

**Recasting Reconciliation through Culture and the Arts:
Strengthening Peace-building Capacity
through The Brandeis International Fellowship Program**

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What do you do with ten strong-minded people in a room for five days and how do you facilitate that and make sure that the creative and intellectual sides come out and that there are different opportunities for communicating and facilitating?

-Brandeis International Fellow, 2003

Recasting Reconciliation through Culture and the Arts was an international fellowship program sponsored in 2003 and 2004 by the Slifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence at Brandeis University. The program identified artists and cultural workers engaged in peacebuilding work in divided societies and offered support for five two-person teams to document, reflect on, theorize about, and share their work. The fellowship award included costs of travel to Brandeis University, participation in two one-week institutes near our campus outside of Boston, and a modest stipend to support costs of documentation that took place in the eleven months between the two institutes.

This chapter tells the story of that program from my perspective as the director of the Fellowship program and director of Coexistence Research and International Collaborations at Brandeis. It includes an overview of the program – its activities, participants, and the institutional context in which it was embedded. I discuss the goals we established and explore the challenges that emerged as the project evolved. The chapter recognizes where and when we successfully met, exceeded, or fell short of our goals and lessons we learned along the way. The chapter also identifies the program’s outputs and outcomes – for its participants, for the sponsoring organization, and for the larger peacebuilding/reconciliation fields. This is a story of the success of knowledge sharing and capacity building. Though it leans on the definitions of success put forth by the collection’s editors, it also suggests a tentative rubric of success for arts and culture-based peacebuilding initiatives and for process-oriented knowledge sharing efforts.

Act I: The inception of the program

Recasting Reconciliation was the third in a series of Brandeis International Fellowship programs that brought distinguished scholars and practitioners working on related issues in various regions to Brandeis’ Boston-area campus. Here at Brandeis they engaged in short periods of reflection and conversation on pragmatic and philosophical/theoretical issues. An initial Fellowship in 1998, sponsored by Brandeis University’s International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life, invited scholars and practitioners to the campus to explore questions about the relationship between coexistence and the quest for justice. A second, subsequent Fellowship, taking place over eighteen months, convened ten scholars, educators, activists and judges to reflect on international courts, human rights and intervention. Like the first two rounds, *Recasting Reconciliation through Culture and the Art* was designed to generate resources and momentum

for a larger inquiry to which the Ethics Center had committed itself, in this case to explore “creative approaches to coexistence and reconciliation.”

Recasting Reconciliation through Culture and the Arts, the third Brandeis International Fellowship Program, emerged from dual convictions. First, the organizers believe that artists and cultural workers practicing in historically divided communities contribute in significant ways both to the actual practice of peacebuilding and reconciliation as well as to on-going conversations about the meanings of ‘reconciliation’ and the nature of effective conciliatory practice. Secondly, we understand that the practice of artists and cultural workers in peacebuilding is under-resourced and that their contributions are under-recognized; their work, therefore, can and should be strengthened through a variety of means, including educational opportunities. As a learning institution concerned with the practical and theoretical terrain at the convergence of peacebuilding and the arts and cultural work, Brandeis endeavored to provide such an educational opportunity.

Act II: Goals

Our convictions led to a range of goals that necessitated a delicate balance in design and implementation of the program. The application materials articulated the project’s goals in this way:

Through this fellowship program, we will develop a community of inquiry among peacebuilding practitioners and artists/cultural workers who are already engaged in exploring the intersections of reconciliation, culture, and the arts *and* scholars and documenters who have worked in historically divided communities. Since conciliatory processes are complex, unpredictable, and take place over many years, we are not asking Fellows to design and implement *new* projects. Rather, we hope to support the documentation of on-going work, deepen the level of reflection upon it, and create contexts for learning to be shared.

Our primary concern in designing the educational experience was knowledge sharing – among the Fellows, between the Fellows and Fellowship staff and the broader Brandeis community, and ultimately with the field of peacebuilding. Our first goal was that through sharing knowledge we would nourish and strengthen the Fellows themselves, supporting their learning, their practice and informing conceptual understandings. We designed the program to support focused reflection on the Fellows’ own practice, including both its efficacy and its ethical dimensions; to facilitate connections with those doing related work in other regions; and to create learning opportunities to consider key concepts and practices associated with the rubrics of conflict resolution, peacebuilding, coexistence and reconciliation. Through the Fellows, we hope to contribute to the quality of inter-group relations in communities in conflict and post-conflict regions.

A second goal was to enhance knowledge within the Brandeis community. We, as facilitators of the Fellowship program, imagined that our own skills and knowledge would expand, and that our capacity to support artist-peacebuilders to document and reflect on their work would deepen. We also were given a mandate to use the resources of the Fellowship program to contribute to the intellectual and cultural life of the Brandeis community, engaging students, faculty and staff in learning about a field with which they were largely unfamiliar.

A third goal was to generate knowledge useful for the peacebuilding field in general. We especially wanted to strengthen the contributions to peacebuilding theory and practice of two groups: artists (from all regions) and practitioners (of all kinds) emerging from the Global South. We anticipated meeting this goal in part through producing a book documenting the contributions of cultural work and the arts to reconciliation, generating theory about such efforts, and articulating an agenda for future research.

We had a host of other objectives and commitments. For instance, we were committed to a broad definition of arts and cultural work, including expressive forms of collectivities such as rituals and folk expression. We were committed to attracting geographically and artistically diverse teams. We wanted to incorporate a variety of intellectual, emotional and aesthetic modes of knowing within the fabric of the institutes themselves, believing, as we do, that reconciliation requires engagement on all these levels. How we met (or didn't meet) these goals and objectives is discussed in the latter half of this chapter.

