future of stability and prosperity. The main proposal discussed by participants was the “Dunia Moja International School” to be located in Kisumu, Kenya, described in this excerpt:

“Introduction
Dunia Moja International School will be located in the hub of East Africa—Kisumu City on the shores of Lake Victoria in Kenya.

The School is founded on the following principals:

1. An integrated arts-like approach towards all subjects, which is key to developing creative relationships and thinking needed for an increasingly interrelated complex world;
2. Recognition and inspiration of innate intelligence and inventiveness of Africans – this needs to be appreciated and inspired; and

The School
Dunia Moja International School will be designed to develop a new breed of leader—social workers, businesspeople, activists, teachers, politicians, artists—who will take up their calling with new eyes and possibilities. We are looking to produce creative thinkers who are connected to themselves, their roots, the global community, and to their humanity.

Creativity and exploration will be the soul of the School. The School will consciously try to break the artificial alienating boundaries of traditional educational structures. It will promote interdisciplinary learning—i.e., how math relates to literature, to business, to philosophy, to history, and other disciplines. This will be a multi-track program that offers limitless choices as opposed to funneling students into predetermined paths. Further, African traditional knowledge will be integrated with newer technologies. The learning will pay special attention to African society as a complex social, cultural, economic, creative, ever-changing organism that has both direct and indirect relationships with the rest of the world.

We recognize the significant challenge the School vision presents to existing educational modalities—particularly in a place where formal schooling has historically served colonial and post-colonial authoritarian control and oppression. Although students will receive a high standard of academic training, life skills will be equally as important. Rather than imposing the dominant Western model of passive knowledge acquisition, the School seeks to be a learning environment cooperatively produced by students, teachers, and others.

In this kind of transformative cultural/educational activity, the creative and connective languages of art-making—of poetry and storytelling, painting and sculpture, theatre, film, dance, and music—become critical tools. This is true not so that students can produce art (although they will), but so they can find their unique voices, see themselves and others from new vantage points, explore questions not yet asked, imagine new possibilities, build new kinds of kinships.
The practice of creative collaboration is also essential if the School is to fashion a more level playing field where Africans can connect with people from other parts of the world to exchange ideas and co-create new thinking. This kind of non-intimidating platform that has its referral point in Africa does not currently exist—yet is desperately needed if young Africans are to fruitfully interact with an increasingly sophisticated world.

The issue of creating a level playing field is also a serious regional challenge, where women’s oppression and ethnic rivalry are major obstacles to development. In our experience, art-making particularly seems to empower young women and facilitate fraternal relationships across ethnic boundaries. Lastly, expansive thinking that balances freedom and responsibility is much needed in a world where so many seem to be turning to fundamentalism and closing in on themselves.

**Rationale**

The world, especially the so-called Developed World, has always related and continues to relate to Africa as a charity case, a continent bereft of any innovative ideas that could substantially contribute to its own development in particular and to the development of the world in general. The School is envisaged to directly counter this popular historical fallacy.

The very idea of school is a Western construct that does not adequately respond to the African reality. The Dunia Moja International School is envisioned to fill that gap. For example, dire poverty confines innumerable African children to total illiteracy simply because the school system is by design favourable to the wealthy. Ideas such as universal access to primary education is still a pipedream in a context where getting the next meal is a fulltime occupation. The School, therefore, will be a laboratory for others to study and learn from and possibly emulate. It is hoped that the School will collaborate with scholars from other parts of world and like-minded institutions and help break the stereotypical view of Africa as simply a place of poverty and misery.”

The proposed school would include students from throughout the East Africa region (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi) and would pay special attention to admission of girls who are socio-culturally marginalized. While each country in the region has its particular history and level of instability (ethnic conflict in Rwanda and Burundi, localized civil conflict in Northern Uganda, and authoritarian rule and violence in Kenya and Tanzania), as a whole they all face similar issues in terms of development, education, and coexistence. Ongoing creative approaches to these problems have included an Interdisciplinary Genocide Studies Center in Rwanda, a women’s economic development and conflict transformation project in Tanzania, and BrooKenya!, an intercontinental grassroots soap opera that connected people across cultures in Kenya, the US, and Peru.

