

**EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES AND
LIMITS OF COLLABORATION:
COMMONALITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN
COEXISTENCE AND RELATED FIELDS**

**Coexistence International Report
Prepared by Isabella Jean, with Jessica Berns and Cynthia Cohen
May 2006**

EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITS OF COLLABORATION: COMMONALITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN COEXISTENCE AND RELATED FIELDS

Coexistence International Report

Prepared by Isabella Jean, with Jessica Berns and Cynthia Cohen

May 2006

I. Executive Summary

Background:

Coexistence International (CI) at Brandeis University works to strengthen the coexistence field by promoting a complementary approach to efforts currently undertaken by a range of players in the international and conflict arenas, including those affiliated with human rights, development, refugee resettlement, humanitarian aid, cultural work, and other fields. In preparation for its networking and policy-related work to promote this complementary approach, the organization seeks to understand the similarities and differences in values – both within the core of the coexistence field (i.e. conflict resolution, diversity work, peacebuilding, etc.) and between those in the core of the coexistence field and the other fields with which we seek to strengthen collaborations.

As part of this inquiry, in the early spring of 2006, CI organized two gatherings of practitioners and researchers from a variety of disciplines who work in conflict zones around the world. The first gathering included twenty-five practitioners and researchers from the core of the coexistence field: several scholar-practitioners who teach the subject of coexistence at the university level, experienced international mediators and peacebuilders, representatives from the United Nations and international NGOs, and students from graduate programs in coexistence. The second gathering included twenty practitioners and scholars from the peacebuilding and coexistence field and the following related areas of work: development and humanitarian assistance, human rights, refugee resettlement, peacekeeping, governance, and the arts. The goals for the two meetings were to explore the boundaries of the emerging coexistence field and to consider both the limits of collaboration and the opportunities for increasing complementarity between and within the disciplines represented at the gatherings. To facilitate these conversations among practitioners, CI adapted a group facilitation tool called the Human Barometer. While diverse disciplines and organizations were represented at each meeting, and participants had worked in many regions of the world, in cultural terms, the gatherings were relatively homogenous. This fact should be noted when reading the summary and analysis of the collected data. Similar gatherings held in other regions of the world or with more culturally diverse participants might yield a broader range of responses.

This report provides an overview of the two events, an analysis of the data gathered, and recommendations for next steps in the inquiry. The Executive Summary provides a synopsis of the findings and conclusions stemming from these two gatherings. A more thorough discussion of the conversations that took place during the gatherings, findings, and recommendations can be found in the body of the report. The attachments include examples of the Barometer surveys utilized at each gathering, the tabulation of responses, and summaries of participants' comments.

Limitations:

CI recognizes that the conclusions we draw in the report are entirely preliminary, and that a larger and more representative sample would be needed in order to draw reliable conclusions about the field as a whole. The report does, however, capture critical agreements and disagreements that surfaced during productive conversations among important actors in coexistence and related fields, and it considers their implications for the larger field of coexistence and for the project of promoting complementarity. The report also proposes ideas for further research and development on crossing boundaries both within the coexistence field and between it and related fields, such as development, human rights, etc.

Points of Agreement:

In summary, participants at both gatherings came to agreement on more issues than they disagreed on. Here are some tentative conclusions, drawing on data from both meetings:

- Participants found the opportunity to explore commonalities and differences, both within the coexistence field and between the coexistence and other related disciplines, to be energizing and helpful. The Human Barometer exercise, when used as a facilitated activity within a group, was a useful tool for that exploration. Participants recommended that some of these questions of values would be most usefully addressed in the context of particular conflicts.
- Certain issues emerged as most interesting to participants in both gatherings:
 - Tensions between restorative justice and retributive justice in post-conflict situations;
 - Needs for, and challenges of, measurement and evaluation in effective practice;
 - Relative value of strategies for change that emphasize economic and political structures versus strategies that emphasize changes in social and cultural patterns; and;
 - Exploration of core values as a way to establish boundaries for the field of coexistence and to formulate opportunities for collaboration.
- There was substantial agreement on values such as inclusion and participation. An overwhelming majority strongly supports an international coexistence field that includes and integrates a wide diversity of voices.
- Other notable points of agreement on common values and standpoints were expressed on:
 - the value of restorative justice and reconciliation (while acknowledging the importance of the rule of law and the problems associated with cultures of impunity);
 - the importance of local ownership and local knowledge in conflict zones;
 - the significance of structural change and links to policymaking that do not negate grassroots efforts;
 - the secondary role of religion and spirituality in informing peacebuilding practice;
 - the importance of using elicitive methods, drawing out knowledge from the cultural groups with whom we work;
 - the importance of reflective practice, evaluation, and documenting our work; and;
 - the need for sustained, on-the-ground presence in conflict regions.

Points of Disagreement:

- There were some discernible differences and disagreements of various degrees that were articulated on:
 - the willingness to engage with armed groups and types of engagement;
 - the degree of emphasis that should be placed on measurable outcomes;
 - the perception of coexistence practice as an art or vocation as opposed to profession; and;
 - the transfer of theoretical knowledge as key to effective practice in the field.
- The tensions that emerged require a more detailed exploration and raise a number of important questions:
 - How can the field address both its commitments to the value of inclusion as well as the limits of that commitment?
 - How can we describe in more nuanced ways the different kinds of engagement we might seek or accept with various kinds of actors?
 - When we think of inclusion, would we establish different boundaries for those with whom we would be willing to engage, 1) as collaborating partners, 2) in our roles as mediators and facilitators, and 3) as groups with whom we would consult, etc.?
 - How do we approach evaluation and define effective practices in our field without de-emphasizing the importance of relationships and processes that do not easily lend themselves to available measures?
 - What are the benefits and caveats involved in professionalizing the field and outlining core competencies? How does it impact our assessment of “intuitive” peacebuilding work done by ordinary people in conflict zones? (Note: Distinguishing between the professional competencies required for people who work outside of their own communities and the importance of empowering citizens to take action to strengthen coexistence in their own societies was a key insight that emerged in our conversation.)
- A number of additional research questions of substantive and strategic nature surfaced in the process of compiling this report. These are summarized here as well as in the conclusion of the report:
 - Would a more diverse cohort of participants provide a substantially different and wider range of answers?
 - Should Coexistence International pursue this research further? If yes, should research be carried out only through the use of paper Barometer surveys or at gatherings? What would CI hope to accomplish with this research in the future?
 - Should we present models of the Barometer for others to use in gatherings? If so, should we further refine language and the format?

Conclusions:

Several tentative conclusions emerge from a comprehensive analysis of the verbal and written data gathered at these two meetings as well as during the preliminary research interviews conducted by CI staff with key experts and practitioners in the field.¹ These conclusions are

¹ These informational interviews were conducted by CI's Program Manager in the summer of 2005 and were an important contribution to CI's strategic planning process and for the development of CI's programs.

based on working assumptions and have not been widely tested with a large number of colleagues from all related disciplines and conflict areas.

- An integrated coexistence field rooted in values of inclusion and participation needs to effectively embody its commitment to diversity and equality and make allowances for multiplicity of practices that exist within its constituent parts. This methodological pluralism, formed with perceptive understanding of nuances in each context in which we work, would allow for sequencing and integration of such important practices as promotion of rule of law, reconciliation, transformation of political structures and institutions, and coexistence work at the grassroots level.
- The coexistence field needs to adapt a holistic approach to affecting social change that includes integrating and linking governmental level work with grassroots processes. Without such comprehensive approach, even the most concentrated efforts aimed at changes in just one of these areas will rarely be effective or sustainable.
- International coexistence work needs to be profoundly informed by local knowledge and support locally articulated priorities and solutions.
- The field needs to increase its visibility and build its record through use of effective and relevant evaluation tools and methodical documentation of its practices, successes and failures. Some outcomes are measurable and should be documented; other outcomes may not be measurable, but nevertheless can and should be documented using appropriate methods.
- In addressing questions about the nature of coexistence work (as a profession or vocation) and the professionalism of the field, it is important to distinguish between the initiatives of citizens working for change within their own societies and those who work in cultural contexts other than their own. Efforts to professionalize the field should in no way disempower people from advocating for inclusion or working to strengthen inter-group relations in their own communities.

CI plans to share this report with a wide audience of scholars and practitioners in the core of the coexistence field and related disciplines to increase awareness about current conversations taking place about values and approaches in the field. We hope that this report will encourage others who work in coexistence and related fields to create opportunities for colleagues to explore similarities and differences in their values and approaches. CI believes that honest inquiry into similarities and differences in values and approaches is an important foundation for complementarity and coordination of efforts across fields. Conversely, when unacknowledged, disagreements in values and approaches may interfere with collaborative practice and implementation in the field.