Act III: Applications and Selections

Early in the design process, we made several key decisions that proved to be significant in our ability to meet our goals. We decided to choose the Fellows through an open application process, partly out of a commitment to an open and fair process, partly out of our need to learn more about who, outside of our circles, was working in this arena. We decided to invite applications from teams of two persons working in a particular region, at least one of whom was an artist already working in any medium to facilitate reconciliation, and at least one of whom would bring experience as a writer or documenter. Our application materials made reference to a wide range of expressive forms, including rituals and monuments, films, dramatic presentations, museum exhibitions, radio series, quilts, songs and stories.

A call for applications for the Fellowship program was disseminated in the spring of 2003, largely through email and internet networks that had been developed through the previous six years of international programming.ⁱ We were aided in our outreach effort through the assistance of organizations with well-developed international networks, such as UNESCO and Search for Common Ground. We received 80 completed applications, representing 160 individual artists and documenters, from which we were able to select five two-person teams.

The applications themselves offer evidence of the vitality and breadth of the field of artist-peacebuilders working in almost every conceivable medium: poetry, theater, music, digital arts, visual art, film-making, performance art and public art installations. They came from Northern Ireland, the former Yugoslavia, Cyprus, Israel and Palestine, the Caucuses; from Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and South Africa; from Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Australia, Indonesia and Cambodia; from Miami, Florida and Cincinnati, Ohio; and from Canada and Costa Rica.

I directed the Fellowship program from my position as director of Coexistence Research and International Collaborations at Brandeis. Early in the process, I enlisted as co-director Jonathan Fox, the founder of Playback Theatre, a form of improvisational theatre with chapters in some fifty countries. He brought to the process his profound respect for narrative and his experience in

creating diverse learning communities committed to listening. He had worked as a trainer with people from the developing world, and had begun to explore the possibilities and limitations of Playback Theatre in conflict regions. During the first institute, we were joined by Farhat Agbaria, a Palestinian-Israeli facilitator with whom I had previously collaborated.

The applications were reviewed by myself, co-director Jonathan Fox, and the associate director of the Ethics Center, an anthropologist who had experience with a previous round of Brandeis International Fellows. We assessed which teams were most likely to contribute to theoretical and practical knowledge in the areas of reconciliation, culture and the arts. Specifically, we looked for evidence of substantial experience in reconciliation per se, i.e., in projects that helped former enemies not only to recognize each other's humanity, but that also engaged adversaries in acknowledging each other's perspectives on historical injustices, addressing painful history, and/or imagining and creating the moral framework for a future relationship. We also looked for evidence of artistic excellence, of the capacity and willingness to be self-reflective and, at least on the part of the documenter, evidence of the ability to write well in English. In choosing the people to whom we offered fellowships, we considered the diversity that would be represented in the overall program, including both geography and artistic genre.ⁱⁱ

Act IV: The Teams

The five teams we selected to participate in the Fellowship program were working in different conflict regions at different stages of the conflict cycle. Their talents embraced a wide range of artistic genres. Some were situated in their own communities, others were 'outsiders' to the communities in which they were working.

Nicholas Kotei Djanie and Lena Slachmijlder, working in Burundi, Rwanda and South Africa, seek to promote reconciliation through African drumming, music and song. Nicholas is a master drummer, dancer, teacher and performer; Lena is a musician and cultural facilitator and also an experienced radio and print journalist who, at the time of the Fellowship program, directed 'Studio Ijambo,' a radio station affiliated with the organization Search for Common Ground in Burundi. Prior to the coming to Brandeis, they both had contributed to a four-day peace festival in Burundi, and have collaborated with the Rwandan National Olympic Ballet to create a dance-drama telling the story of the Rwandan genocide and the efforts underway towards reconciliation. In their application materials they wrote: "*We both believe, based on our experiences, in the creative and spiritual power of drumming, song and dance to transform individuals and communities, deal with trauma, and facilitate the process of reconciliation around the unity of rhythm.*"

Ly Daravuth and Ingrid Muan, visual artists, art historians and curators, were co-founders of Reyum Institute for Arts and Culture in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Reyum sponsored an Art School for disadvantaged children, and, prior to the Fellowship program, had curated an exhibition called 'The Legacy of Absence' in which artists were asked to create works reflecting on the legacy of the Khmer Rouge Period. In their application materials Ingrid and Daravuth wrote: "*For the past five years, we have been working together on a series of art and research projects which culminate in exhibitions and publications. The institutional frame for our work is Reyum, the Institute of Arts and Culture that we established in downtown Phnom Penh in late*

1998. In this storefront space, we offer images and texts that we hope open a modest public forum in which those who wish to participate can look, think, discuss, and create. By doing so, we feel that we contribute towards coexistence – if not reconciliation – in Cambodia.”

