INT. DIALOGUE PEACEBUILDING AND STATEBUILDING.

CSO INPUT TO WORKING GROUP MEETING ON POLITICAL DIALOGUE

SIERRA LEONE 4-5 MAY 2011.

"Since we elected them, I have not seen any of our parliamentarians, not even one time. We elected them and raised them up so high we destroyed the stairs between us and them. There is no longer a connection." Citizen in Burundi (public debates in 2007).[i]

"*We can talk to each other but if those in power continue to manipulate us, then how can we be at peace? The problem is that we don't have capacity. So when leaders give us money we continue to only serve their interests. This is the reality, no one can deny it*." Citizen in Timor Leste (public debates in 2007-9)[ii]

"*…at this time we see everyone is speaking about democracy and rights, not of duties; our leaders must make these things a combination of rights, duties and democracy. When (a citizen) is going to do something, he must also feel like he has a duty to be able to live in a democracy*." Citizen in Timor Leste (public debates in 2007-9)[iii]

STATEBUILDING

« …statebuilding is

1. An endogenous process to enhance capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state driven by state-society relations;

2. Founded on political processes to negotiate state-society relations and power relationships among elites and social groups. Statebuilding is intimately connected to the political processes through which social/political relations and power relationships between holders of state power and organised groups in society are negotiated and managed.

Legitimacy aids the process of state building, and is reinforced as state building delivers benefits for people. The state's ability to manage state-society expectations and state-building processes is influenced by the degree of legitimacy it has in the eyes of its population.

3. A process that takes place at all levels of state-society relations. Developing resilience (…) requires territorial administrative integration and effective political processes to manage state-society expectations at all levels of government – from local to national. It is equally important to consider relations between different levels of government. The policy framework that defines centre-periphery relations has an important impact on state-society relations and whether tensions of unity and diversity within state and society can be managed constructively.

OECD/DAC 2008: *State building in situations of fragility. Initial findings.* Paris pp. 1-2

The Conversation on Political Dialogue in the IDPS Working Group.

a. Distinguishing the distinct.

The conversation on political dialogue in a context of peacebuilding and statebuilding will benefit from

- Clear distinction between 'political dialogue' between aid providers and aid recipients, and 'political dialogue' among the 'national' or 'internal actors' (often referred to as 'national dialogue'). This paper focuses on 'national/local dialogue(s)'.
- Clear distinction between 'debate', 'negotiation', and 'dialogue'. All are needed but they are not the same. This paper focuses on 'dialogue(s)'.
- Clear distinction between 'political dialogue' to reduce high tensions and to prevent or stop outbreaks of serious violence (which tends to be more oriented towards the elites), and 'political dialogue' as a regular 'governance' mechanism, which squarely centres on the relationship between 'authorities' and 'people' or 'the state' and 'citizens'.

In societies resilient to conflict turning violent, there is permanent political debate, but also negotiation and dialogue in a multitude of fora. There are no effective states without effective citizens. Resilient societies have strong capacities for permanent political debate, negotiation and dialogue in the form of state and non-state institutions, but also in the form of skills and deeper attitudes and mindsets (a culture of debate and dialogue). This is the real long-term strategic goal. Shorter-term conflict management cannot be done in ways that jeopardize the longer term goal.

b. Connecting the conversations.

Extensive and ongoing –national/local- political dialogue is in our view at the heart of statebuilding, peacebuilding and economic policies and development strategies. That means that this topical conversation needs to be explicitly connected to those on '(external assistance to) capacity development; 'planning' and 'aid instruments'.

c. A word of caution.

The obvious relevance of and enthusiasm for political dialogue in both ongoing 'good' governance and for conflict management and building sustainable peace, cannot makes us ignore some prevalent realities:

- In many societies around the world, there is palpable 'dialogue fatigue' and 'dialogue cynicism'. This is a clear indicator of too many 'dialogues' that are perceived as having produced little or nothing. They probably even have 'done harm' by undermining trust in dialogue.

- We have recently seen large numbers of popular protesters (e.g. in Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain) reject offers of a 'national dialogue', until certain leaders step down. Political dialogue can be used – or be perceived as- a stratagem to gain time in order to protect the status quo.

KEY CIVIL SOCIETY MESSAGES ON POLITICAL DIALOGUE.

1. Political dialogue is central: Extensive and ongoing –national/local- political dialogue is at the heart of statebuilding, peacebuilding and economic policies and development strategies.

2. Only broad-based, inclusive and participatory political dialogue generates legitimacy: Political dialogue may be needed between elites, but the central political dialogue is between the state and society or between elites and the wider population. Broad public debate and inclusive and participatory dialogues are the only option to generate legitimacy for both the process and its products.

The conventional 'Track' thinking is counterproductive and reinforces the problem of disconnects between elites/leaders and populations. The central axis in building resilient societies is the 'vertical' one and not the horizontal one. Political settlements as elite bargains may be required at given moments in time, but ultimately the challenge is for viable (and renewable) political settlements between the state and citizens or between leaders and a population at large. Classical closed-doors, elite-oriented mediation therefore stands in a tense relationship with more open, inclusive and participatory politics that generates trust in state institutions and can provide a counterweight to destructive elite in-fighting.

3. National capacities for constructive public debate, negotiation and dialogue are required within the state but also in society. While it is to be expected that the national parliament, political parties, a National Electoral Commission, a Constitutional Court etc. will serve that purpose, there is widespread testimony that in many countries they are disconnected from the population at large and sometimes captured by elites.

State institutions can be built through technical capacity development. Legitimate and trusted state institutions can only be built with extensive citizen participation and hence through broad public political dialogue. That is all the more applicable to national 'institutions' with a mandate and a role to manage conflict peacefully and through dialogue. Even constitutions can no longer be written by 'technical committee', but require a broad public participation process.

Strong capacities are needed in society (population/citizens) to work with and complement the state in handling conflicts constructively, to negotiate and bargain with the state about rights and expectations but also obligations and duties, and to provide trustworthy platforms for debate, dialogue and negotiation where elite controlled ones cannot be effective.

4. Elite and citizen guarantors for implementation: The cumulative experience with 'mediation' shows the importance of 'guarantors' to encourage the parties to respect and implement their agreements. Such 'guarantors' are often external actors. But it are citizens that are most directly concerned by the outcomes of negotiations and dialogues. Hence the more participatory and inclusive the processes, the greater the likelihood that their outputs will have broad support. That makes implementation easier, and also constitutes a much wider set of 'social auditors' and 'guarantors'.

5. Roles for external actors: People in a political community have to make and sustain their own peace and build their own institutions of governance. Core roles of external assistance actors are to provide methodological support (also through facilitating South-South exchanges), political encouragement and protection of the political space, and financial support to build institutionalized local & national capacities. They can act as reminders (to both state and non-state actors) of the need for 'legitimacy' and additional guarantors of agreements reached. But they need to be very conscious also of their own legitimacy, not only through the power of the purse or in the eyes of the national government, but in the eyes of the wider society.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

To national governments and national leaders:

- Leaders that show themselves to be responsive to all their citizens, and that exhibit strong collaborative and consensus-building styles and skills, will receive popular support and gain a legacy of wide national and international respect while in office and after. Acknowledge that public legitimacy is not gained and sustained solely on having been 'elected'. Therefore come out of the capital city and the elite circles, go around the country and engage with people – not to tell them what they have to think, but to listen and provide them with information and explain.

- Acknowledge that the state on its own cannot create effective, legitimate and trusted institutions and guarantee the absence of violence in the society. Everybody's efforts are needed to achieve that goal. Engage the public in discussion about the expected roles and performance of public institutions, and invite their ideas for how they can do better. Encourage local authorities but also citizen grouping to take active responsibility for conflict management.

- Encourage civil society organisations to create platforms for reasoned public debate but also for constructive dialogue. Encourage them to bring the insights and results from these debates and dialogues to the authorities, but also regularly participate in these debates and dialogues. Invite the public to participate in 'higher/elite' level political dialogues, providing them also the information to be able to so meaningfully.

- Create spaces for public debate and meaningful participation in the formulation of national and local plans and policies, widely publicise them and invite public action in support of their implementation. Do not engage in belated and superficial 'consultations' with a broader public that doesn't have all the information or hasn't had time to prepare.

- As a matter of principle opt for inclusion of all political interests and persuasions, and only exclude reluctantly and exceptionally, and regularly review the position on inclusion/exclusion.

- Look for independent, broadly trusted and skilled conveners and facilitators (not only of 'high standing') of difficult political dialogues, rather than trying to handle and control them yourself. Strengthen your own skills and that of others in the public sector for collaborative and consensus building ways of working.

- Encourage international assistance actors to engage with your parliament, political parties and wider public, about the what and how of their assistance.

To citizens and civil society:

- Develop the mindsets, attitudes and skills that allow you to collaborate with other citizens, and with local and national authorities, including with people outside 'your group' and who may not be 'like-minded'.

- Understand your rights and duties and your responsibility and ability to contribute to legitimate institutions, good governance and conflict prevention, both at local and at national level. Demand information but also take the responsibility to inform yourself.

- Be critical about the performance of public figures and public institutions, but also come up with constructive and practical proposals – and seek to collaborate with the public sector.

- Refuse to engage in belated and superficial 'consultations' when you haven't received all the information or haven't had time to prepare. Specify on what terms you can participate meaningfully.

- Create platforms for reasoned and constructive public debate and for dialogue, and invite members of government, the public institutions and the elite to participate in them on an equal footing. Develop individual skills and institutional positioning and capacities to act as a trustworthy convener and/or facilitator of difficult and sensitive conversations.

- Encourage international assistance actors to engage with your parliament, political parties and wider public, about the what and how of their assistance.

To external assistance actors:

- Acknowledge that resilient societies have strong local and national capacities in both state and non-state sectors for debate, negotiation and dialogue. This relates to leaders, institutions and citizens. This is a matter of institutions, skills, attitudes and mindsets. Supporting the development of such capacities should be your strategic goal.

- Acknowledge that 'one political dialogue' is not the way to go. Multiple political dialogues, of different nature, are often needed and appropriate. They do not need to be closely 'coordinated', as long as they are complementary and deliberately get linked up with each other.

- Move away from the 'technical' approaches that by themselves will never be sufficient to build legitimate institutions nor a society with a strong culture of critical but reasoned debate and strong abilities for constructive collaboration. Provide more and more sustained support for 'civic education' (for people and leaders) and for the development of individual and institutional skills that are critical for conflict management and stronger social and political cohesion: the creation of independent and impartial platforms; facilitation, mediation, consensus-building, participatory-action-research, responsive, transparent and collaborative leadership etc.

- Move away from the short-term and too-often pre-designed 'projects' towards more strategic and more flexible programming. Or understand and treat 'projects' as a mere administrative instrument within the context of a more strategic approach.