In the two relatively homogeneous gatherings that produced the data summarized in the report, the small differences that surfaced were consistent across both gatherings. In a preliminary way, this finding bodes well for the possibilities of greater complementarity and coordination of efforts across fields. The participants, however, were selected precisely because they were already working across the boundaries of defined fields, and, as noted above, were relatively homogeneous culturally. We anticipate that greater differences would emerge if we facilitated the exercise with people of greater cultural difference and/or those whose perspectives emerge from the core of a field and who are not yet engaged in cross-disciplinary work.

More reliable data would likely emerge if we were to gather responses from a much larger and more diverse sample, perhaps using only written responses. Rigorous documentation of and reflection on the challenges and successes of joint projects would serve as the best empirical evidence of the limits and possibilities of collaboration between the field of coexistence and related fields. Given the eagerness with which practitioners in CI's gatherings participated in this exercise, we believe that providing opportunities for open discussion of similarities and differences, in both values and approaches, would be helpful during the early stages of cross-discipline collaboration.

One important dimension of defining a field is to establish its boundaries. Who is inside the field? Who is outside? It is clearly still too early to say that the coexistence field has demarcated its borders with a set of shared values, goals, and approaches. We hope, however, that this report and the gatherings on which it is based represent important steps toward this goal. We look forward to feedback from our colleagues.

II. About Coexistence International

Coexistence International (CI) works to strengthen the field of policymakers, practitioners, researchers, advocates, organizations, and networks promoting coexistence at local, national and international levels. The initiative is housed at Brandeis University's International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life within the Slifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence.

CI envisions a world where diversity is embraced for its positive potential, human dignity is a core value, interdependence between different groups is recognized, equality is valued and actively pursued, and the use of weapons to resolve conflicts is increasingly obsolete. It contributes to this vision by strengthening the practitioners, advocates, policy-makers and researchers who, at local, regional, national and international levels, work toward these same goals.

Through research and practice, CI promotes a complementary and inter-disciplinary vision of the coexistence field that includes not only practitioners and theorists working directly on coexistence (i.e. conflict resolution practitioners, coexistence facilitators, mediators, etc.) but also those working in related areas, such as democracy, rule of law, education, humanitarian aid, sustainable development, transitional justice and cultural work. Complementarity means that individuals and organizations working in coexistence and in related fields understand that their effectiveness depends upon each others' work. Building upon this understanding, they work with awareness of, and sometimes in collaboration with, the other disciplines. CI understands complementarity and networking as critical strategies for strengthening the coexistence field and ultimately contributing to sustainable peace.

Coexistence International's work is currently focused on several interrelated strands²:

- networking practitioners, researchers, and agencies who are thinking about the field at a meta-level;
- conducting research on the state of coexistence policies within governmental, non-governmental, and multilateral institutions;
- facilitating learning between coexistence practitioners and the arts community;
- reinforcing regional networks and policy work in a particular, yet-to-be decided geographic region;
- strengthening donor engagement on coexistence issues.

III. Introduction

Coexistence is a concept that encompasses a wide range of efforts at all societal levels to address the challenges that arise when different groups (such as cultural or religious groups) seek to live together. Coexistence practice aims to transform social and political relationships, structures, and discourse in a direction that favors reduction of violent and structural conflict. Coexistence interventions enhance the capacity of individuals, groups and institutions to manage emerging conflicts nonviolently and constructively. Practitioners of this work might use different terminology to describe what they do (conflict transformation or peacebuilding or diversity training or mediation, for example). CI considers all of these

² More information about Coexistence International can be found on the website: www.coexistence.net

practitioners to be the “core” of the field. There are also practitioners, researchers, policymakers and artists whose field of work is different, but very related to coexistence, in the sense that how they approach their work can play a very important role in determining the quality of inter-group relationships. CI considers these fields to be related.

CI’s conceptual framework, outlined in its strategic plan and available on its website, recognizes a fragmentation in the coexistence field and a lack of clarity about commonalities and differences both within the core of the field and between the core and related fields. Consistent with its commitment to strengthening the field through complementary and inter-disciplinary approaches, CI launched a program of work in the summer of 2005 with the principal aim of fostering increased communication, strategic thinking, learning, and collaboration between the leaders from coexistence and related areas of work. To this end, CI has organized and facilitated a series of networking gatherings bringing together leading thinkers and practitioners from a diverse set of disciplines for in-depth conversations, reflection and learning.

The idea for a group exploration of the boundaries of the coexistence field and its commonly shared values and principles emerged at a CI-convened meeting of coexistence and conflict practitioners in New York (December 2005). Subsequently, CI decided to make use of a group facilitation technique known as the *Human Barometer* in order to conduct an exploration of commonalities and differences, and this was done at two separate meetings in the spring of 2006. CI plans to continue to build on the knowledge gleaned from these gatherings and the possibilities that such an exercise opens for cross-boundary work.

The Human Barometer Exercise

To facilitate joint exploration of commonalities and differences in the core values held by people who comprise the fields of coexistence and related disciplines, CI adapted for its use a group facilitation tool called *The Human Barometer* (Barometer). This tool has been utilized in the past by practitioners of coexistence and conflict transformation in inter-group conflicts around the world. The Barometer exercise allows for a group of people to collectively examine their values, principles, positions and opinions on selected subject matter in a distinctly visual and interactive way. During this exercise, participants are asked to place themselves somewhere along a spectrum in relation to two polarized positions. CI adapted the format and content of the exercise to stimulate constructive discussions and bring to the surface important issues in the limited time frame of several hours. To date, CI has had the opportunity to use this tool twice and this report presents the data and analysis of emerging trends.

Each Barometer statement was written in a way that would compel the participants to indicate an unequivocal stance on a particular set of values, principles and practices. Adjustments in the format and content of the Barometer survey were made based on participant feedback between the first and second gathering and on the need to tailor the statements for a different set of participants. Due to lack of shared vocabulary, the process of adapting the tool was marked by a challenging search for relevant terminology and definitions. Terms such as coexistence and peacebuilding practice were used to denote the wide range of ways in which this work manifests itself in the field.

The Barometer exercise was conducted at the CI gatherings as described below, and it should be noted that this does represent a departure from the way the Barometer is conventionally used. Participants were given printed copies of the Barometer surveys to fill out prior to the “live” exercise. Each Barometer statement pertained to a set of beliefs and values that could be held by practitioners in the coexistence and the related fields. There were eleven statements in total. Participants were asked to fill out the paper Barometer surveys by marking the position on the spectrum that most closely corresponded to their beliefs. Space was also provided for writing additional comments about the person’s opinions on each value statement. Additional demographic data about the participants was collected for research purposes and not for attribution, through an optional and confidential form.³

Due to a limited time frame and in the interest of fostering in-depth conversations rather than a cursory run through the entire survey, no more than four statements were addressed by the group as a whole in the “live” Barometer. At the beginning of the exercise, the facilitator asked participants to rank and select four out of the eleven Barometer statements that they would like to see addressed by the entire group. After the voting process, the facilitator then read one of the selected Barometer statements aloud and asked all of the participants to physically place themselves along the spectrum by standing next to the number sign corresponding to their chosen position. Number signs indicating each of the five spectrum positions were posted around the room. As a result, the group was dispersed around the room in small and large groups of individuals centered around their selected position on the spectrum. In some cases, only one individual was found at a specific position on the spectrum or none at all.

The small group discussions that took place along the spectrum proceeded in an informal and unstructured manner without the use of facilitator. After approximately 10 minutes, the facilitator called the entire group to re-convene and asked for several people from each position to summarize the conversations that took place, explain their choice of position on the spectrum, and share any surprises that came forth as a result of statements by others. After this facilitated large group discussion, the process was repeated by reading the next Barometer statement selected by the group and everyone situating themselves around the room again. People were observed switching positions if in the process of the small group discussion they became convinced that a shift to a different position would better represent their personal values and points of view in relation to the statement or in relation to the rest of participants.

For the purpose of this report and subsequent research, CI gathered response data on all of the Barometer statements from the paper-based surveys collected at the end of each meeting. In addition, participants’ positions during the “live” Barometer exercise were recorded along with summaries of small-group and large-group discussions. The following analysis integrates the paper-based responses as well as the positions and discussions recorded during the “live” Barometer. The data and analysis is broken down by the dates of the two meetings in March and April of 2006.

³ See attachments for both versions of the Barometer.

IV. Research Caveats and Challenges to Data Analysis

The following are some important caveats concerning the process of data collection and analysis that have a direct impact on the content of this report.

