Democratic Dialogue –
A Handbook
for Practitioners

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Bettye Pruitt and Philip Thomas

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Acknowledgements

Many people and institutions have helped to make this Handbook possible.

We wish to acknowledge our special thanks to Bettye Pruitt and Philip Thomas as the book's lead authors. We are also grateful to Martin Ängeby, Elena Díez Pinto and Katrin Käufer, who contributed to this study as supporting authors.

Goran Fejic, Marc-André Franche, John Lobsinger, Céline Moyroud, Betilde Muñoz Pogossian and Yadira Soto served as members of an Editorial Board, representing the sponsoring institutions and providing support and guidance to the author group. Marc-André Franche, Céline Moyroud and Koenraad Van Brabant contributed to the drafting of two chapters in Part 2. Elizabeth Diaz, Sonia Gonzalez, Helena Koumi, Maureen Mayne and Alicia Morales assembled the case material and other information for the Appendices.

Elizabeth Diaz, Francisco Díez, Victor Alfredo Leon Gemmell, Gabriel Aguilera Peralta, Andrew Russell, Ranabir Samaddar and Koenraad Van Brabant read and commented on the manuscript. Thanks are due to all of these contributors.

We also thank the organizations that, along with the four institutional sponsors, contributed the written case material referenced throughout the Handbook and in the Overview of Dialogue Initiatives in Appendix 1. These are the Carter Center, the Institute for Democracy in South Africa, the International Institute for Sustained Dialogue, the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, the University for Peace and Interpeace (formerly WSP International).

Finally, we wish to acknowledge with great appreciation the many dialogue practitioners who participated in learning workshops—in Guatemala (2000 and 2002), Panama (2003), Buenos Aires (2003), Stockholm (2004) and Geneva (2005)—and who shared their experience and practical wisdom to inform this Handbook.

Foreword

Academic research and statistics tell us that the number of conflicts, as well as the number of victims of wars and other forms of violence, has declined significantly since the end of the cold war. That is very welcome news. Also welcome is the news that this remarkable progress is largely due to the improved performance of peacemakers of one sort or another, and that the Untied Nations in particular is now more willing to intervene to prevent or end conflicts. Furthermore, the United Nations, regional organizations and non-governmental bodies are cooperating better with each other, and the experience acquired by all in the field is serving them well. As a result, there is no doubt that the international community is now better equipped to help parties involved in all sorts of dispute to build consensus and resolve differences through dialogue and compromise.

UN staff and other people involved in this kind of activity have every right to feel satisfied that their work is thus recognized, but obviously there is no reason for anyone to be complacent: we still live in a complex and turbulent world where conflict continues to rage in far too many places. Many of these conflicts have either suffered from neglect (Somalia, for example) or have resisted all attempts to help resolve them (Palestine/ Israel, Kashmir). Other conflicts have returned to haunt us after we thought they had been properly resolved or were well on the way to satisfactory solutions: Haiti, East Timor, Afghanistan, Lebanon …

It is generally accepted today that a sustainable peace is one that empowers people, and that helps them acquire skills and build institutions to manage their different and sometimes conflicting interests in a peaceful manner. Dialogue is universally recognized as the tool par excellence to address and, it is to be hoped, resolve the differences—objective or subjective—that caused conflict in the first place. However one defines it, dialogue is a democratic method aimed at resolving problems through mutual understanding and concessions, rather than through the unilateral imposition of one side's views and interests. For its part, democracy as a system of government is a framework for organized and continuous dialogue.

The authors of this Handbook on democratic dialogue have undertaken the difficult but necessary task of gathering the vast knowledge accumulated in the field of conflict resolution and translating it into clear concepts and practical options for dialogue facilitators. Sponsored by and drawing on the experience of three international organizations (International IDEA, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Organization of American States (OAS)) and one development cooperation agency (the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Handbook offers helpful insights into contemporary conceptual approaches to dialogue, and provides practitioners with concrete sets of options on how to design, start, convene,

conduct, monitor and evaluate a dialogue process. The multiple options offered stem from practice, and the case studies presented in Appendix 1 illustrate how these options may be applied in real life.

Dialogue takes place in many settings, at different levels and on myriad subjects. Issues may range from international or national security to human rights, from climate change to HIV/AIDS, from economic development to the management of water resources. Actors and stakeholders include governments, political parties, traditional leaders and ordinary citizens.

Those who have acquired some experience in the facilitation of dialogue processes are well aware of the importance of local knowledge. Lessons learned in one country are never easily transferable to another. This is because dialogue is an eminently human exercise, highly sensitive to the needs and priorities defined by local realities, to the nuances of language and the intricacies of collective memory. Dialogue is always about the needs and priorities of real people in real situations.

It is said in military circles that 'the best battle plan does not survive the first shot'. This is a valuable lesson to remember when dealing with conflict situations. The best negotiating plan, carefully based on the best information available, will still have to pass the test of the reality on the ground. When I started trying to mediate an end to the civil war in Lebanon, I was sent there with an Arab League resolution mandating the deployment of a military observer force to observe a ceasefire that the Lebanese factions said they would honour. Soon after I reached Beirut, it became clear to me that a 300-man observer force was not going to be of much help. Indeed, it could seriously complicate the situation. Since it was not possible simply to ignore the resolution that gave us our mandate, we said that 'its implementation needed to be temporarily postponed'. Our work then took a wholly different direction that culminated in the Taef Agreement and the end of the civil war.

This is what I sometimes call 'navigation by sight'. It does not mean that no planning or preparation are needed. Lebanon's civil war had been raging for more than 15 years—some say 17—and one could not possibly try to help end such a difficult problem without a thorough understanding of the situation. Nor can one land in Beirut without quite a few ideas about how to approach the mission. But, no matter how well prepared one thinks one is, no matter how long and how well one has worked to prepare the mission, no matter how many resolutions—binding or otherwise—are supporting the effort, it is vital that one keeps eyes and ears wide open all the time, and is ready to adapt to the hard facts on the ground. In other words, start your mission with as many tools as possible. Have all the maps and charts you can lay your hands on, and carefully study

your route. But if you see that there are obstacles that your maps did not indicate, do not just trust your map and do not ignore what you see with your own eyes.

Most of the 'dialogue facilitators' of my generation learned the art of facilitating dialogue by doing it. Years of active engagement in bringing 'conflicting parties' together, in convincing them to sit at the negotiating table and start building a common agenda step by step, have shaped a deep experience that functions as a reliable tool. But dialogue is a discipline whose basic rules and lessons can be learned and broadly shared. The learning process may be shortened if we remain fully aware that there are no general, one-size-fits-all models, and that dialogue must be tailored to each specific national and cultural context, one that is fully owned by those who are supposed to be its ultimate beneficiaries.

The outcome of a real dialogue process will seldom be predictable. Even the most consistent application of the lessons learned should not be taken as a guarantee of success. This is the case with all political processes that involve a plurality of actors, and that take place in multifaceted and rapidly evolving contexts. Dialogue, indeed, is an eminently political process: on the one hand, it conforms to hard facts and has a purpose—to seek responses to very concrete social and political claims and grievances. But on the other hand it is also influenced by the more delicate and elusive chemistry of human relationships.

Understanding both the underlying political issues (the deep-seated grievances) and the human relationships that often blur and distort the picture (but that may also, when allowed to emerge, carry unsuspected positive energies) is crucial to creating the 'dialogic situation' that catalyses progress and allows the gap to be bridged.

I believe this Handbook will help dialogue facilitators find the right blend of ingredients to conduct a successful dialogue.

Lakhdar Brahimi
Former Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General

Preface

The complexity of today's global challenges, such as achieving the Millennium Development Goals, deepening democratic governance, preventing violent conflict or tackling terrorism, is a poignant reminder of our increasing interdependence. More than ever, addressing these realities requires solutions that deal not only with symptoms but also with root causes. Addressing root causes requires engaging local, national and international institutions charged with managing differences of interests, aspirations or worldviews and working on the quality of human interaction which underpins their functioning.

A core aspect of this work means promoting, facilitating and engaging actors involved in multi-stakeholder dialogue processes. As our experiences show, dialogue, when used in the right context and with the appropriate methods, allows new realities and innovative solutions to unfold.

For our organizations, dialogue is not only a tool to attain our goals; it is at the heart of the values which sustain our work, such as respect for human rights, equality, diversity and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Dialogue is also the means through which we engage with partners and stakeholders.

It is therefore with great pleasure that we present this Handbook as a contribution to the theory and practice of dialogue. This joint publication underlines our commitment to promoting democratic dialogue and stands as a tribute to the value of sharing knowledge and experiences across regions, practices and institutions.

The principal aim of this Handbook is to demonstrate concretely how dialogue works and how it can make a difference in the pursuit of peace, development and democratic governance.
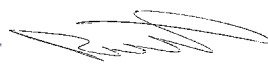
To achieve this goal, it presents options and methods to carry out a successful dialogue process and analyses lessons learned to narrow the gap between theory and practice. It presents practitioners with recommendations and options based on a wide variety of experience. The Handbook also demonstrates that dialogue is not a panacea and that its success depends on careful preparations.

This first joint contribution from our four organizations can also be understood as a road map for the work ahead as much remains to be done to improve the practice and develop the field of expertise. We hope the Handbook will be an opportunity for many institutions and practitioners to reflect on their own practice and continue to improve it.

We envisage this publication as a first step towards increased collaboration both at the headquarter and at the field levels. We are grateful to the authors and the Editorial Board for their dedication, and express our gratitude for the contributions of so many practitioners and institutions without which this Handbook would have not become a reality.
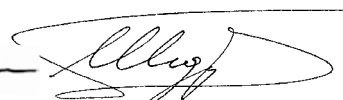
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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AI	Appreciative inquiry
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CDAC	Departmental Commission of Attention to Conflicts (Guatemala)
CDGs	Citizen Deliberative Councils
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CMM	Coordinated management of meaning
CSDGG	Center for Studies on Democracy and Good Governance
ECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
HIPC	Heavily indebted poor countries
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus/Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IDRC	International Development Research Center
IEA	Institute of Economic Affairs
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INCORE	International Conflict Research
IRDP	Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace
LUUUTT	Lived stories, untold stories, unheard stories, unknown stories, stories told, and storytelling (model)
MINUGUA	United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MSP	Multi-Stakeholder Process
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NCCC	National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation
NIF	National Issues Forums
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OAS	Organization of American States
PAR	Participatory action research
PCP	Public Conversations Project
PROPAZ	Programa para el Desarrollo de Recursos para la Construcción de la Paz
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RBLAC	Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNDP)
RCTF	Regional Conflicts Task Force
SD	Sustained Dialogue
TO	Theatre of the Oppressed
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPRECO	Presidential Unit of Conflict Resolution (Guatemala)
US	United States
USA	United States of America
WISCOMP	Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Purpose of the Handbook

The collaborative effort of the four institutions sponsoring this Handbook—the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)—is based on a common sense of the important role dialogue processes can play in advancing peace, human development and democratic governance. In 2003, they and 13 other organizations that are engaged in promoting and organizing dialogue processes[1] came together to pool the numerous lessons learned in their collective experience, distil best practices, and offer some guidelines and options to practitioners. The objective was to produce a user-friendly methodological tool that would help the institutions and other dialogue practitioners carry out their work in a more systematized way.

This group of institutions adopted the term 'democratic dialogue', already used in the Latin America and Caribbean region, to emphasize both the relevance of dialogue for strengthening democratic institutions and the democratic way in which dialogue works—by bringing a wide array of societal actors into conversations that lead to positive change. A broad understanding emerged that democratic dialogue consists of inclusive processes that are open, sustained and flexible enough to adapt to changing contexts. It can be used to achieve consensus or prevent conflict—a complement to, not a replacement for, democratic institutions such as legislatures, political parties and government bodies.

Focus on Practitioners

From the beginning, the intended audience for the Handbook has been dialogue *practitioners*—that is, people actively or potentially engaged in organizing, facilitating or promoting dialogue work within their institutions and societies. These practitioners can be grouped into three broad categories.

> *Dialogue practitioners are people actively or potentially engaged in doing dialogue work—organizing it, facilitating it and promoting it within their institutions and societies.*

- **Decision-makers**. Decision-makers are the people who have formal responsibility for addressing the challenges confronting society at many levels—local, national, regional and global. They are dialogue practitioners when they use dialogue as a means of fulfilling these responsibilities. While it is an important principle of democratic dialogue that everyone has ownership of and responsibility for addressing societal challenges, it is helpful to recognize that these practitioners often have a particularly important role to play in dialogue processes and their outcomes.

- **Dialogue promoters**. These are people who advance the case for using dialogue as a way to address societal challenges, not from positions of formal responsibility but as concerned parties with a stake in the outcomes. In national contexts, many of these practitioners are in *inter*governmental organizations representing the international community, such as UNDP, the OAS and International IDEA. Alternatively, they may be in either of the two non-governmental sectors—business or civil society. Within civil society, people may be involved in the wide range of national and international non-profit organizations that address societal challenges from the perspective of the social sphere, as opposed to the economic or political spheres.

- **Process experts**. These are people who bring technical process expertise from a variety of disciplines to support dialogue initiatives, and who in many cases have devoted their careers to advancing the use of dialogue.

Because of this focus, the Handbook partners have made significant efforts to involve practitioners in developing its content. UNDP's Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC) convened four practitioner workshops between 2000 and 2003 as part of its initiative to develop a 'methodological platform' for dialogue work. Some of these were co-organized, and the outcomes of other workshops in each institution have also enriched this Handbook. Members of the institutional community of practice have developed cases from the field, using a common format in order to enable comparisons to be made. In addition, the institutions sponsoring the Handbook held two practitioner workshops for in-depth discussion and feedback at different stages of its development. All of these efforts have informed and guided the work of the author team. A smaller group of practitioners reviewed a complete draft and provided comments, and an Editorial Board comprising members from the four sponsoring institutions oversaw the team's work. In short, this has been a broad-based community effort, signifying the collective commitment to democratic dialogue of the institutions working in this field.