- Move away from fast-track 'planning processes' that serve more the needs of donors than of the societies concerned, and undercut the possibility for broad (not just governmental) national ownership and support, because they have not been underpinned by and emerged from broad political dialogue. Do not encourage, support or accept planning and policy decisions that are clearly not underpinned by any broad-based dialogue. If planning frameworks are required in the relatively short-term, then keep them provisional and revise them once broader national debate and dialogue has been possible.

- Use your engagement with the state and with (civil) society, to encourage critical but constructive collaboration between them, rather than antagonism and competition.

- Make a persistent effort to fully understand the national and local dynamics as seen through the eyes of a diverse range of national and local actors. Relevant and effective assistance cannot be provided on the basis of superficial knowledge and understanding.

- Use your potential leverage to protect and promote the political space within which broad, inclusive and participatory political dialogue can take place. Do not use your leverage to promote your own interests, agendas and solutions. Listen to the advice of a diverse set of national and local actors about whether and where you should be more front-stage and more back-stage, and why.

THE ANALYTICAL AND EXPERIENTIAL ARGUMENT.

I. Debate-Negotiation-Dialogue.

In a 'debate' different speakers argue a position and seek to convince an audience of their views – debate can remain adversarial, there is no strong expectation that the debaters will reach consensus.

In a 'negotiation' different parties seek to defend their interests and achieve their objectives but the intent is to bring them to an agreement that is likely to represent a 'compromise' – negotiations are adversarial but convergence is required; negotiations typically are not very public.

In a 'dialogue' the participants need to come to a constructive attitude not only in how they present their views but also in how they actively listen to the other. The end result may still be a compromise or an 'agreement not to agree', but the relationships are not adversarial and there is ability ('capacity') to collaborate with others that have different views.

The roles of the 'conveners' and facilitators/mediators are different in the three instances. This CSO paper focuses mostly on 'dialogue'.

II. Purposes of Political Dialogue.

It may be helpful to differentiate dialogues whose main result is expected to be a 'product', and dialogues that are more directly expected to produce some socio-political change. All of the following can generally take place at a national but also at a local level.

a. <u>Dialogues to generate 'products':</u>

A vision: Dialogues can take place to develop a 'national vision', around which everybody can mobilize. A word of caution however is again required here. Inclusive 'visioning' exercises are perhaps best avoided when it is clear that there are deep divisions and very different views about the desired future. In Lebanon for example, there are probably very different visions about the future, to start with already

about the 'political settlement' say in Lebanon 2025. The past and current communal political settlement is under threat from demographic changes (hence no census in Lebanon, as this would be politically explosive), while there is also a Lebanese constituency for a 'secular' politics i.e. de-communalisation. Other types of profound differences for example may exist around e.g. the role of religion in society, or the role of the private and the public sector (see e.g. the current debate in Britain around the notion of the 'Big Society'), the centralization or federalization of the state etc. Debate and dialogue about these issues may be very necessary – but may not yield a unifying 'vision' that goes beyond vague statements.

An approach adapted to greater diversity may be that of dialogue around 'scenarios'. They allow participants to explore possible scenarios and to build scenarios. A well know example was the 1991 Mont Fleur dialogue in South Africa that brought together participants with very different outlooks around the core question: "*How will the transition go, and will the country succeed in "taking off"?* [iv]

An agenda: Dialogues can take place to develop an agenda for peacebuilding. Broad based discussions and public debates can identify what a population sees as going well and not well in order to sustain the peace, with dialogue then identifying some priority issues that various stakeholders agree to work on together.

Proposals and recommendations: Dialogues in multi-stakeholder working groups can lead to proposals and recommendations on how to solve certain problems or at least move constructively on big challenges. Proposals and recommendations may be addressed to different audiences, may be very practical and directly implementable, or may require translation into legislation and public policy.

A master plan or an action-plan: Broad-based inclusive dialogues may not be the most efficient approach to themselves generate a comprehensive and detailed master 'plan' such as a Poverty Reduction Strategy. They may strongly feed into such plan e.g. by identifying an agenda and priorities, and contribute to the implementation of a plan e.g. by articulating lower-level but more specific 'action-plans' and by generating proposals and recommendations on specific problems and challenges or Sustained dialogue platforms may also act as ongoing sounding boards for monitoring the implementation of the action-plans and for the periodic review and adjustment of the wider design and implementation of a 'master plan'.

b. <u>Dialogues to more directly produce some socio-political change.</u>

All 'dialogues' seek to effect some change among the participants, both personal change (in perceptions, behaviours) and change in the interpersonal relations (greater willingness to encounter the other, to listen to the other, change in tone and choice of words when conversing with the other etc.).

The above mentioned possible uses of 'dialogue', towards a 'product', require a certain degree of 'convergence' and a reasonable 'ability to collaborate' among the stakeholders. That doesn't always exist (as yet). In other types of dialogue, the primary objective is more one of generating a basis for constructive conversation and a basic ability to collaborate across divides.

Peace making negotiation: The intended outcome may be an 'agreement' but the main effort is on getting the key actors to agree to meet and talk and eventually compromise. The facilitation is most likely to one of 'mediation'. The agreement is expected to have a direct socio-political impact (e.g. weapons silenced, recognition of some contenders as legitimate political parties, sharing of power etc.).

Political party dialogue: The intended outcome may be an agreement on 'the rules of the game' ('code of conduct') but a primary reason for organizing political party dialogue may be to halt rising tensions and ward off potential violence. The example from Ghana (2008-2009) offered to the working group is a effective case in point. In Burundi, by contrast, most 'opposition parties' pulled out of the political process before the second round of the 2010 elections, and it is actually civil society actors that are now trying to create and maintain a channel for conversation between the ruling party and the political opposition. In Rwanda, as in Burundi, there is a Permanent Forum of Political Parties, yet questions are raised about the quality of its dialogue and the inability for any genuine political opposition to partake in Rwanda's political life.

New initiatives, new capacities: Many effective dialogues mobilize participants into initiatives of their own. This cannot be planned for (in a logframe or otherwise) but is probably one relevant indicator. The participation of ex-political prisoners in a West Bank dialogue process for example, has generated momentum for them to mobilize both as a group with specific needs and demands but also with a distinct political voice. Participants in the intra-Tajik dialogue (started in 1993) eventually (2000) formed a 'Public Committee for Promoting Democratic Processes', creating pockets where citizens could experience their capacities as political actors to accomplish results that are beyond the reach of governments. [v]

III. Dialogue by itself is a Tool, Not a Strategy.

Dialogue is an instrument for change; it is not the change itself. It can be applied with different audiences and for different thematic challenges.

The critical strategic question therefore is whether a proposed dialogue - rather than other political stratagems (e.g. exclusive decision-making, a consultation but no dialogue, a negotiation, popular mobilization and street demonstrations , imposed conditionality, international isolation etc.) is 'appropriate' in a given conflict-situation ('*appropriateness criterion*').

Critical here is the analysis of the current dynamics of the situation, the actors and the possible short and medium-term scenarios. This also includes the appraisal of whether the timing is ripe, whether there is enough 'political space', and whether key stakeholders can see value in it and would be able and willing to participate.

If dialogue is part of a larger strategy for change, then it becomes important to articulate more explicitly the '*theories of change'*. Why do we believe that certain approaches and actions are likely to produce certain (positive) changes? In dialogues, there are probably commonly used implicit hypotheses of change to do with the effect of facilitated interactions on individuals based on individual and group psychology (transformation in inter-personal relations). More critically important however are the

Lebanon: Track 1 and Track 1.5.

The 'Common Space Initiative' in Lebanon is a remarkable initiative in support of the 'National Dialogue', an elite exercise chaired by the President. As a possible example of a 'Track 1.5' initiative it is sophisticated technically and in its process management. It may be strategically most appropriate as both Lebanese and external peacebuilders have often pointed at the fact that in Lebanon 'reform' or 'change' can only come from the top – given the central role of 'leaders' in a political formula of communal groups that also delineate vital patronage systems. But it cannot be argued that 'civil society' is in any meaningful way involved in it. Lebanese civil society organisations typically do peacebuilding at the grass-roots level, acknowledge that some of them are also communally/politically aligned, and generally complain of their lack of any access to top leadership. The politics of Lebanon is also heavily influenced by external regional and international players, and the same leaders engaged in national dialogue will also use their external allies when it is politically expedient. The 'National Dialogue' supported by the 'Common Space Initiative' may very well be a platform that is helping to avoid renewed escalation into violence in this very tense country. But it remains to be seen whether it can be a sufficient platform for any meaningful change that would begin to tackle some of the root causes of those tensions.

hypotheses of change related to the influence of the dialogue process on the wider socio-political dynamics – hypotheses that are more context and situation-specific (and again refer us back to the central importance of the –ongoing- conflict analysis).

Strategic thinking also implies considering pro-actively the possibility that a particular dialogue may fail – and what to do then?

The challenges that contested states and states in situations of fragility experience are typically too big and embedded to be effectively addressed in *one* political dialogue. Multiple dialogues will be required, often simultaneously, among citizens, within the elite, between citizens and the elite, among regional players etc. These will are likely to be best convened and facilitated by different actors. The task will be 'link' or 'connect' the various processes in order to generate 'good enough' convergence between the multitude of stakeholders.

Central African Republic/DRC. A perceived lack of local, national and regional political dialogues.

"In the LRA affected area, in CAR and in DRC, the government does not take the threat seriously and therefore does not have strategy to address the issue or its outcome. Despite attempt from civil society and community organisations to raise the issue, the response of the government is not adapted and does not pay attention to the point of view of the people and the civil society organisations living in those areas, which are the best informed. There is a lack of dialogue between the communities/civil society and the government representatives.

The political 'dialogue' seems to happen only in opposition, during marches, protests, joint advocacy, when the government is provoked and have to reply. In most cases, the reply from the government is one of denial to admit its weaknesses. In January 2011, a nun was killed by the LRA. The church and civil society organised a protest in Dungu and Isiro which was followed by several local businesses. The objective of the protest was a reaction to the killing of a nun, to raise the issue of LRA and push the government to take it seriously. The government's response has been a denial of the threat posed by the LRA, arguing insecurity was provoked by the local population and underestimating the number of LRA fighters currently present in north eastern DRC."

Civil society feedback on recent questionnaire on political dialogue (2011).

If there is a belief that 'dialogue' can add significant value, then a series of broad strategic questions need to be addressed:

a. Inclusion and public participation.

- ***Whose political voices?*** 'Politics' is not only the concern of 'politicians' but also of citizens. Some groups have channels for their political voice, others not at all – how can the latter express themselves and take part? Sometimes a stakeholder group (a 'sector of society') may not yet be ready to partake in a broader dialogue – intra-group dialogue may first be needed to gain the necessary knowledge about issues and develop a common position, that then can be taken to an inter-group dialogue.