- The research findings are based on a very small data pool. In total, there were 45 participants and 32 paper Barometer surveys were collected. The conclusions are therefore limited in their scope.
- Not all of the participants returned the paper surveys, and not all of the collected surveys were fully completed. This circumstance makes it difficult to present a statistically complete analysis of the gathered data.
- In many instances, people indicated more than one choice on the paper Barometer spectrum possibly because of a shift in their position; many did so without crossing off the initial position.
- In those cases where written or verbal comments indicated that a particular Barometer spectrum was not seen as a continuum or that the statements were not mutually exclusive, many participants selected the middle position (3) and stated that both values/approaches /practices are required for effective practice. In few instances, both outermost ends of the spectrum were checked off with written comments indicating that both approaches are necessary.
- Contextual considerations were mentioned in small and large group discussions with a number of participants reporting ambivalence in regards to their selected position because of a number of factors that could possibly modify their decision.
- As a result of feedback from participants in the first gathering that the language of the exercise was confusing, adjustments were made to the language and format of the instrument before the second gathering. This makes the results from the two gatherings only roughly comparable.

V. March 2, 2006. Clarifying Differences Within the Coexistence / Peacebuilding Field

On March 2nd, Coexistence International and the Alliance for Peacebuilding co-hosted a gathering of researchers and practitioners from the fields of conflict resolution, peacebuilding and coexistence at Harvard Law School with support from Program on Negotiation (PON). The stated goal of the meeting was to seek an understanding of both the commonalities and differences in the core values held by scholars, practitioners, activists and advocates who comprise the field. Cynthia Cohen, Director of International Coexistence Research and Collaboration at Brandeis University, facilitated the Barometer exercise.

The guiding questions for the March 2nd gathering were:

- Are there core values that are shared by all who work in the fields of coexistence, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution? If so, what are they?
- What important differences in values and behaviors exist among practitioners and scholars working in these fields?
- Do the practices of the coexistence/peacebuilding/CR field embody its most important core beliefs and values? If not, why not?
- Are there certain practices that contradict important core beliefs and values? Is this reason to refrain from collaborating?

Twenty-five people participated in the Barometer exercise. Participants were from the core of the coexistence field. Twenty-one Barometer surveys were collected at the end of the session. Demographics of the participating practitioners and scholars were as follows:

- The session featured participants representing a variety of professional practices with an overwhelming number representing academic/research institutions and NGOs, and a substantial number working as consultants on grassroots, governmental and intergovernmental levels.
- The majority of the participants indicated their primary region of work as the Middle East and North America, with fewer working in Africa, Eastern Europe/Balkans, and South Asia. In contrast, work in Central America/Caribbean, South America, Western Europe, East Asia, and Australia/New Zealand/Pacific Islands was not reported by any of the participants at this particular gathering.
- There was an equal split between the participants who indicated the scope of their work as primarily local in nature (community-level organizations, policies, and processes) and those who specified that their work focuses on international organizations, policies, and processes. Some participants also reported working in a geographic region comprised of several countries.

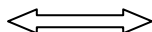
Data gathered through the “live” Barometer

The Barometer exercise was facilitated according to the process described above, with the paper surveys filled out at the start of the meeting, followed by a group vote on which Barometer statements to address, and then the “live” Barometer. The following section lists the four statements selected and reports on the participants’ positioning along the spectrum. It is important to note that in all four instances, there was some difference between the way the participants placed themselves on the paper version and the subsequent way in which the human Barometer formed around the room. The degree of difference varied from slight to very noticeable and was only detected after comparing the paper data with the meeting records. While there may be several explanations as to why some participants shifted their positions during the exercise, it should be noted that no instructions were given in regard to the freedom to move along the spectrum after the initial selection of a position on paper or in the “live” exercise. As a result, there was some movement observed while the exercise was taking place. For the purpose of this research, the numbers reported below reflect the final positioning in each small group after the initial shifts had taken place. This research is not overly concerned with reporting the exact numbers of people at each location but instead seeks to map the trends, patterns, and common conversation threads that emerged within and among the formed groups. The Barometer statements are listed in the order that they were addressed.

Barometer #11:

I believe that the international coexistence/conflict transformation/peacebuilding field should seek to integrate all voices, including liberal and conservative, military/armed and nonviolent, corporate and non-profit, governmental and non-governmental, religious and secular, policy liberals and policy conservatives.

I believe that there are core values that should define the international coexistence/conflict transformation/peacebuilding field and the parties with which we would be willing to partner or engage. We should set clear limits.



The participants physically positioned themselves along the spectrum in the following way:

| | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (5 people) | (11 people) | (5 people) | (0) | (2 people) |

Responses to this statement from both the “live” Barometer and the paper Barometer indicate that over two-thirds of the participants support the idea of an international coexistence field that includes and integrates a diversity of voices. There were only two people who placed themselves at the opposite end of the spectrum advocating for setting clear limits. After the group reconvened to discuss the positions, various definitions of “integrate,” “core values,” and “clear limits” were offered. The people from Position 1 were guided by the phrase “integrate all voices,” which spoke to their core values of inclusion and participation through which fears and assumptions can be transcended and addressed if all actors are part of the process. The people from the opposite end of the spectrum, at Position 5, were influenced by the phrase “set limits.” They argued that because their core commitment is to build collaborative and cooperative communities, the fundamental prerequisite for that would be the cessation of armed violence. Consequently, integrating voices of people who use mass killing as a mechanism for resolving conflict is at odds with their core coexistence values. When asked whether or not they would work with a militant group that has engaged in killing, people at Position 5 responded affirmatively but reiterated that disarmament is a prerequisite for cooperation. The participants from the middle ground, Position 3, were in partial agreement with statements coming from both ends of the spectrum and articulated the need to include as many people as possible while still being able to draw the line in relation to constructive engagement. In-depth understanding of facts and opinions about certain actors in the field can clarify whether or not some group’s actions are driven by fundamental philosophy or a transitory tactic. It was agreed that much collaboration in the field depends on contextual factors. Several people selected the middle position because they did not see the two statements as contradicting each other.

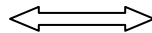
The largest group of participants chose Position 2. Their commitment to integrating diverse voices was accompanied by reservations. Participants noted the distinction between a general agreement on who is part of the field (as inclusive as possible was preferred) and a personal willingness of each practitioner to work with certain groups. To illustrate such reservations, one participant stated a reluctance to work with groups that rely solely on the power of prayer or the power of protest to resolve inter-group differences, but in abstaining from such collaboration did not advocate for these groups’ exclusion from the field. In the course of the discussion, several

analytical lenses were offered through which to look at the emerged spectrum of opinions. It was noted that Position 1 presents an instrumental approach where inclusion is a means of achieving the overarching goals of coexistence. Conversely, Position 5 articulates a normative approach that sets limits and regulations governing the field. People at Positions 2 and 3 did not perceive these two as mutually exclusive and saw possibility for finding common ground by setting limits compatible with values of inclusion and cooperation. One additional qualification stressed that agreement to include all voices does not automatically validate the choice of actions on behalf of all the included actors. This caveat can be an important entry point for seeking middle ground between Positions 1 and 5.

Analysis: Inclusion is a core value of the coexistence field. This poses a familiar dilemma: where to draw boundaries in relation to those who exclude or who are intolerant. The group agreed that the field has work to do to articulate the various types of cooperation or inclusion and the conditions under which one would engage with others who do not share this value (or other core values of the field, such as equality and preference for non-military modes of conflict resolution). Defining the two ends of the spectrum in instrumental and normative terms was, to some extent, helpful in paving the way for increased understanding about what some of the underlying assumptions might be. However, deliberations about a common set of values and principles are useful only inasmuch as the coexistence practitioners feel the need for a set of guiding principles. This particular group of practitioners indicated that there is a need for clearly articulated values, but also that those values should not turn out to be barriers to engagement with a wide range of actors in a variety of different roles.

Barometer #9

My coexistence/conflict transformation/peacebuilding work is based on a strong commitment to accountability and the necessity of upholding rule of law in societies. I believe that those who commit crimes should be punished and that a culture of impunity contributes to further violations of rights and can trigger violent conflicts.



My coexistence/conflict transformation/peacebuilding work is based on a strong commitment to restorative and social justice and the possibility of reconciliation. Excessive focus on the punishment of individual wrong-doers often ignores the complexity of responsibility for human rights abuses and does not address the practical needs of victims.

The participants physically positioned themselves along the spectrum in the following way:

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (0 people) | (2 people) | (13 people) | (4 people) | (3 people) |

The participants standing at Position 2 advocated for the important role of accountability and rule of law, and in addition:

- acknowledged their awareness of the common perception that conventional legal mechanisms do not necessarily provide for restorative justice;

- recognized that laws by themselves are not sufficient to address the countless issues faced by societies in conflict and that there is a great room for improvement in the way the retributive justice system addresses post-conflict situations;
- justified their preference for legal instruments and mechanisms as essential in eliminating unjust practices since laws are the foundation for human rights and restoration in societies;
- stressed that lawmaking needs to reflect the needs of the people it serves, both in process and content.