How to Use the Handbook

Significant efforts have been made to ground this Handbook firmly in the experience of individuals and institutions engaged in dialogue work, because—in contrast to a more mature field such as negotiation, which can be studied using well-developed curricula in established educational institutions—this is where the relevant knowledge resides. The practice of dialogue still lacks a widely shared definition; a set of guiding concepts,

a terminology and standards that are broadly accepted; and even an acknowledged body of exemplary cases that could provide a common reference point for the purposes of developing the essential characteristics of an established field of practice.

Despite these uncertainties, the sponsoring institutions believe that the work must go forward, and they have conceived this Handbook as a practical tool to help make that possible. It is offered not as an argument for the use of dialogue over other approaches and tools, but rather as a resource that can inform thinking about how to address a particular problem or bring about a desired change, and it can underpin judgements about when dialogue is an appropriate approach.[2] If and when that judgement favours the use of dialogue, the Handbook can provide a link to the experience and wisdom of practitioners who have taken that route before. The sponsoring institutions therefore hope that it will serve both as an overview of the subject and as a reference work in which practitioners can find inspiration, guidance and indications of additional resources on specific topics.

Part 1: The Conceptual Framework addresses some basic questions about democratic dialogue. Why is it needed? What is it, exactly? How does it contribute to positive change? We address these questions mainly from the perspective of the practitioners engaged in dialogue work, and with reference to their experiences in a wide range of contexts. We also suggest further readings and sources of information on particular concepts and case examples.

Readers who are experienced dialogue practitioners—or, perhaps, experienced in work that is essentially the same but not called 'dialogue'—may find that this section simply presents what they have already thought, understood or explained to others about their work in this emerging field. But it may be useful to read what others are saying and to connect the ideas to a wider range of experience. For readers without experience in dialogue work, this section will probably be far more important as an entry point to the topic. We hope that it will provide the conceptual clarity, solidly grounded in experience, that enables all readers to express for themselves and others what this work is about and why it might be useful.

Part 2: Putting Concepts into Practice speaks to the prospective dialogue practitioner who says 'I can see that dialogue may be a useful tool in my situation … now what?'. For the more experienced practitioner, this section of the Handbook may suggest some different ways of doing things, and offers guidance to a wider range of approaches and tools. Or, since it is based firmly on the practice of a diverse group of people working

We use this symbol to alert the reader to cross-references that may facilitate making connections between concepts and practical application, or between different steps in an unfolding dialogue process.

in a wide range of contexts, it may simply provide a sense of confirmation and a connection to others doing similar work.

The chapters of Part 2 follow the steps of an unfolding dialogue initiative, from early conversations about the need for and possibility of dialogue to designing and implementing a dialogue process and evaluating the outcomes. At each step, we offer an overview of the task at hand and suggest specific actions to take in order to deal with the issues and challenges that are likely to arise. The experiences of the many practitioners who participated in the Handbook workshops and contributed written case studies provide concrete illustrations, and the suggestions for further reading make possible a more extensive exploration of particular tools and approaches.

Wisdom from the field
We use shaded areas with white print like this to present insights, illustrations, suggestions from practitioner interviews, comments on cases, and the six learning workshops conducted as preparation for this Handbook.

Part 3: Applications offers a different perspective on the work in the field by presenting three fully developed dialogue initiatives. These include a regional dialogue organized by the OAS in San Mateo Ixtatán, Guatemala; a country dialogue sponsored by UNDP in Mauritania; and an International IDEA democracy-building project in Nepal. By presenting these three cases in full, we hope to give readers a more complete sense of what such a dialogue initiative involves, as well as concrete examples of how specific contexts and objectives shape the approaches taken and the tools used.

We use shaded areas with italicized print like this when we pull out key phrases from the text to highlight their significance.

We use shaded areas with black print like this to provide additional resources such as suggestions for **further reading** and **examples** from work in the field.

Appendix 1 presents a comparative table of case studies that the members of the institutional community of practice created and made available on the Internet. For each case, the Appendix provides a brief statement of context, purpose and outcomes. It conveys a sense of the broad range of work being carried out in this emerging field.

Appendix 2 presents a brief overview of available dialogue processes and process tools, and includes references to sources of further information on how to use them.

Part 1:

The Conceptual Framework

Chapter 1.1: Introduction

Chapter 1.2: The Need for Dialogue

Chapter 1.3: Defining Dialogue

Chapter 1.4: How Dialogue Contributes to Change

Chapter 1.1: Introduction

In September 2004, eight small groups of young Zimbabweans came together to begin a dialogue process.[3] Reflecting the goal of the process organizers to reduce youth participation in political violence, each group came from one of the eight electoral districts of the city of Harare, where most of the violence was taking place. The groups' members were roughly balanced between males and females and included the key youth organizations—political, religious, recreational (sports and arts) and student groups. The participants were all recognized leaders within those groups, and together they represented a wide array of political views.

The process began with orientation sessions, in which participants selected two from a list of possible topics (unemployment, HIV/AIDS, the role of youth in nation-building, political tolerance, delivery of public services) and set the ground rules they would use to ensure a neutral environment in which their conversations could be open. These sessions were followed by two-day 'kick-off' retreats outside the city that included recreational events and team-building activities, as well as discussion of the issues. Following the kick-off, each group continued with monthly half-day meetings in a local community venue. Every group had a team of moderators—one selected from among the youth participants and one an activist from a local civil society organization—who received training and continual coaching in how to organize and facilitate dialogue.

Of the issues proposed, unemployment and HIV/AIDS were the most pressing: every group chose one of the two, and three groups chose both as topics for discussion. In the initial conversations, participants talked about the issues cautiously and superficially, taking care not to expose their political connections or views, nor to deal directly with difficult social issues such as HIV/AIDS. As the dialogues continued, however, they began to talk more openly and to form relationships across their differences. In one group, after participants voiced their common fear of being tested for HIV, they all agreed to be tested before the next monthly meeting. Another group channelled its shared impatience with the persistent lack of employment opportunities into

organizing a research project to study the impact of unemployment on different parts of its community. In another group, participants from different ends of the political spectrum began to meet socially outside the 'safe space' of the dialogue process.

All of this took place amid mounting political confrontation in the approach to the parliamentary elections of early 2005. And the dialogues continued until June 2005, when a massive police crackdown on the informal business sector and unofficial housing developments in Harare left hundreds of thousands of people homeless. Through these difficult times, and despite fears of reprisals, members of the dialogue groups supported each other and kept the process going. When two of the groups dissolved under the pressure, more stable groups absorbed their members.

Through this process, the young people gained greater understanding of the issues by sharing information with their peers, and the better understanding gave them a sense of greater control of their own choices. Additionally, they came to understand that they could disagree, even sharply, without becoming enemies or resorting to violence. According to the project's dialogue trainer and evaluator, they have 'come to play a stronger, more articulate and more responsible role in the bodies they had come from … providing a greater voice for tolerance, more consensual approaches to conflict management, and greater gender equity'. They have also applied the conflict-management skills they learned in the dialogue to many areas of their lives—in at least one case, averting an outbreak of violence. Moreover, the groups have developed projects on the issues they discussed, so that they can continue working together after the dialogue process itself has concluded.

This initiative to empower Zimbabwean youth illustrates key aspects of successful dialogue processes. It had a positive impact on a problem—youth involvement in political violence—by changing attitudes and behaviour within a group that was representative of the diversity of actors in the problem dynamics. Participants who had viewed each other with suspicion and hostility formed new relationships based on mutual respect and understanding, and on the recognition that they were united by common issues and concerns, despite their differences. Both individually and as a group, they began to 'take ownership' of their problems. The skills learned in the dialogue process and the relationships formed in the dialogue groups helped them assume greater responsibility for dealing with those problems. At the end of the initiative there was reason to believe that these changes would have a sustainable impact, not only on the specific problem of political violence but on a broad range of issues confronting those young people and Zimbabwe as a whole.

It is the promise of such significant and robust outcomes, plus the inherently participatory nature of dialogue, that make this approach appealing to the institutions sponsoring this Handbook, as well as to many others who are using and promoting dialogue as a means of addressing the challenges of global society in general and developing countries in particular. In the roughly 15 years since the end of the cold war, the possibility of

such approaches, and the need and demand for them, have expanded greatly. South Africa, Poland, the Czech Republic and Chile have provided examples of successful transitions from authoritarian to democratic regimes. Bosnia, Guatemala and Northern Ireland have laid the foundations for peaceful futures after years of violent conflict. These experiences provide inspiration and hope that difficult and divisive issues can be dealt with without resorting to force.

Internationally, the concepts of human rights and human development have arisen to strengthen the moral claims of all people to live in peace and to have a say in the decisions that affect their lives. On the subject of economic development, for example, Nobel Laureate economist Amartya Sen has argued forcefully for broad participation and self-determination as the most effective way to address problems such as persistent poverty. 'Political and civil rights, especially those related to the guaranteeing of open discussion, debate, criticism, and dissent', writes Sen, 'are central to the processes of generating informed and reflected choices'.[4]

For further reading

There is a large and growing literature on the subject of dialogue, reflecting the rising level of activity in the field. As an entry point to this work, an annotated bibliography of 65 publications relevant to the body of practice reflected in this Handbook is available under 'Democratic Dialogue Documents' in the Learning Library at <http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org>.

It is in this context that dialogue—the process of people coming together to build mutual understanding and trust across their differences, and to create positive outcomes through conversation—has moved into the public sphere. Increasingly, people and organizations working to secure peace and human rights, to promote human and economic development or to strengthen democratic institutions, have come to see dialogue as a valuable complement to both negotiation processes and political processes, such as competition among political parties, voting and governance by elected representatives. The number of dialogue processes taking place around the world has increased accordingly, and at the same time the need for greater understanding of what dialogue is, when it is appropriate and how to do it effectively has grown.

This part of the Handbook addresses the first of those questions: what exactly is 'dialogue' as a process that responds to the need and opportunity for wider participation in the public sphere—what we call democratic dialogue? In Chapter 1.2 we turn first to the question of 'Why dialogue?' in terms of the societal needs that dialogue practitioners are seeking to meet. Chapter 1.3 sets forth a definition of dialogue that is grounded in practitioners' understanding and takes the form of a set of Governing Principles. Finally, Chapter 1.4 explains how practitioners think dialogue contributes to change at the various levels required to have an impact on societal needs.

Chapter 1.2: The Need for Dialogue

Each dialogue initiative has its own purpose, one that is tailored to a particular problem situation or need. The recent proliferation of dialogue processes, however, and the adoption and promotion of dialogue as an approach by an array of national and international institutions, indicate a sense of need that goes beyond the specifics of any one situation. This higher-level need has two main components. One is a deficit in the 'soft' side of democracy—the culture of participation and cooperation required to make societies resilient and democratic governments sustainable. The other is an effectiveness gap in governance that undermines public confidence in and support for democratic institutions, as many of the most pressing societal problems remain largely unaddressed.

The Need for a Culture of Democracy

'Elections do not equal democracy.' So wrote Carlos Santiso, Senior Programme Officer of International IDEA, reflecting in June 2000 on IDEA's four years of support for democratic development in Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Guatemala, Romania and Indonesia. When many countries began a transition to democracy in the post-cold war era, Santiso noted, 'it was originally assumed that the holding of relatively free and fair elections would naturally lead to the gradual emergence of democratic institutions and the progressive consolidation of a democratic culture'. Conditions in many countries, however, have brought the recognition that 'democratization processes adopt, more often than not, irregular, unpredictable and sometimes reversible routes in highly fluid and volatile political environments'. Hence IDEA's support for dialogue processes focuses on helping people in democratizing countries meet the challenge of establishing democracy in substance as well as in form.[5]

In one way or another, virtually every institution promoting dialogue identifies this need to build the attitudes, skills, practices and experience that add up to a societal capacity for democracy. As the Overview of Dialogue Initiatives (Appendix 1) indicates, the institutions are using dialogue to address a number of different issues and working

with a variety of social actors. Cutting across these differences is an emphasis on creating the culture of democracy, as distinct from what Roel von Meijenfeldt, formerly a Programme Director of International IDEA and now Executive Director of the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, calls 'the engineering part' of democracy—its institutions and electoral processes.[6] Efforts to build the soft side of democracy focus mainly on helping societies develop the following four critical capacities.

1. **The capacity to resolve conflicts peacefully**. Where there is a history of violent conflict, or the threat of it, developing the capacity to avoid violent or destructive expressions of conflict is necessarily of the highest priority. This is a basic ingredient of a democratic culture and requires that people be able to talk to each other about the issues that divide them. As a team from Interpeace (formerly the War-Torn Societies Project) wrote about its work in Rwanda, 'it is clear that genuine "peace" must and can only be made by Rwandans [and] to that end Rwandans must talk among each other'. Only Rwandans could create the necessary environment for the talk that had to happen: 'a space in which people would feel safe expressing themselves [and] where they could listen to each other notwithstanding the pain this might rekindle'. Supporting them in learning how to do that became the basis for an Interpeace dialogue project in Rwanda, launched in 2002.[7]

    Ultimately, preventing violent conflict also demands that societies be able to address the underlying conditions that generate conflict, such as poverty, inequity and patterns of discrimination or social exclusion. In the Alta Verapaz province of Guatemala, for example, a long-standing pattern of land-related violence has been rooted in such conditions among the Mayan peasants of the region. As described in a case study prepared by the OAS on a dialogue process called the Mesa de Cobán, 'impoverished Mayan communities frequently "invade" or occupy lands to plant crops to feed their families, or simply to harvest planted crops. The costs for landlords to evict these "invaders" can be considerable, and the process often results in violence and the loss of life. In addition, it is not uncommon for lands to be "reinvaded" shortly afterwards, either by the same group or by another community. These confrontations can result in large losses for both sides, especially when the crops go unharvested.' The Mesa de Cobán responded to the need for the actors in these conflicts to develop ways of advancing their competing claims without resorting to force.[8]

2. **The capacity to cooperate across political party lines**. At its best, competition among political parties is a mechanism for public debate on national issues and priorities. Once elections are over, however, politicians must find a way to cooperate and govern for the benefit of all, or breakdown will occur. A majority party, for example, may come to dominate every aspect of political life and may govern without input from or reference to the opposition and the people it represents. Or a constellation of relatively weak parties may find themselves incapable of developing a set of priorities for governing. A number of countries have established institutes for multiparty democracy in recent years, notes von Meijenfeldt, since parties in emerging democracies often 'do not know or are not familiar with the fact that it is also possible to cooperate, because they have developed so much animosity through all the emphasis on elections'. The sense of the need to address this issue has given rise to numerous dialogue processes, sponsored or supported by a variety of institutions.[9]

    For example, the 1993 Bambito dialogues in Panama brought together politicians so deeply divided over the dictatorship of Manuel Noriega and his removal by a US invading force that they could not bring themselves to speak to each other, much less work together to develop a plan for Panama to take over ownership of the Panama Canal and Canal Zone.[10] In Guatemala, in 2002, the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy and UNDP joined forces to promote a dialogue across party lines so as to provide an alternative to the growing political fragmentation and polarization that were preventing the legislature from moving forward to consolidate the peace accords and address the country's persistent social and economic problems. The political elite could not lead the country forward because its members were stuck in the larger pattern of what one dialogue participant called 'a society that is voicing its opinions but not listening to each other'.[11]

3. **The capacity to develop an inclusive agenda for action**. Beyond simply learning how to get along, political parties and elected officials must have the will and the skills to develop plans and programmes that address the needs of the society as a whole. When done well, the development of such plans builds consensus around the proposals and alignment behind the action steps they put forward. These are essential to secure support and cooperation from key societal actors such as business, labour and civil society organizations. Moreover, when the agenda embodies a

positive vision of where it will take the society, there is greater likelihood that it may be sustained despite changes in the political leadership.