Beverley Hosking and Jenny Hutt use Playback Theatre (PBT), a form of improvisational theater performed in some fifty countries around the world, *“to create the space for deep community dialogue involving the telling and receiving of difficult-to-tell and cannot-be-told stories.”* Prior to her involvement in the Fellowship program, Bev was an international PBT trainer, based in New Zealand, working also with social activists in India and in Fiji with a group of indigenous and Indian Fijians promoting reconciliation. Jenny, who had also performed and conducted in two PBT companies, took the role of documenter in this team. In the Playback Theatre School in New Zealand, Bev and her co-director found that *“the combination of theatre, the telling of personal story and the ritual of the PBT form, together with the strength of traditional ‘tikanga Maori’ can create a powerful framework within which a strong and deep exploration of differences can occur.”*

Kim Berman and Stompie Selibe of Artist Proof Studio in Johannesburg, South Africa, came into the fellowship program with years of experience running community outreach and development programs that use art processes as a medium for engaging social change. The projects vary from education and training, income generating activities, AIDS awareness and responses to communities in trauma. Kim is a printmaker and educator who co-founded the Artist Proof Studio in 1991. Since that time, Artist Proof had become the home for some 80 artists to gather, and attend workshops and classes in printmaking, photo processes, bookmaking, papermaking and other techniques. Stompie works as an artist, musician and teacher, studying art and music therapy. He speaks seven African languages, and had led workshops with people from all walks of life in South Africa.

Iffat Fatima from Kashmir and Lisa Kois from the United States applied as a team collaborating on the creation of a documentary film in Sri Lanka. Lisa entered the collaboration as a human rights lawyer and writer, Iffat as a filmmaker and cultural researcher. In their application they wrote that their project was to be a *“pro-peace and anti-war documentary film that focuses on the stories of people that give expression to the larger narratives of peace and war... It will look at the ways in which those affected by conflict have no choice but to remember, while exploring the ways in which they remember through storytelling, art, symbol and ritual. Both the process of undertaking the journey and the film itself are intended to stimulate dialogue within and between communities that have been separated by geographic, linguistic and ethnic differences, as well as to stimulate dialogue with and between parties to the conflict.”*

Act V: The Brandeis Institutes

One of the biggest challenges facing the faculty of the Fellowship program was how best to structure the two Brandeis institutes that bookended the Fellowship. How could we make the best use of the limited time we would have together given the range of skills and talents of the fellows, the different kinds and registers of discourse that each would find appropriate and comfortable, and the range of goals of the program? When Jonathan, Farhat and I met to plan the first institute, we agreed that we would attempt to interweave intellectual, emotional and

aesthetic modes of knowing in the fabric of the institutes themselves, believing, as we do, that reconciliation requires engagement on all these levels. We did, in fact, engage at all of these levels.

First Institute, November 2003

The first institute began with the Fellows introducing themselves and their motivations for participating in the program. On the second day, we continued more according to the conventions of a coexistence workshop than the expectations of an academic institute, by exploring identities. Each team introduced the dynamics of conflict within their regions. On days 3 and 4, I shared theoretical frameworks on meanings of reconciliation and the nature of aesthetic engagement. The group grappled with these larger concepts of reconciliation as they tried to imagine how such theory could be applied to their own work. Two Fellows reflect on this activity:

Learning to find a frame to hold the different concepts of reconciliation was useful. It is like using different frames to hold pictures. Learning the terms and ways of expressing [reconciliation] can help frame the process. I have been resistant to the term [reconciliation], but I think my understanding has gone up.

I've got a much greater sense of the territory we are moving in and of the dimensions of this work, of reconciliation and art. I am aware of the bigness of it, which isn't new, but I am more and more respecting the bigness of it and at the same time, I've really developed a trust that small initiatives have value and [I am developing] an awareness of the importance of those small movements and the need to think systematically and trust that my small part has value.

Fellows responded with questions and areas for further exploration; these became the focus for small group discussions and brainstorming. During these discussions, some important ideas were expressed about the unique and beneficial aspects of reconciliation through arts and culture work:

I think [reconciliation] is about the creative space of finding meaning and purpose and excitement about life where there is helplessness and hopelessness and I think that is what art can do, provide opportunities to make a choice.

We are reconciling consciously but not dealing with the heart.... That made me realize how powerful music is for the community, to share the process through emotions. People begin to tell stories by listening to sound. People get a chance to listen to stories of the apartheid era.

Art can help reintegrate people into the community. So it is important to make art as an instrument, as a medium, not as a focal point. It almost has to be silent. It is a medium to get another field [where we could not go without it].

[There is] something interesting about the engagement of sound...helping [an audience] to engage in telling their story because the musician helped to carry their burden.

A formal judicial process...may limit the space for addressing different pasts and different memories that may be at odds with each other and that memory work or education may be a more constructive way to create that space, through art or education...ritual, or ceremony.

Oral history opens doors [to multiple perspectives] but [in some cases] international aid will only focus on the leitmotif past, official past or set framework.

Toward the end of the week, each team was given an opportunity to engage the group in helping them reflect on practical and ethical dilemmas that had been arising in their practice. These conversations then informed our brainstorming for a list of elements that would be included in the chapters and portfolios each team would submit and discuss during the next institute. Several evenings were reserved for informal cultural sharing. The institute concluded with appreciations of each participant.

Interwoven in this flow of conversations and sessions were three visits to the Brandeis campus – one for a dinner with a formal welcome from the Provost, one for a long afternoon and evening of presentations and workshops in which each of the Fellows presented their work, primarily to a segment of the Brandeis community, but also significantly, to each other. We returned to the Brandeis campus at the end of the week for a performance of a nearby Playback Theatre troupe, who elicited and replayed stories related to themes of dialogue and reconciliation. This on-campus programming provided opportunities for community members to interact with and learn from the Fellows.