The opinions that surfaced at the opposite end of the spectrum (preference for restorative justice/reconciliation) included:

- arguments based on evidence from numerous post-conflict societies in which communities do not talk about justice and do not believe that judging criminals helps to restore societal fabric;
- concerns about the ability of a retributive justice system to address the varying levels of culpability, such as the difference between heads of states who abuse power for self-benefit and the “rank-and-file” category of perpetrators;
- concerns over excessive media attention and funding being channeled towards retributive justice (criminal tribunals/legal means) and not enough support provided to the victims of the crimes and addressing social injustices;
- support for restorative justice but with an important caveat about the destructive nature of impunity.

The largest group, at the middle ground, offered the following interpretations of the two Barometer statements:

- the familiar argument about “peace before justice” or “justice before peace” was referenced in a discussion about sequencing or integrating retributive and restorative approaches;
- possibility of custom-made approaches based on timing and context was discussed;
- concerns were voiced that those advocating for upholding rule of law assume by default that the law is good or that the state advancing this law is legitimate;
- other concerns stressed the largely Western-based property-oriented laws that do not necessarily transfer across cultures in a value-free way;
- acknowledgement of a growing polarization on reconciliation and justice issues out in the wider world: while a majority at this gathering stood in the middle of the given spectrum, a supposition was put forward that most people outside of the room would be found at the outermost ends of this same spectrum.

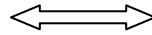
Analysis: The Barometer highlighted a range of opinions between the proponents of legal/human rights instruments and the supporters of restorative justice/reconciliation processes. It also revealed the desire to have dialogue about these issues. Two interconnected perspectives emerged about the possibility of bridging the divide. When the two ends of the spectrum are defined as justice (Position 1) and caring (Position 5), rather than “justice vs. impunity,” it becomes possible to seek approaches that would mitigate the polarization between human rights/accountability advocates and conflict resolution/reconciliation practitioners. However,

such common ground largely hinges on the acceptance that rule of law is key to long-term reconciliation. The second perspective takes into account the factors of sequence, timing, and context-sensitivity as key considerations in selecting which approaches to adopt or to fund. The caveat here is that given the drastically different contexts, actors, and phases of conflict around the world, the task of reaching a steady consensus on these approaches is rather difficult.

Barometer #8

I believe that changing economic and political structures is most important in effective coexistence/ conflict transformation/ peacebuilding practice.

I believe that that changing social and cultural patterns is most important in effective coexistence/ conflict transformation/ peacebuilding practice.



The participants physically positioned themselves along the spectrum in the following way:



The array of opinions stretched between Positions 1 and 3, and there were no substantial divisions. Participants at Positions 1 and 2 emphasized the use of power analysis and the need to focus efforts on the centers of power in order to bring forth large-scale and sustainable change. Their position was premised on the belief that changing social and cultural patterns takes generations to accomplish and that social changes are more rapidly prompted by transforming political and economic institutions, policies, and structures. Their theory of change posits that a change in behavior over time leads to change and alignment in attitudes and perceptions. Participants gave examples where structures and policies have legislated such changes in behavior leading to tangible outcomes (i.e. Northern Ireland currently has very little discrimination due to tough “equality laws” instituted in the past decade); others noted examples where changes at the legal/policy levels without concurrent work to address attitudes and consciousness have backfired (i.e. legislation-mandated bussing to address racial segregation in the United States).

It was observed that the coexistence and peacebuilding field has historically leaned toward social and cultural grassroots work, and many projects that center on dialogue and relationship building have failed to address structural change. Hence, there was an element of surprise when no person was found at the farthest right end of the spectrum giving exclusive preference to changing social and cultural patterns. Even so, it was remarked that the Barometer would have looked dramatically different if more people from the World Bank, the United Nations, and national governments were in the room (the assumption being that they would stand at Positions 1 or 2). The key discussion therefore centered on ways to reconcile the extreme differences in opinion that might be held by individuals at opposite ends of this spectrum within the coexistence field. A concern was voiced that strong emphasis on structural issues results in less dialogue and that ensuing changes in policies are not accompanied by shifts in consciousness, often leading to repeated clashes and persisting enmity.

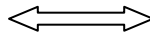
Analysis: The recognition of driving forces behind social change and the linkages between “top down” and “bottom up” approaches are central to effective coexistence interventions. The group

agreed that engaging with power structures need not come at the expense of grassroots processes. A coexistence field that embraces complementarity is, by definition inclusive of these two approaches, seen as mutually reinforcing by most in this group. However, the enduring misperception of coexistence work as being exclusively relationship-focused confirms the need to promote the diversity of expertise, tools, and skills available in this field. Coexistence practitioners' ability to influence policies and power brokers within national and international bodies relies on their willingness to engage and transform well-institutionalized systems that are often resistant to change.

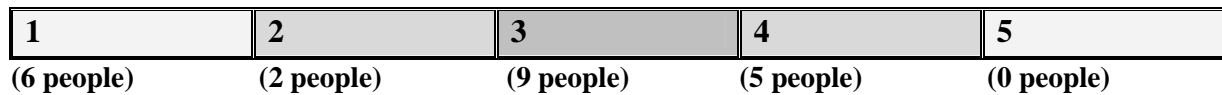
Barometer #4

I believe that the coexistence/conflict transformation/peacebuilding field should use methods that are measurable and achievable.

I believe that the coexistence/ conflict transformation/ peacebuilding field should prioritize process & relationships, and embody the values of respect, interdependence & equality.



The participants physically positioned themselves along the spectrum in the following way:



The Barometer surfaced discussions around the following issues⁴:

- the increasing need for accountability in the field and recognition that the coexistence field can't use the excuse of being a new field forever;
- the importance of developing new measurements, tools, and indicators (such as reduction of violence);
- the assertion that ways to measure just about any conflict transformation approach, including dialogue work, can be identified;
- the relationship between creating knowledge and advancing new and innovative approaches and the task of measurement and evaluation;
- the crucial need to articulate a set of intended results before launching new interventions and initiatives;
- the lack of institutional memory and internal learning mechanisms pervasive in both large agencies and small initiatives;
- the concern that most evaluation is funding-driven instead of learning-driven;
- the danger of over-emphasizing measurement thereby stifling creativity and risk-taking;
- the mutually-reinforcing nature of measuring outcomes while prioritizing process and relationships.

Analysis: There was substantial interest in this conversation, and it could serve as groundwork for further discussion about methods and approaches. Practitioners with extensive evaluation experience expressed a genuine conviction that we can devise ways to measure any type of coexistence work, as long as we see value in it and embrace a commitment to learning from

⁴ Of the four issues that were addressed by the group, this one was characterized by the greatest disparity between responses to the paper survey and choices people made during the live exercise.

evidence. The instrumental use of evaluations solely for funding purposes was criticized as too narrow. At the same time, the increasingly common donor requirements for outcome driven work have already compelled many practitioners to adjust their practices resulting in shifted perceptions about the use of evaluation. It is clear that coexistence practitioners and agencies engaging in inward reflection on their impact in conflict situations are motivated by a host of factors: desire for effective innovative tools, reassessment of their roles and responsibilities, and/or a need to fulfill requirements from funders and partners in the field. Whatever the case, the Barometer exercise demonstrated that the evaluation question is critical, and is seen as a way to advance the field through effective practice, documenting outcomes and increasing visibility.

Data gathered through paper Barometers

While the Human Barometer generated lively and interactive conversations about values and practices, additional data was revealed in the participants' paper Barometer surveys. The entire Barometer survey can be found in the appendices to this report and includes exact number of responses given to each statement and brief summary of participants' comments.

Concluding Conversation

The March 2nd meeting concluded with a facilitated conversation on the boundaries of the field and limits of collaboration. A number of issues and concerns surfaced during the conversation, ranging from setting shared goals and lack of funding to the challenge of consensus building and collective policymaking when multiple actors are involved. Defining boundaries of the field involves taking stock of the diversity of actors already present in the field and defining what makes the coexistence arena distinct from other fields. The group expressed great interest in continuing this exploration of boundaries in a productive conversation with practitioners from related fields of development, human rights, arts, etc. The Barometer exercise was seen as a potentially very useful tool for mixed-group dialogue about commonalities, differences, and complementary approaches.

The group also commented on the importance of understanding how the coexistence field is perceived from the outside and where it fits into the big international picture. Participants voiced a concern that the field is hardly on the radar screen because of minimal funding and lack of shared strategies. Competition for funding within the field was seen as detrimental to shared long-term vision. Genuine commitment to effective practice would mean turning down funds if we recognize that another group can do the job better. While fostering cohesion was seen as important to building identity for the field, conflicts within the fields were understood to be inevitable, signifying the diversity of the actors. In addition, participants commented on the possible usefulness of the Barometer tool to groups collaborating in a particular conflict zone. Using the Barometer in this way could help encourage complementarity and place similar types of conversations into a specific regional context.