**Discussion:**

The discussion began with the recognition that networking and establishing connections between people and the organizations represented in the room is very important to the peacebuilding and reconciliation process in East Africa. The main points discussed included the residual effects of colonialism in relation to the government and national identity, the educational system, African agency, and the possible uses of theatre to initiate positive approaches to peace and reconciliation. When challenges were brought up, such as post-colonialism issues and the dynamics of power in East Africa, it was agreed that in order to initiate effectual change through any organization, it should be African-centered, African-

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**Major Themes:**

- Utilizing theatre and education for reconciliation
- Residual effects of colonialism/ “dependency syndrome”
- Importance of local empowerment and voice
- Lack or misdirection of resources and funding
- Tribalism versus national identity
- Censorship of theatre in Uganda

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Excerpt from proposal by Kitche Magak, Kate Gardner, and Jack Ogembo
empowering, and sustained through African agency. The educational system was viewed as perpetuating colonial definitions of power and creating a “dependency syndrome” where children were not challenged to question and creatively approach problem-solving. In order for great change to happen, it was agreed that the educational system needed to begin by deeply empowering African youth to take control of their lives and be agents of change for the future. Various ways to utilize theatre for promoting peace, dispersing information, and as a means by which the “dependency syndrome” could be eradicated were recurring themes throughout the workshop.

One participant identified tribalism as one of the main problems in the region, adding that the colonial division of land in East Africa left unnatural divisions between groups. There are 57 tribes in Uganda and individuals associate themselves with their tribe and not with their nation. This lack of unity contributes to the country’s problems. The residual effects of colonial structures of power have also created what was referred to in the workshop as the “dependency syndrome.” A participant suggested that theatre can be used to put these issues out in the open, explaining that in the 1980s theatre helped to give Ugandan problems a face and people began solving issues themselves. The participant proposed a playwriting competition or festival where Ugandans could write their stories and everyone’s perspective could be made public in a creative environment. However, the Ugandan government is small and powerful, and it is difficult to start a workshop or program without going through them. Creating an anthology of submitted plays could immortalize the stories even if the plays could not be put on.

Another participant discussed the situations in Uganda and Rwanda. The government in Rwanda is making efforts to bring unity and focus on feeling Rwandan rather than Hutu or Tutsi. This was brought about through radio and media as well as theatre. The participants wondered what efforts could be used in Uganda to bring about this same unity and sense of nationalism. However unity is attained, one participant noted, “cohesion has to be a political will that must be sustained.”

One of the main ways to reinforce this idea is through education, so the group discussed problems in education and ways to solve them. One participant spoke of the power of theatre to send strong messages and educate an audience. The school system in Kenya makes children dependent on teachers and does not teach them how to be creative. The educational system was designed in the colonial days and has perpetuated the “dependency syndrome.” Participants agreed that a school for peace and creativity would make an indelible mark upon East Africa’s future generations. A participant raised an additional problem concerning education, which is that most of the population is still illiterate. Therefore, theatre is a method that can be used to speak to everyone, though some participants were apprehensive about how theatre would be able to impact issues of illiteracy. One participant expressed the idea that literacy and education are different concepts, and that theatre can make people educated, without being exclusive to the educated population. There was an example of informational pamphlets about HIV/AIDS being given out in Uganda as part of a government-sponsored campaign. However, since the campaign supplied only written materials, the illiterate population was excluded. Using theatre to broadcast these messages would make ideas more immediately accessible to everyone.

Censorship and government control of information was a concern as well. One participant told an anecdotal story in which he was approached by someone who said to him, “Will you do plays when you come back? Whatever you do, don’t do a political play.” When he asked the group how one should go about such situations, a participant answered, “You just have to do it, somebody has to do it.” The concept of connectedness came into play. It was suggested that if one can’t do a play in Uganda, they should do the play in Kenyan schools and by the time the people in power make a fuss, it has already been seen by a few schools and has become a bigger movement dealing with more people. The participant also noted, “The government cannot deal with it if it is coming from all corners.” The media is a significant source with which to engage to motivate large groups of people and foster a national debate.
Another issue raised during the workshop was that of resources and funding. Since power almost always revolves around those who have money, the group decided it was imperative not to become dependent on them if they are not going about change in the right way. One participant brought up the idea that even when solutions come from outside of Africa, decision-making processes should be African-centered, giving a voice to the people who are being helped. Another participant thought that the biggest problem was the colonial model that “nothing works without a Western figure running it.” Some expressed their frustration that Westerners bring in a project but do not give Africans a voice in the issues that affect them. An example was brought up of Westerners bringing water to a village but not understanding that women cannot access certain areas where the well is built because of conflict or social constructions. It is important that we must “have the people who are funding you invest more than their money.”