Nearly every statement of purpose in the Overview of Dialogue Initiatives in Appendix 1 of this Handbook conveys a sense of this need in one way or another. For example, the objective of the Carter Center project on the Agenda 2025 initiative in Mozambique was to 'establish, through a participatory process, a common long-term national vision'. Similarly, the OAS describes the purpose of the Grand National Dialogue in Honduras as being to 'create a consensus around a vision of the country for 2021 that could be translated into state policies capable of coping with the challenges the nation would face in the future'. The purpose of International IDEA's Democratic Assessment through Dialogue Programme in Georgia was to 'advance democracy by facilitating a serious and comprehensive reflection on political, social and economic problems, by articulating a democratic reform agenda, and by generating solution-oriented thinking and actions'. In the UNDP-led initiative, Visión Paraguay, the goal was to 'develop a space for consensus and construct a shared vision to help surpass societal divisions (sectoral, cultural, socio-economic etc.) and influence the country's development'.

4. **The capacity for citizen participation**. Finally, advocates and practitioners of dialogue articulate a need for inclusiveness in democratic societies, not just in extraordinary circumstances or processes of agenda-setting, but on a routine basis. This need has become increasingly evident as the post-cold war democratic transitions have proceeded, and governments have faced the fact that governance in democracies cannot flow entirely in a top–down direction. The need also exists in established democracies, expressed by demands from citizen groups for a more bottom–up approach to governance. As former Chief Economist of the World Bank and Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz has suggested, 'Participation does not refer simply to voting ... [but] requires that individuals have a voice in the decisions that affect them'.[12]

Contributing to the development of this societal capacity is central to the rationale for much of the dialogue practice that has informed this Handbook. For example, it is a core part of the mission of a special programme on dialogue, created in 2001 within what was the OAS Unit for the Promotion of Democracy. According to key personnel working in the programme, 'harnessing competing groups and

interests into effective and complementary processes requires new skills, attitudes and behaviours, often radically different to those prevailing in societies accustomed to confrontation and exclusion'. But it is a critical step to securing democratic governance: 'The creation and maintenance of permanent spaces where government and all social sectors, including the most marginalized, can interact and jointly address issues of social concern can lead to more equitable and participatory democracies.'[13]

International IDEA applies a similar reasoning to its work supporting dialogue processes for the purpose of creating national development agendas: 'the more inclusive and participatory the process is, the more efficient and legitimate the outcomes will be'.[14] IDEA's projects aim to build the 'skills, attitudes and behaviours' for citizen participation by giving people experience of participatory processes in the concrete work of developing assessment reports, and at the same time modelling how national assessments and plans can be drawn up in a manner that builds consensus and support for the findings.

The Need for Effective Governance

'Politics aren't just entirely a matter of values or principles', said OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza in October 2005. 'The objective of politics is to deliver beneficial results to people.'[15] To a great extent, the institutions promoting democratic dialogue are doing so because they recognize that 'politics-as-usual' in many countries is not conducive to meeting that fundamental objective.

In November 2000, a workshop of 100 participants from 17 countries in Africa, Eastern Europe, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean explored different dialogue methodologies and their uses.[16] To frame the discussion, they formed country teams to consider the challenges facing their national governments. This exercise gave rise to a daunting catalogue of social and political problems. Many were issues with dimensions extending beyond national borders, such as stagnant economies, poverty and inequality worsening with globalization, and the AIDS epidemic. Others were social ills that seemed to be related to the breakdown of traditional societies and social values: social and cultural fragmentation, weakened families, corruption, and emigration of the educated class. In many of the countries, historical patterns of class and ethnic divisions and racial discrimination were contributing to a lack of trust, an absence of shared vision and uncertainty about national identity. In three countries there was armed conflict, and others were struggling with the legacies of authoritarian regimes, military rule and violence, including genocide.

Common to these problems is that their solution requires change—in people's attitudes and relationships, and in the broad patterns of behaviour and institutional structures that preserve the problems. Such change requires engagement across the various sectors, groups and levels of society. Citizens in these countries, however, were not engaged, and the governments seemed unable or unwilling to address these challenges effectively. The workshop participants hoped that dialogue processes could break this impasse.

Participatory Processes That Can Produce Results

Many governments have embraced the idea that greater participation is needed to address complex and often deeply-rooted societal problems. Dialogue practitioners, however, argue that bringing people together is not enough. Indeed, in many places there is widespread public disillusionment stemming from disappointment with participatory processes that have raised expectations but failed to deliver results.

Yadira Soto, coordinator of the former OAS Special Program for the Promotion of Dialogue and Conflict Resolution, describes being called upon by the government of a Latin American country to help initiate a dialogue with the country's indigenous population. The OAS was being firmly rebuffed by the indigenous leaders: 'They basically said, "Look, we're not interested in dialogue. We've already participated in 21 dialogues with the government, and they still haven't done what we've asked them."'[17] Soto's story illustrates the widely recognized problem of 'dialogue fatigue'—the logical outcome of too many dialogue processes that have produced lots of communication but little understanding and no change.

The need, therefore, is not just for more dialogue processes but for better processes that result in broadly owned, sustainable changes. Practitioners recognize that there can be many reasons why dialogues may lead to disappointment and disillusionment, such as a lack of genuine intent to change the status quo, a lack of will or a lack of follow-up. Quite apart from these issues, however, the process itself must have the capacity to produce results. To do this, it must deal effectively with the following five key challenges.

> *To be effective, dialogue processes must meet five challenges:*
>
> *1. dealing with complexity*
> *2. coordinating meaning*
> *3. producing innovation*
> *4. enabling deliberation*
> *5. producing sustainable results.*

1. **The challenge of dealing with complexity**. Complex issues require responses that take account of their full complexity. The recognition that tackling the AIDS crisis involves addressing gender relations, or that ending violent conflict may have to involve addressing poverty, reflects an understanding that the search for solutions should address all the elements in a problem situation. In a 2002 communication to fellow dialogue practitioners, Adam Kahane, facilitator of the Mont Fleur civic scenario process in South Africa and many other dialogues, described his way of thinking about the criteria for effective processes to deal with the complexity of the issues that the community of practice is concerned with.

For further reading

On different types of complexity and the 'wicked messes' they can cause, see George Roth and Peter M. Senge, 'From Theory to Practice: Research Territory, Processes and Structure at the MIT Center for Organizational Learning', *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 9/1 (1995), pp. 92–106; and Peter Senge and Otto Scharmer, 'Community Action Research', in Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury, eds, *Handbook of Action Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001).
Both articles are available at <http://www.solonline.org>.

We can assess any given situation according to its level of complexity along three dimensions, (as suggested by Peter Senge, George Roth and Otto Scharmer):

- *Its level of* social complexity*: in a situation with high social complexity, actors have diverse (rather than unitary) perspectives and interests. Such situations cannot be addressed by experts and authorities, but only through the direct involvement of the actors or stakeholders.*
- *Its level of* dynamic complexity*: in a situation with high dynamic complexity, cause and effect are distant in space and time; causes are not obvious and cannot readily be determined through first hand experience. Such situations cannot be addressed piece by piece, but only by looking at the system as a whole.*
- *Its level of* generative complexity*: in a situation with high generative complexity, the future is unfamiliar and undetermined. Such situations cannot be addressed by applying lessons or rules of thumb from the past, but only by tuning into emerging futures.*[18]

Societal problems that involve many different parts of the population call for solutions that engage and include everyone in the 'problem system'. Only then can analyses and plans of action integrate all the perspectives and roles that make the situation what it is. And only then can people begin to sort out the multiple factors influencing problem situations and agree on which changes will have the greatest impact on them.

2. **The challenge of coordinating meaning**. Meeting the challenge of dealing with complexity calls for participatory processes that bring together diverse groups of people with different experiences, interests, cultures and ways of looking at the world, and sometimes with histories of violent conflict between them. This inclusiveness is essential, yet it presents its own significant challenges. Sometimes people embark on dialogues literally speaking different languages. Nearly always they come in 'speaking different languages' in the sense of giving very different interpretations to words, actions and events they have experienced in common. The words and actions do not 'speak for themselves' or carry their own meaning. Rather, they are invested with meaning as people 'make sense' of them by filtering them through their own conceptual frameworks. The more these conceptual frameworks differ, the more the interpretations are likely to be at odds and the greater the challenge of achieving understanding.

The more conceptual frameworks differ, the more the interpretations are likely to be at odds and the greater the challenge of achieving understanding. What is needed in these situations is not necessarily more communication but more understanding.

What is needed in these situations is not necessarily more communication but more *understanding*. Positive outcomes require that participants emerge from the process with a commitment to coordinated action—an agreement to work

towards a common goal. To do this, they must build enough mutual trust and acceptance to acknowledge and legitimate the different meanings they give to words, actions and events, so that together they can develop a common language, at least around issues of common interest. Only with this more coordinated meaning-making will they have a foundation for coordinated action.

3. **The challenge of producing innovation**. Societies are turning to dialogue processes because 'government-as-usual' is not adequately addressing their problems. Many governments have initiated or welcomed such processes, recognizing that they simply do not have the answers to those problems. On all sides there is awareness of the need for truly different, novel approaches—in short, for innovation. Some practitioners quote Albert Einstein to make this point: 'Problems cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created them.' To produce innovation, dialogues must create the basis for a systemic approach and build a foundation for aligned, collective action. In addition, these processes must empower participants to question the status quo, challenge prevailing assumptions and envision significant change at all levels.

See Defining Dialogue as a Distinctive Kind of Process, Chapter 1.3.

4. **The challenge of enabling deliberation**. Societal change calls for the capacity to frame alternative choices and, ultimately, to make tough decisions, often requiring significant trade-offs. This is deliberation. It involves carefully weighing competing options and making choices, such as the choice between policies that favour economic development and those that protect the environment, or the choice to sacrifice certain civil liberties in the interest of public security, or vice versa. To contribute to a robust societal capacity for deliberation, dialogue processes must establish an environment of trust as a basis for negotiating the trade-offs that are necessary in order to proceed. They must also create the mutual understanding and common purpose that enable societal groups to develop a sense of mutual responsibility for the consequences of their decisions.

For further reading

Christine Loh is co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Civic Exchange, an independent, Hong Kong-based think tank on public policy. She calls the skills learned in dialogue 'sustainability tools'. Her articles, *An Introduction to Sustainability Tools* (2002) and *Promoting Sustainability Tools* (2003), are available at <http://www.civic-exchange.org>.

5. **The challenge of achieving sustainable results**. When festering, long-term problems such as inequity or exclusion reach a crisis state, there is an understandable sense of urgency to deliver quick results. In such circumstances the natural impulse is to call on the familiar problem-solvers and to attack the visible symptoms rather than devise a longer-term initiative to address both the crisis and its underlying causes. The solutions that emerge from such crisis responses, however, are usually short-lived.

Sustainable results, by contrast, demand that a longer-term perspective be maintained in the face of those urgent pressures. They require that the full spectrum of people

with a stake in the outcome be engaged, that the underlying problems be tackled as well as the crisis at hand, and that this be done in a way that gives people the motivation and skills to continue working on those deeper issues after the immediate crisis has passed. Such an approach takes more time than a 'quick fix', but it offers greater hope of producing sustainable results that address the current problem *and* build societal capacity to deal with future challenges when they arise.

This chapter has attempted to convey the often urgent sense of need that animates the dialogue work captured in the quotations and case examples presented in this Handbook. The two high-level categories of need described are complementary. On the one hand, the need for effective governance to develop sustainable approaches to societal challenges demands processes that engage and empower people to tackle their own problems. On the other hand, the need to build the culture of democracy requires strengthening the very capacities that such processes demand. The next two chapters consider the question of why practitioners think dialogue is an appropriate way to address these needs—what they think dialogue is, and how they think it contributes to positive changes that can have an impact on these needs.

Chapter 1.3: Defining Dialogue

As many writings on dialogue point out, the word derives from the Greek *dialogos*, which means through (*dia*) the word (*logos*), or through the meaning of the word. Literally, then, it can describe any communication that uses words to convey meaning. However, as used in the public sphere in the post-cold war context described in Chapter 1.1, the term has come to mean a specific kind of participatory process—one that is particularly well suited to addressing the societal needs described in Chapter 1.2.

This chapter does not attempt to develop a definition of dialogue that is applicable in all instances. Rather, it considers the ways in which practitioners understand the meaning of dialogue and the defining characteristics of dialogue processes, expressed as a set of governing principles, derived from their experience. The chapter also introduces the concept of the 'dialogic approach'. For people engaged in dialogue initiatives, this is a kind of code of conduct derived from the governing principles. Many practitioners think the dialogic approach can also be an effective way of engaging in other kinds of decision-making and consultative processes in which people are addressing societal challenges.