Overall Analysis

As projected by the organizers of this meeting, the Barometer exercise provided a platform for exchanging ideas about commonalities and differences in the coexistence field. The interdisciplinary nature of the coexistence field was best exemplified by the conversations about intersections of approaches reflecting a wide array of values, analytical frameworks and linkages. But the conversation does not end here. The guiding question about the boundaries of the field

remained only partially explored and needs to be revisited in future meetings featuring representatives from related fields. Key values such as inclusion and participation require further and more nuanced analysis by both coexistence practitioners and together with their colleagues in related fields. The Barometer conversations demonstrate that there is a great difference between saying one will “work with” an armed group (i.e. facilitate a session in which their members participate) and saying one will “collaborate” or “partner” with an armed group. Such qualifications are important in determining the limits of collaboration between and within the expanded and integrated field. Ultimately, however, the analysis of data from both “live” and “paper” Barometers shows that participants agreed on more points than they disagreed on.

Common standpoints were expressed by more than two-thirds of the group on the following:

- the value of restorative justice and reconciliation (while acknowledging the importance of the rule of law and the problems associated with cultures of impunity);
- the need for diversity of voices and opinions in the field;
- the importance of documenting effective practice;
- the significance of structural change and links to policymaking that does not negate grassroots efforts;
- the importance of local ownership and local knowledge in conflict zones (data from paper Barometer);
- the need for sustained, on-the-ground presence in conflict regions (data from paper Barometer);
- the importance of using elicitive methods, drawing out knowledge from the cultural groups with whom we work (data from paper Barometer).

Disagreements of various degrees were articulated on:

- willingness to engage with armed groups (from paper Barometer);
- the perception of coexistence and conflict resolution practice as a profession as opposed to vocation/art (from paper Barometer).

The broad agreement on values among practitioners and researchers in the coexistence field might be less clear and more nuanced in specific conflict settings and contexts. Therefore, the working relationship and synergies that are nurtured through such meetings need to extend outward and be tested through direct collaboration in the field. The use of an adapted Barometer tool, or some other process that facilitates open conversation on these and other questions of values, could be instrumental for facilitating conversations about values and shared goals among practitioners working on similar projects and in the same regions.

This first version of the Barometer exercise triggered inevitable discussions about the selected terminology, definitions, and concepts. The difficulty with the language in some measure reflects both the limitations of the tool and the nature of the emerging coexistence field. Practitioners need to engage in more in-depth conversations and explore the nuances of the language used in this field. It is worth noting that the process of clarification of terms provided space for verifying and substantiating key assumptions and shared notions. In numerous instances, participants were surprised to hear the explanations for why others were at the same place along the Barometer spectrum. In some other cases, people who placed themselves at different positions along the spectrum actually shared values and beliefs. By offering their own

interpretations of the statements, participants collectively searched for an expanded or narrower spot on the Barometer that best expressed their values. The small-group discussions were deeper in their scope and featured rich interactions that went beyond the expectations of the organizers. Some of these conversations attained a certain level of problem-solving when it came to clarifying terminology, reframing some concepts, and exploring underlying assumptions behind commonly used approaches. This collaborative approach manifested a high degree of innovation, creativity, and expertise in interpersonal skills, all of which are attributes of coexistence and conflict transformation field. Regrettably, the time limits did not allow for in-depth consideration about how participants' personal values match or differ from the organizational values of their respective agencies.

VI. April 6-7th Gathering: Networking Coexistence and Related Fields at the Meta-Level.

In April 2006, Coexistence International hosted a two-day strategy and networking meeting that brought together 20 leading practitioners, researchers, policy makers and donors from the core of the coexistence/conflict resolution field and from related fields including development, governance, human rights, refugee and internally displaced persons, transitional justice, and the arts. The goals of the meeting were:

- To reflect on commonalities and differences in values and practices across these fields in the work towards the creation of societies characterized by respectful, equitable relationships across difference
- To explore the current state of the relationships between those working at the core of the field and those working in related fields

The Barometer exercise played an important role during the first day of the meeting by helping participants to become acquainted with one another and by launching strategic discussions about complementarity between fields. The guiding questions for the Barometer exercise were:

- Where is the common ground in our work?
- What are the values and vision this group shares?
- Are these values, vision, and approaches understood and integrated into our various fields?

Fourteen people participated in the April Barometer exercise,⁵ and 11 Barometer surveys were collected at the end of the session. The demographics of the participants were as follows:

- While a large number of participants represented academic/research institutions, many also worked as consultants, advisors or staff at intergovernmental, national and non-governmental agencies and within grassroots groups. The group also featured two former government officials from the United States and Iran, a theater artist and a visual artist, and a representative from the foundation that funds CI's work.
- Of those who filled out the demographics survey, four people identified themselves as coexistence/conflict resolution/peacebuilding practitioners, two as artists, and the rest of the responses were equally distributed among development, governance, human rights, refugee work, and transitional justice.

⁵ This number excludes CI staff.

- An equally large number of people focus their work on the grassroots and the governmental level, with fewer participants within this group working at the intergovernmental level. Consequently, participants’ scope of work focuses primarily at the national level and on policies and processes within international organizations and community-level organizations.
- The majority of respondents work in North America, Middle East, Africa, or multiple regions, with some working in Central America, South America, Eastern Europe, and South Asia. However, there was not a great regional or cultural diversity within the group.

Data gathered through the “Live” Barometer

The Barometer was adapted in its content and form to correspond to the mixed nature of the participants. The Barometers were modified from their previous form at the March meeting (a spectrum with two statements at each end) to a single sentence followed by a five-point scale indicating degrees of agreement or disagreement. This adjustment was largely in response to feedback from the March gathering about a perceived lack of opposition or mutual exclusivity in the statements. In comparing results from the two Barometers, it should also be noted that the sequence of the Barometer statements has been altered.

The paper Barometers were mailed to all of the participants a week before the gathering to save time during the meeting and to allow for more extensive written responses. The process for the exercise generally remained the same as at the first meeting, except that due to time constraints only two statements were used for the “live” exercise. Some follow-up conversations to the Barometer exercise took place over dinner and were summarized the following day. Cynthia Cohen, Director of Coexistence Research and International Collaboration at Brandeis University facilitated the Human Barometer exercise.

Barometer #10

Effective peacebuilding practice prioritizes social and restorative justice and the possibility of reconciliation over accountability and rule of law.

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|------------------------------|
| 1 (Strongly Agree) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (Strongly Disagree) |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|------------------------------|

(0) **(4 people)** **(5 people)** **(0)** **(5 people)**

Those who generally agreed with the statement chose Position 2 rather than Position 1. They chose this more moderate position because of considerations that reconciliation is a crucial component within a sequence of approaches to peacebuilding, but they recognized the importance of the rule of law. It was stated that without reconciliation, there is no rule of law. Most human rights concepts were seen as lacking context-awareness, and an argument was made that past cases demonstrate that only when you achieve reconciliation can you move to justice (e.g. South Africa).

The participants at Position 5 also discussed the importance of sequencing approaches. Their position was based on the premise that in order to achieve social justice and reconciliation, order and rule of law first need to be established. Sierra Leone provided an illustrative example. Rule

of law was seen as a fundamental mechanism for achieving reconciliation. A concern was voiced that the term and concept of reconciliation has been widely misused by a number of undemocratic leaders, or “top dogs,” without being accompanied by structural and political change. Conversely, equality and rule of law have traditionally been the pursuits of the “underdog.”

Those at Position 3 discussed the importance of being aware of how we perceive and analyze conflict situations and whose perspective we assume (the powerless, the marginalized or the mainstream). All of this affects our choice of approach that should depend on a host of local factors. Iran was cited as an example where rule of law can be itself problematic because it stifles pluralism. It was also noted that emphasis on accountability is often based on assumption that the victims are dead, but in the cases of women violated during conflict they are very much alive and want to live in a society with social justice and reconciliation. There is a conspicuous dichotomy between the expectations and aspirations of local populations vs. the international community’s emphasis on accountability through legal means. Questions were posed: Does rule of law create a structure and space to deal with the emotions of conflict? Does it create a framework of fairness?

The written comments from the surveys indicate that a number of participants see the value and need for both approaches even when placing themselves closer to one or the other on the spectrum. Contextual considerations were mentioned in most of the surveys. The long-term sustainability of peacebuilding efforts was described as hinging on legislation that makes the peace process legitimate.

Analysis: In the process of large group conversation, when explanations were provided as to why people positioned themselves where they did, a number of participants were actually in agreement with their colleagues from across the room. It became apparent that most people would not indiscriminately advocate for a single approach without considering the local dynamics. Restorative justice was recognized as an important component of building sustainable peace. Echoing the central themes from the March 2nd gathering, the conversations centered on sequencing approaches as part of a comprehensive society-wide process of transformation. The differences in opinions spread across the disciplines and organizational affiliations: U.N. officials stood next to artists while coexistence practitioners, development workers and human rights advocates were distributed all along the spectrum. There was insufficient time to address the question of advocacy and policy-making on issues of reconciliation and accountability. It would be constructive to foster a conversation about how these differences are transplanted into the world of practice and policy in order to understand if some of the expressed values are significantly mitigated by political, organizational, and contextual factors.