Second Institute, October 2004

The second Brandeis institute took place eleven months later. The primary focus for the second institute was for Fellows to give each other feedback on the drafts of the chapters they worked on after the first institute. Based on verbal and written reflections from the Fellows in response to the first institute, as well as the assessment of the program's faculty, several changes were made in the second institute. It was lengthened from seven to ten days, with the first full day being spent in recreational activities in a rural setting. Fellows seemed to notice and appreciate the changes and felt that sharing feedback on each other's work was one of the most rewarding parts of the institute:

The 2nd institute was a stimulating and an enjoyable institute for me, both emotionally and intellectually. The institute provided a neutral space for dialogue between the fellows and the facilitators which opened out possibilities for moving forward in the area of our work. I feel highly privileged and nourished because of it. Meeting informally in New Hampshire set the tenor for the institute. It was great because it gave us an opportunity to be with each other and tune into each other informally in an atmosphere of relaxation and fun. It was a great space for transition and entry where we could let go of our stress and tension- an embarking space.

[One of the high-points of the institute was] sitting with each team and making a serious attempt to enter into what they presented of their work via their writing. It was a substantial piece of work with many people contributing and from different perspectives. I found it interesting to have such the focus on the different pieces of writing and the work involved, to have my own response and to hear from others - this was very stimulating and woke me up to areas that I had not focused on myself. Everyone had prepared for the session to some extent and was pretty thoughtful.

Discussions on chapters, on art, sharing portfolios, sharing stories and struggles moved me, affirmed me, supported the work, gave me a sense of pride through association. It fed me, enriched me, "nourished my capacities".

Also, we streamlined the facilitation team from three to two leaders. Although the group missed the support and insights from the third facilitator, having a smaller facilitation team simplified the planning process and also freed up resources to bring guests for a two-day symposium, *Re-Imagining Self and Other: Creativity and Ethical Action in the Aftermath of Violence*. The only interaction with the Brandeis community was at that event, designed to nourish and inform the Fellows rather than to draw on their expertise (although their questions and responses added significantly to the richness of the conversation). The symposium featured five guest presenters – the American film-maker Barbara Sonneborn; the Nairobi-based peacebuilding scholar and practitioner Dr. Hizkias Assefa; the African-American cultural worker Jane Sapp; the Japan-based Belgian arts-and-peace networker Olivier Urbain; and the Indonesian poet, journalist and human rights activist Goenawan Mohammad – who spent the day following the public symposium interacting in a more intimate setting with just the Fellows.

Intermission: What did the Fellows Do?

In the eleven months between the two Institutes, the teams documented ongoing work and new initiatives, producing drafts of working papers and portfolios. The roles of ‘artist’ and ‘documenter’ were distributed across the two participants in different ways, ranging from one team in which there were two distinct and separate roles, to another in which the tasks were to be equally shared.

Kim Berman and Stompie Selibe of Artist Proof Studio in Johannesburg reflected on an action-research project they designed and undertook to make the spirit of ‘ubuntu’ or interdependence a core principle of the studio itself. Their project consisted of multiple layers. First-year students conducted oral history interviews with members of their families and communities on the meaning of ‘ubuntu’ and then created works of art and journals exploring the meaning of the term. Drawing on this reservoir of stories and images, they collectively composed large linocuts, or linoleum prints, expressing their understandings of the indigenous African concept. Meanwhile, the organization underwent a re-organization process, establishing a system of mentorship and accountability designed to develop and strengthen Black leadership within APS itself. The projects are documented in Kim Berman’s paper, *Artist Proof Studio: A Journey of Reconciliation*, and Stompie Selibe’s portfolio, including work by his students, entitled *Art, Ubuntu and Reconciliation: Journeys from Members of Artist Proof Studio*.

In Cambodia, Ly Daravuth created a brief portfolio, *Reconciliation: Where are you?* In it, he brings an artist’s eye to questions of violence, justice and intergroup relations in contemporary Phnom Penh. He also wrote *Notes on Pchum Ben*, a beautifully-illustrated description of a traditional Khmer ritual of reconciliation with the dead. He argues that within this ritual can be found resources for a process that would allow the citizens of Cambodia to grapple with the legacy of violence and domination that have plagued that country’s past and present. Daravuth’s team partner, Ingrid Muan was working on a separate documentation project when she died tragically of an acute illness. She had designed and begun to implement a project with children in Reyum’s art school in which they studied the Khmer version of a text about the ten lives of

Buddha prior to his enlightenment. Each story contains a particular virtue: generosity, honesty, tolerance, compassion, self-determination, etc. The stories became the basis for discussion among the children, scholars and religious leaders. We will publish her partial draft on our virtual resource center.

Lena Schlachmijlder and Nicholas Djanie produced two different works about drumming and reconciliation. Lena interviewed many traditional African drummers, including Hutu and Tutsi drummers who had remained friends and colleagues even during the times of the worst ethnic violence in Burundi. She has gathered testimony about the power of drumming to create feelings of equanimity (even in the aftermath of loss) and to sustain relationships across ethnic divisions. Her paper, *The Rhythm of Reconciliation: A Reflection on Drumming as a Contribution to Reconciliation Processes in Burundi and South Africa*, ends with a vision for a reconciliation ritual for Burundi, in which drumming would play a central role. Nicholas produced a portfolio based on his own experiences as a master drummer working in Rwanda, Burundi, Johannesburg and New York. It includes his own story, images of his work in different settings, the sounds of his drumming, and a diagram that explain a theoretical framework that explains the conciliatory power of drumming, in terms of African cosmologies. His portfolio is entitled *Touch of the Drums*.