VARIOUS- COMPLEMENTARY- EFFORTS IN BURUNDI.

1. ***The Burundi Leadership Programme*** started in 2002 as an innovative and highly relevant initiative. As an evaluation highlighted

"*The BLTP mainly seeks to affect two of the variables that cause mistrust to be prevalent in a society: stereotypes and lack of interaction. This is simultaneously its strength and its weakness. The strength is evident: few other programs are addressing these causes of mistrust and in the absence of progress on them, the necessary institutional changes may never materialize. The limit is equally evident: as the BLTP does not (and cannot) address the other factors that cause mistrust, key variables that condition the changes it seeks to promote are outside of its control. The participants may have made progress on overcoming some of the causes of mistrust, but as the other causes may still be in place, major counter-pressures may remain at work. In addition, they may have made these breakthroughs, such as they are (they evidently vary from person to person, and it is impossible to measure them), between themselves, but not towards others who were not present at the workshop –and vice versa. All of that, of course, is exactly Burundi's reality, and change will always be slow. On the other hand, the new incentives for collaboration and compromise created by the new power-sharing dynamic we discussed above, as well as the other policies and projects by the international community, try to impact some of the other variables (especially 5 and 6) but neglect the ones the BLTP directly addresses. In short, we believe that the BLTP covers a neglected, yet important, area in the current transitional process of Burundi. It cannot control all relevant variables, but neither can other projects or actions. Its contribution is potentially important and necessary although insufficient by itself –a fact that is also true for most other activities and projects.*"

Uvin, P. & S. Campbell 2004: The Burundi Leadership Training Programme. A prospective assessment. Bujumbura

2. ***Cadres de Dialogue.***

In the years 2007-2009 Burundians also benefitted from the 'Cadres de Dialogue' or 'Dialogue Forums'. Initially designed as a mere 12 month project, with UN PBF funding, it actually ran for 25 months. The government set up a 'National Forum', under whose umbrella four dialogue and consultation frameworks operated: one for national and local elected officials, one for political parties, one for the media, and one for non-state actors (encompassing civil society, women's associations, private sector, trade unions and religious groups). The process generated peacebuilding oriented action plans(relatively general and not in a form that allows for clear implementation), but more importantly contributed to a 'culture of dialogue' and strengthened the capacity of Burundian facilitators. An evaluation suggests that the process contributed to the creation of an electoral law by parliament that satisfied all parties, to the effective functioning of the National Independent Electoral Commission the head of which was a former facilitator of the Dialogue Forums, and to the creation of a Permanent Forum for Political Parties. Critiques of the Dialogue Forum suggest that if would have been better designed as an overall programme and process that informed the other PBF projects rather than a $ 3 million project on its own, that if failed to consult directly with the population, and remained to disconnected from the real political dynamics and processes in the state institutions.

Campbell, S. L. Kayobera & J. Nkurunziza 2010: Independent External Evaluation. Peacebuilding Fund projects in Burundi. Bujumbura, Gov. of Burundi and UN pp. 143-148

3. ***CENAP Participatory-action-research inspired 'national dialogue'.***

More or less at the same time in 2007, the Centre d'Alerte et de Prévention de Conflicts, a Burundian civil society entity, had initiated a long term programme. It spent the first 10 months listening to Burundians everywhere in the country and from all walks of life, on how they saw the situation and what they thought were major obstacles or challenges to consolidate peace. The initial consultations and debates went through geographical and thematic focus groups. Emerging 'findings' were then taken to each of the provincial centers (and authorities) for additional perspectives. The results were consolidated in both a report that constituted a virtual 'state of the nation' collected from the views of over 2400 Burundians[1]. It was also accompanied by a video documentary where Burundians could be seen and heard 'as they expressed themselves' directly. This was then presented in the autumn of 2008 to a 'National Conference' event that was well attended not just by urban elites and provincial authorities, but also by ordinary Burundians. The discussions at that event led to a mandate for CENAP to create multi-stakeholder working groups tasked with generating consensual proposals and recommendations on how to tackle some major challenges identified as 'priorities': the prevalence of weapons among the population; persistent high levels of unemployment; memory of the past, the record of history and reconciliation; and the long-standing challenge of in Burundi of managing electoral victory and defeat. The CENAP programme continues, with its highly skilled facilitators and researchers.

CENAP 2008: Défis à la Paix Durable. Autoportrait du Burundi, Bujumbura.

Burundi is at the moment again in a political crisis, triggered when the opposition parties pulled out of the elections after their significant defeat in the first round. Several top opposition leaders have gone in hiding or left the country, and there are strong suggestions that some may be contemplating taking up arms again. The National Electoral Commission nor the Permanent Forum for Political Parties have not been able to avoid this development. The point here is not a discussion of Burundian politics, nor to invalidate the BLTP programme or the Cadres de Dialogues project.

The point is to confirm the observation in the BLTP evaluation that changing a political culture cannot be done by one project – or even a medium to longer term process- alone. It will require a multiplicity of potentially complementary efforts that –over significant amounts of time- hopefully will begin to show cumulative impact. Meanwhile the international community no longer has the same interest in Burundi as before, and the Burundian government is more assertive about what it sees as the appropriate role for the international actors – and its limits. That clearly points at the strategic importance to invest in strong national (and local) capacities for facilitation, in state institutions but also in society (not just 'civil society' in the narrow sense of the word).

b. The nature of the dialogue(s).

- ***Will this be a 'formal' and/or an 'informal dialogue'?*** (This is not to be confused with 'Track 1' and 'Track 2' dialogues). In 'formal dialogues' the stakes are higher, the issues more politicized and participants more likely to defend their views and positions. The advantage is that results of a formal dialogue may be more 'binding'. Informal dialogues are not binding, but that can also be a strength. Participants may find it easier to open their minds and listen to perspectives and positions of others; collaboration and convergence may be easier. Often having both does not amount to duplication: progress in the informal dialogue can feed into the formal one, and if the formal dialogue stalls or falls apart, the informal one may remain a platform where are key stakeholders can continue to meet and work together. How will formal and informal dialogues maintain a useful separation and yet be linked?

GUATEMALA. Ongoing inter-sectoral dialogue in informal spaces.

Since 2000 civil society in Guatemala has provided platforms for inter-sectoral policy-dialogue on various aspects of 'democratic security' (role of the military, police and intelligence services in a democratic society; national security policy and the creation of a national security council and its relationship with key state institutions, prevention and rehabilitation policies to complement the heavy handed repression of youth gangs and youth violence etc.). These platforms bring together non-state actors with actors from the civilian and security branches of government. Over the past 11 years, governments have come and gone, political party negotiations and dialogues have been held, but analysis and evaluation shows that many state reforms and policy developments have been incubated in these sustained, informal problem-solving dialogues.

- ***Will this be a 'dialogue project' or a 'dialogue process'?*** Many dialogues are designed as 'projects', with a certain time frame and a defined level of funding. This generates a pressure to have some output or outcome. That can be stimulating but also counterproductive. In reality, dialogues move with anthropological and political time, not with administrative time. Individuals, stakeholder groups, societies as a whole, are not immediately ready to discuss the most sensitive issues early on. It is only some significant experience with dialoguing and collaborating on important but less sensitive issues that eventually generates the trust (in the others but also in the process) that allows the most contentious and sensitive issues to come on the table. When this will happen cannot be predicted or prescribed from the outset. Longer-term processes (and hence sustained 'capacities for dialogue facilitation') are often required. These can also play a meaningful role with regard to the implementation of 'agreements' reached or 'legislation' and 'public policy' adopted.

  If there is a strong 'presence' of one or more external actors, then the relative open-endedness or not of a dialogue can influence on whether local/national participants will feel encouraged to 'take responsibility '(i.e. 'ownership') for it or not. Certainly an externally defined time horizon will create suspicion that the process serves more an 'external' agenda.

Longer-term and more open-ended dialogues however can lose momentum and direction, which has to be guarded again. They also need to remain attentive to important moments and opportunities when they need to come out and contribute and be ready to do so – and not remain engrossed in their own process.

The Burundi example shows how the UN Peacebuilding Fund resources were used for a 'Cadre de Dialogue' initiative with a given time frame (initially a mere 12 months, although in practice it extended for 25 months). But it ended before the 2010 elections that generated very significant new tensions, and hence was no longer available as a platform. By contrast, the Centre d'Alert et de Prévention des Conflits since 2007 creates and facilitates platforms for a much longer process, obviously with important milestones along the road. Building on the trust and the inclusive networks of contact it has acquired throughout society (geographical, vertical between the elite and the population, and across the spectrum of political position), CENAP now has been called upon to try and create a channel for communication between the ruling party and the political opposition.

c. Learning from the national/local experiences.

- What can and must be learned from previous and current 'dialogue' initiatives and experiences in this society? It is rare to be the first political or national dialogue initiative. National actors that have been participants in or fairly close observers of past and current initiatives probably have interesting perspectives on their relative strengths and weaknesses. This is a vital source of learning before designing a new initiative, not in the least because many of those that participated in past dialogue will participate also in this new one!

IV. Preparing for and Managing a Dialogue Process.

Detailed guidance on this topic can be found in various manuals such as the 'Democratic Dialogue. A handbook for practitioners' or 'Fostering Dialogue across Divides'. We will concentrate here only on some key attention points and highlight some dimensions for the Working Group.

a. Convener.

There is broad agreement that generally conveners of dialogues best be people and entities that can be trusted by all who need to take part in the dialogue. That means they need to be perceived as 'impartial' and 'equi-distant' from all players. In situations with serious political division therefore, it is typically not the best idea that a political dialogue is convened (and facilitated) by the 'government' – or by the opposition.

There is also a fairly common belief that conveners need to be high-profile individuals that are widely respected and seen as 'consensus figures'. That may be the case but should not close the eyes to other options. Many effective dialogues are convened and carried by low-profile individuals and entities (often belonging to civil society in the broad sense of the term), who however have the backing of a broad

spectrum of more prominent individuals (who can make up the 'Board' of the institution or be an 'Advisory Group' of the dialogue etc.), and who gain greater trust over time through the persistent quality of the service they provide. This is important because there will be situations were no 'high profile consensus figure' acceptable to all, can be found, or where qualifying individuals are not willing or able to take up that role. And it can be precisely the lower profile that makes that those who need to participate do not feel too threatened or suspicious from the outset.

Sometimes there can be a 'convening group', not one individual but perhaps 3 or 4 that together inspire respect and trust in different sections of society.