Barometer # 9

Effective practice unequivocally requires measurable and achievable methods and outcomes.

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 (Strongly Agree) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (Strongly Disagree) |
| (4 people) | (7 people) | (0) | (2 people) | (1 person) |

Advocates of measurable and achievable outcomes, at Position 1, proposed the need for a roadmap when designing conflict interventions. Failure to articulate intended results and measure outcomes undermines the whole coexistence intervention process and jeopardizes success. The field is at a critical stage that requires measuring impact, recording best and worst practices, and being accountable to funders and constituencies in conflict zones. Therefore there was a call to be stricter with ourselves about the learning process -- learning about what we're doing. However, the evaluation methodology needs to be adjusted so that it does not become a pervasive invasion of all aspects of day-to-day work. In regards to what can and can't be measured, it was stated that even dialogue work, long thought of as un-measurable, can be assessed by documenting shifts in behaviors and attitudes in participants over time. Both quantitative and qualitative methods should be used and results need to be analyzed in a larger context. Much of the conversation echoed the issues discussed at the March gathering and reflected the growing awareness of the methodological challenges in the field.

The single person at Position 5 expressed a strong conviction that there are important peacebuilding activities that are not measurable, e.g. conducting confidence-building exercises. At Position 4, people were concerned about lofty goals of "building a human rights culture" or "promoting coexistence and peacebuilding" and methods of measuring the degree of "peacefulness" of a society. While a laundry list of indicators can be conceived, participants were not convinced that these would amount to an appropriate measure. While pursuing peace, we can speak of "indices of success" (i.e. changes in law, politics, and language) but not necessarily measurement of progress. Concern that quantitative measurement obstructs and overlooks the quality of relationship was voiced.

For participants at Position 2, the importance of measurable outcomes was informed by professional experience in the field and relationships with funders who prioritize outcome-based programs. A recent report by an important funder of conflict resolution work, which criticized the field's inattention to evaluation, was one of the topics discussed. Several participants selected this slightly modified position to the left of strong agreement based on their experience with funders who don't know how to evaluate. The group saw itself as reconciling the two ends of the spectrum by encouraging creative measurement methods that do not lose track of relationships and process. A key issue discussed was the functional use of evaluations and avoiding "evaluations for show."

Analysis: Similarly to the March 2nd Barometer exercise, most participants agreed that learning is fundamental to the growth and survival of the field and that a body of evidence helps move individual efforts and the entire field forward. However, the ways to go about structuring this learning process are numerous and become the source of tension for the practitioners in all of the related fields. The conviction that new, innovative and effective evaluation tools can be designed and adapted for use in diverse types of coexistence interventions is a promising start. It is important to note that participants who advocated for increased use of evaluation (Positions 1 and 2) did not all hail from agencies in which evaluation is institutionalized as part of organizational process. More than half were representing smaller, newer, and less-hierarchical organizations and initiatives, and presumably devise evaluation methods and set learning objectives without directive from above.

The distribution of responses from the March 2nd and April 6th gatherings are comparable in many ways. Most people at both meetings supported the use of measurable outcomes. But the April group was less ambivalent about this preference. Therefore, the majority stood closer to the left end of the spectrum rather than in the middle as was observed in March. The mixed nature of the April gathering also allowed for some observation on commonalities and differences within the fields. The two participating artists were in agreement in their support of measurable outcomes and were joined by practitioners from coexistence, development, and governance fields. Representatives from an intergovernmental agency together with former government figures also shared their strong support of measurable outcomes. The “minority report” was put forward by representatives from the human rights and refugee resettlement fields who expressed reservations about the majority’s emphasis on measurable outcomes. The cross-fertilization of ideas from development, coexistence, and human rights professionals as well as practitioners from other fields who think at a meta-level is an important part of the field’s learning process. The shared experiences and concerns across the disciplines are certainly grounds for further discussion and collaboration on designing functional evaluation tools.

Data Gathered through Paper Barometers

While the Human Barometer generated lively and interactive conversations about values and practices, additional data was revealed in the participants’ paper Barometer surveys. The entire Barometer survey can be found in the appendices to this report and includes the exact number of responses on each statement and a brief summary of participants’ comments. Where possible, a comparison is made between the responses from the March 2nd and April 6th Barometer exercises.⁶

Overall Analysis

The Barometer exercises, paper surveys, and follow-up conversations demonstrate that participants at the April meeting find more common ground than discord. The picture that gradually emerged around the room and through subsequent analysis of the paper surveys was not one of great polarization. This interdisciplinary gathering featured rich conversations, exchange of ideas, and collective deliberation about complementarity. In comparison to the first gathering in March, fewer analytical and conceptual frames were offered and more empirical experiences from the field and case examples were used to help build understanding between participants. The fact that this gathering featured more practitioners and fewer people working in academia may account for this difference. It should also be noted that participants at the second gathering were selected based on their extensive experience working across disciplines and many of them do not classify their professional work in just one narrow practice area.

There were a number of noticeable trends and patterns in the ways coexistence practitioners and colleagues in related fields view peacebuilding practice and requirements for its effectiveness. A common thread that emerged from all the data is a compelling vision for a comprehensive and holistic approach in which different methods and perspectives are validated and integrated into a more effective peacebuilding practice. Those few differences that surfaced (e.g. on restorative justice, engaging with armed groups and evaluation) were mitigated by such considerations as sequencing, degree of engagement, and availability of flexible and creative measuring methods.

⁶ In addition, please find attached in the appendices a summary of the dinner conversations. The dinner conversations provided additional space to discuss key questions raised by the Barometer exercise.

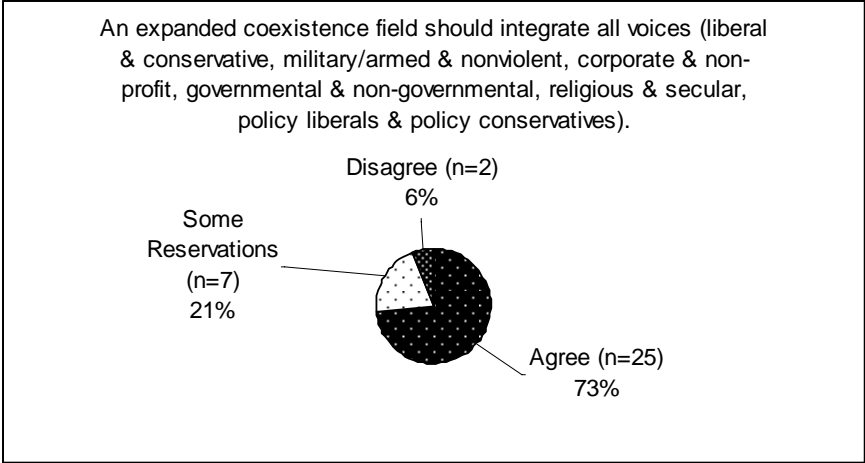
Ultimately, the differences of opinions and methodological pluralism practiced within this group did not indicate grounds for substantial friction that would prevent collaboration in the field. Enough differences did emerge, however, to support our assumption that opportunities for reflection on questions of values and approaches would be useful in any collaborative endeavor, and that a platform to engage with questions on this level would be helpful to establish at early stages of collaborative projects. These hypotheses would need to be tested through further research and in real and sustained collaborations.

VII. Conclusions

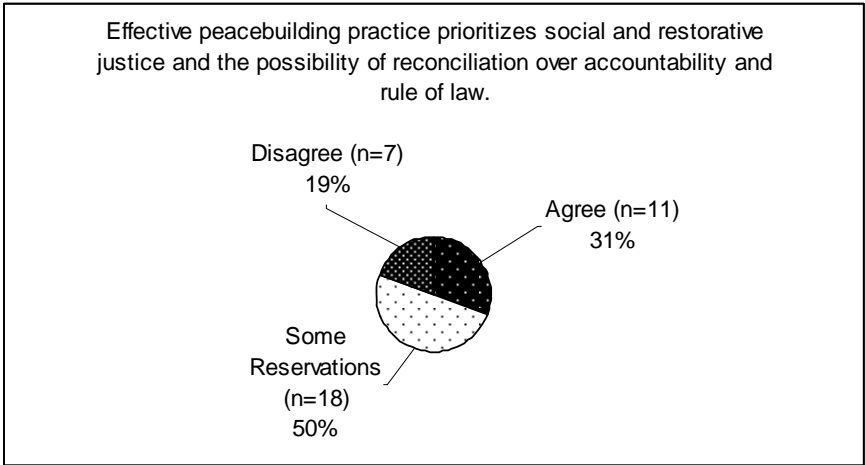
The two gatherings in the spring of 2006 brought together individuals with multiple loyalties and identities as practitioners, activists, political figures, artists, feminists, academics, and scholar-authors, among others. While diverse disciplines and organizations were represented at each meeting, and participants had worked in many regions of the world, in cultural terms the gatherings were relatively homogenous. In the two Barometer exercises that produced the data summarized in this report, the small differences that surfaced were consistent across both gatherings. In a preliminary way, this finding bodes well for the possibilities of greater complementarity and coordination of efforts across fields. The participants, however, were selected precisely because they were already working across the boundaries of defined fields and, as noted above, were relatively homogeneous culturally. We anticipate greater differences would emerge if we facilitated the exercise with people of greater cultural difference and/or those whose perspective emerge from the core of a field and who are not yet engaged in cross-disciplinary work.