Bev Hosking and Jenny Hutt thoroughly documented an entire session of the Playback Theatre Summer School. Jenny also interviewed Bev about her experiences working with teenagers in the aftermath of violence in Fiji, on social development projects with ‘dalits’ (sometimes referred to as ‘untouchable’ people) and bonded laborers in India, and with people in refugee camps in Angola. Their paper, *Playback Theatre: A Creative Resource for Reconciliation*, is a richly documented analysis of how this form of improvisational theatre creates spaces for social dialogue, enhancing the capacities required for reconciliation and, in some cases, contributing directly to conciliatory processes.

In Sri Lanka, Lisa Kois and Iffat Fatima have recently completed two different films that bring into relationship the stories of Sinhalese and Tamil people whose lives have been affected by the conflict. Their documentation project was delayed for a number of reasons, including the tsunami that destroyed villages in several of the areas in which they had collected stories. They remain committed, however, to producing a working paper and a portfolio reflecting on their experiences, and we look forward to adding these to the collection in 2006.

Act VI: Assessing Success: Documenting Knowledge Shared

Although there is much we would change if directing a similar Fellowship program again in the future, in light of the goals we initially established, we consider *Recasting Reconciliation through Culture and the Arts* to be a success. Below, I discuss in turn the extent to which we met each goal.

Strengthening the Fellows

We believe the Fellows were significantly enriched through this educational experience, as evidenced by their working papers and portfolios, their comments at various stages of the Fellowship program and by the projects they are imagining subsequent to it. To some extent, the

success of a project like *Recasting Reconciliation through Culture and the Arts* can be measured in terms of the tangible outputs, such as the number and quality of the working paper and portfolios, the numbers of people who attended related events and the feedback they offer about their usefulness, etc. However, in an educational project, it is important also to assess the impact of the project in terms of participants' development and how they are extending their learning into their communities and their on-going work.

In a recent round of conversations with the Fellows, it has become clear that their participation in *Recasting Reconciliation* continues to have an impact on how they undertake their work and in their plans for the future. For instance, Artist Proof Studio has incorporated Kim Berman's and Stompie Selibe's 'ubuntu' project into the on-going curriculum for first year students and also into other aspects of the institution. In addition to learning the skills required to create linocuts, students entering APS are now introduced to the concept of ubuntu as the organizing principle of the organization, and are required to gather stories illustrating the concept from members of their families and communities. Images from these stories become the basis for collective works of art; conversations about the stories as well as the processes of production become the basis for establishing a culture of reciprocal respect within this community-based organization. APS is also looking for opportunities to share with groups in South Africa and other regions its experiences in transforming organizational culture based on artistic explorations of local conceptions of interdependence. Kim and Stompie explain how they feel the institute impacted their ability to strengthen their work at APS:

Stompie: Working inside Artist Studio brought our engagement to see other possibilities to extend our vision - to be more creative and to hold our own vision. [What we learned during the institute] makes the vision clearer. You are not focused on only one project but on other things. See reconciliation on a lot of levels...using ubuntu.

Kim: This Institute has shaped a philosophical approach for building a new Institution such as APS. Finding Ubuntu as an indigenous concept has been useful in exploring the pieces of reconciliation on multiple levels. I am able to exercise strong leadership and step back from operational issues. Framing activism through the lens of reconciliation has been important in that it has allowed me to interrogate my relationships and expectations. I wish to pursue this application of the context of reconciliation towards my other areas of research projects, (Phumani Paper and Paper Prayers). I do see real effects on the communities I have been working with. I hope they will be lasting through our integration of some of the processes in our curriculum and learning programs.

In New Zealand and in her work throughout the Asia-Pacific region, since the Fellowship program Bev Hosking has been emphasizing the 'social dialogue' potential of Playback Theatre. In order to facilitate deeper intergroup encounters, for instance, she and her Maori colleague Christian Penny have changed the structure of their summer school from two 5-day workshops to one 10-day workshop. In addition, Bev herself has arranged to participate in training programs in the facilitation of intercommunal dialogue. She also has established a relationship with the Australian Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, where she recently co-facilitated a gathering of artists, cultural workers and peacebuilding scholars and practitioners. Because of relationships and networks established through the Fellowship program, peacebuilders working throughout the Asia Pacific region will be studying playback and incorporating it into their work in East Timor, Vanuatu and elsewhere. On a more reflective note, Bev adds,

I have come away from the year knowing that I am interested to work more in partnership with others and am keeping an eye out for opportunities to do this. I am speaking with folk involved in Treaty education work here and looking at how PBT might complement some of that work. I have also made contact with some folk working directly with 'dialogue' in NZ though this is still at a beginning stage. I am very keen to work as part of a project with a few others exploring what we could create together in this area - using aspects of PBT, stories or theatre. Having a research arm to this would be great as I feel that it is important to more thoroughly evaluate the effects of this work. I have thought about PBT from some new perspectives. I know this will have a flow on effect on my training work - (already has) and via this work will also have a flow on effect on the wider PBT community.

Nicholas Djanie, the master drummer from Ghana who has worked in Burundi, Rwanda and South Africa, has taken to heart questions raised during the institute about the extraction of cultural elements from one cultural/geographic location to another. While he is currently performing in *Drumstruck*, an off-broadway production in New York, he is imagining bringing what he has learned about drumming and reconciliation back to communities in Ghana itself. Prior to the fellowship program, he saw himself more as a performer; drumming events were 'gigs'. Now, reconnecting to the deeper meanings of drumming in Ghanaian culture, he understands himself to be a cultural worker and a facilitator of reconciliation.