Other participants agreed with this model, explaining that it complemented the idea of a school for creativity, because this gives Africans the power to express themselves and give themselves more of a voice. When children are taught to simply listen to what their teacher says, they are trained to respect authority their whole lives and never question.

After the key points were raised, participants identified what the next step could possibly be, and how to take action. The group focused on maintaining the connections formed during the workshop in order to stay in communication with artists and peacebuilding practitioners from various regions and fields. More specifically, the Dunia Moja International School proposal was a tangible plan the group could work with, as it addressed several of the key issues such as increasing literacy and incorporating the arts into education to encourage creative thought. On a similar note, the Theatre Without Borders program was brought up as a similar initiative outside of the classroom, which exposed participants to free expression while forming valuable connections. One participant proposed the idea of a thematic theatre festival, during which playwrights would be asked to write on a certain issue. It would be more difficult for the government to shut down a whole festival than it would be to shut down one play. If such a festival were still banned after writers had begun their work, the group suggested creating an anthology of the works written so that they were still accessible to study and appreciate, and use in a less repressive time. However, this again brought up issues of literacy and accessibility of resources. In the end, the group decided that the most valuable action to take was to remain in constant conversation about these issues, and stay connected with one another. A list of affiliated organizations was written up so that each member may have access to a resource they had not previously known about. The group recommended that action be taken to increase creative speech and education.
Questions Raised:

- In Uganda (and elsewhere) how can communities be supported to move beyond tendencies of blaming each other toward solving problems and planning for the future?
- How can we, as people interested in creativity, fit into the peacebuilding efforts that are already going on?
- Is it possible to focus people on nationality instead of tribes?
- What are the possibilities of an international school for creativity and peace? What are the potential challenges?
- How can we creatively overcome “dependency syndrome,” particularly in schools and youth?
- How can partners with resources be enlisted to contribute to visions and to help sustain projects designed to bring creative approaches to issues of development and peacebuilding in East Africa?
- How do issues of gender surface in such projects and how can they be productively engaged?
- Could a regional network of artists and peacebuilders function to support the development and implementation of our projects? If so, how?

Recommendations & Action Steps:

1. The main challenges in achieving creative peace and reconciliation in East Africa have to do with the legacy of the colonial past: tribalism, illiteracy, government repression, and “dependency syndrome.” Action must focus on overcoming these challenges through theatre and education.

2. Resources and funding for creative work in the region are small, and when they do exist they are typically dominated by Western figures who may not understand local contexts. Therefore, more funding and projects should focus on incorporating local voices and decision-making.

3. The Dunia Moja International School proposal offers a tangible plan for action in creatively approaching reconciliation and peace in Kenya. The school incorporates the arts into education and addresses the key issue of increasing literacy.

4. Other ideas for specific action included: utilizing Theatre Without Borders for local programs which would expose participants to free expression, and holding a thematic theatre festival during which playwrights would write on a particular socio-political issue.

5. The main action step was for those in the group and in their external circles to maintain the connections formed during this workshop and translate it to continued reflection and joint action.
Appendices

Appendix One: Participant List
Appendix Two: Background Readings
Appendix One: Participant List

Inter-ethnic relations in Post-war Serbia

Asnia Asim (Facilitator) was most recently employed by the World Bank’s South Asia Human Development unit. She is currently a student in the MA Program in Coexistence and Conflict at Brandeis.

Zohar Fuller (Rapporteur) is an undergraduate student at Brandeis University who has taken Professor Cynthia Cohen’s course in “The Arts of Building Peace.”

Endah Setyowati (Rapporteur) has been working at the center for Study and Promotion of Peace at Duta Wacana Christian University in Indonesia since 1999. She is currently a student in the MA Program in Coexistence and Conflict at Brandeis and has also taken Professor Cynthia Cohen’s course in “The Arts of Building Peace.”

Eileen Babbitt is Professor of International Conflict Management Practice and Director of the International negotiation and Conflict Resolution Program at Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University.