In the process of drawing preliminary conclusions from the gathered data, it is helpful to see the level of consensus and the spread of opinions in a cumulative way, in which responses to similar statements from both gatherings are merged. The following pie charts combine responses given by March and April participants during the “live” exercises and on paper surveys. Only those barometer statements that were used in both versions of the survey are listed here.⁷ The high prevalence for the middle ground on some barometers makes it difficult to come to definitive conclusions about the levels of agreement or disagreement, especially in those cases where data is limited to succinct paper-based remarks. More extensive written comments and, where available, “live” Barometer discussions help form a more nuanced understanding of some of the reservations and middle ground positions represented. This fact has implications for further research and needs to be taken into account if CI continues Barometer research through paper surveys only. The following conclusions are based on combined responses from both gatherings and lay the groundwork for further inquiry into complementarity and limits of collaboration in the coexistence field.

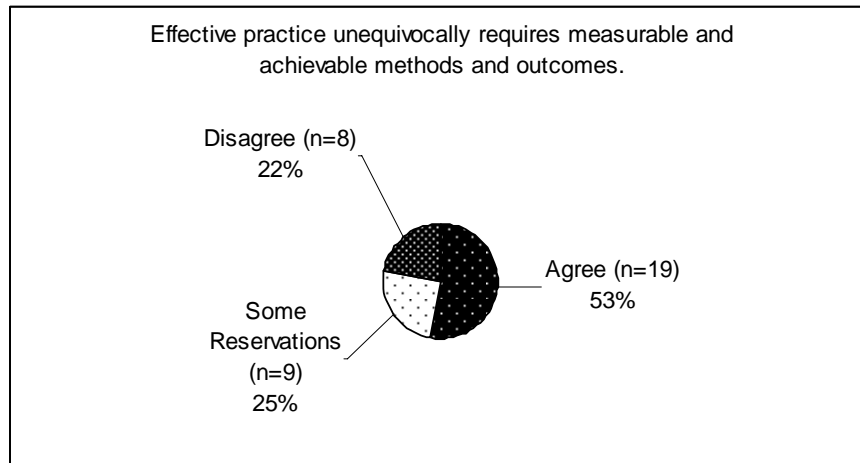
⁷ Due to changes in format and content after the March gathering, not all of the barometer statements match in both versions. For responses on all barometer statements please see the March and April barometer surveys attached.



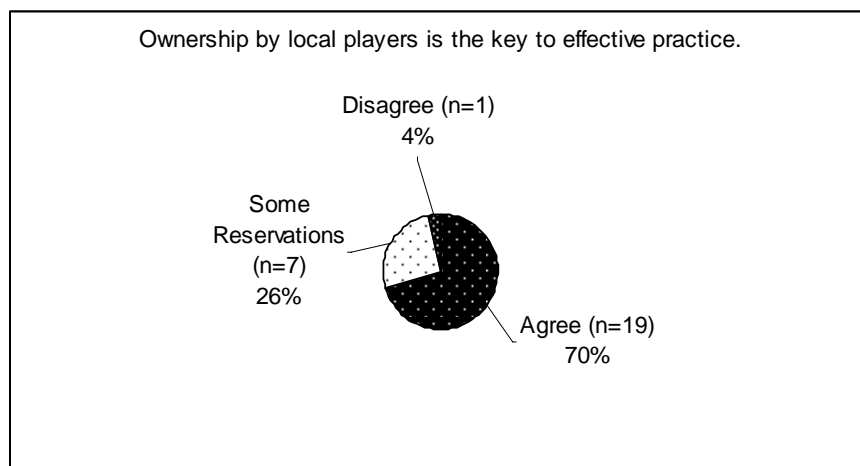
There was a substantial agreement on values such as **inclusion** and **participation**. An overwhelming majority strongly supports an international coexistence field that includes and integrates a diversity of voices. Verbal and written comments from 21% of participants who straddled the two ends of the spectrum also indicate support for inclusion and point to the need for further clarification on the types of collaborations required for effective practice. As a result, there are important questions that arise: How can the field address both its commitments to the value of inclusion as well as the limits of that commitment? When we think of inclusion, would we establish different boundaries for those with whom we would be willing to engage, 1) as collaborating partners, 2) in our roles as mediators and facilitators, and 3) as groups with whom we would consult, etc.? An integrated coexistence field rooted in values of inclusion and participation needs to effectively embody its commitment to diversity and equality, and make allowances for multiplicity of practices that exist within its constituent parts. This methodological pluralism, formed with perceptive understanding of nuances in contexts in which we work, would allow for sequencing and integration of such important practices as promotion of rule of law, reconciliation, transformation of political structures, and institutions and work at the grassroots level.



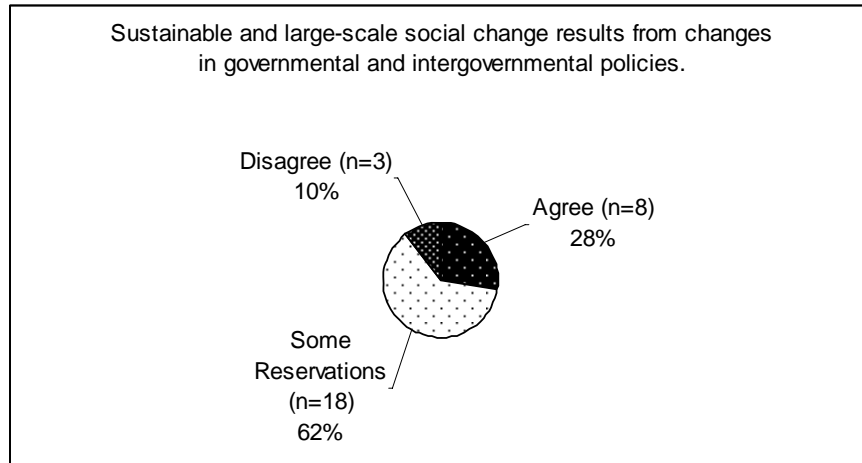
The statement addressing the tension between **restorative justice** and **retributive justice** in post-conflict situations brought forth a dialogue about the value of restorative justice and reconciliation with acknowledgement of the importance of the rule of law and the problems associated with cultures of impunity. A large segment in both groups indicated their strong support for both approaches by choosing the middle ground. This obvious inclination for integrative and sequential approaches to justice and reconciliation also echoes the sensitivity to local contexts and respect for locally articulated solutions expressed on a different barometer.



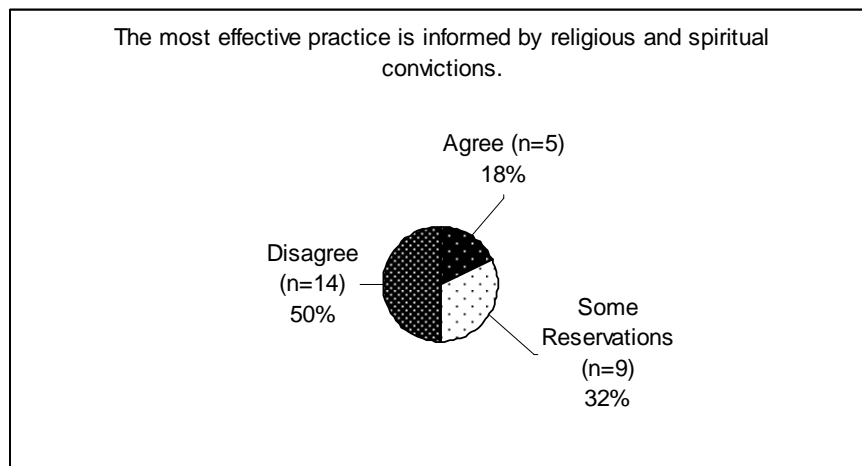
The widespread agreement on the importance of reflective practice, **evaluation**, and documentation was moderated by a number of reservations about disproportionate emphasis on measurable outcomes. The practitioners at both gatherings attached great significance to developing evaluation approaches and defining effective practices in the field without de-emphasizing the importance of relationships and processes. All of the practitioners agreed that the field needs to increase its visibility and build its record through use of effective and relevant evaluation tools and methodical documentation of its practices, successes and failures.