When it comes to 'mediation' for a political agreement, the '3th party' (convener and 'mediator') is often external players (international, regional). Negotiated agreements also benefit from 3th party 'guarantors'. For national and local 'dialogue' among the people of a given society, the preference is for national actors to be the conveners and facilitators. They have the advantage of understanding the local language(s) but ideally also the hidden clues and meanings of communications, and the historical references and experiences that consciously or unconsciously may shape the participants' attitudes and behaviours. They still can benefit from 'methodological support' from external actors. Conveners by no means have to be people with past or current political power (be it linked to modern state politics, or derived from 'traditional' authority). There are excellent conveners to be found among 'concerned citizens' – who have been exposed to the circles of power- but who have no past political trajectory and are not suspected of using the dialogue for their own future political benefit. In some instances well known and widely respected cultural figures have played such role.

b. Participation and Inclusion.

The guidance regarding 'inclusion' in mediation and in dialogue may not be the same. For dialogue the general principle should be that 'all stakeholders' have to be included. That means all those 'that matter' because they have the power or influence to block a 'result', but also those who may not have much power or influence but whose lives are affected by the issue being discussed. The latter should be included not just out of a moral concern, but also because they typically have a very relevant understanding of issues and problems as they manifest themselves in day-to-day reality, and an appreciation for the likelihood that a proposed remedy will work or not. In other words, they have valuable knowledge to bring to the dialogue.

Where differences of opinion tend to emerge is on the 'how' to bring in various stakeholders. That includes reservations about bringing in players that are deeply disliked and seen/portrayed as 'obstructive' or even 'destructive', and more practical questions of how to bring in effectively larger numbers of people. There are no standard formula although certainly plenty of experiences. More options become available when we get away from the notion that 'everyone should be participating in the dialogue with everyone else and from the outset'. It is possible to envisage intra-group before inter-group dialogues, indirect 'communications' rather than direct face-to-face dialogue, low key informal dialogues before going into more formal dialogues etc. The facilitators of the dialogue process (contrary to a mediation process) – particularly one designed as a longer-term process rather than a shorter-term

project, do not have to come up with the solutions themselves: they may ask various actors how and when they think they could connect to a broader dialogue, and allow for different rhythms and modalities.

When it comes to bringing in 'more people', conversations tend to stumble over the question of 'representation'. This is unhelpful – particularly if the dialogue managers believe that they have to pick the 'representatives'. A better strategy is to identify (and validate) sectors of society with a certain common perspective or interest (they can have different views but e.g. share a residential area and hence have a common stake in what happens to their locality) and go through a process with them that generates some key criteria for those participating in a dialogue and their expectations of transparency and accountability from those participating, and then let them choose the individuals. A network of focus groups whose members do not directly participate in the core dialogue can become very useful here: they are a source of insights and ideas, but also a sounding board for what is being discussed among the participants in the core dialogue. Such 'dialogue infrastructures' exist for example in Guinea Bissau, Rwanda. Other ways of connecting core participants in a dialogue (and even in mediation processes) to the 'wider public' is public opinion polling, but also 'participatory polling'. [vi] Another tool of connecting 'dialogues' on the same or related issues taking place in different locations and with different participants, is video. With participant agreement, dialogues sometimes can be filmed and the footage lightly edited or turned into a shorter or longer documentary. Seeing and hearing others dialoguing about the same issue somewhere else is far more powerful than having to rely on a verbal or written record.

c. Setting an –evolving- agenda.

Effective dialogue seeks to create growing responsibility among participants for the process, and hence potential ownership over the results. This raises the question of who sets the agenda? Allowing the participants to define the agenda and the key questions is a powerful step in that direction. Obviously there will not be an immediate consensus, but facilitated dialogue (rather than 'negotiation') about the agenda can be the first 'dialogic' experience. As mentioned before, a society, or important groups in a society, may not be ready to discuss the most difficult and sensitive issues right away. It is perfectly legitimate to then dialogue about other important issues, and wait until the participants are ready. That means that the agenda can and must evolve. Again, all of this is easier in a more open-ended dialogue process than in a more predefined and often predesigned 'dialogue project'.

d. Facilitating dialogue in safe spaces.

Very strong facilitation skills are required, both of dialogue events and of sustained dialogue processes. Facilitators like conveners have to be able to gain and maintain the trust of all participants. Local/national facilitators are in principle best placed to adapt facilitation styles to local habits of communication. One key challenge will be to handle the asymmetries between participants: asymmetries in power, in knowledge about the topic, and in confidence to express oneself and argue ones views. This applies to local and to national level dialogues. Both in the facilitation of the event and in the broader management of the dialogue, it will be important to protect the spaces for dialogue as

'safe'. Local level debates and dialogues can generate animosities that can have local level repercussions for some of the participants. And frank debate can also put participants at risk in a national level climate that has difficulty hearing very different and critical views. Here the convener(s) and facilitators have a role to play, but they also need to have ensured sufficient support from politically influential people, to avoid or halt repercussions against participants.

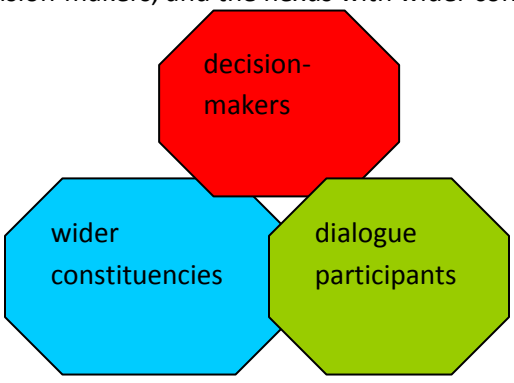
e. Injecting 'knowledge'.

Some dialogues focus heavily on the relationships between the participants, who each come with their own views, experiences, perspectives and ideas. Other dialogues consciously seek to inject 'knowledge' into the conversation. The injection of knowledge is both tactical and substantive. It is substantive because it generates a deeper understanding of an issue that is perceived as a 'problem'. That deeper understanding may take different forms: more factual information, insight into what key stakeholders that are not part of the dialogue think about it, insight in 'solutions' that have been proposed or tried before and apparently haven't had much effect. It is also tactical because it helps to de-personalise and de-politicise the conversations. Certain facilitators, drawing on participatory-action-research principles, invite the participants in the dialogue to identify where they think they need more 'knowledge' about the topic in order to be able to discuss it properly.

f. Strategic management and communications.

To be able to attend to difficult and sensitive issues, dialogues (like mediation efforts) cannot be constantly under the spotlight. On the other hand, to be able to generate broader support and buy-in for both the analysis of the challenges and the products generated by the dialogue, many others who are not directly participating, need to be regularly communicated with.

The strategic management of a dialogue process therefore requires the *simultaneous management of three critical dynamics*: that within the dialogue group(s), the nexus between the dialogue group and the decision-makers, and the nexus with wider constituencies or the public at large.



Too often, communications and dissemination strategies find themselves a poorly funded and supported aftermath to the actual dialogue exercise that of course could only involve a limited number of people. The dialogue them may have a profound transformational experience on its participants and generated very relevant and promising outputs. But it turns out to have taken place within a somewhat artificial 'bubble', disconnected from the wider socio-political dynamics and trends.

To avoid that, there have to be regular communications with opinion makers, decision-makers and their close advisors, and also with a wider 'public', so that none of them are 'surprised' by the results of the dialogue, but also able to disregard it because they had no connection at all to it.

The Geneva Initiative: success in output, failure to communicate, failure to impact??

The 'Geneva Initiative' was a non-official process (2002-3) of encounter, dialogue and negotiation between a group of fairly prominent Israelis and Palestinians who had been actively involved with formal peace processes. It resulted in late 2003 in a model 'Permanent Status Agreement' that addressed all the critical issues. In that sense it had a highly successful output. However very quickly there was a severe backlash from many Palestinians and Israelis alike, because significant sectors in both societies had not been involved at all in the process, not even indirectly, and were unprepared for the serious compromises that are inevitable. Participants in the Geneva Initiative conceded that they had failed to think about a serious communication strategy already during the process. Since then the Geneva Initiative remains active and is trying to communicate more effectively with a broader public, but finds itself largely overtaken by other dynamics (deep political split among the Palestinians, shift to a less compromising right in Israeli politics etc.). Other actors have designed processes that seek to engage those sectors of Israeli and Palestinian society that historically have been excluded from peace processes, but have shown to have enough political power to be able to block their conclusion or implementation.

This observation supports the fundamental argument for 'inclusion'. Where this is not (yet) possible, the strategic management of the dialogue needs to pro-actively consider who might be opposed and generate a backlash.

V. Implementing Results of a Dialogue.

The challenge of implementation of the results of a 'negotiation' and of a 'dialogue' generically depend on how inclusive the processes have been and how extensive and substantive the communications about the process while it took place. 'Political will' cannot be left only in the hands of politicians – political will legitimately also resides with citizens. In short, the more exclusive and discreet or 'secretive' the process, the harder the implementation may be, and the more inclusive the process and the wider the public support for its results, the more likely implementation may happen. This relates directly to the 'strategic management' of the process (see above).

Mediators face the challenge of getting public support for agreements that may have been reached behind closed doors and/or with people whose power derives more from the gun than from public legitimacy. They also face the challenge of gaining and sustaining 'political will' from the primary participants for agreements that may have been reached with some arm-twisting. 'Agreement reached' therefore is the start and not the end of the journey. It makes eminent sense to follow agreement with a sustained dissemination and information campaign (which will generate public debate), to fairly quickly underpin 'agreements' with sustained dialogues, and to allow the more inclusive dialogues to influence new political agreements (e.g. when elections lead to a new elite configuration).

As mentioned earlier, the tangible outputs of dialogues can be a vision, proposals and recommendations, and/or an action plan. A vision is an aspirational and inspirational goal. Approaching the vision (rather than its 'implementation') will depend on how strong a consensus there is on the core vision, and particularly on the pathways to get there. A vision may very well remain partially unrealized and therefore 'aspirational' although people will want to see meaningful improvements in core areas of the vision that also respond to their demands (e.g. a society where everyone has access to primary and secondary education, and to preventive and curative health care).

The implementation of proposals, recommendations and an action-plan will also partially depend on their quality, and partially on their relative ease. Some dialogues generate brief and general proposals and recommendations that are not addressed to any particular audience. Other dialogues generate proposals and recommendations that are very extensively thought and worked through: the dialogue participants have examined the relevant legal references, the existing institutional set-up and official mandates but also the actual functioning of institution and other past or current proposals and recommendations; their proposals and recommendations are addressed to specific target audiences, and have been worked through in the necessary detail to make them already that more 'actionable'.

At the same time things that are relatively easy to implement tend to get done quicker ('low hanging fruits') and can provide a useful psychological boost. But more significant changes in contexts of statebuilding and peacebuilding typically are multifaceted and hence more complex, therefore much harder and will take significantly more time and energy. They will also start competing with other 'priorities'.

Sustained support to promote the 'acceptance' of proposals, recommendations and action-plans will be required, as well as sustained support for (monitoring off) their implementation. This may have to come from dialogue participants but also from committed figures that are influential in political and policy circles (nationally and locally).