...first I did this kind of work as my business. If people didn't call me, I didn't necessarily care [to intervene]. But I have seen that I have to be concerned, to care; I have to volunteer, help without knowing what is going on. I have to seek out and help to solve [conflicts]...I appreciate the art in my work and the ability of art to break down barriers and differences. For example I can go to a university where people have more knowledge than me, but I am not afraid. I feel comfortable to do it. You can do it everywhere. Talking to the people...everywhere. Language doesn't matter. They catch up with you with the drum. They get a sense of what I am saying. I appreciate that you can do it. It is easy.

In Cambodia, Ly Daravuth has been imagining how Reyum might coordinate a nationwide, grassroots reflection on the legacy of domination and violence in Cambodia, to take place alongside the UN-sponsored trials. He approached Brandeis to assist him in facilitating an initial inquiry into whether a grassroots project would be welcome and what its contours might be.

The quality of the Fellows' reflections on their own practice, and their commitment to revising and refining their work, confirms our initial assumptions that artists and cultural workers from conflict regions can benefit from educational opportunities emerging from the peacebuilding field.

Strengthening the Field

The working papers and portfolios produced by the Fellows are the most tangible outputs of *Recasting Reconciliation through Culture and the Arts*. They offer rich descriptions of the projects as well as reflections on the ethical dilemmas and questions that have arisen in their work. Distribution of these documents will contribute the voices of practicing artists and cultural workers to current conversations on the meanings of 'reconciliation' and the resources that exist within cultures around the world to facilitate it. They begin to make accessible to scholars and practitioners the reservoirs of practical and theoretical knowledge that are held in communities,

in the Global South and in the processes of practicing artist-peacebuilders – sources of knowledge often overlooked in the literature of the peacebuilding field.

As of this writing, five working papers and three portfolios have been created, original works exploring the intersection of arts, cultural work and peacebuilding theory and practice. They cover a range of artistic media and represent diverse and distinct voices, yet still cohere around a common set of questions and share some of the conceptual frameworks explored in the Brandeis institutes and symposium. They will help launch *Creative Resources for Coexistence and Reconciliation*, a virtual resource centerⁱⁱⁱ, lead to the publication of a book, and have already informed several conference presentations, articles and chapters in other books. We will learn more about the usefulness of these works to others in the field over the next months and years.

Less tangible but perhaps more far-reaching are the insights about art, cultural work and peacebuilding that emerged from the Fellowship, from discussions and reflection at the institutes themselves, and from the ongoing reflection and practice documented in the Fellows' papers and portfolios. Fellows have taken the questions raised, the concepts explored, the ideas exchanged at the Fellowship, and incorporated them into their own intellectual and creative work. As one Fellow notes:

It's not easy to assess the influence of an institute like this. It has made me more self-reflective and self-conscious about what I am doing or what I might choose to do. It has foregrounded the term reconciliation in my mind and I shall continue exploring different meanings and different associations with it. It has become an open-ended term. And I can see it applicable in different contexts. In engaging with my community, friends, those who I might agree with, those I may not agree with, many of those conversations and discussions are there to fall back on and remember and reflect. But one of the most enduring things of the fellowship has been the friendship and the connection which has developed amongst the fellows - a small community which developed while we were there, a community with a common frame of reference - reconciliation through art and culture - which connects us and bonds us.

In drawing together the knowledge that the Fellowship documented, we see what is a beginning rubric, in fact, for designing, implementing and then assessing successful arts and culture-based peacebuilding initiatives (see below).

Suggested Implementation Rubric for Arts & Culture-Based Peacebuilding Initiatives

Locally rooted concepts and traditions can become powerful touchstones for transformation at personal, interpersonal and organizational levels.

- Especially in cultures with strong indigenous drumming traditions, drumming is a source of individual equanimity and group solidarity. It inspires feelings of vitality and relatedness. Drumming experiences can be crafted to bring former enemies into viscerally compelling experiences of interdependence.
- Traditional concepts – such as the South African notion of ubuntu – can become a practical resource for change on many levels, especially if explored through a variety of media such as oral history and visual arts.
- Traditional religious rituals, such as the Pchum Ben ritual of reconciliation with the dead in Cambodia, can provide culturally resonant forms for mourning losses and letting go of bitterness toward both self and others.
- Community art forms developed in the context of one culture can be modified to incorporate elements of local cultures, resulting in more culturally relevant and accessible approaches. A striking example is Playback Theatre, which, as practiced in New Zealand, incorporates elements of Maori culture.

Reconciliation is a long, slow and deep process, perhaps a never-ending journey, itself composed of many sub-processes.

- Attitudes and stories change over months of regular participation in sessions designed to facilitate the sharing of narratives, such as playback theatre or oral history workshops.
- As communities consolidate relationships and build more trust, their members can revisit deeper layers of traumatic memory.
- The skills to handle traumatic memories must be built into the intervention team, either through the training of artist-peacebuilders or through collaboration with others who are such skills.
- Care must be taken not to re-traumatize either the audience, or the artist-peacebuilders themselves.

Community arts organizations and artworks themselves create spaces that are bounded, and therefore, offer unique opportunities for learning and experimentation.

- Art exhibitions can create spaces for positive public engagement with difficult historical legacies. Engagement is often more likely when the expression is understated or indirect.
- Playback Theatre creates spaces for social dialogue and cultivates the capacity to listen. It allows people to engage with their own and each other's stories from multiple perspectives, as tellers, actors, audience members, and discussants.
- Community arts institutions -- such as Artist Proof Studio in Johannesburg and Reyum Institute for Art and Culture in Phnom Penh -- can create spaces of generosity, respect, and trust, even as young people are learning skills that will allow them to earn a livelihood as adults. Art education can become a vehicle for the affirmation of values such as responsibility, accountability and excellence.