Steve Burg is Adlai E. Stevenson Professor of International Politics and Chair of the Politics department at Brandeis. He is participating in effort to prevent further ethnic conflict in the Balkans through his association with the Project on Ethnic Relations.

Scott Edminston is Director of the Office of the Arts at Brandeis University.

Alex Grigor’ev is Executive Director of the Project on Ethnic Relations, an organization dedicated to preventing ethnic conflict in Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and the former Soviet Union.

Attila Klein is professor and founding faculty member for the Sustainable International Development program at Brandeis. He currently teaches a course that assesses the relationship between conflict and the environment.

Dijana Milosevic is the artistic director of Dah Teatar and Research Centre located in Serbia. Dah’s work has included cross-community collaborations with a theatre in Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as performances that challenge the citizens of Belgrade to acknowledge the legacy of atrocities committed by their government. She is also contributing a chapter to the Performance and Peacebuilding in Global Perspective anthology.

Aida Nasrallah is the pen name of Mahagna Nasera, a Palestinian-Israeli author and artist who focuses on women’s roles as peacebuilders. She organizes and runs a weekly salon for women poets and writers, serving as mentor for Arab women in Israel who wish to experiment with poetry and fiction. She is also contributing a chapter to the Performance and Peacebuilding in Global Perspective anthology.

Safety and Security among Immigrant Communities in Waltham, MA

Mark Auslander (Facilitator) is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Director of the MA Program in Cultural Production at Brandeis University. He has curated exhibitions of African and African-American art, as well as family and cultural history.

Amanda Brown (Rapporteur) is an undergraduate double Theatre and Peace, Coexistence, and Conflict Studies major at Brandeis University, who has taken Professor Cynthia Cohen’s course on “The Arts of Building Peace.”
Marci Diamond is the President of the Board for the Waltham Alliance to Create Housing and the Director of Sexual Assault Prevention and Survivor Services, Massachusetts Department of Health.

Joan Serra Hoffman has been working in the field of violence prevention in the US, Europe, and Latin America for over 15 years. Her research and program interests include youth rehabilitation, youth and community development, and comparative and cross-national urban and youth violence prevention issues.

Britta McNemar is Coordinator for Waltham Family School, an Even Start Family Literacy Program which aims to promote literacy and education for entire families.

Mithra Merryman has represented victims of domestic violence in court. She has addressed the needs of Latina women in Waltham and has begun teaching local community organizations about immigration and domestic violence.

Jane Oslin volunteered as a rural community extension agent for Peace Corps Niger, where she also started an adult literacy program. Upon returning to the U.S., she worked as the producer for “Cambridge Green,” a weekly TV show addressing environmental justice issues.

Ellen Schattschneider is a Brandeis University professor and sociocultural anthropologist who specializes in psychoanalytic, phenomenological, and practice approaches to culture, particularly in East Asia.

Eugene van Erven is a senior lecturer/researcher at Utrecht University. Dr. van Erven is conducting original research into community theatre productions designed to address relations between the Muslim immigrant communities and their non-Muslim neighbors in cities in the Netherlands. He is also contributing a chapter to the *Performance and Peacebuilding in Global Perspective* anthology.

Roberto Varea is a professor of theatre at the University of San Francisco, where he is co-founder of the Performing Arts and Social Justice major, and teaches theatre to incarcerated women at the San Francisco County Jail’s Sisters Project. He is also contributing a chapter to the *Performance and Peacebuilding in Global Perspective* anthology.

Karla Zevallos is the President of the Board of Directors of Breaking Barriers, a community organization based in Waltham that addresses the needs of immigrants. She is also the Community Advocacy Coordinator at REACH Beyond Domestic Violence.

*Improving Understanding between Tamil and Sinhalese Artists in Sri Lanka*

Joni Doherty (Facilitator) is the Director of the New England Center for Civic Life. She is also a Senior Lecturer in American Studies and Humanities at Franklin Pierce University

Chris Kingsley (Rapporteur) is a Senior Program Associate at Brandeis University’s Heller Graduate School in its Center for Youth and Communities. He has been a learning partner with, and evaluator of, Coexistence International for two years.

Sunil Pokhrel (Rapporteur) is a development activist working in the field of awareness creation, peace, and conflict management in social, economic, and cultural issues in Nepal. He is currently a student in the MA Program in Coexistence and Conflict at Brandeis, and has also taken Professor Cynthia Cohen’s course on “The Arts of Building Peace.”