Definitions

Given the challenges that dialogue practitioners are seeking to address, it is natural that their understanding of what dialogue is should focus on outcomes. OAS dialogue experts, for example, define dialogue simply as a 'problem-solving process' that is 'utilized to address socio-political and economic-based issues that cannot be adequately and effectively solved by one or several governmental institutions alone'.[19] Similarly, on the basis of a broad survey of UNDP personnel, Mark Gerzon

> **For further reading**
>
> Two books by US public opinion researcher Daniel Yankelovich provide a helpful integration of many of the theories mentioned here, with practice-based explanations of and arguments for dialogue processes:
> *Coming to Public Judgment: Making Democracy Work in a Complex World* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991); and *The Magic of Dialogue: Transforming Conflict into Cooperation* (New York: Touchstone, 1999).

reported that, across a wide variety of specific definitions, there was convergence on essential elements: 'The critical quality of dialogue lies in that participants come together in a safe space to understand each other's viewpoint in order to develop new options to address a commonly identified problem.'[20] Juanita Brown, co-developer of the World Café process, captures this key quality in simple terms by talking about 'conversations that matter'.[21]

By and large, practitioners do not rely on theoretical sources to explain or justify their belief in the societal value of these participatory, outcome-oriented processes. Those who do might mention the theory of 'communicative action' developed by Jurgen Habermas, or Hannah Arendt's concept of 'representative thinking'.[22] Others might point to the theory of how conversation creates reality, developed by the evolutionary biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela; to the theories of the philosopher and educator Paolo Freire about the capacity of ordinary people to learn and to play a constructive role in shaping the world they live in; or to Martin Buber's theories of relationship.[23]

For working definitions of dialogue, however, practitioners tend to draw mainly on their experience in the field, and they often define dialogue by describing what it is *not*—for example, negotiation or debate. Increasingly, as the field has formed and practitioners have begun to interact and learn together about their common work, they have recognized the need for definitions that take account of the different societal settings in which they are operating. This is particularly true in the global context, where practitioner networks cross regional as well as national boundaries.

Defining Dialogue as a Distinctive Kind of Process

In his *Socratic Dialogues*, the Greek philosopher Plato described the method his teacher, Socrates, used for deriving truth through a logical sequence of inquiry and response. The core concept in the Socratic method of making meaning through conversation is part of all definitions of dialogue, but that method's highly structured and rational form of interaction bears little resemblance to the way practitioners characterize it.[24] Instead, they tend to emphasize learning rather than discovering truth, and to include the role of feelings such as trust, respect and empathy, as well as the exchange of ideas and thinking, as the basis for developing common understanding.

For example, Hal Saunders of the International Institute for Sustained Dialogue and the Kettering Foundation offers this definition:

> *Dialogue is a process of genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn. Each makes a serious effort to take others' concerns into her or his own picture,*

'…in dialogue, the intention is not to advocate but to inquire; not to argue but to explore; not to convince but to discover'.

even when disagreement persists. No participant gives up her or his identity, but each recognizes enough of the other's valid human claims that he or she will act differently toward the other.[25]

One of the most common ways in which practitioners convey a sense of the particular qualities of conversation that define dialogue is to distinguish it from other kinds of conversation, such as debate or discussion. IDEA, for example, in *Dialogue for Democratic Development* (1999), says that 'dialogue is different from debate in that it encourages diversity of thinking and opinions rather than suppressing these notions … In the practice of dialogue, there is an agreement that one person's concepts or beliefs should not take precedence over those of others'.[26] This means, in the words of Louise Diamond of the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy, that 'in dialogue, the intention is not to advocate but to inquire; not to argue but to explore; not to convince but to discover'.[27] Hal Saunders explains that 'debate assumes only one right answer and invests in pressing and defending it; dialogue assumes the possibility of an answer better than any of the original points. Debate narrows views and closes minds; dialogue can build new relationships'.[28] Noted physicist and dialogue promoter David Bohm makes a similar point about the difference between dialogue and 'discussion':

> *Discussion is almost like a ping-pong game, where people are batting the ideas back and forth and the object of the game is to win or to get points for yourself. Possibly you will take up somebody else's ideas to back up your own— you may agree with some and disagree with others—but the basic point is to win the game … That's very frequently the case in discussion. In a dialogue, however, nobody is trying to win. Everybody wins if anybody wins. There is a different sort of spirit to it.*[29]

'Debate assumes only one right answer and invests in pressing and defending it; dialogue assumes the possibility of an answer better than any of the original points. Debate narrows views and closes minds; dialogue can build new relationships.'

Dialogue vs negotiation/mediation. Practitioners also find it useful to contrast dialogue with conflict-resolution processes such as mediation and negotiation. Negotiation is 'an official process', suggests Bassam Nasser, a Palestinian working in Gaza. It can end conflict, but it cannot create genuine peace between peoples, which requires qualitative changes in their relationships. He points to the 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel as an example: 'Even now, you do not see peace between the citizens, between people … In my opinion, it is because an official negotiation process took place, but not anything other than the official negotiation process. So I think negotiation has created

an alternative to armed resistance or conflict, but not peace.' For peace, there would have to be deeper change, 'and dialogue would create that'.[30]

Dialogue is 'more dynamic, more fluid, and more experimental' than negotiation, says UNDP practitioner Sayed Aqa. It is 'a much broader concept than negotiations. Dialogue and mechanisms and processes for it must exist before, during *and* after a conflict'.[31] In *A Public Peace Process*, describing the Inter-Tajik Dialogue from 1993 to 1999, Hal Saunders enumerates the ways in which dialogue differs from formal mediation and negotiation [bullets added]:

- *The hoped-for product of mediation or negotiation is a concrete agreement. The aim of dialogue is a changed relationship.*

- *The currency of negotiation is defining and satisfying material interests through specific jointly agreed arrangements. The outcome of dialogue is to create new human and political capacities to solve problems.*

- *Negotiations require parties who are ready to try to reach agreement. Dialogue can be fruitful by involving parties who are not yet ready for negotiations but do not want a destructive relationship to continue.*

- *Negotiation deals with goods or rights that can be divided, shared or defined in tangible ways. Dialogue may change relationships in ways that create new grounds for mutual respect and collaboration.*[32]

As these practitioner statements clearly imply, dialogue is not a substitute for negotiation and mediation in conflict situations. Yet they maintain that it is an essential part of conflict resolution and prevention processes, wherein the goal is to build a sustainable peace. In drawing clear distinctions, they argue for both dialogue *and* the other processes as part of a larger peace initiative.

Dialogue vs deliberation and decision-making. Deliberation is the process of carefully considering and weighing the options required to make tough decisions that have significant implications and in which, ultimately, values play a major role—for example, as suggested in Chapter 1.2, in making trade-offs between security and the protection of individual rights, or between economic development and environmental concerns. Dialogue and deliberation are different processes. Like dialogue and negotiation or mediation in a peace initiative, however, they may be best understood as discrete, complementary steps in a larger, participatory decision-making process such as those envisioned in the concept of deliberative democracy. Figure 1.3.1 illustrates this interrelationship. [33]

Figure 1.3.1 Decision-making Process

Dialogue

- Bringing together many voices, stories, perspectives
- Shared inquiry, exploration, discovery
- Deep listening that fosters respect and understanding
- Shared meaning-making & co-construction of knowledge

Decision-making

- authority decides
- negotiation
- consensus
- vote

Deliberation

- Reasoned argument
- Serious examination of possible solutions
- Careful weighing of tradeoffs
- Reasoned and informed judgment

The process illustrated is dynamic. It can take 40 minutes or ten years. As the diagram suggests, the specific act of deciding can remain clearly in the realm of the formal structures and processes of governance, yet be open to being influenced and fed by citizen participation where that is needed to deal with complex issues. In this process, dialogue enables deliberation in a variety of ways. It allows citizens to explore issues together and to deepen their understanding, drawing on diverse perspectives and integrating them into a shared sense of the whole. Emphasizing listening and inquiry, dialogue is a step that fosters mutual respect and understanding, as well as awareness of the different meanings people make of common experiences. The role of this step is to help people develop a more comprehensive vision of reality than they could create alone as individuals, parties or interest groups.

In contrast to the opening, exploring, visionary character of dialogue, deliberation is a process of narrowing. Like dialogue, however, it is a process of joint inquiry and respectful listening to diverse views. 'The ways of talking and listening are the same in both', explains Hal Saunders. But deliberation focuses 'on issues and on choices among possible directions to move in dealing with them', while dialogue focuses on 'the dynamics of the relationships underlying the issues and on ways of changing those relationships so groups can work together to deal with specific problems'.[34]

The differences between dialogue and deliberation may be subtle in practice, but distinguishing between them is useful because it sharpens the focus on outcomes. For example, in describing its Capacity-Building Programme for Sustainable Democracy, IDEA presents a clear picture of the dialogue's role in a larger process that typically produces a democracy assessment and an agenda for reform. Its overview of the programme states that that dialogue is its 'single most important feature'. Dialogue 'bridges the divides across the political spectrum and between the state institutions, civil society and the private sector', and it produces a 'widened space for debate about democratic reforms'. Developing a 'comprehensive, locally owned agenda' is a separate step. The 'widened space' creates the context within which the deliberation required to produce the agenda can take place.[35]

International IDEA's overview does not use the word 'deliberation'. Indeed, outside the deliberative democracy field, practitioners rarely make these distinctions, at least explicitly. Some say they are promoting dialogue to bring about changes in relationships, while others say their dialogues are intended to reach agreements or determine the best course of action. Still others say they are using dialogue to create a shift in relationships in order to foster agreement and action. This has tended to create confusion about definitions. In part, this situation may reflect something Saunders notes, that it is only since the mid-1990s that people working on conflict and those working on supporting national transitions to democracy realized that 'they labor in neighboring fields'. In approaching the interrelated challenges of governance and 'the political resolution of conflict', Saunders suggests, 'dialogue and deliberation walk hand in hand, while each tackles a different dimension of the challenge'.[36] Exploring this distinction further and bringing it into wider use may be an essential step in the maturing of dialogue practice.

Defining Dialogue in a Global Context

As the use of dialogue has expanded across many regions of the world, practitioners are increasingly challenged to develop definitions that bridge cultural divides. One of the strongest recommendations in UNDP's 'Strategic Outlook on Dialogue' is to use 'the term "dialogue" with great awareness of differences in cultural contexts'. One practitioner pointed out, for example, that in the Balkans one must talk about the issues to be addressed, not the process to be used in addressing them. 'If you tried to engage people in some Western-sounding "dialogue" … it would go nowhere. Dialogue would only get their backs up.' Similarly, practitioners posted to other parts of the world use terms like 'community conversations', 'national sovereign conferences' and 'strengthening of collaboration' to avoid sounding Western and 'elitist'.[37]

The term 'democratic dialogue' is widely used in Latin America and the Caribbean, where a proliferation of dialogues has focused on strengthening democratic governance. The report of a conference on national dialogue experiences in the region, jointly sponsored by IDEA and the World Bank, uses the terms 'dialogue' and 'democratic dialogue' interchangeably and states: 'To the extent that dialogue is a method, it is clear that without it democracy loses its meaning'.[38] Three criteria help to distinguish democratic dialogue from other types:[39]

- **purpose:** to address complex social problems that existing institutions are not adequately addressing
- **participants:** a microcosm of the system that creates the problem and who have to be part of the solution
- **process:** an open and inclusive dialogue, allowing the building of trust necessary to reach agreements for concrete action.

These definitions are grounded in experience and echo the way in which many people describe their dialogue work. Even more than 'dialogue' by itself, however, the label 'democratic dialogue' can present challenges for globally diverse audiences. One objection is simply that the term seems redundant. 'Basically, dialogue is a democratic process', says von Meijenfeldt. 'You cannot have an undemocratic dialogue.'[40] Others point out that 'democratic' is an unhelpful addition because of its meaning in the geopolitical context of the 21st century. From her base in Hong Kong, Christine Loh of Civic Exchange notes that she can promote the use of dialogue into mainland China as a tool for more effective, robust public decision-making—but not if it is called 'democratic dialogue'.[41]

In addition to being careful about labels, it is important to be aware that the sources informing the practice of dialogue are broader and deeper than the Western European philosophical tradition dating back to Plato and Socrates. David Bohm and colleagues point to research on 'hunter gatherer bands' whose gatherings for conversation 'seemed to provide and reinforce a kind of cohesive bond or fellowship that allowed [the] participants to know what was required of them without the need for instruction or much further verbal interchange. In other words, what might be called a coherent culture of shared meaning emerged within the group'.[42] Modern life, they suggest, has disconnected people in rich countries from this ancient tradition of community association. But it remains relatively strong in other parts of the world in. For example, Cécile Molinier, UNDP Resident Representative in Mauritania, has noted that in the national dialogue on the Millennium Development Goals that she helped to organize, the fact that dialogue is 'part of the culture' there made it possible for people 'to set aside rhetoric and talk openly'.[43]

Juanita Brown acknowledges this heritage with a lovely image

> … of the open central courtyard in an old-fashioned Latin American home … [Y]ou could enter the central courtyard by going around and through any of the multiple arched entryways that surrounded this open, flower-filled space in the middle of the house. For me, Dialogue is like entering this central courtyard in the spacious home of our common human experience … [T]here are many points of entry to the experience of Dialogue. Indigenous councils, salons, study circles, women's circles, farm worker house meetings, wisdom circles, non-traditional diplomatic efforts and other conversational

modalities from many cultures and historical periods [have] both contributed to and drawn from the generative space that we [call] Dialogue.[44]

In short, we use the terms 'dialogue' and 'democratic dialogue' with awareness of and respect for the fact that they may not be useful or usable in all settings. At the same time, as explained in the introductory chapter, these are terms that fit the practice and understanding of the institutions sponsoring the Handbook. In a global context where more and more people are using 'dialogue' to label virtually any kind of process involving people talking to each other, we believe there is value in articulating our own definitions as clearly as possible, as a basis for the kinds of discussions that can move forward the field as a whole.