Complex, but more transformative, proposals and recommendations generated by dialogues will often take significant amount of time to be implemented, several years not being unusual. If this is the expectation, then disappointment should not arise if there seems to be little progress after a year. We also need to recognize that situations change and that certain proposals and recommendations generated at some point through a dialogue process, may simply lose relevance and come to belong to the past.

IV. National Capacities for Political Debate, Negotiation and Dialogue.

Resilient societies (which is not the same as 'strong states') require a multitude of national – and local-capacities for political debate and for negotiation and for constructive dialogue.

a. Political parties, parliaments, national electoral commissions etc.

Political parties should be primary vehicles for political debate and dialogue, both internally and between them. The same holds for parliaments. There is a significant role for peer-to-peer assistance e.g. through the Interparliamentary Union or the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, among others.

Yet we know from experience that, in more fragile and less resilient societies, they often are not and are more a vehicle for accessing power than for representing citizens. Political parties do not always have a real programme, and cannot be assumed to be internally 'democratic'. We see multiple examples of electoral commissions that are neither really independent, nor 'neutral' and even if they are they may not have enough leverage and authority. This is not to argue against strengthening their capacities, but a reminder to correctly asses, in every given situation where it is felt a political dialogue could bring added value, where the potential conveners and facilitators can be found.

The deep disappointment and distrust among citizens in these institutions, and in the justice system, is palpable once they can speak out.

Citizen voices from Burundi. [vii]

> "*I often overheard people from different political parties arguing in cafes. They say: 'We are going to massacre you at the elections!' They don't have bad intentions-it's just that the population understands democracy and elections means 'to kill each other'. Decision-makers didn't take the time to explain to the population, especially to the grassroots, that democracy is a war of ideas and different visions of society, and not an armed conflict*."
>
> "*And after all, what good is multi-partism? One morning you wake up and there is a new political party, then another. I was listening to the radio and I heard what I think was an advertisement: "Vote for me! I will give you all the milk you want!" Fountains of Fanta will come from the ground. D we really think he can make foundations of Fanta come from the ground? Or that he will have enough milk to give to all of us? Why are all these political parties always stirring up trouble among us? I would like if after the elections, once the people vote for their party, and that party wins, all of the other losing parties are disbanded. Because these parties divide us*."
>
> "*When you commit a crime, its 'democracy'. When you do this or that, it's 'democracy'. This 'democracy', is it more important than the laws that are supposed to punish the criminals? This 'democracy', it sounds like a place where criminals can take refuge.*" (The man is actually commenting on 'human rights' and how an ineffective and sometimes corrupt police and

judiciary mean that on the grounds of 'innocence until proven guilty', in practice most accused never go to court and are quickly released. Similar complaints abound in other countries.)

Citizen voices from Guinea Bissau.[viii]

> "*We have more than sixty parties. Each party thinks it is better than the others. When a party wins the elections, instead of forming alliances with other parties to work together, they seek to destroy them*." (p. 31). The person exaggerated perhaps intentionally to make the point about the proliferation of political parties without real grassroots foundations. At the time there were actually 34 parties.
>
> "*The rigor of justice is only for the poor. When a wealthy person is arrested and protected, there is a flurry of phone calls that ends up getting their freedom*." (p. 27)

A citizen in Liberia.[ix]

> "*…because we don't have money, those with money are coming and taking our lands from us, you see! When you take the case to court you have to carry money. If you don't have the money, how will you talk*?" (p. 40)

A citizen in Timor Leste.[x]

> "*Timor today inclines toward following western democracy, but Timor itself has a very beautiful democracy called nahe biti. For old men like me, from the 1940s, 50s and 60s, there was never just one person making decisions on issues but rather many were involved in taking decisions to resolve problems. I think this is perhaps the democracy for Timor. However, our country has decided to close its eyes to our traditional values and follow democracy models from other countries."*

Civil society feedback to a recent consultation in the context of the IDPS confirmed this. Following are main responses to the question: Should your parliament be the primary forum for political dialogue? If not, why not? Does it play that role in practice? If not, why not?

Philippines/Colombia: Parliament needs to be involved in one way or another (to strengthen democratic institutions), but it is also one of the less trusted institutions and may therefore need to be complemented by a non-partisan external group.

West Africa: the role of parliamentarians in political dialogues is a critical issue as they are representatives of the people. Yet in most cases they do not have the right capacities to make informed contributions. Information on dialogue processes are not passed on to them on time or they do not have time to even read the issues before the meetings! No, Political dialogue should go beyond the parliament. There is a need to have several events that should bring out the voice of the citizens in a political dialogue. Some parliamentarians live in the cities and do not deliberate with their constituencies and cannot carry the voice of the people all the time.

Liberia: No, I don't think so, given the fact that the necessary space for freedom of expression cannot be permitted in the parliament, due the fact that there are various rules and regulations governing the house.

I think a political dialogue should create the space for individuals, including stakeholders to freely identify gaps and discuss issues affecting the country's political environment that could be hindering growth and development.

DR Congo: is such a large country that representatives of the people in Kinshasa tend to be isolated from the population. Therefore the parliament is disconnected with the realities of the people. Due to a weak opposition and the fact there has not been local elections, much of politicians at the provincial and local level have been chosen by the president or members of its parties and therefore are obliged to him in a way, reducing the possibility of real dialogue.

The quite sudden introduction of multi-party democracy, often under pressure or encouragement from outside, in societies with significant fault lines and without strong networks and institutions that create bridges across divides, has often been conflict-inducing rather than conflict-reducing. Multi-party politics after all is a mechanism to regulate the competition for power – and it only functions well in environments where there are many other formal and informal mechanisms that create connections and cohesion. Support to political parties and to national parliaments is definitely relevant – but should not exclude nor distract from support to a multitude of other 'mechanisms' and 'institutions'.

b. <u>The quality of leadership.</u>

There is a growing recognition of the importance of 'leadership' for peacebuilding and statebuilding. Reference has already been made to the Burundi Leadership Training Programme. In many countries that are tense and/or have experienced significant amounts of violence, feelings about 'leaders' tend to be quite pronounced. Some get fierce loyal support from some quarters (because they are a source of patronage or seen as the genuine protectors of a group's legitimate rights), but in many places (including so-called 'advanced democracies') there tends to be fairly widespread distrust and disaffection with national leaders. Some such expressions:

> Citizen in Burundi: "*We don't trust the authorities because the authorities don't follow the law. We are in a democracy, the citizen sees and hears everything. He says to himself: 'Why should I follow the law, while the authorities break them*?" [xi]
>
> Citizen in Guinea Bissau: "*The President steals. The Governor steals. The minister and even the Prime Minister steals. The administrator steals. Who will not steal?*" (p. 52) The person is referring to prevalent corruption.[xii]
>
> Citizen in Liberia: "*When development funds are provided by the Government, the country's legislative caucus, including the senators and legislators, eat the money. For this reason, there are neither roads no any form of actual development in this place…we are appealing to them to stop eating our development funds.*" (p. 36)[xiii]
>
> Citizen from Timor Leste: "*There was very little coordination within the leadership during the 2006 crisis. Our leaders delivered different messages when seeking solutions to some of the problems that we faced. Leaders created confusion during that crisis and today they still continue using the same pattern and therefore make existing problems worse and bigger and more difficult to resolve*." (p. 36)[xiv]

There has been recognition that some of the problems in contemporary Timor Leste result from the legacy of the history of resistance on leadership styles. A nation-wide consultation (2007-9) by the Timorese civil society organization "Centre for Studies of Peace and Development" created opportunities for ordinary Timorese in all 13 districts to express their views on how they saw the state of their country at that time, and what they taught were major challenges to sustainable peace. In all over 900 people participated in the district level consultations and debates, and over 300 took part in 3 regional conferences that followed. The findings were then structured in a report, but also accompanied by a video documentary were Timorese could be seen and heard to speak directly, and brought to a National Conference in Dili in August 2009. This brought together over 200 Timorese from all walks of life, including the ruling coalition and the political opposition but also some 130 people that had come from the districts. The discussions and debates led to the agreement to give CEPAD a mandate to pursue targeted work on four identified priorities. Among them: the promotion of individual and party interests over the national interest which compromises the integrity and inclusiveness of the state institutions; corruption, collusion and nepotism; and the history of the resistance and the occupation (some of the deep seated tensions relate to the different roles of the current leadership during that period, and frustrated claims among a number of ordinary Timorese for recognition of their roles and contributions).

It would be unfair however to simply point the finger at 'leaders'. There is a grain of truth in the saying that 'a society gets the leaders it deserves'. As mentioned by the evaluator of the Leadership and Communication Capacity for National Renewal (LCCNR) programme in Timor Leste:

> "*The central problem is that leadership training programs build up a skill "supply" that is most often not matched by societal "demand", which basically means there is no reward for altering one's behavior. In Timor, as in many post-conflict places, a good leader is equated with someone who has a "strong hand", someone who takes unilateral decisions and is not afraid to push them through; someone who quells any opposition; someone who holds power, not shares it. It is an understanding of leadership framed by a history of military resistance. In such an environment displaying "soft" leadership skills does not get much societal recognition, nor improve ones power-base.*
>
> *To be truly effective on a systemic level, post-conflict leadership training programs need to be part of a two-pronged approach that, while building up leadership skills also builds up societal understanding and demand for participatory leadership approaches. Only by simultaneously generating and matching supply and demand can such a program become an important engine for societal change*." [xv]

Leadership for Peacebuilding – Collaborative and consensus building styles and skills.

Predominant leadership styles in divided societies are competitive. There is fierce competition for power and for control over the resources of the state. Intra-elite infighting is a significant factor in many persistent situations of fragility and conflict.

> *When did you hear that in Senegal ministers are changed the way you change your shirt, the way we do in Guinea Bissau? If the prime minister works well in a country, we should let him stay at his post. Same thing for the President. But there is no stability when whoever sits in the seat of power gets it pulled out from under him. Every minister knows he will not last in his post so everything he gets he takes home with him*." (p. 32) Citizen in Guinea Bissau

The introduction of multi-party democracy, in the absence of the deeper structural networks and cultures of collaboration across divides, can simply offer no more than a new channel for fierce competition. The persistent in-fighting with successive military coups and multiple political assassinations in Guinea Bissau actually started after the introduction of multi-party politics in 1994.

Four challenges to overcome in preparing people to exercise leadership for peacebuilding are:

- The predominant idea about the 'charismatic individual': Understandings of leadership across a spectrum that at one end posits the 'charismatic individual' and at the other end 'distributed leadership'. Distributed leadership acknowledges that in any real life situation leadership can and often must come from a variety of 'locations', in other words that leadership is required at various levels and in different sectors and hence from different people. The prevalent understanding however remains that of the charismatic individual, the super-hero who by virtue of exceptional personal qualities and skills can resolve everything and therefore of course is also bound to lead. Such self-image tends to give rise to the belief that 'without me this place will descend into chaos'. In reality, if that happens, it is more because no other leadership has been allowed to exist and flourish for a long time. The vacuum has been self-created.