Barbara Epstein is Program Administrator of the Slifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence at Brandeis University.
Mari Fitzduff is Director of the international MA Program in Coexistence and Conflict at Brandeis University and Chair of the Advisory Board for Coexistence International.

Pushpa Iyer is Assistant Professor and Program Coordinator of Conflict Resolution at the Graduate School for International Policy Studies at the Monterey Institute for International Studies. Dr. Iyer specializes in identity conflicts, civil wars, and peace processes.

Madhawa Palihapitiya is a native of Sri Lanka, where he works with local populations in order to build communities, settle conflicts, and cope with natural disasters. He is a student in the MA Program in Coexistence and Conflict at Brandeis. He is also contributing a chapter to the Performance and Peacebuilding in Global Perspective anthology.

Larry Simon directs the Master of Arts Program in Sustainable International Development and the Center for International Development at Brandeis University.

Seung Hwan Yeo is a student in the MA Program in Coexistence and Conflict at Brandeis. For his field project, Seung worked with the Small Arms Network in South Asia. His study looked at the possibility for reducing the intensity of the Sri Lankan Conflict through a reduction/restraints on small arms and their availability.

Iran/Israel/US Relations (Diaspora Focus)

Kevin Clements (Facilitator) is the Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies of the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Queensland, and former Secretary General for International Alert. He is also a member of the advisory board for the Performance and Peacebuilding in Global Perspective anthology.

Leslie Kingsley (Rapporteur) is currently a Human Resources Manager at the Archdiocese of Boston.

Alicia Anstead is an arts and culture Neiman Fellow at Harvard University and senior arts and culture writer for the Bangor Daily News in Maine.

Gordie Fellman has been a professor of Sociology at Brandeis University for more than 40 years. He also directs the Peace, Conflict, and Coexistence Studies minor on campus.

Zafar Habib works as Project Director and Legislative Capacity Coordinator at Pakistan Legislative Strengthening Project PLSP. He is currently a student in the MA Program in Coexistence and Conflict at Brandeis.

Mahmood Karimi-Hakak is a native of Iran, now an associate professor of creative arts and producer of theatre at Siena College. He is a poet, theatre director, filmmaker, and the artistic director of Mahak International Artists, Inc.

Roberta Levitow is a founding member of Theatre Without Borders and has directed more than 50 productions in NYC, LA, and nationally, with a particular emphasis on developing original writing and new American work. She is also a co-editor of the Performance and Peacebuilding in Global Perspective anthology.

Bryan McAllister-Grande is Assistant Director of the Office of Global Affairs at Brandeis, which was created in 2007 to enhance collaboration between the Brandeis community and support international activities, programs, research, and service.

Danny Michaelson helped create Bennington College’s mediation curriculum, and is a certified Mediation Trainer. He is also co-director of Quantum Leap, a program for truants and at-risk students in Bennington County.

Sanam Naraghi Anderlini is an independent researcher, trainer, advisor, and analyst working with the UN, World Bank, and bilateral donors on issues of gender, peace, and security.
Naveed Nour is an artist and photographer born in 1963 in Cologne, Germany, to Iranian parents. During the 1980-1988 Iran/Iraq war, he traveled throughout Iran and documented the social-economical effects of war on society.

Lee Perlman is Director of Programs at the Abraham Fund Initiatives in Israel and Lecturer at Tel Aviv University and has an extensive career in the field of Israeli education.

Naghmeh Sohrabi is the Assistant Director for Research at the Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis University.

John Tirman is the Executive Director of the Center for International Studies at MIT and former Executive Director of the Winston Foundation for World Peace.

Tracy Wallach is an independent consultant and facilitator who does organizational and leadership consulting. She specializes in promoting productive communication among disparate elements of an organization and facilitating successful collaboration and teamwork.

Transitional Justice Efforts in West Africa

Dan Terris (Facilitator) is the director of the International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life, and Associate Vice Provost for Global Affairs at Brandeis University

Susan Lanspery (Rapporteur), a scientist at the Center for Youth and Communities at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis, has more than 20 years of experience in conducting evaluations and other studies in partnership with nonprofit organizations and public entities. She earned her doctorate in social policy at the Heller School.