Governing Principles: The Defining Characteristics of Dialogue Processes

As stated, we have no intention of constructing and promoting a single definition of dialogue for everyone to use. Nevertheless, there is a real need to differentiate the kinds of dialogue processes that seriously address the needs described in Chapter 1.2 from what some practitioners call 'fake dialogues'. These may be processes that bring people together mostly for show, demonstrating that opposing parties can sit down together but entirely avoiding the difficult issues that keep them divided. Or they may be processes convened by officials or institutions that would more accurately be named 'consultations' or, worse, 'window dressing' to make authorities seem to be consulting on policies that they have already decided upon.

Where there is a genuine commitment to use dialogue to create change, however, a number of process characteristics may be considered defining. Different groups of practitioners have produced lists of these guiding principles that differ from the five presented here.[45] But, regardless of the actual terms used, most lists capture the essence of what these five characteristics convey.

Dialogue processes should be characterized by:

Inclusiveness

This is perhaps the most fundamental principle of dialogue practice. It expresses the underlying assumption that, to the extent that everyone who is part of a problem situation can be involved or represented in a dialogue process, the participants collectively have key pieces of the 'expertise' they need to address their own problems, as opposed to being entirely dependent on others for solutions. A related assumption is that, for change to be sustainable, the people in the problem system need to have a sense of ownership of the problem, the process for addressing it, and proposed solutions that result. To develop this sense of ownership, they have to participate in the change process.

The principle of inclusiveness may be expressed in a variety of ways. For example, some practitioners specify *multi-stakeholder dialogue* as a form that assembles all the different groups whose interests are bound up in achieving a successful outcome. To others, inclusiveness means creating a *microcosm of the system* that is sustaining a particular problem or pattern of human relationships. Others articulate this principle in terms of the *perspectives* or *voices* that must be part of the conversation, so as to suggest that a dialogue process can be inclusive without involving literally everyone. UNDP practitioner Selim Jahan advocates using the term 'broad-based dialogue' to emphasize this key aspect.[46]

See Selecting the Participants, Chapter 2.3.

To IDEA, dialogue processes that promote democracy must be inclusive, because inclusiveness is a core principle of democracy itself:

> *Democracy encompasses the state, civil society and the private sector; all share joint and complementary responsibilities for its advancement. Inclusion and participation are two key dimensions of democratization. This inclusive and participatory approach constitutes the basis for a pluralistic partnership.*[47]

Listing inclusiveness as one of the 'essential elements of dialogue design', the team in the OAS former Special Program for the Promotion of Dialogue and Conflict Resolution states that 'an increase in inclusion brings an increase in legitimacy to achieve the desired agreements. All social expression must be heard, including political, economic, social and military expressions, as well as the expression of those who have been repeatedly excluded in the past'.[48]

On the problems created by exclusion

As an example, one practitioner noted the case of Guatemala, 'the private sector not feeling a part of the peace process and then not bound by the framework that came out of the peace settlement'. Similarly, the organizers of the civic scenario process 'Destino Colombia' judged, with the benefit of hindsight, that their decision not to involve either the government or the drugs traffickers in the process limited the impact of the dialogue.

See Wisdom from the Field – Sources (p. 236) for the sources of these materials.

As this statement suggests, inclusiveness is especially relevant in contexts where a historical pattern of *ex*clusion underlies the societal problems to be addressed. The role of the dialogue process in this context is to give a voice to those who usually have no say in key decision-making processes—such as women, youth, the poor and groups that are disenfranchised on the basis of race, ethnicity or religion—and thus tend to derive relatively little benefit from the decisions made. Yet the principle also applies to dialogues among political leaders and other elite groups. In a dialogue initiative in Ghana, for example, the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy took pains to include all legally registered parties, not just those that had won parliamentary seats. 'In countries coming out of conflict, or countries with severe poverty, these are national dramas, so to speak, that need to be addressed in a more harmonious way in order to move forward and have greater consensus', says the Institute's Roel von Meijenfeldt. In those cases, he suggests, exclusion in 'the political arena' is as big a problem as social and economic exclusion for countries striving to build national consensus and move forward.[49]

The insistence on this principle is grounded in the widely held view that inclusiveness is a requirement if a dialogue process is to be legitimate and have a robust outcome. It also reflects the hard-won knowledge that if inclusiveness is not comprehensive, that circumstance can compromise the sustainability of any understandings that emerge.

Finally, practitioners specify that achieving inclusiveness goes beyond simply creating a diverse group of dialogue participants. 'It is not simply putting factions around the table', says Jessica Faieta of UNDP. 'Just having a chair does not put them on an equal footing.' She offers as an example the relative weakness of indigenous people in Latin America 'in terms of capacity, in terms of experience, etc.' when they enter into conversations with government representatives.[50] Others cite the power imbalances in Israeli–Palestinian talks and the struggle of Afghan women to find a voice amongst the tribal warlords in the *loya jirgas* (grand councils) that have been held in Afghanistan since 2001.[51]

To realize the goal of inclusiveness, dialogue organizers and facilitators must take steps to mitigate these imbalances. 'Gaps or perceived differences among participants create obstacles for the establishment of an open sphere for dialogue and discussion', states a report on post-conflict dialogues in Indonesia. Where these gaps exist, the report argues, people are silenced. 'A key role for the facilitators is to create horizontal spaces for discussion.'[52] Other practitioners call this 'levelling the playing field'. It is an essential part of an inclusive dialogue process.

Joint Ownership

This criterion requires, at the very least, that the dialogue process not be, in the words of one practitioner workshop group, 'an instrument of only one actor, for example the government—to buy time or to accomplish only a government agenda'.[53] Similarly, according to Leena Rikkilä, Asia Programme Manager for IDEA, it cannot be merely a superficial consultation: 'Invite a handful of people and then you talk with them and you have consulted with them and that's done.'[54] Rather, dialogue is an '*exchange*', says Elissar Sarrouh of UNDP, even when convened by powerful institutions. It embodies the 'democratic notion' that everyone is involved and engaged equally—a '*two-way street … not one side dictating to the other*'.[55]

> *A fundamental requirement for people to engage fully in dialogue and in working toward change is, in the words of one practitioner, that 'people need to feel that there is something real at stake'.*

Roel von Meijenfeldt argues that successful dialogue processes involve 'basically empowering people to get into the game of working or shaping their own future'. Reflecting on the recent experience of the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy in Ghana, he said: 'Through this dialogue you basically assure ownership of the process, and ownership is a commitment towards reform. Without ownership, reform remains a bit of a superficial exercise. But when that ownership is assured, people really take issues forward, and that produces remarkable results compared to other experiences.'[56]

To create this sense of ownership, the dialogue process must provide an opportunity for what one practitioner workshop group called 'conversations about what truly matters—the real thing'.[57] A meaningful dialogue, asserted another workshop team of practitioners, 'should not be a semantic discussion about how to draft an agreement, but a substantive discussion about fundamental issues'.[58] The Zimbabwean youth dialogue described in Chapter 1 illustrates this phenomenon. The conversations on issues of central importance to the dialogue participants—HIV/AIDS and unemployment—gave them the sense of empowerment to take greater control of their lives in those two key areas and, at the same time, to begin to play a positive role in reducing the conflict surrounding them.

Learning

As one practitioner states eloquently: 'dialogue is not about the physical act of talking, it is about minds unfolding'.[59] On one level, this principle addresses the quality of interaction in a dialogue process. It distinguishes a legitimate dialogue from a 'fake' dialogue, wherein the communication is all one-way, and from a debate or negotiation, wherein participants focus only on winning as much as possible for their own side.

Many people refer to this quality as 'openness' in the sense that participants open themselves to hearing and reflecting upon what others have to say, to what they themselves are saying, and to the new insight and perspective they may gain as a result. In *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together*, William Isaacs describes key behaviours or skills that create this kind of interaction as '*listening*—without resistance or imposition; *respecting*—awareness of the integrity of another's position and the impossibility of fully understanding it; and *suspending*—suspension of assumptions, judgment, and certainty'.[60]

The learning that comes in this kind of environment has a great deal to do with the inclusive characteristic of dialogue that brings together people who do not normally talk to each other and may in fact be in conflict. 'Through dialogue competing interests can interact in a non-adversarial way', practitioners point out. Yet the nature of the process points them towards learning, because it 'is not about pronouncing judgments; rather, it is about listening for a deeper understanding and awareness of the issues at stake'. Another practitioner concurs: 'Dialogue is a good way of doing a conflict analysis'.[61]

Beyond that, as Ramon Daubon of the Inter-American Foundation and the Kettering Foundation suggests, dialogue creates an opportunity for learning through *self-reflection*—'people beginning to realize that each only has a little bit of truth'. On a larger scale, he notes, this characteristic of dialogue can lead to the development of 'public knowledge' that can make positive change more sustainable.[62]

Humanity

'Through dialogue our natural intelligence is able to reveal itself. Our humanity is afforded the possibility of recognizing itself', write the authors of IDEA's *Dialogue for Democratic Development*.[63] Like learning, the humanity of dialogue processes helps to differentiate them from other kinds of interaction. This characteristic has a lot to do with how people behave towards each other when they engage fully in dialogue. It requires empathy—the ability to put oneself in another's shoes. 'When people start to make an effort to understand the other, the seed of dialogue is planted.'[64] And it requires authenticity, as expressed in Bill Isaacs' fourth key dialogue skill: '*voicing*—speaking the truth on one's own authority, what one really is and thinks'.[65]

In a workshop, teams of practitioners talked about their best dialogue experiences and developed the following list of contributing behaviours.[66] Dialogue participants, they said, should:

- show empathy—that is, truly understanding the position of the other person instead of reacting to it
- exhibit openness to expressing one's point of view with respect for the rules of the dialogue
- maintain a respectful tone, even in the most extreme conditions
- have conversations about what truly matters—the real thing
- assume responsibility, individually and collectively, for both the problem and the solution
- unblock emotionally: 'listening to the reasons of the heart that Reason often ignores'
- have the courage to recognize differences and, even more, to recognize common ground
- demonstrate the capacity to change.

Taken together, these items echo the definition of dialogue offered by Hal Saunders, quoted earlier, as 'a process of genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn'.[67] The practitioners' list goes further, however, in specifying that the interaction and learning not only happen on an intellectual level but involve the whole person. Similarly, when David Bohm and colleagues define dialogue as 'thinking together', they specify that their concept of

'thought' includes 'not only the products of our conscious intellect but also our feelings, emotions, intentions and desires', as well as 'responses conditioned and biased by previous thought'.[68] It is these largely unstated and invisible aspects of the human interactions in dialogue that move people to learn and change. In the words of Meenakshi Gopinath, a leading peace advocate and dialogue practitioner based in India, 'the spoken part of dialogue is only the tip of the iceberg ... if we concentrate too much on the spoken part, then we are missing the essence of [it]'.[69]

As with learning, creating an environment that supports this kind of human interaction among participants is a central aspect of dialogue work. Many practitioners refer to this environment as a 'safe space', and they place great emphasis on building a level of trust in the process that will make it possible. Striving for inclusiveness, managing power and status differences to ensure that all voices can be heard, and focusing on issues that really matter to the participants are all critical steps towards accomplishing that. They set the stage for the kind of conversations, characterized by learning and humanity, that make dialogue processes distinctive.

See Dialogue Events: Creating a Safe Space, Chapter 2.4.

A Long-Term Perspective

In Chapter 1.2, we defined *sustainable* solutions to complex problems as one of the critical challenges of effective governance. A defining characteristic of dialogue is the long-term perspective that finding such sustainable solutions requires. Practitioners recognize that the various kinds of crises that afflict societies often require swift action—to stop the violence, stabilize the political situation and alleviate the misery. Intrinsic to the nature of dialogue, however, is its focus on the underlying patterns of relationships and behaviour from which the crises emerge. Working at that level is what creates the possibility of sustainable change, and it takes time. 'Dialogue is about using time in a different way, in the sense of realizing there are no quick fixes', says Swedish Ambassador Ragnar Ängeby. 'Time is needed to make deep change possible.'[70]

See Short-term vs Longer-term Vision, Chapter 2.6.

Within the practitioner community, people working on conflict have expressed this principle clearly. Mary Anderson and Lara Olson, reporting on the findings of the three-year 'Reflecting on Peace Practice' project, offer the judgement of an experienced dialogue participant that 'one-off interventions are hopeless and useless'. Anderson and Olson suggest that a multi-year commitment is essential to enable dialogue participants 'to transfer the personal impacts of the dialogue to the socio/political level'.[71] In *A Public Peace Process*, Hal Saunders lays out an approach he calls 'sustained dialogue' and describes a dialogue initiative in Tajikistan that started in the early 1990s and that continues. No less is required, Saunders argues, to transform racial and ethnic conflicts.

In all areas of practice, the emphasis on building capacity at the societal level reflects a long-term perspective. 'We are talking about creating a culture of dialogue, altering

the fundamental power relationships', suggests Ramon Daubon. 'For example, in Sweden when a conflict arises, the default option is a dialogic one on all levels. This is something that developed slowly in Scandinavia in the 20th century.' The challenge, he notes, is how to go about building that capacity where it does not exist.[72]

Dialogue practitioners take up that challenge in a variety of ways. In 1996, for example, the OAS launched OAS/PROPAZ (Culture of Dialogue Program: Development of Resources for the Construction of Peace), a project that sought to build a culture of dialogue in Guatemala, both by facilitating dialogues and by providing dialogue training to personnel in a wide range of partner organizations.[73] Another approach is that of IDEA and Interpeace, both of which have developed the practice of creating a working group of diverse stakeholders who analyse issues and ways of addressing them. In the process, they build a network of individuals able to articulate a common agenda and make a compelling case for change. These people often become leaders who can continue to work and advocate for change after the dialogue process is over. IDEA considers this aspect of its programme a key to sustainability.[74] Such approaches often unfold over a period of years. But this time frame is acceptable, even essential, if the approach is conceived, in the words of Matthias Stiefel, former Executive Director of Interpeace, as 'a long-term process of empowering a society and not as a short-term process of responding just to an immediate problem that may have emerged'.[75]

Practitioners express the underlying principle of a long-term perspective in other ways as well. UNDP's approach to conflict *transformation* emphasizes workshops to build the 'skills and aptitude' for dialogue and negotiation, rather than organizing dialogues or negotiations on 'the conflict of the day'.[76] The OAS former Special Program for the Promotion of Dialogue and Conflict Resolution emphasized the importance of taking steps towards the *institutionalization* of dialogue and participation in a number of Latin American countries. They point to laws that require participatory processes in addressing certain kinds of public issues, the creation of official positions such as the ombudsman to promote and facilitate dialogue when conflicts arise, and investment in skill-building for dialogue facilitators and participants.[77]

The Dialogic Approach

The concept of the dialogic approach expands the relevance of the guiding principles—from capturing the essential characteristics of dialogue processes to describing a *code of conduct* for dialogue

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Examples of institutionalizing dialogue:

- In 2003 OAS/PROPAZ became an independent entity—the ProPaz Foundation—fulfilling one of the major objectives of the initial project to leave 'an installed capacity to support [Guatemala's] peace and democratic processes'.