- The equation of 'leaders' and 'leadership': People at the top may be expected to 'lead' but not all of them have effective 'leadership qualities and skills'. Leadership is about being able to project an inspiring vision, and signal a pathway to get there, generate enthusiasm and motivation, build effective teams and enable others to use their skills and develop themselves, project moral integrity and an ability to handle the inevitable moral dilemmas fairly etc. Leadership is more about having people work with you than having people work for you.

- The confusion between 'leaders' and 'managers': 'Managers' are good at ensuring that an institution works efficiently and effectively. Managers can be very good 'administrators' but not all managers are also good 'leaders', while not all people that show real 'leadership' are also good 'managers'. Senior people need to understand what they are good at and what less so, and build up a team with complementary skills.

- The dominance of private sector thinking about 'leadership': Much of the leadership and leadership development literature and practices come from the private sector. Competition however is a central dynamic in that sector. In the context of peacebuilding and statebuilding, competition is often part of the problem. What these contexts ask for is eminent skills in collaborative leadership, in promoting inclusion, creating coalitions, fostering collaboration and convergence and consensus.

c. The media.

The media have a primary role in providing platforms for public political debate and in ensuring that it is and remains reasoned and respectful, and doesn't degenerate into demagoguery, insult or incitement to violence. In countries where there is a high degree of literacy and broad access to television, newspaper and (satellite) TV (and to a lesser degree the Internet) may be the primary vehicles. [xvi] In societies with low literary, radio will be the most effective vehicle. The problems with state-controlled media are well recognized. The problems with privately controlled media less so. The private control of media is no guarantee that they will promote reasoned and respectful public debate and an inclusive society. Training journalists may be relevant and important, but working with the editors and owners of the media perhaps even more so.

d. Informed citizens.

Effective governance requires recognition of the citizens' 'right to information', and hence pro-active information dissemination and transparency also from the state institutions. Global surveys indicate that is the exception rather than the norm. [xvii] This often requires a shift in political culture and public sector attitude, where the population at large ('citizens') is seen as too ignorant to participate (a condition that then gets perpetuated by not providing them with information) or supposed to be obeying the authority rather than having rights (and obligations) and aspirations to which the authority should try to be responsive.

> « Leaders often see a public that wants everything and is generally uninformed, with little to contribute to policy making, where the public sees decision-making processes completely taken over by special interests and partisan battling. »
>
> *CEPAD: Priorities for Peace. 2010:13*

Professional associations (not only of doctors and lawyers but also e.g. of taxi drivers, farmer associations and cooperatives, student groups and trade unions are other entities that can benefit from stronger skills in reasoned debate, political dialogue and negotiation. Not just in the pursuit of their specific interests, but also as groupings of citizens engaged in a wider society.

e. Citizens and civil society collaboration with traditional and modern leaders and institutions.

The many examples available of 'political dialogues' typically highlight combinations of civil society platforms working together with people in the formal political sphere and/or with traditional authorities, to defuse tensions, address major challenges and contribute to gradual process in transition and transformation. In South-Central Somalia for example, Somali civil society organisations worked together with traditional elders during 2005-6 to restore and consolidate the 1993 Mudug Peace Agreement . [xviii]

These civil society entities may start as ad hoc groupings or coalitions of 'concerned citizens' but over time become an established actor in their own right.[xix] They may also include independent and respected research institutes and think tanks that can inject a sound 'knowledge base' into the debates and dialogues. In some instances the interaction between 'civil society' and state institutions has even been 'institutionalised', e.g. in Guatemala there is an established 'Liaison Office' between a network of

civil society organisations working on democratic security with the national parliament, as well as a 'Security Advisory Council' of non-state actors (including the business sector) to the President's office (as complement to the advice provided by the security forces).

f. Societal infrastructures for debate, dialogue, conflict resolution and governance.

The potential strength of a broader societal 'infrastructure for peace', rather than 'elite dialogues' and 'state institutions for conflict management' only, is beginning to be recognized. Critical elements here are indeed the

- connections between multi-level and multi-actor platforms for debate and dialogue;
- existence and collaboration between state and non-state actors and platforms;
- access to facilitation training and methodological support.

In an earlier submission to the Working Group, the example was provided of Ghana .[xx] We add here two more examples, from Rwanda and again from Guinea Bissau.

Developing a Societal Peace Infrastructure in Rwanda.

In Rwanda, the Institut de Recherche et de Dialogue pour la Paix has been managing a process of debate and dialogue for peace and governance since 2001. The programme deliberately creates the vertical connections that 'Track approaches' typically fail to do i.e. it reaches from the President's office to the 'commune' level on the hills, and has even managed to extend to the most important concentrations of Rwandans living abroad. As in Burundi later (see case study above) it started out with a society-wide consultation. In several communes, local people were so thrilled by the experience that they expressed interest in continuing to dialogue among each other. IRDP then helped by training several (and alternating) local facilitators, and mentoring what became known as (five) 'dialogue clubs'. These dialogue clubs also became 'sounding boards' (of ordinary people/citizens) regarding major peacebuilding challenges that were discussed in thematic working groups, mostly at Kigali level. Over time the dialogue club members took the initiative to go beyond dialogue into cooperative agricultural undertakings, made possible by the relationships and trust developed among them through the dialogues. There is also clear testimony from local authorities, that participating in the dialogue clubs has changed their relationship with local citizenry – for the better. Recognising the importance of new generations in Rwanda and the necessity to break with the legacy of the past, the programme since has expanded and stimulated and supported the creation of 'dialogue clubs' in a growing number of schools.

Developing a Societal Peace Infrastructure in Guinea Bissau:

In Guinea Bissau, the Voz di Paz programme since 2007 has been a major channel for the views of citizens about the peace and state building challenges in the country, but also for direct citizen initiative. Between 2007-9 Voz di Paz too organised nation-wide consultations in which over 3000 people participated. In addition over 1000 members of the military and police were consulted and some 200 members of the Bissau-Guinean diaspora in Lisbon. But from early on, the programme supported the creation of 'Regional Spaces of Dialogue' which cover the whole territory. The core members of each 'Regional Space' are locally suggested on the basis of their local or national influence, their commitment to the service of peace and their experience in resolving conflict. They also represent the local/national diversity. Guinea Bissau has the benefitted of quite a large number of local radio stations, which are actively used by the programme. These 'Regional Dialogue Forums' have become the engine through which peacebuilding approaches are assumed and owned by the people. They have become a primary conflict resolution mechanism locally, but also try to become an aggregated positive influence in the turbulent national level politics. [1]

VII. Roles for External Actors.

The primary role of external assistance actors to political debate and dialogue (different roles may apply in a 'mediation' scenario) is to support and help strengthen the local and national capacities for political and public dialogue. One overall measure of success for the external assistance actors is whether, when they disengage after X years, the national capacities are stronger than when they engaged, or the same or actually weaker?

The most common forms of external assistance are financial, methodological and political. External financial support is often a necessity in fragile situations. Capacities for political dialogue however are not built on the back of 'projects' only. Some form of institution-building financing is required, and can be accompanied by ongoing exploration of the means to diversify this and to derive it more from domestic sources. (see CSO Input paper on 'External Assistance to Capacity Development' – April 2011).

Methodological support is most welcome if it comes in the form of tried and tested and carefully reflected experiences from comparable environments, or in the form of broad principles that local/national actors can adapt and even innovate around.

At the moment, much support is directed at strengthening of state institutions and supporting civil society separately. It is not unusual to see a relatively difficult to even antagonistic relationship develop between 'the state' and 'civil society'. Acting as 'social auditors' of the performance of the state, is a legitimate role for civil society. But such role can often be played more effectively if simultaneously there are also many instances and experiences of constructive collaboration between state and societal institutions. Using aid better to strengthen mindsets, skills and institutional arrangements for collaborative work between state and society, will also reduce the tension over the perceived competition between state and non-state actors for limited international resources.

Discreet political support can be needed from external actors to help protect the conveners and facilitators of a dialogue process from political threats but also from political cooptation. As the following examples show, more overt political support may be required in contexts where the national leadership is unwilling to allow the political space in which genuine and broad based political debates and dialogues can flourish.

For external actors to be able to play constructive roles they need to be attentive to:

- The quality and evolution over time of their understanding of the actual dynamics in the society they seek to help, and the risks and opportunities arising. This cannot be done without a close and ongoing contact with a broad-enough spectrum of local actors;

- Weigh in on the rules of the game, but otherwise be largely neutral in their support of the processes. “They should play a supportive role and ensure the rules of the game are fair and equity is being achieved.” (CSO feedback from West Africa);

- Not come with preconceived ideas about outcomes: “Supporting negotiations with a predetermined outcomes – in the case of disputes in the Caucasus this refers to status questions of secessionist entities- in mind or even expressed publicly, is not helpful and can lead to further deterioration of relations and stagnation of peace processes. (CSO feedback from the Caucasus).

- When they need to play a fairly active role and when to move more backstage: “External actors have been involved in dialogue through the G-24 process, which gave civil society a breathing space at a very challenging time. It is less clear that this 3d party role is needed now that gov't is engaging directly (with quality time) with CSOs. I am rather skeptical about the role of the international community (embassies and UN): I believe they often lack the capacity, freedom and commitment to do substantive inputs.” (CSO feedback from Colombia).

In all instances, the guiding principle is that of building a genuine partnerships – not only with government but also within wider society, and allowing the local/national actors a very significant say in the strategic and tactical management of the process, and any external communications about it. After all, they are the ones that have to live with the outcomes.

SOMALILAND – SUCCESSFUL ENDOGENOUS PEACEBUILDING AND STATEBUILDING & APPROPROATE INTERNAL-EXTERNAL ACTORS ROLES.

Somaliland is a remarkable case of indigenous 'peace making' (although it went through a period of civil war between 1996-8). The absence of much official international engagement – due to Somaliland's self-declared independence (1991) not being recognized, was perhaps more a blessing than an obstacle if the situation in south-central Somalia, that has 'benefitted' from much international attention, can serve as comparison. Somalilanders have developed their own mechanisms of governance, with e.g. a two-tier parliament with a lower house of elected representatives and an upper-house that reflects the clan dynamics. They have also limited the number of political parties to three – probably a wise move to avoid a proliferation of clan & lineage based political parties that would shatter the possibility of relative political cohesion.
Since the late 1990s, Somaliland has gone through municipal, presidential and parliamentary elections. While sometimes there were tension-generating delays, all ended well and power has been transferred between political parties. But the ride at times has been rough. The Somaliland Academy for Peace and Development often played a discreet informal or more visible and formal role in managing tensions pre- during and after elections. It worked with the political parties and with the media to establish codes of conduct, and organised and hosted many public debates.