There was an overwhelming accord on the importance for international coexistence work to be profoundly informed by **local knowledge** and to support locally articulated priorities and solutions.

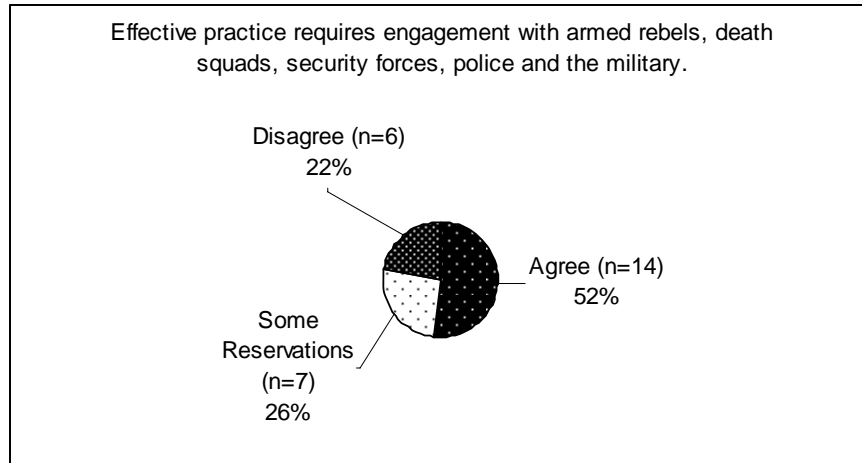


Majority of the participants indicated the need for a comprehensive approach to **large-scale social change** that integrates and links governmental level work with grassroots processes. Without such a comprehensive approach, even the most concentrated efforts aimed at changes in just one of these areas will rarely be effective or sustainable.

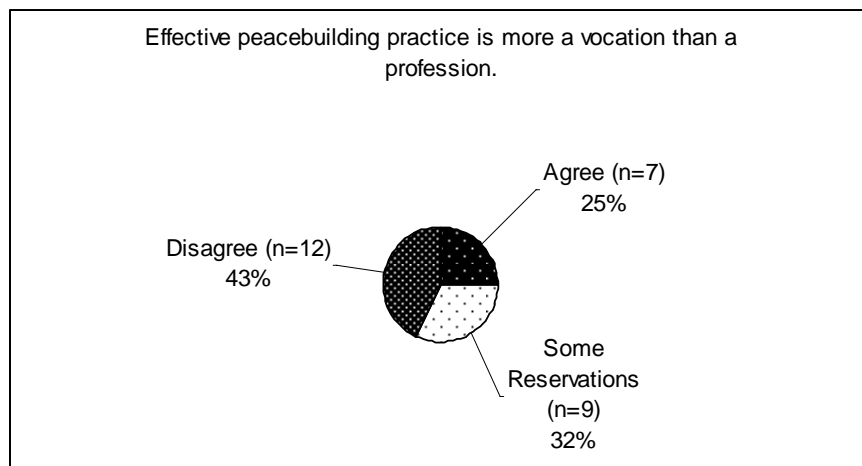


There was a general accord about the secondary role of **religion** and spirituality in informing these practitioners' peacebuilding practice.





A range of opinions on the willingness to engage with **armed groups** was evidenced through the analysis of written comments. While 52% of overall participants indicated their support for engagement with armed groups, there is a clear need for more nuanced descriptions of the different kinds of engagement practitioners might seek or accept with various kinds of actors.



A large segment of overall participants expressed a conviction that peacebuilding and coexistence work constitute a **distinct professional field**. Simultaneously, participants raised important questions about benefits and caveats involved in professionalizing the field and outlining its core competencies. How does professionalization impact our assessment of “intuitive” or activist peacebuilding work done by ordinary people in conflict zones, or work people undertake as part of their other professions, for instance as teachers and social workers? In addressing questions about the nature of coexistence work (as a profession or vocation) and the professionalism of the field, it is important to distinguish between the initiatives of citizens working for change within their own societies and those who work in cultural contexts other than their own. Efforts to professionalize the field should in no way disempower people from

advocating for inclusion or working to strengthen inter-group relations in their own communities.

VIII. Next Steps

Ultimately, participants saw a great deal of value in taking part in the Barometer exercise and learning about opinions and values held by their colleagues on a range of issues. In part, the success depended on the willingness of participants to be open and reflective. There was trust and a capacity to share. In the future, in order to remain relevant and sensitive to context, the Barometer tool would need to be continually adjusted to fit the emerging needs of the practitioners. While it can potentially be used exclusively in a survey format to gather information from colleagues and partners in far corners of the world, the lack of the interactive dimension in the exercise could decrease the nuanced understandings generated through conversation and miss out on its relationship-building and consensus-building potential. The possible use of the Barometer with colleagues in conflict areas to further elucidate principles guiding their practice and to test grounds for collaboration could include: adapting the tool for similar networking gatherings in a particular geographical region or country; using the tool for inter-sectoral networking (e.g. bringing together conflict/peacebuilding advisors from a variety of intergovernmental agencies, or gender advisors from all the peacekeeping missions, etc) to build understanding in their respective lines of work that affects coexistence; and lastly, working with headquarters/leadership of key organizations that shape and transmit decisions and policies affecting multiple conflict regions around the world.

There are a number of remaining research questions that are outside the scope of this initial report but which are central to CI's mission of strengthening the coexistence field. How does the picture that emerged from these two gatherings in Boston reflect the reality found in meeting rooms, conference halls, and, most importantly, on the ground where multiple other actors practice, advocate, and promote coexistence on a daily basis? What are the possible ways that the Barometer can be used in a relationship-building and consensus-building fashion? And should it be used that way? Should this tool be used to assess possible grounds for collaboration on a particular program or joint campaign of action? Is it possible to measure the degree of commonality and agreement in the coexistence field through such gatherings alone, or does it require evidence from direct experience situated in specific contexts? Would it require additional research, perhaps using just the paper barometers with a large sample of practitioners from diverse fields? What important conversations and collaborations with local, grassroots-based coexistence practitioners in the developing world can be stimulated through the use of a Barometer? Similarly, what important conversations and collaborations with policy makers and power brokers who have direct impact on coexistence can be cultivated through the Barometer exercise? Would they see as much value in such exercise as do coexistence practitioners? What are some possible limitations or even dangers of transplanting this tool across the interdisciplinary and geographical borders?

CI plans to share this report with a wide audience of scholars and practitioners in the core of the coexistence field and related disciplines to increase awareness about current conversations taking place about values and approaches in the field. We hope that this report will encourage others who work in coexistence and related fields to create opportunities for colleagues to explore similarities and differences in their values and approaches. CI believes that honest inquiry into

similarities and differences in values and approaches is an important foundation for complementarity and coordination of efforts across fields. Conversely, when unacknowledged, disagreements in values and approaches may become more consequential when it comes to collaborative practice and implementation in the field.

One important dimension of defining a field is to establish its boundaries. Who is inside the field? Who is outside? It is clearly still too early to say that the coexistence field has demarcated its borders with a set of shared values, goals, and approaches. We hope, however, that this report and the gatherings on which it is based represent important steps toward this goal. We look forward to feedback from our colleagues.

Next Steps for CI

As CI moves forward with its mission of (1) **strengthening the effectiveness** of policy makers, practitioners, researchers, advocates, organizations, and networks promoting coexistence or capable of promoting coexistence at local, national, and international levels; and (2) bringing new actors into coexistence field by **facilitating connections, learning, reflection, and strategic thinking** between those in the coexistence field and those in related areas (e.g. sustainable development, human rights, democracy, the arts), the Barometer will likely continue to be an important resource. Whether CI decides to remain the facilitator of this exercise or not, the Barometer, as described in this report, can be a vital tool for facilitating conversations and reflection into the similarities and differences both within the coexistence field and between the coexistence field and other areas. CI believes that a strong coexistence field, an awareness of how different issue areas impact coexistence and increased possibilities for collaboration hinge in part on greater understanding on the similar and different values and practices that drive our work. The Barometer exercise can help uncover these similarities and differences.

CI's work from July 2006 to June 2007 will focus not only on networking and gatherings, but on harnessing existing knowledge, contributing new ideas, and packaging and publishing resources and tools that will be of use to coexistence practitioners, policymakers, and colleagues from related disciplines. It is likely that in addition to making the Barometer available on the CI website for those institutions and groups that are interested in running the exercise, CI will also publish the Barometer data in a condensed, practical format for those unable to read the complete findings.

Appendices

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| March 2 nd | List of participants and Barometer Survey with recorded responses |
| April 6 th | List of participants and Barometer Survey with recorded responses |
| | Summary of Dinner Time Conversations (April 6) |