Arts programs will have a deeper, more lasting impact on communities if they are sustainable.

- Community cultural institutions, especially those that enjoy and cultivate local leadership and rely on existing webs of relationships, are more sustainable and can respond more readily to emerging issues than outside initiatives.
- Drumming is effective as a resource in reconciliation efforts but it is not sufficient to transform social, cultural and political dynamics. It could be more effective if linked to on-going development and coexistence initiatives.

In terms of disseminating the knowledge to the field, the working papers and portfolios produced as part of *Recasting Reconciliation through Culture and the Arts* have already found their way into undergraduate and graduate courses taught at Brandeis and several other institutions within our immediate network. They are being distributed among community drumming groups in Brisbane, Australia. The insights incorporated within them have been shared in a variety of venues, including the International Network of Museums For Peace annual meeting, the founding symposium of Theatre Without Borders, and at a session of the United Nations conference, Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict. Case studies based on the Fellows' work were presented as examples of community-based development efforts in conflict regions during a Knowledge Fair sponsored by USAID and the World Bank for the network of international donors participating in the Conflict Prevention Network. Now that *Creative Resources for Coexistence and Reconciliation*, a virtual resource center, is on-line, we expect much broader usage of these documents, and intend to gather responses from readers. We also plan to publish some or all of them in a book, with an accompanying cd-rom.

Strengthening Brandeis

The faculty of the Fellowship program, the guest presenters at the related symposium, and students and faculty at Brandeis all have referenced learning from their participation in the program. As directors of the Fellowship, we have learned much about how to facilitate knowledge exchange among actors who work in different contexts and how to incorporate different expressive forms and educational programs in order to engage people who have enjoyed very different levels and kinds of educational opportunities.

The institutional context for this program, an Ethics Center in an American research university, emerged as an important factor in the unfolding of the program. While the university provided the resources and created the space for the gathering of practitioners, it also projected its own needs onto the program. The institution's agenda included not only the development of relationships and resources to give momentum to our inquiry into culture, the arts and peacebuilding, it also needed to include on-campus programming.

In some instances, the Fellows bristled against the demands and expectations of the university, even though these had been made clear in the application process. Several of the fellows reported, on evaluation forms and in feedback sessions, difficulty in managing the transitions from the intimate sessions of our institute to the public sessions, which invited a tone more promotional than reflective. Several felt discomfort at being put up on a pedestal, and several complained about the pacing of the day of workshops with the Brandeis community, which had been scheduled more in alignment with the class sessions and the needs of the Brandeis community than with the comfort and saturation level of the Fellows. Brandeis stakeholders acclaimed these same sessions as models of exemplary programming, highlighting the difficulty of meeting both Fellows' and Institutional goals.

In initiatives that involve relatively well-resourced academic institutions and practitioners working in grassroots institutions in conflict regions, a question remains about how to balance the interests of the institutions with the priorities and needs of the participants and their

communities. The articulation and exploration of this question is one of the unanticipated but useful outcomes of *Recasting Reconciliation through Culture and the Arts*. Directors of projects like these need to assess when and how to acknowledge and respect the agenda of the hosting institution, and when and how to buffer international guests from what can appear to be the insatiable appetite of the university.

We did, however, accomplish learning at the institutional level at Brandeis. We have incorporated our learning from the Fellowship program into new initiatives. For instance, given the opportunity to design a new networking/publication project in the arena of arts, culture and peace, we've decided to focus on one genre, theatre, rather than try to embrace the full range of the arts in a single project. We are discovering that the shared vocabulary and sensitivities of a single genre (as complex and multi-faceted as it is) does in fact facilitate communication among people who come from different regions, speak different languages, enjoy different levels and kinds of formal and cultural education, and are at different stages of their careers and lives. Over time, we intend to create initiatives and publications for each genre; we decided to start with of theatre as the focus following *Recasting Reconciliation* because of the opportunity to collaborate with Theatre Without Borders, an extraordinarily talented and committed network of theatre artists who are committed to international theatre exchange. While it is to some degree possible to generalize about 'the arts and culture' as we did in the *Recasting Reconciliation* project, we are learning that each genre also has unique contributions to make to peacebuilding. Theatre brings the resources of narrative; its practitioners are trained to attend to relationships, both on and off the stage; theatre as a field emphasizes the importance of conflict and its resolution.

We recognize that the impact of the Fellowship program – on the Fellows, their communities and the peacebuilding field more broadly – will be greater to the extent that we are able to sustain supportive relationships with each individual and each organization. This is a challenge, given the structure of our funding, but each time we create opportunities for conversation, new possibilities emerge.

Regarding the Institute structure, finding a balance between many demands was challenging. One particular day of this institute was cited by several of the participants as the most useful. It was a long day, during which we focused on drafts of working papers and portfolios from each of the teams. It was a day that included both aesthetic and intellectual engagement, and a session in which Fellows' developing relationships allowed them to give each other feedback that was both appreciative and critical, and that addressed both the substance of their work and the presentation of it in the portfolios and chapters.