It became able to do this because it had over time developed a strong reputation for its participatory-action-research work on critical issues in Somaliland (such as the livestock economy, decentralization, natural resource based conflict), which had also given it a very wide network of contacts and connections across all possible divides. Throughout it received financial assistance from international donors channeled through an international NGO that also provided methodological support, enabled exchanges with other 'local/national peacebuilders' and created access for Somalilanders to international policy and decision-makers.

When Somaliland organised for its first parliamentary elections in 35 years (2005) and for its second presidential elections (2010), the international partners were able to identify and mobilize in technical expertise in the actual processing of election results and subsequently in voter registration (a contentious issue as it would reveal the real rather than claimed demographic balance between clans and lineages). The preparations for the 2010 Presidential elections proved particularly challenging, and this time the international actors occasionally have to weigh in more actively and directly to promote and protect a truly independent and competent electoral commission and a free and fair electoral process. The combined efforts of Somalilanders and international actors – and the political maturity of the Somalilanders, resulted in a successful election – and a transfer of power.

See among other Academy for Peace and Development publications, 2006: A Vote for Peace. How Somaliland successfully hosted its first parliamentary elections in 35 years, and 2008: Peace in Somaliland. An indigenous approach to statebuilding. Burao, Boroma and Sanaag conferences. Hargeisha.

THE D.R. CONGO : PROBLEMATIC POLITICAL DIALOGUES,
NOT YET SUCCESSFUL ENDOGENOUS PEACEBUILDING AND STATEBUILDING &
DIFFICULT RELATIONS BETWEEN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ACTORS?

Civil society feedback from the DRC to our recent consultation on political dialogue, painted a bleak picture.

"We have had a series of political dialogues that have failed us in the past. The first one was called by President Mobutu in 1990-2. The second one through President Laurent Kabila in 1998-9. The third initiative was led by the Protestant Churches in 2000 and the last one in Sun City (South Africa) in 2002.

A main objective of political dialogues since the end of the civil war was to engage in discussion with armed group but also to study their grievances and try to address them. However, it was quickly dropped and did not contribute to building stronger institutions and addressing issues faced by the population.(...) Since the 2006 elections, political space has reduced in the country and the disconnect between policy makers and the people keeps growing."

In DRC, years of brutal colonization, Mobutu rule and civil war have created a system of survival economy, based on patronage relations, kinship and high competition over resources. This has resulted in the privatization of the public functions, patron-client relationship in the public sphere, violent competition over resources (land, minerals, political power, education…)…this a provoked the collapse of all basic services (education, health, security), impoverishment of the population and increased vulnerability because of the disappearance of safety nets.

In this context, political dialogue has emerge has a way to have access to power by manipulating the population (populist discourses, based on nationality/ethnic kinship/community/family), buying allegiances and therefore has totally alienated the representatives from their base. Hence, political will require finding ways to invent political representativeness in DRC, both from the decision maker side (how to represent the population fairly) while educating the population on what to expect (in order to avoid manipulation by elites).

The DRC as a nation has many grievances from its recent history, that we have a hard time dealing with. We have never had a 'truth and reconciliation' commission to tackle these, and the failures from political dialogue that fueled conflict.

However, depending on the structure of civil society and of individual representatives in local government, there are some potential. In South Kivu for example, civil society is more active and very organised and therefore has a better access/engagement with decision makers than in North Kivu or Province Orientale. Usually district or provincial level politicians are more accessible but also do not have the same influence over issues than national actors. A decision taken by a local administrator will easily be broken or cancelled by a higher up official, rending it nul.

We need a dialogue, perhaps after the elections scheduled for late 2011, when a new parliament is functional. The dialogue needs to be inclusive of all political parties, parliamentarians, the Senat, civil society representatives, religious leaders, women and youth representatives. A credible NGO can chair the dialogue. We have never had a process that is led by civil society. However, the challenges faced by political dialogue in DRC is not only affecting the political and public sphere, it is also very present in the civil society. Patronage/clientelism/despotism are a characteristic of some civil society organisations, customary chiefdom and very deeply present in society.

We need external actors in the political dialogue, for their thematic expertise. But they cannot take the leadership of the process. It has to be owned by the Congolese. That will then also avoid the blame game between internal and external actors when something goes wrong."

FIJI – A DEMAND FOR A REAL ROLE FOR EXTERNAL ACTORS.

Civil society feedback from Fiji on our recent consultation on political dialogue definitely saw a role for external actors.

"The (existing) dialogue process is directed and organised by a coalition of civil society leaders (incl. leaders of the private sector, faith based groups and NGOs). Most parties, including the Fiji government, perceive the dialogue process as credible but there are creditability issues bringing the process to a track 1.5 / 1 level with certain key political and civic leaders unwilling to enter the process."

I believe track I dialogue should be led by multilateral organisations such as the Commonwealth Secretariat and the UN. *(Note: the political situation in Fiji is that of a military coup)* External actors can play an important facilitation / convening role. These actors must be perceived as neutral and not entering the process with pre-conceived ideas.

ANNEX 1. SOURCES BASE OF THIS PAPER.

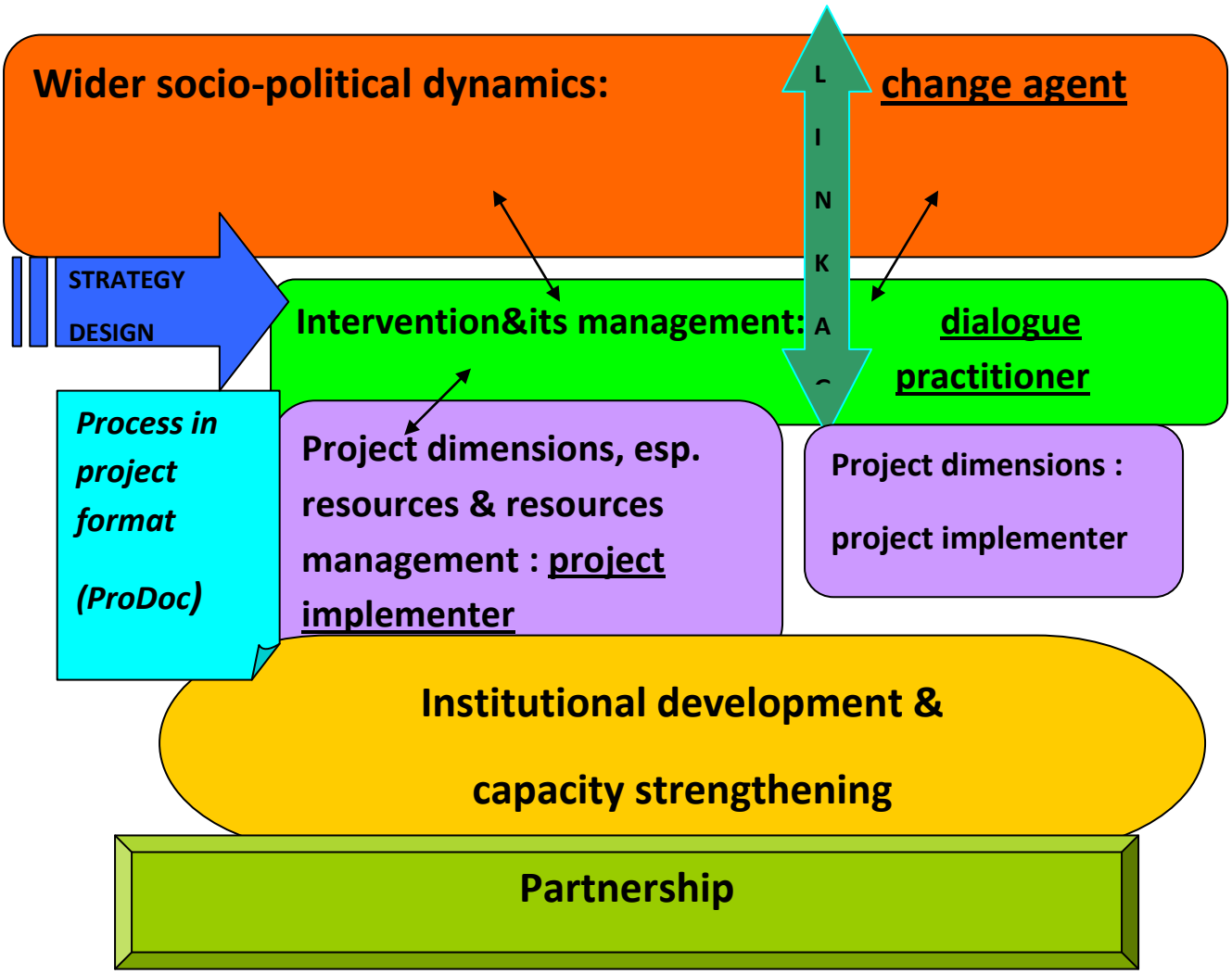
This paper draws on

- "Voices of Civil Society Organisations on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding." 2010, Geneva, Interpeace. Prepared as an input to the Dili meeting in April 2010. The report summarises the input of 49 civil society organisations, of which 30 from the global south.
- Responses to a questionnaire in March 2011 sent to CSO partners, of which 6 from Conciliation Resources partners in the global south.
- "Civil Society Consultation on the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding." 2011 London, Saferworld – consisted of field level consultations in Uganda, Kenya and South Sudan.
- Programmatic experiences with political debate and political dialogue of civil society organisations in various countries around the world that are experiencing moments or protracted periods of fragility. Citizen voices are taken from records of these.
- The experience of a 'Leadership for Peacebuilding' course, offered since 2008 by the Geneva Centre for Security Poliy and Interpeace.
- A workshop on 'Evaluating Democratic Dialogues', held at the Carter Centre in Atlanta in 2007, which brought together governmental, UN and civil society practitioners
- Relevant DAC guidance, notably Encouraging Effective Evaluation of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities. Towards DAC guidance. 2007, Paris, OECD DAC http://www.mynous.org/pdfIEblog/EvaluationOfConflictPrevention.pdf
- Relevant handbooks and manuals, developed by CSOs or with CSO input, such as
  -IDEA, CIDA, UNDP, OAS 2006: Democratic Dialogue. A handbook for practitioners. http://www.undp.org/cpr/documents/we_do/democratic%20_dialogue.pdf
  -Herzig, M. & L. Chasin 2006: Fostering Dialogue across Divides. A nuts and bolts guide from the Public Conversations Project. Watertown, MA, Public Conversations Project.
  http://www.publicconversations.org/docs/resources/Jams_website.pdf
  -A Handbook on Constitution Making Processes, to be published in 2011.
  There is also an extensive literature on 'mediation' that is not referenced here.
- Civil society feedback on a first draft of the paper.