Isha Wright (Rapporteur) is a native of Sierra Leone and a student in the MA Program in Coexistence and Conflict at Brandeis University. She has also taken Professor Cynthia Cohen’s course on “The Arts of Building Peace.”

Alidu Babatu Adam, from Ghana, is a MA student in the Sustainable International Development Program at Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis.

Daniel Banks is a full-time faculty member in the Department of Undergraduate Drama, Tisch School of the Arts, New York University and is Director of the Hip Hop Theatre Initiative at Tisch, which has worked with youth across the U.S. and in Ghana and South Africa. He is also contributing a chapter to the Performance and Peacebuilding in Global Perspective anthology.

Catherine Filloux is a French-Algerian-American playwright whose work often explores themes of human rights and intercultural connection and reconciliation, particularly among post-genocide Cambodian communities. She is also contributing a chapter to the Performance and Peacebuilding in Global Perspective anthology.

Jane Hale teaches French and Comparative Literature at Brandeis. Her areas of interest include 20th century French literature, theater, education, and West African and Caribbean Literature. She is currently writing on portrayals of literacy in world literature.

Franklin Odoro is a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science at Carleton University in Canada, and former Head of Programs, Ghana Center for Democratic Development. He is a native of Ghana.

Olajide Olagunju, a native of Nigeria, is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Anthropology at Brandeis. He is a graduate of the MA Program in Coexistence and Conflict. He has also taken Professor Cynthia Cohen’s course on “The Arts of Building Peace.”
Marie Pace is a former Program Advisor in Governance, UN Development Programme Nigeria.

Joyce van Dyke is a playwright who wrote *A Girl's War* about the contemporary Karabakh conflict, partly inspired by her Armenian grandparents who survived the genocide of 1915.

Kristin Williams is Program Coordinator for Coexistence International at Brandeis University.

*Creativity, Social Development, and Peacebuilding in East Africa*

Irene Bugingo (Facilitator) is a researcher at the Rwandan Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace (IRDP) where he has published on such topics as the rule of law in Rwanda. He is a student in the MA Program in Coexistence and Conflict at Brandeis.

Leigh Branson (Rapporteur) is an student in the MA Program in Cultural Production at Brandeis University.

Allison Young (Rapporteur) is an undergraduate Anthropology and Art History major at Brandeis University who has taken Professor Cynthia Cohen’s course on “The Arts of Building Peace.”

Sarah Bawaya is an employee of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) in Rwanda, a place that works to educate Rwandans on the importance of peaceful social cohesion. She is a student in the MA Program in Coexistence and Conflict at Brandeis.

Nandita Dinesh is a graduate of Wellesley College and a Watson Fellow. As a Watson Fellow, Dinesh has traveled to Rwanda, Guatemala, and Northern Ireland to study the role of theatre in societies that have experienced conflict.

Erik Ehn is a playwright, educator, and theorist of contemporary theatre who currently serves as Dean for the School of Theater at the California Institute for the Arts. He is also the co-director of the summer Genocide Studies Program in Rwanda. He is also a member of the advisory board for the *Performance and Peacebuilding in Global Perspective* anthology.

Kate Gardner is principal of WorldEnsemble, a studio for creative human interaction. She has conducted projects and trainings in the United States, Africa, Latin America, and Europe as a creative consultant, artist, and teacher. She is also contributing a chapter to the *Performance and Peacebuilding in Global Perspective* anthology.

Lyn Haas is an educational consultant, former superintendent of schools in Vermont, and development partner with a women’s organization in Tanzania.

Matthew E. Logurale is a student at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management from Kenya.

Kitche Magak is a lecturer at the Maseno University’s departments of Communication & Media Technology and Literature. He is co-director of BrooKenya!, an intercontinental soap opera created by people in Brooklyn and Kenya.

Charles Mulekwa is an award-winning playwright, actor, and director, and is a long-standing member of the National Theatre of Uganda. He is also contributing a chapter to the *Performance and Peacebuilding in Global Perspective* anthology.