On the other hand, both we and the participants felt that in the two Brandeis institutes, no one level of inquiry –intellectual, emotional, aesthetic– had been undertaken to a satisfying degree. Finding modes of engagement and registers for discourse that were comprehensible and engaging to all the key players was the key pedagogical challenge of this Fellowship program. We had cast a wide net, and only sometimes were able to address the range of sensibilities in a comprehensively satisfying way. Some participants, engaged in work that emphasizes trauma recovery and the emotional work associated with healing, were loathe to let intense feelings remain unattended. Others were made extremely uneasy by tears shed in the setting of the group.

Some, themselves scholars working at the doctoral or post-doctoral levels, wanted to explore our questions in light of a whole range of academic disciplines and theories; as facilitators we did support engagement at the theoretical level, but needed also to structure interactions that were accessible to all, including those with little or no formal education. We were equal to the challenge of bridging differences of genre, culture, experience and education only some of the time. We did learn a great deal about what kinds of issues and problems to address and how to anticipate such challenges, and that must count as one of the positive outcomes of the Fellowship program.

One additional element of the design of the project warrants comment: the fact that Fellows participated as members of two-person teams. We were less than fully prepared for the complexity of leading a group that consisted not only of ten individuals but also of five teams. Each of the teams experienced its own dynamics, sometimes reflecting those of the conflict regions in which they were working. Given the range of the goals of the project, and the limitations on the time we could spend together, we were unable to support each team as thoroughly as we had hoped, especially within the context of the group. This arena does point to an interesting area for future research and programming, however. How do teams of artist-peacebuilders working in conflict regions address the conflicts that emerge within their own team or group? What kinds of structures for support would make their work more effective? Are there lessons to be learned from the creativity with which they approach conflicts among themselves? In the future, unless we are prepared to focus on strengthening teams, we are likely to choose to invite participation from artists and peacebuilders as individuals.

Act VII: Coda

Writing from her position as Country Director for Search for Common Ground in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lena Schlachmijlder, herself a musician, wrote this about a recent initiative. In the midst of an extremely difficult context, filled with violence, corruption and disheartening levels of jealousy and suspicion, she has turned to theatre for approaches to address conflicts and strengthen communities. She writes:

In the midst of all of this, it's easy to feel very small and insignificant in our work to contribute to a lasting peace.... Nonetheless, one thing that has given me hope is the development of participatory theatre as a tool of conflict transformation. I've recruited a brilliant Kinshasa actor, director, creator, artist, who is leading this initiative, with a lot of support from myself. Using mostly Forum theatre techniques, our team of actors are going into communities, listening to the conflicts and problems that they face, and then after a few hours putting together a scenario which they present and then invite the population to intervene and propose solutions to their conflicts. Absolutely fascinating, and through this theatre format we've been able to open up subjects and get diverse and varied participation.

Last week, through a series of coincidences, I invited a Playback actress currently based in Rwanda to come to Bukavu and give a three-day workshop in Playback for this same team of actors. Focus on the necessity to listen, to feel the emotion, and to express things with more and different types of creative representations....She was great, despite not speaking a word of French. The fourth day, they went to a meeting of widows and tested out the technique -- the reaction was really positive and many women were able to tell their stories for the first time, and hear from others their advice and suggestions about how to improve

their situations.

We've just signed a collaboration with the UNHCR and are now going to use these interactive theatre techniques very intensively in South Kivu regarding the current return of 150,000 Congolese refugees from Tanzania. A string of conflicts are inherent in this return, and our role is to try and create various forums of dialogue and conflict transformation (through media, theatre and collaborative committees and joint activities) to try and address these issues with dialogue rather than violence.

As we develop this tool, I hear echoes of our conversations during the Fellowship -- particularly regarding what had interested me in particular -- the need to understand what dimensions of the reconciliation process are present, what need to be facilitated, and when we can actually see that arts are having an impact in moving people towards a place where they can be more open to listening to the other, listening to themselves, and seeking common ground the basis on which solutions for the future will be found.^{iv}

While we have evidence that the Fellowship Program as a whole was successful, the participants expressed many reservations. They objected both to not enough structure and too strict of an agenda. They complained when our inquiry was too negative (in search of dilemmas) and then again later when it was too appreciative, not critical enough. They refused to allow their work to be used in service of theories that did not organically arise out of their practice. They also rarely met the timetables we established together. In all of these challenges, they were teaching us at Brandeis a great deal about John Paul Lederach's 'the artist's way applied to social change^v.' It is not the way of rigid timetables and bureaucratically defined roles. It is a way that allows clarity to emerge from chaos, and leaves space for spontaneity, improvisation, rehearsal, and revision. It demands authenticity and celebrates paradox.

As aspiring artists of peacebuilding practice, we at Brandeis are cultivating the relationships that nourish imaginative responses to the problems of violence, domination and greed. The relationships the Fellowship engendered – among the Fellows and between them and the faculty at Brandeis – are giving rise to new collaborations, some already underway and some still possibilities for the future. Like the Fellows of *Recasting Reconciliation through Culture and the Arts*, we seek to act in ways that create the conditions for hope to be possible.

ⁱ Application material available at <http://www.brandeis.edu/ethics/fellowships/bif/index.html>; scroll to the bottom of the screen.

ⁱⁱ This limitation required us to rule out many talented and interesting applicants, including several working in extremely difficult circumstances who were passionate about the need for training. We hope that when the publication phase of this first Fellowship program is complete that we or others might be able to return to some of the applicants who were not accepted, to offer training programs in their regions.

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.brandeis.edu/go/CreateCoexistence/>.

^{iv} personal communication, October 23, 2005.

^v This is a concept Lederach elaborates on in his book, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*, 2005, Oxford University Press.