ANNEX 2. STRATEGIC REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF DIALOGUES. A technical note.

Without wanting to go into an exhaustive discussion about this topic, here some key points.

a. Make it a Strategic Review or Evaluation.[xxi]



'Project evaluations' of dialogues miss the point. The 'project' is only an administrative format within which external funds are disbursed. The purpose of a dialogue process however is to contribute to some change. So what dialogue designers should exhibit and what evaluators should be looking for is evidence of 'strategic thinking'. Central here is the connection of the dialogue to the wider socio-political dynamics. Also of strategic interest is the strengthening of capacities, particularly national and local ones. A third area of possible interest is the quality of the partnership between internal actors and the external ones seeking to assist them. Of least interest is whether the 'project' did what it said it would do, within the time frame originally suggested etc.

b. Types of Evaluations.

The most useful evaluations, for the dialogue managers and for the donors are *real-time evaluations*, as they have greatest value for adaptive management and learning. However while they will be able to capture some intermediate effects and influences, wider impacts will definitely still be beyond the horizon (as they may also be for evaluations that occur really at the end of the project);

Longitudinal evaluations are seldom done, but would make a lot of sense if one wants to capture 'impacts' in the wider socio-political environment, especially if the dialogue remains sustained, for example through a series of consecutive projects/programmes. Is there eventually a 'cumulative impact'?[xxii] Otherwise of course cause-effects become ever vaguer and attribution ever more difficult;

Is there however much value in evaluations of single project dialogues? Or would it be for learning purposes not more rewarding to do *comparative evaluations of different dialogues*, either in the same context or across contexts? The comparative perspective would highlight more clearly the finer subtleties of types of dialogue and how they are managed, and the conditions that influence their ability to have influence?

c. Do no Harm with Evaluations.

Evaluating a dialogue process, in real time or towards the end of the project is itself an intervention with its own impacts. This has implications for the timing of the evaluation, for the choice of evaluators, for the style of the evaluation and for how the results of the evaluation are articulated and disseminated. The *first principle in deciding and conducting an evaluation is also 'do no harm'*:

- Timing: would an evaluation at this moment be disruptive, possibly exacerbate tensions and sensitivities that we are trying to manage, defuse, transform into more trust etc.?
- A dialogue is supposed to bring about transformations and change: an evaluator therefore cannot focus on a 'snapshot' in time, but needs to see the current situation in a broader perspective;
- The evaluators need to be very well versed not only with the context but also the conflict – as seen and experienced by the internal actors. A combination of well chosen internal and external evaluator(s) seems desirable. The internal evaluator can pick up and interpret meanings in what is said but also in the body language and in what is left unspoken, and understands the historical references, emotional impacts etc. of her or his interlocutors. An outsider can bring an element of perceived 'impartiality', more reflective distance from the dynamics under discussion, possible fresh perspectives and relevant comparative knowledge from other dialogue experiences;
- Evaluators need to be aware of and sensitive to the emotional dimensions of dialogue processes;
- Evaluators discuss the wording of their findings with the dialogue management team, to ensure that sensitivities are not unnecessarily exacerbated by a choice of words or phrasing;
- Interactive and more open dissemination and discussion of findings may precede finalization of the draft.

4. Broad and General Criteria for the Evaluation of Dialogue Programmes.

1. ***Relevance / appropriateness.***
   Is this dialogue with these participants to address these issues using this process right in the circumstances?

2. ***Linkages***
   Are individual and grassroots programmes linked to higher level actors / key people?
   Are dialogues focused on 'key people' linked to efforts to engage larger constituencies (and vice versa)?
   Are dialogues focused on promoting changes in people's behaviour, skills and attitudes linked with change efforts at the socio-political level?
   Are different efforts contradictory or undermining each other?

3. ***Consistency with values of conflict prevention and peacebuilding***
   Are the means of intervention consistent with the goals of the dialogue (e.g. are participatory dialogues practicising these principles in the management of the intervention?)
   Is the dialogue 'conflict-sensitive' or do the logistics, agenda, follow up, staffing, and other elements of implementation inadvertently exacerbate intergroup divisions?

4. ***Coverage***
   Are regional and international dimensions of conflicts taken into account in the dialogue?
   Are internal conflicts as well as inter-group conflicts addressed?
   Are there hidden conflicts that receive little attention?

5. ***Effectiveness***
   Has the dialogue achieved its stated goals?
   Are the goals relevant to the driving factors of conflict? How?

6. ***Impact***
   The results or effects of the dialogue that lie beyond the immediate programme activities or sphere and that constitute broader change in the conflict.
   At three levels: micro (individual); meso (changes in –group- behaviour or action), macro (changes in the conflict)

7. ***Sustainability***
   Will hard-won improvements in inter-group relations persist in the face of challenges?
   Are effective mechanisms in place to implement products of the dialogue?
   Have those who benefit from ongoing conflict or resist peace ('spoilers') been addressed adequately?

8. ***Efficiency***
   Are outputs and outcomes delivered in an efficient manner?
   What were the alternatives to achieving the goals? How does this dialogue compare in cost and time to other avenues for achieving the same goals?
   Is the effort achieving progress in reasonable time?

9. ***(Coherence)***
   Unclear what relevance this may have.

5. Tangible and Intangible Outcomes.[xxiii]

Dialogues can have shorter and longer-term outcomes. Importantly, they can have tangible outcomes e.g. a change in legislation or a new formal political accord, but also many significant intangible outcomes, which are hard to assess and at best difficult and expensive to 'measure'. A greater readiness of people to meet each other who previously refused to do so, a change in the tone of conversation, a greater ability to collaborate across divides, a broadening of the boundaries of what can be discussed in public, increased trust in the institutions of governance etc.

6. The indicator game.

There tends to be too much or too early obsession with 'indicators', to the possible detriment of missing the strategic picture. Expert discussion confirms that indicators are important but should not be 'center-stage'. In our practice we frequently encounter problems with the use of indicators:

- Indicators are often not very good; it is difficult to identify appropriate indicators;
- Indicators tend to overemphasise quantitative measures when dialogue often involves non-quantifiable outcomes and impacts. Yet not everything that is countable is relevant and not everything that is relevant can be counted;
- Indicators become a substitute for good analysis and interpretation; they encourage a 'fill in the box' exercise.

Moreover, the indicators actually should change: If we acknowledge that indicators are signals of change then it seems to follow that over time and throughout a process *the indicators also need to change* . In other words we need evolving criteria of success (e.g. an 'early success' might be that people who for a long time refused to meet, now have agreed to sit together and try to have a dialogue say for 15 meetings. A 'later success' might be that together with some thematic specialists they are now working together to enrich their knowledge and understanding of a problem with the help of some 'research' or 'knowledge input'. Yet a 'further success' might be that they have produced joint proposals on how to try and tackle that problem.

The brief examples and the graph above show that there may be certain types of change that we can identify as possible or likely occurrences in an effective dialogue. How these changes might manifest themselves, and hence what would be 'indicators' to suggest they did, really can best be identified by the national/local actors. What is it that in their eyes signals that a change has taken place?

And we should also remember that a dialogue process takes place with participants who also have their own volition, and that neither its direction nor its rhythm nor its outcomes can be controlled and guaranteed by the process facilitators.

[i] Transcript from video : Local Voices on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding 2008: Interpeace video shown at 3th High Level Forum in Accra

[ii] Centre of Studies for Peace and Development (CEPAD) 2010 : Priorities for Peace. Dili

[iii] CEPAD 2010, see note ii.

[iv] The Mont Fleur Scenarios. What will South Africa be like in the year 2002? Global Business Network, Deeper News, Vol. 7 no. 1 http://www.generonconsulting.com/publications/papers/pdfs/Mont%20Fleur.pdf

[v] See The Tajikistan Peacebuilding Initiative. http://www.sustaineddialogue.org/programs/tajik_peace-building.htm

[vi] See e.g. Irwin, C. 2001: How Public Opinion Polls were Used in Support of the Northern Ireland Peace Process. In The Global Review of Ethnopolitics. Vol. 1(1) 62-73 and Cyprus 2015, 2009: Investigating the Future. An in-depth study of public opinion in Cyprus. UNDP & Interpeace.

[vii] Video, see note i

[viii] Voz di Paz 2010: Roots of Conflict in Guinea-Bissau: The voice of the people. Bissau

[ix] Platform for Dialogue and Peace 2010: Peace in Liberia. Challenges to consolidation of peace in the eyes of communities. Monrovia

[x] CEPAD 2010, see note viii

[xi] Video transcript see note i

[xii] Voz di Paz, see note viii

[xiii] Platform for Dialogue and Peace, see note ix

[xiv] CEPAD, see note iii

[xv] von Kaltenborn-Stachau 2008: Your 'Good Leader' might be Another Person's Worst Nightmare. Blog at http://blogs.worldbank.org/your-good-leader-might-be-another-person-s-worst-nightmare

[xvi] See e.g. Lynch, M. 2006: Voices of the New Arab Public. New York, Columbia Univ. Press which is a detailed examination of the influence of initially Al Jazeera and then other Arab satellite broadcasters, and their interaction with the written press, in the creation of a new, international Arab public sphere that, in the end, seems to have gotten fed up with the non-responsiveness of many of its rulers.

[xvii] See e.g Darbishire, H. Proactive Transparency. The future of the right to information. Washington, D.C, World Bank Institute & International Budget Partnership 2011: Open Budgets. Transform Lives. The Open Budget Survey 2010. US, Mexico, South Africa and India

[xviii] Puntland Research and Development Centre 2006: Peacemaking at the Crossroads. Consolidation of the 1993 Mudug Peace Agreement. Garowe

[xix] See e.g. Wachira, G., Th. Arendshorst & Simon Charles 2010: Citizens in Action. Making peace in the post-election crisis in Kenya – 2008. Nairobi, Concerned Citizens for Peace, NPI-Africa & Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict.

[xx] Bombande, E. 2010: Building Peace through Inter-Party Political Dialogue and Strengthening the Democratic State. The Ghana experience.

[xxi] This graph was developed by Koenraad Van Brabant, Interpeace. It can be reproduced with proper attribution.

[xxii] See e.g. Giupponi J-D. 2006: Developing National Capacities to Manage 'Democratic Security'. Relevance of WSP International projects for MINUGUA's verification mandate and their impacts on the implementation of the Guatemala Peace Accords. Interpeace, Geneva & Guatemala City. This evaluation looks at the cumulative impact of a process that by then had been going on for 5 years and had had to be structured into successive 'projects'. The process continues with the agenda evolving.

[xxiii] This graph has been developed by Koenraad Van Brabant, Interpeace. It can be reproduced with proper attribution.