- International IDEA supported the formation in Burkina Faso of the Centre for Democratic Governance, an independent centre created by the dialogue group to pursue its work of strengthening democracy.

- In Rwanda, Interpeace and its Rwandan partners set up an institution at the beginning of the dialogue process, the Institut de Recherche et de Dialogue pour la Paix, that could direct the initiative, give it national ownership and credibility, and provide long-term sustainability.

See Table 2.1.1, The Dialogic Approach, Chapter 2.1.

practitioners and a *quality of interaction* that can be effective in bringing about positive change in many situations, not just those formally designated as dialogues.

The Dialogic Approach as a Code of Conduct

In one sense, the concept of the dialogic approach simply extrapolates from the governing principles on how to go about the work of promoting, organizing or facilitating dialogue processes. In promoting a process that is inclusive and empowering, for example, practitioners must display the same **respectfulness** towards other people, **openness** to different points of view and **empathy**. Creating the trust necessary for people to enter into a dialogue with their opponents, or even with those who are simply different, also requires **transparency**. This is important both in the sense of speaking authentically and in the sense of avoiding secrecy, or the appearance of it, in one's actions and conversations. 'From early on it has to be made clear that the intent is to have a truly inclusive—and transparent—process', counsel the authors of the case on Interpeace's initiative in Rwanda. When the Interpeace team encountered apprehension in the Rwandan Government about its meeting with the political opposition, it addressed those concerns by 'openly and transparently' sharing what had been discussed in the meeting.[78]

> **For further reading**
>
> Concepts that are closely related to the dialogic approach are:
> John Paul Lederach's formulation of 'mediative capacity' in 'Building Mediative Capacity in Deep Rooted Conflict', *Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* 26/1 (Winter/Spring, 2002), pp. 91–101; and
> Louise Diamond's advocacy of four 'peace principles' that can be applied in the family, at work, in the community and in the world, in *The Peace Book: 108 Simple Ways to Make a More Peaceful World*, 3rd edn (Bristol, VT: The Peace Company, 2003), available at <http://www.thepeacecompany.com>.

Enacting the principle of learning by adopting a stance of **inquiry** is another important element of the dialogic approach. Being in inquiry mode involves asking questions not just to advance one's own goals but also to gain understanding. Inquiry like this is not instrumental, practitioners suggest, but it serves one's purpose at a higher level. 'We have to approach [dialogue] not only as a tool, but as a process of being', Gopinath argues. 'In other words, you don't parachute into a problem and say, "Okay, now I'm going to dialogue, because as a result of dialogue, I'm going to expect X outcome." You're going into it as a process that is ever-changing and that is open and malleable and that is flexible. ... It is only when you are able to be both transparent and vulnerable that the journey enhances your ability to envision a new future.'[79]

Taking the Dialogic Approach beyond Dialogue Processes

Interactions that are not formally conceived as dialogue processes can be more or less dialogic. For example, processes of negotiation, mediation, deliberation and decision-making can be more dialogic to the extent that they create environments in which participants representing diverse perspectives can feel included, empowered and 'safe' enough to be transparent in their own communication, open to understanding what others have to say, and able to take a long-term view of the issues before them. The concept of the dialogic approach simply provides language to describe this particular quality of interaction, making it possible to recognize the role the approach can play and to adopt it intentionally whether or not the context is a formal dialogue process.

In putting forward the concept of dialogue as a philosophy, practitioners understand that organizing a dialogue process is not the best response in every situation. In all instances, however, the dialogic approach offers an alternative to the use of force—be it force of arms, force of political or economic power, or merely force of argument. And practitioners believe it is a more effective alternative. They do not promote the use of dialogue or the dialogic approach just because they want to be nice to people or cultivate friendly relationships. Rather, as Chapter 1.4 describes, they believe it is the best way—indeed the only way—to bring about the kind of change required to make headway against the societal challenges they care most about addressing.

The concept of the dialogic approach simply provides language for describing this particular quality of interaction, making it possible to recognize the role it can play and to adopt it intentionally whether or not the context is a formal dialogue process.

Chapter 1.4: How Dialogue Contributes to Change

Dialogue practitioners are people seeking change. As Chapter 1.2 describes, the change they seek may be greater societal capacities for cooperation, peaceful conflict resolution or democratic self-governance. Alternatively, they may conceive of change as making progress against a variety of social ills, such as poverty, inequality, crime or disease. Or they may frame it broadly as economic development or human development. This chapter addresses the question of why they believe that dialogues—participatory processes with the defining characteristics set forth in Chapter 1.3 as governing principles—are effective in making those kinds of changes.

Levels of Change

As Bassam Nasser noted about the 1979 Egypt–Israel peace treaty, the formal treaty brought an end to armed conflict—a concrete change of great significance. But achieving a lasting peace, Nasser asserted, will require change that goes beyond a formal agreement between governments to touch the hearts and minds of Egyptians and Israelis. Similarly, contemplating the kind of approach likely to be effective in the complex work of democracy-building, IDEA project evaluator Geert van Vliet suggests that it must be one that is able 'to foster complex processes of change in attitudes, in values, in modes of interaction …'.[80] Both these observations highlight a fundamental premise of dialogue work: that the more personal, intangible, but deeper level of change is essential if there is to be a sustainable impact on the kinds of complex societal challenges that dialogue practitioners care about.

Many people use the image of an iceberg to convey the idea that often the visible characteristics of an entity or phenomenon are only a small portion of its totality, and that it is important to be aware of those aspects we cannot readily see. We use this Iceberg Model of change, developed by Katrin Käufer and Otto Scharmer, to emphasize the point that visible and invisible changes are connected and often interdependent.[81] At the deepest level, shifts in feelings and perceptions open up people to the possibility of change.

Figure 1.4.1 The Iceberg Model: Levels of Change
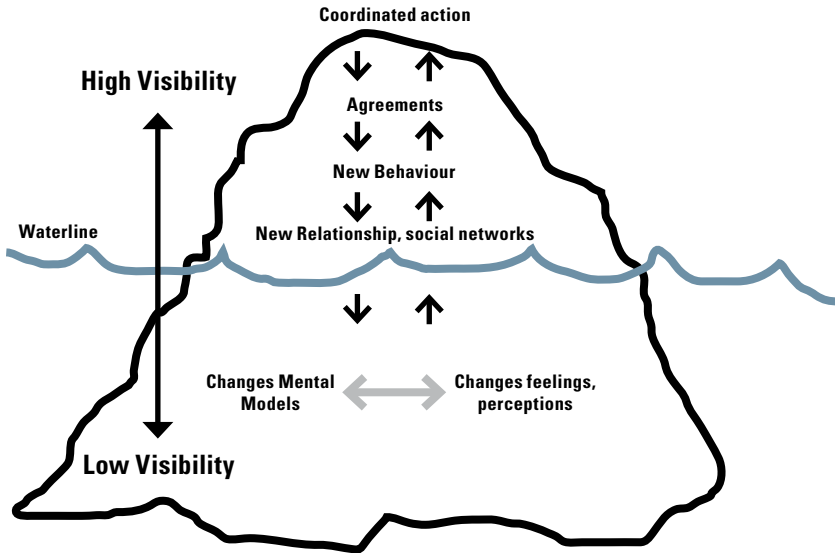
Some of the most powerful examples of such shifts come from dialogues among parties to violent conflicts. For instance, Meenakshi Gopinath described this experience from her work in the contested area of Kashmir:

> *I was with a group called ... Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP). We [agreed we had to] look at breaking the silence on the conflict in Kashmir. These were groups of women who always continued to blame each other, each other's community for their predicament. For example, the Muslim women in the valley blamed the Hindu community for what had happened to them. The Hindus who fled the valley blamed the Muslims for having driven them out of their homes and for ethnic cleansing and so on.*

> *But when they came together in a safe place, which was [away] from their immediate environment, and they began to hear each other's narratives and pain, they realized their pain does not cancel out somebody else's pain. In other words, they both are going through a certain level of deprivation …*

> *Now, at that moment, something happened where the women who were listening to each other's narratives ... their whole body language changed, and a couple of them shed*

tears when they listened to what had happened to what were their erstwhile adversaries. And they found that there was a commonality of human experience. I think that was a very moving turning point … [Where] they never used to make eye contact with each other, [they] began to acknowledge each others' presence. And so the 'othering' process which had translated into body language and the kind of guarded adjectives that were being [used], all that began to melt. I won't say they hugged each other and embraced each other, but the walls of antipathy [came down].[82]

Louise Diamond, co-founder of the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy and of the Peace Company, provides another example from a conflict situation—a dialogue she facilitated in Bosnia in 1996, immediately after the signing of the Dayton peace accords.[83] The dialogue group included a young Serbian soldier and an older Bosnian Muslim woman, 'a kind of earth mother, suffering, grieving, and saying, "what have you done to the men in my life?"'. The young man insisted that he had fought only because he was forced to, but the woman remained very angry and hostile towards him over the course of several days of the dialogue workshop. At one point, however, the soldier withdrew from the group and then returned having written a poem about his own pain and the unnecessary suffering of war. 'This melted the

woman's heart', said Diamond, and the two became close friends. Diamond described how this shift went beyond the change in feelings experienced by those two people to effect a change within the group in the way people thought about the conflict:

We went back to Bosnia after three months and then again six months later, and we asked people who had been in that workshop, 'What stands out for you, what do you remember?'. 95% of them said that they would never forget that woman and that man, and the statement of reconciliation that had happened between them. It was personal for the two of them, but for every one else in the room and at a larger level it was totally symbolic of the archetype of the soldier who really didn't want to kill people and the mother who suffered, the victims of war.

What Diamond points to in this example is a shift in 'mental models'—the underlying assumptions that shape the way people experience and interpret the world around them. In these two conflict stories, the shift might be described as moving from hating and blaming one's enemies to seeing war itself as the enemy, with victims on all sides. A somewhat different example comes from Philip Thomas's account of an experience in dialogue work in El Salvador. Some months after the conclusion of a dialogue process,

one participant saw on television the police beating up a union member who had also participated in the dialogue. He immediately called a friend to say 'this is wrong'. Later, he reflected on what had made him feel outraged in that instance, which was not unlike scenes he had witnessed before. He noted that he had been moved not so much by the personal connection to the union leader as by a changed perception of what is acceptable behaviour in a democracy.

In an analysis of three civic scenario projects—the Mont Fleur project in South Africa (1991–1992), Destino Colombia (1997–2000), and Visión Guatemala (1998–2000)—Katrin Käufer points out a variety of mental model shifts. A participant in Destino Colombia experienced 'at a personal level ... the most beautiful acquisition ... to understand and to discuss all subjects without having anyone get angry and without killing each other'. A black South African who, under apartheid, had 'lived only for tomorrow', began to apply the scenario concept in her own life and to consider how 'my actions today ... would help me fulfil my dreams for the future and for my children's future'. A Guatemalan revised his view of his country's history in response to the carefully documented account of a professional historian, one of the experts who provided input to the Visión Guatemala dialogues.[84]

> *Increasingly, people have come to the recognition that concrete steps toward change, such as treaties and other agreements, constitutional reforms, policy initiatives or legislation, are necessary but often not sufficient to meet the challenges societies are facing. To take hold, they need to be grounded in deeper change at the personal level, and this is where dialogue has a particular role to play.*

As a result of these kinds of changes, people look at the world through a different lens, and the new perspective can have significant effects on their relationships to others, on their behaviour, and on the impact they have in the world, individually and collectively. The 'learning histories' of the three civic scenario projects, on which Käufer's analysis draws, enable her to document these effects.[85] For example, in South Africa, a coalition of dialogue participants, including conservative white businessmen and radical leaders of Nelson Mandela's African National Congress, came together to promote the vision that emerged from the scenario process—a vision of inclusive democracy and of slow but steady economic development that would benefit all. Similarly, in both Colombia and Guatemala, participants in the dialogues forged lasting relationships. They considered themselves a network and they joined forces in projects to advance the shared objectives that had emerged from the scenario-building exercises. In Colombia, a group of businessmen came together to establish a foundation named Ideas for Peace. In Guatemala, various combinations of Visión Guatemala participants collaborated on constitutional reform, reform of the national university and the creation of a research institute with a mission to fight poverty.

Appendix 1 of this Handbook provides many more examples of dialogue results that cover the full spectrum from intangible to concrete, invisible to visible. Taken together, they convey a picture that confirms the message of the iceberg image—that these different levels of change tend to be interconnected and interdependent. Nobody wants a dialogue process that is all about personal transformation, with no concrete

outcomes. Increasingly, however, people have come to recognize that concrete steps towards change—such as treaties and other agreements, constitutional reforms, policy initiatives and legislation—are necessary but often insufficient to meet the challenges societies are facing. To take hold, such initiatives must be grounded in deeper change at the personal level. This is where dialogue has a particular role to play.

How Does It Work?