Jacinta Odhiambo is a Kenyan graduate student in the Sustainable International Development program at Brandeis University, and is president of the African Forum.
Appendix Two: Background Readings

Available at www.coexistence.net/events/octartsworkshops.html

Inter-ethnic Relations in Post-war Serbia

- Abbreviated version of the anthology chapter curated by Dijana Milosevic

Safety and Security among Immigrant Communities in Waltham, MA

- Excerpt from the NEW PARTNERSHIPS FOR NEW AMERICANS PROPOSAL. Submitted by Center for Youth and Communities, Brandeis University
- In The Name Of The Fathers: An Intercultural Community-Based Theatre Project In The Hague, Netherlands – draft case study by Eugene van Erven
- Buried in the Graves of Social Consciousness, by Roberto Varea
- El Teatro Jornalero! Of San Francisco: An Immigrant Worker’s Theater
- El Teatro Jornalero! Un espacio de auto-definición para la comunidad trabajadora inmigrante latinoamericana en San Francisco, by Roberto Varea (Español)
- Voices from the Field: Local Initiatives and New Research on Central American Youth Gang Violence

Improving Understanding between Tamil and Sinhalese Artists in Sri Lanka

- “Performance, Globalization and Conflict Promotion/Resolution: Experiences from Sri Lanka” by James Thompson, in Cultures and Globalization: Conflicts and Tensions
- Abbreviated version of anthology chapter curated by Madhawa Palihipitiya
- In Place of War. This UK-based research project documents and assesses performances emerging in conflict regions. From it’s Sri Lanka project, please read:
  - Background http://www.inplaceofwar.net/pages/sri_lanka.html
  - Project Work http://www.inplaceofwar.net/pages/sri_lanka_projectwork.html
  - Reformulation of Tamil Traditional Theatre (Kooththu) http://thirdeye2005.blogspot.com/
  - For images of Pongul Tamil see http://www.inplaceofwar.net/web_db/php/index.php?page=record&cat=events&id=90
- TamilNet articles on joint Tamil-Sinhala literary/cultural festival:
  - Sinhala,Tamil scholars explain joint festival http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?artid=10263&catid=13
Iran/Israel/US Relations (Diaspora Focus)

• “Benedictus” - script of the play, by Motti Lerner. An International Collaboration created by Mahmood Karimi-Hakak, Motti Lerner, Roberta Levitow, Daniel Michaelson and Torange Yeghiazarian. Translation from the Hebrew by Anthony Berris
• “Benedictus Synopsis”
• “Conservatives, Neoconservatives and Reformists: Iran after the Election of Mahmud Ahmadinejad,” by Naghmeh Sohrabi.

Transitional Justice Efforts in West Africa

• Excerpted Summary of Transitional Justice Approaches
• Excerpted Background of Transitional Justice Processes in West Africa
• Rethinking Truth and Reconciliation Commissions: Lessons from Sierra Leone, by Rosalind Shaw (USIP Special Report)
• Notes on Pchum Ben (Cambodia), by Ly Daravuth
• Resisting Amnesia: Yuyachkani, Performance, and the Postwar Reconstruction of Peru

Creativity, Social Development, and Peacebuilding in East Africa

On Northern Uganda:
• Executive Summary of a very recent UNHCR report on transitional justice efforts in Northern Uganda
• “Only Peace Can Restore the Confidence of the Displaced” - a report on recent work implemented by the UN and NRC for internally displaced in Northern Uganda
• Excerpt from the Christian Children’s Fund’s Northern Ugandan Humanitarian Situation Assessment Report Feb 6th-16th 2006

On Kenya:
• Draft proposal for Dunia Moja International School by Kitche Magak, PhD, with Kate Gardner and Jack Ogembo, PhD
Pieces of the Coexistence Puzzle: Part II was part of a larger event, Acting Together on the World Stage: Setting the Scene for Peace/Actuando Juntos: Trabajando por la Paz en el Escenario Mundial, which was held at Brandeis University from October 4-8, 2007. Acting Together on the World Stage connected theatre artists, coexistence practitioners, scholars, students, and the local community to explore the potential contributions of the arts to building peace and coexistence around the world. A summary of this event can be found at www.coexistence.net.

The problem-solving workshops of Pieces of the Coexistence Puzzle: Part II grew out of an event held at Brandeis University from March 15-16, 2007 entitled Pieces of the Coexistence Puzzle: Democracy, Human Rights, Gender and Development. This event explored the ways that coexistence and related fields can interact and cooperate in a complementary approach to peacebuilding work. A full conference report can be accessed at www.coexistence.net.

This event and publication were made possible through a generous grant from the Alan B. Slifka Foundation