The core dynamic of change in dialogue processes involves people acquiring some perspective on their own thoughts and thought processes, and on the way those thought processes shape their perceptions of reality. As David Bohm, Donald Factor and Peter Garrett point out, most of the time people do not have that perspective: we simply think, without being observant of the forces—such as memory, belief, emotions and culture—that influence our thinking:

> *The core dynamic of change in dialogue processes involves people getting some perspective on their own thoughts and thought processes, and on the way those thought processes shape their perceptions of reality.*

We can be aware of our body's actions while they are actually occurring, but we generally lack this sort of skill in the realm of thought. For example, we do not notice that our attitude toward another person may be profoundly affected by the way we think and feel about someone else who might share certain aspects of his behavior or even of his appearance. Instead, we assume that our attitude toward her arises directly from her actual conduct. The problem of thought is that the kind of attention required to notice this incoherence seems seldom to be available when it is most needed ... Dialogue is concerned with providing a space within which such attention can be given.[86]

Within that space, the impetus for noticing how one's own thought processes are working comes from the input participants receive from each other. 'Each listener is able to reflect back to each speaker, and to the rest of the group, a view of some of the assumptions and unspoken implications of what is being expressed along with that which is being avoided', the Bohm group states. Often, this awareness comes to the listener in the process of hearing another's story. Hal Saunders describes this phenomenon as follows:

> *Through dialogue each group can begin to recognize the feelings and perceptions of the other. The rigidity of their own pictures loosens. Each group becomes more able to listen. In many cases, the telling of personal stories can play a vital role in compelling people to pay attention to facts they would rather ignore. As participants modify their own pictures of reality, they may begin to see past behavior as counterproductive.*[87]

The practical significance of the governing principles set forth in Chapter 1.3 lies in the role they play in creating that 'space within which such attention can be given'.

Inclusiveness is basic. It brings into the space the diversity of perspectives needed to challenge participants' habitual modes of thought. 'As a microcosm of the larger culture, Dialogue allows a wide spectrum of possible relationships to be revealed', write Bohm and his co-authors. 'It can disclose the impact of society on the individual and the individual's impact on society. It can display how power is assumed or given away and how pervasive are the generally unnoticed rules of the system that constitutes our culture.'[88]

See Dialogue Events: Creating a Safe Space, Chapter 2.4.

But the environment must be right for people to make the effort and take the risk of scrutinizing their thought processes. They need to feel they are having conversations that matter—not just talking superficially, or 'for show', or to serve the purposes of one party only. People also need the encouragement and support to develop or tap their capacities for voicing, listening, respecting and suspending, and to create a safe space in which they can open themselves to learning and relax into appearing as a whole human being, emotions included. Finally, they need sufficient time for the change process to unfold naturally, at its own pace, and particularly for participants to overcome their natural resistance to change. The members of the Bohm group caution that the change sought cannot be forced or predetermined. 'Nevertheless', they say, 'changes do occur because observed thought behaves differently from unobserved thought'. Some of the

> *'Changes do occur [in dialogue processes] because observed thought behaves differently from unobserved thought.'*

most significant changes, Hal Saunders points out, often take place in the time between dialogue sessions, when people have time to integrate and work with the new perspectives they have gained in the process.[89]

The Dialogic Moment

Practitioners' explanations of how change occurs in dialogue processes are often expressed as stories of notable, breakthrough events that shift groups towards greater understanding. These are 'dialogic moments'. The melting of the Bosnian woman's heart by the young Serbian soldier's poem was such a moment. In the Kashmiri women's dialogues described by Meenakshi Gopinath, the moment occurred with the shedding of tears over the stories of deprivation and suffering told by women on the enemy side.

The OAS case of the San Mateo Ixtatán dialogue in Guatemala, presented in Chapter 3.2, describes such a moment and its outcome:

> *In a defining moment of the talks, the parties were able to share with each other the pain and suffering the [36-year-long civil war in Guatemala] had caused. They spoke of the harmful effects of the conflict in their lives, communities, and throughout the municipality. This honesty exposed many people's feelings and actions in the conflict and the civil war, but the exchange did not cause a stalemate or an interruption of the process. Instead, participating in the open environment produced the Agreement of Coexistence as each party acknowledged and recognized that the war had caused suffering on both sides.*

Often, what practitioners describe is one individual precipitating a dialogic moment by breaking through polite conversation to speak honestly, taking the risk of being emotionally vulnerable or bringing forward values that evoke our common humanity. UNDP Resident Representative Cécile Molinier recalled such an action by a participant in the Mauritania dialogue on the Millennium Development Goals presented in Chapter 3.4. The representative of a human rights organization, which had not yet been recognized as a legal entity, was in the dialogue circle with a number of high-level officials—the first time he had ever been in such a setting. 'He spoke in a moderate fashion', recalled Molinier. 'He said he was not just defending black slaves, but all people who were helpless and had nowhere to go. He was looking to the people in authority to help him help them.' This individual created a shift in the group, because 'they sensed he was really being genuine. There were many moments like that, when people put down their defenses'. Those moments, Molinier said, were what made the dialogue work.[90]

Field research conducted in the mid-1990s as part of the Dialogue Project at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology confirms the practical wisdom of these explanations of how change comes about. After poring over transcripts of hundreds of hours of conversation, the research team came to the conclusion 'that dialogue exists not so much in the exchange of words and ideas, but in fundamental shifts in the direction of the conversation'. These shifts occurred, the team noticed, when 'certain persons, alone and together, appeared to catalyze the group toward insight [or when] certain facilitator moves assisted the group in seeing its own shared situation and reflecting together'.[91]

These 'key episodes' or turning points are critical for the impact they have on individuals and on the dialogue group. Looking back on a dramatic moment in the Visión Guatemala dialogues, an interviewee told the project historian that, as the result of that event, 'the group gained the possibility of speaking frankly. Things could be said without upsetting the other party. I believe this helped to create a favorable atmosphere in which to express, if not the truth, certainly each person's truth'. Nine years after the conclusion of the Mont Fleur civic scenario process, the learning historian found in interviews that a number of the participants 'remembered exact dates and times of the shifts in their thinking'. To a great extent, the craft of dialogue work described in Part 3 aims to set the stage for moments with this kind of effect.[92]

From Personal Change to Societal Change

The sense of urgent societal need that drives most dialogue work makes the translation of individual-level changes into societal-level changes of the utmost importance. Yet the field still has a long way to go to document and understand the relationship between these two levels of impact. For now, on the basis of the materials assembled for this Handbook, two patterns seem important.

Impacts from shifts in mental models. The Iceberg Model provides a visual representation of the explanation most practitioners give of how deep changes in mental models, feelings and perceptions that take place 'below the waterline' provide the foundation for changes that are more concrete and visible. In the new thinking, relationships, networks and behaviours that emerge from dialogues, practitioners see the kinds of individual-level changes that can translate into larger impacts, along the lines described by Käufer in her analysis of three civic scenario processes. Practitioner accounts of dialogic moments are replete with powerful examples of the shifts that have occurred, and many of the positive outcomes reported in the cases supporting this Handbook flow from these key shifts. For example:

- rural and urban factions in a war-torn region of Guatemala finding creative ways of overcoming obstacles and creating a municipal government that served the interests of all[93]

- opposing political parties in Panama agreeing to compete in elections on the basis of how, and how well, each would implement a common national agenda[94]

- coalitions of erstwhile enemies cooperating to promote a democratic reform agenda in Burkina Faso[95]

- former Marxist revolutionaries and conservative businessmen together advancing a shared vision for equitable, sustainable economic development in South Africa.[96]

While most of these cases mainly involve educated elites, changes such as increased capacities for peaceful management of conflict and active participation in government are also familiar in community dialogues, such as those conducted by the OAS in Guatemala and by Interpeace in Rwanda. Ramon Daubon points to the experience in Latin America with participatory budgeting. In Peru, he notes, the law mandating citizen engagement was very threatening to the mayors, even though only 20 per cent of the budget was subject to the participatory process. 'They were opposed at first—they would lose power; it would be a mess. And it *was* a mess at first, with everyone advocating for his or her own interests.' Now, however, the process has begun to work well, as both sides have developed capacities for cooperation. Daubon paraphrases the words of one mayor: 'Now the citizens are committed to the decisions that are made. Government is better, and if things don't work as everyone thought they would, people accept that rather than just blaming me.'[97] In that town, the aggregate shift in attitudes of both the citizens and the mayor created what was, in effect, a new social contract for managing town affairs cooperatively.

Impacts from results. Daubon's example highlights another way in which the effects of dialogue processes can reach the societal level—the positive effects of positive outcomes. On the one hand, the mayor points out that the decisions reached collectively through the participatory budgeting process are 'better' than what he was able to produce

through government-as-usual. On the other hand, people accepted the outcomes—both good and not-so-good—because they felt ownership of the decision-making process and the decisions themselves. Similarly, the case of the Mauritanian dialogue on the Millennium Development Goals, presented in Chapter 3.3, emphasizes the creation of a 'critical mass' of citizens who have 'learned about dialogue as a tool to get constructive and fruitful discussions on different themes' as a significant step towards building 'a strong basis for a culture of participatory governance'.

Over the long term, practitioners envisage that, as dialogue processes prove their value and proliferate, more and more people will gain positive experience with dialogue and embrace it as the preferred approach for addressing *any* complex societal challenge. For instance, Ragnar Ängeby talks in terms of building the capacities for 'resilient societies' that can work cooperatively to meet any challenge that may arise.[98] Similarly, Carmelo Angulo, then UNDP Representative in Argentina, describes a 'dialoguing democracy' in which dialogue is the dominant modus operandi at all levels of governance.[99]

From the field of deliberative democracy, Philip Thomas provides a list of ten positive outcomes that flow from successful processes involving large numbers of ordinary citizens in public deliberation:[100]

1. closing the gap between 'experts' and the public

2. moving from distorted, simplistic understandings to revealing and accepting the complexity of societal challenges

3. setting higher standards for public discourse

4. shifting focus from competing interests to the common good

5. strengthening the public's capacity for reasoned decision-making

6. bringing values into deliberation and decision-making

7. increasing citizens' sense of efficacy

8. strengthening relationships among citizens, issues, institutions and the political system

9. placing responsibility for public policy with the public

10. creating opportunities for transformative learning and systemic change.

Conclusion

The end of the cold war ushered in a period of great hope and optimism in the world—that nations that had been governed largely as satellites of one superpower or the other could begin to chart their own courses; and that ordinary citizens could begin to assert their rights and needs in the public arena. 'The end of authoritarian regimes after the cold war, created openings for more bottom–up approaches', reflected Special

Representative of the UN Secretary-General to Sudan Jan Pronk. 'Regime change could take place without violence. The middle strata between grass roots and elites—civil society and business—could start to play a new role. They could also be active in ideas and raise issues such as gender and the environment. This was a great new opportunity, in practice as well as theory.'[101]

After more than 15 years, however, there is considerable frustration at the national and global levels at the extent to which there continues to be 'old wine in new bottles': democratic structures that still operate according to the traditional rules and routines of elitist, top–down power politics. The catalogue of seemingly intractable problems presented in Chapter 1.2 attests to the concrete results of this discouraging pattern of business-as-usual. There are, to be sure, inspiring examples of change. But there is a pressing need for change that is deeper, broader and more sustainable if the promise of the end of the cold war is to be realized.

This Handbook and the body of practice it draws upon represent a response to that need, one that is focused not on any one issue or particular structure but on a *process* for addressing a wide range of issues and for operating within diverse structures to produce more positive results. Part 1 has defined the process, which we call dialogue, and has set forth an understanding of the needs it addresses, how it works and what it can accomplish, on the basis of the conceptual constructs and practical experience of people who have been using it. Part 2 ventures into the details of dialogue processes to offer guidance on how to explore, design, launch and execute an initiative, again drawing on the accumulated experience and wisdom of practitioners. It also addresses some of the challenges people face in doing this work. Part 3 presents an overview of a broad array of dialogue initiatives and three in-depth cases, so as further to ground the reader's understanding in the practice field.

Part 2:

Putting Concepts into Practice

Chapter 2.1: Introduction

This section of the Handbook offers advice and practical wisdom gained in the field by people who are using dialogue in countries all over the world. It does not prescribe a particular method or offer a recipe for successful dialogue. Rather, it outlines the elements needed and presents an array of methods, tools and suggestions, along with examples that show how others have used them. In the end, each practitioner must fashion a particular approach based on its specific context and purpose.

That said, the governing principles of dialogue processes introduced in Chapter 1.3 can help inform the many judgements and choices a practitioner will have to make. These principles are inclusiveness, joint ownership, learning, humanity and a long-term perspective. It may be helpful to think of them as the basic dimensions of dialogue practice—they are what make dialogue an effective tool for addressing the complex challenges facing societies in the 21st century.

These governing principles offer a framework for thinking about the characteristics of the dialogue processes that help to make them successful. The following chapters address how these principles inform one's practice when exploring

See The Dialogic Approach, Chapter 1.3.

the possibilities for a dialogue, designing the dialogue process, implementing the design, addressing the need for monitoring and evaluation, and handling some of the challenges that are most common in dialogue work. Before turning to those steps, however, we address two overarching issues: the dialogue practitioners and the roles they play; and the way in which experienced dialogue practitioners recommend working, which we call the dialogic approach, as discussed in Chapter 1.3.

Dialogue Practitioners and the Roles They Play

As stated in the Introduction, this Handbook is addressed to dialogue *practitioners*—people actively or potentially engaged in doing dialogue work, as opposed to analysing or theorizing about it—and we distinguish among three types:

- decision-makers
- dialogue promoters
- process experts.

The purpose of these distinctions is simply to draw attention to the different roles people and institutions can play, depending on where they sit. Different roles have different advantages and constraints. For example, when the need or opportunity for a dialogue arises, decision-makers in a position of leadership can play a key role in empowering a dialogue process by making the institution a sponsor or a participant. At the same time, their power to convene a dialogue may be constrained by problems of legitimacy and credibility, or by competing obligations and responsibilities—such as, in the case of government, to a political party or a particular policy. They may then need support from other actors perceived as more neutral to establish the legitimacy of the dialogue process. This is a significant pattern in actual practice. Many of the dialogue processes described in Part 2 and Appendix 1 were initiated from within national governments but received support from international institutions, either intergovernmental organizations or non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Dialogue promoters within international organizations can often be important in establishing the neutrality needed to bring diverse participants into a dialogue process, but their ability to play a role may be constrained by the limitations of their mandates. Civil society organizations that operate internationally, such as Interpeace or the Carter Center, as well as national organizations, may have more flexibility than intergovernmental organizations in promoting dialogues, but they also have relatively less convening power or influence in the matter of engaging government actors.

In short, institutional contexts significantly shape the roles that individual practitioners can play. This applies not only in the initiation phase, but throughout all the hard work of building support for and putting together a process based on the governing principles of a dialogue. The experts who help design and facilitate these processes must be sensitive to this issue if they are to play their role effectively. Similarly, for decision-makers or dialogue promoters who are reading this Handbook and considering how to launch a dialogue initiative, it is important to start by assessing one's own position and the particular strengths and limitations that may be part of it. This brief overview suggests that, in most cases, inter-institutional cooperation is essential to success.

It is also important to recognize that—in addition to various institutional strengths—three kinds of capacities are crucial for the design and implementation of dialogue processes:

- **Technical**. This includes familiarity with methodologies, approaches, tools and techniques that facilitate group process, innovation and decision-making.

- **Political**. Political competency includes the capacity for reading, understanding and being sensitive to the shifting power dynamics that characterize the complex context in which dialogue processes unfold.

- **Cultural**. This is the capacity for inter-cultural understanding and sensitivity.

All these capacities are essential in shaping *how* a dialogue initiative develops, which ultimately is as important as *what* the initiative is about. Experienced individuals often have a sense for all of these, but rarely are all of them fully developed in a single individual. Thus, as with institutions, there is a need for cooperation, so that the various capacities complement each other to sustain the overall effort.

The Dialogic Approach

Regardless of the situation from which one steps into the practitioner role, the essence of this work is to cultivate a broadly shared sense of ownership in the dialogue initiative and its outcomes. This means ensuring that people are involved, making them feel included, and encouraging them to participate actively in the process. This is where the dialogic approach takes on practical importance.

As described in Chapter 1.3, the dialogic approach captures the collective understanding of experienced practitioners about how to embark on the task of initiating, promoting, organizing and facilitating dialogue processes. It is a kind of code of conduct derived from the governing principles that define dialogue processes. The following table suggests the logical steps through which one can move from principles to a set of guidelines for behaviour.

Table 2.1.1 The Dialogue Approach

The Dialogic Approach			
Governing Principles	**Goals**	**Qualities**	**Behaviours**
• Inclusiveness • Joint ownership • Learning • Humanity • Long-term perspective	• Engage all parts of the system • Create the conditions for change on the basis of important issues • Foster learning; facilitate deeper understanding • Create the sense of safety required for openness • Foster commitment to achieving sustainable change	• Respectfulness • Transparency • Openness • Empathy • Authenticity • Patience • Flexibility	• Inquire to learn • Share what you know • Listen empathetically • Reflect back what you are hearing • Explore underlying assumptions—yours and those of others • Acknowledge emotions as well as ideas and opinions • Adjust course to reflect new knowledge or understanding

Of course, different practitioners may use different language to capture what they think are the critical aspects of effective dialogue work, or they may emphasize some behaviours as particularly important. Nevertheless, there is broad agreement that there should be consistency between one's own behaviour and what one advocates as proper behaviour for dialogue participants. This is what practitioners mean when they suggest that dialogue should not be practised simply as a tool or strategy to achieve particular results, but as a basic modus operandi that expresses a particular philosophy. In the words of Indian dialogue practitioner Meenakshi Gopinath, this is a matter of 'ethical perspective'.[102] It is also an effective way to establish conditions favourable to a successful dialogue process. Here are three rules of thumb to support the practice of the dialogic approach: on inquiry, transparency and self-reflection.

1. **Inquiry is a practitioner's most valuable tool**. In the hundreds of conversations conducted to bring about a dialogue, adopting the stance of an inquirer rather than that of an advocate will do much to establish the open relationships that are conducive to dialogue. Being curious about people, listening to their stories and showing empathy are ways of connecting to them as human beings and treating them with respect. This means asking questions, not just to gather information but also to understand and learn from others. The practitioner's role is to draw people into the dialogue, not impose a dialogue on them. Drawing from them the issues they see as important, and encouraging them to voice their aspirations, are ways to build support for working together to address those issues.

2. **Transparency is essential for building and maintaining trust**. Acting with transparency as an individual means sharing relevant information; acknowledging the issues at stake and the problems that arise, even when they are difficult, sensitive or embarrassing; and expressing one's true thoughts and feelings when they are called for in a conversation. This kind of behaviour by dialogue practitioners establishes a basis for people to trust them and, through them, to trust the process leading to a dialogue. This kind of trust is needed to build an inclusive dialogue, which by definition must draw in people from different sides of political, socio-economic, cultural, religious and ethnic divides. Working across these divisions and mitigating the power imbalances typically associated with them are some of the greatest challenges in dialogue work. How practitioners conduct themselves as individuals or as part of a team, of course, will not itself address these difficult challenges. If people perceive the practitioner as genuine and trustworthy, however, he or she can become a more effective agent in moving the whole system towards addressing them.

3. **Self-reflection holds the key to openness and flexibility**. Learning entails being open to new ideas and perspectives, and this often requires acknowledging and relinquishing assumptions and preconceptions, at least temporarily. To relinquish them, however, one needs to be aware of them, which entails self-reflection. Similarly, to be transparent and flexible about the agenda one brings to a conversation, one needs to be aware of it in the first place. Modelling self-awareness, openness and flexibility may be one of the most powerful steps a practitioner can take to advance the dialogue process. Taking different perspectives into account as one moves forward will establish a foundation of collective thinking on which trust and ownership can be built.

As one sets out to practise the dialogic approach, it may be helpful to acknowledge at the outset how difficult it can be: how easily one can slip from inquiry into advocacy when challenged by people who see things very differently; how hard it is to be transparent amid sensitive and often complicated interactions; how readily one can become reactive and lose perspective on one's own underlying assumptions or agenda. Practising this approach, however, is not only possible; it is also vital to achieving success in the core task of building people's trust in and commitment to the dialogue process. Whether one's strength lies mainly in technical process expertise or in political wisdom and skill, the capacity to operate dialogically is an essential one to develop in order to do this work.

How to Use This Section

Figure 2.1.1 illustrates the major stages of a dialogue initiative and how they interrelate. The remaining chapters in Part 2 address these stages: exploring; designing the dialogue process; implementing the design; and monitoring and evaluation. The final chapter highlights some of the most common challenges that practitioners confront.

Figure 2.1.1 Process Design Flow Chart

Need for Dialogue Identified

Knowledge/Competencies Required
- Political (Political intuition / influence & legitimacy)
- Technical (Process know-how)
- Cultural (Intimate knowledge of cultural context)

Chapter 2.2 "Exploring Possibilities for Dialogue"

Initial Quick Assessment
Conditions to move forward?

Comprehensive Assessment
Issues ◆ Actors ◆ Context

Conditions to move forward?

Chapter 2.2

If Not Dialogue...
Then what?

Contribute to strengthening conditions for future dialogue

Chapter 2.3 "Designing the Dialogue Process"

Develope Design
Form Co-Design team to:
- Explore alternative approaches / methods
- Co-create draft of mandate or concept proposal (purpose, actors, process, ground rules, role)
- Articulate resources required

Chapter 2.3

Convening Process
- Present draft proposal
- Gather & incorporate feedback
- Address 'spoilers' – develop strategies for bringing others into the process
- Finalize MANDATE document

Conditions to move forward?

Chapter 2.4 "Implementing the Dialogue Process"

Implementation of Dialogue Process

Preparation ⟶ Events ⟷ Between Events
- Training
- Capacity-building
- Intragroup
- Intergroup
- Communication
- Follow-up

Chapter 2.5 "Monitoring & Evaluation"

Ongoing Monitoring & Evaluation
Learning / Adapting / Reporting

The 'Feel' of the Process

By laying things out in this way, we aim to provide a clear sense of what lies ahead for the prospective practitioner who comes to this section of the Handbook saying: 'I can see that dialogue may be a useful tool in my situation ... Now what?'. But in dialogue processes, of course, as in other aspects of life, events tend not to unfold in such a linear fashion. Being inclusive and interactive, dialogue initiatives are highly dynamic and unpredictable, just as—invariably—are the societal contexts in which they unfold. As a result, they require continual adaptation. Guatemalan practitioner Miguel Ángel Balcárcel notes that this spiral pattern 'means that frequently we have the impression that we're going backward, but we're going forward at a different level'. Understanding this pattern, he suggests, 'enables us to avoid becoming discouraged when we have to go back to steps or tools that we feel belong to a previous stage'.[103] Thus it may be useful to recognize at the outset that, while the steps in Figure 2.1.1 may be helpful for planning, the experience of the process is more likely to be like Figure 2.1.2.

Figure 2.1.2 The Flow of a Dialogue Process
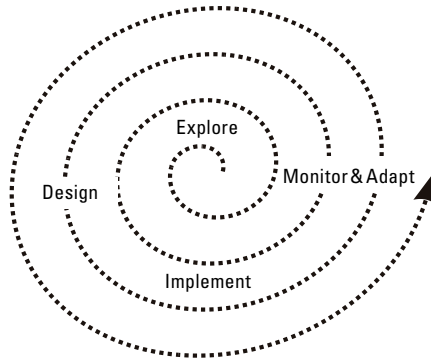
Still, understanding that there will be uncertainties and the need for adjustments, it is important to be rigorous in thinking the process through at the start. In this sense, practitioners are something like an architect who must assess all the relevant factors influencing a prospective building before producing a design. Then they must work with the builder who will implement the design and be responsive to the needs of the people who will occupy the building; those needs may only become apparent as the structure takes shape. The quality of the end result will depend on both the strength of the original design and the creativity of the architect and the builder in making the necessary adjustments.

We hope that the following chapters will support both aspects of the practitioner's role. Working through them in a linear fashion may support a rigorous prior assessment and a clear thinking-through of the design for a dialogue process—from taking the first steps towards convening, to a well planned evaluation of results. Subsequently, the reader may find it helpful to revisit particular sections. These might, for example, provide support in developing plans more fully, suggest an alternative to a process tool that is not working as intended, or offer a suggestion on how to deal with an unanticipated development or challenge.

Chapter 2.2: Exploring the Possibility for Dialogue

This chapter examines the steps to be taken to determine if a dialogue process is feasible and appropriate in a given situation. It outlines a means of gathering the necessary information on the issues, the actors and the context. Should the dialogue process proceed, this information will provide the essential 'baseline analysis' to guide process design and form the basis for evaluating the initiative's progress and outcomes. The chapter also offers some suggestions on how to make the case for a dialogue process when the situation calls for it.

Understanding Assessment as Intervention

The most important factor to keep in mind at this preliminary stage is that the assessment of whether a dialogue process is a possible and appropriate response to a situation is not simply a data-gathering exercise that precedes an intervention. The exploration itself is an intervention. The people one chooses to talk to, the kinds of questions one asks and the expectations one raises just by talking about the possibility of dialogue—all of these exploratory

> *The exploration itself is an intervention. The people one chooses to talk to, the kinds of questions one asks, the expectations one raises just by talking about the possibility of dialogue—all these exploratory activities will have some impact on the situation, whether or not a decision is reached to proceed with a dialogue process.*

activities will have some impact on the situation, whether or not a decision is reached to proceed with a dialogue process. Recognizing this at the outset, practitioners can be aware and intentional about conducting an assessment in ways that foster positive changes.

Ideally, the assessment process can help create the conditions for dialogue. Dialogic engagement and serious consideration of stakeholder concerns from the outset will do much to create the trust, acceptance and support that will bring people to the point of taking ownership of the challenges they face and of the process for addressing them. In that sense, the exploration step is highly interconnected and overlapping with the

convening and process design activities discussed in Chapter 2.3. Even if conditions prohibit moving forward with a dialogue process, however, the assessment process itself may have served the stakeholders by deepening their knowledge and understanding through inquiry and reflection.

Finally, the information and understanding gained through the assessment will lay the foundation for continuous learning and adaptation as the initiative proceeds. Continual monitoring of progress, constructive feedback and mid-course correction can then become intrinsic parts of the process as it moves forward. Additionally, it is essential to create this learning framework at the beginning if impacts are to be assessed effectively later. We return to this topic in Chapter 2.5.

To summarize, the assessment process carried out during the exploration stage serves several purposes simultaneously.

1. **It serves the *design process* by:**
*   eliciting stakeholder participation
*   producing key information and insights for shaping process design
*   assessing the ripeness of conditions for success.

2. **It serves *stakeholders and potential participants* by:**
*   establishing a shared body of knowledge and understanding of the situation's history and background, as well as of the stakeholders' perceptions and goals
*   fostering a process of self-reflection in which parties gain a clearer appreciation of their own positions and those of others, as well as of their interrelationships
*   helping to strengthen or re-frame relationships.

3. **It serves *monitoring and evaluation* by:**
*   establishing a pattern of rigorous analysis of conditions and context to support continual monitoring and adaptation
*   creating a baseline of information and understanding for the eventual evaluation of outcomes.

Two Levels of Assessment

Going into the exploration step of a dialogue initiative, it is helpful to recognize that this is likely to be an extensive undertaking that requires a considerable amount of time—months, in most cases, and perhaps as much as a year in complicated situations, such as Interpeace's engagement in Rwanda. Understanding that it is not only a matter of data collection but is also an action and an intervention in itself (one that is usually well worth the time and resources invested) may help the practitioner and others involved to resist the inevitable pressure to move quickly to launch a new initiative. The assessment establishes the participatory nature of the dialogue initiative and begins the process of engaging people in it.

In practice, when an apparent need or opportunity for a dialogue process arises, there are two levels of assessment. The first—a quick assessment—is the process that individual practitioners and their institutions undertake to decide whether circumstances justify investing the time and resources required for the second level of assessment—the more comprehensive analysis mentioned below. This is the gateway to a more thorough exploration. Drawing on sources such as one's own knowledge and experience, informal networks, news media and published reports, a quick assessment comprises the following questions:

- Who is calling for dialogue and why? (both explicit reasons and other, less explicit reasons)

- What power or level of influence do they have?

- What previous attempts at addressing this issue have been made?

- Why now? What has changed in the context that makes the possibility or need for dialogue important now?

- Who else should be involved?

- Who else has been working on this issue and what are they currently doing?

Depending on the answers, practitioners and their institutions may decide that the situation or the timing is not right for a dialogue process. In a crisis, for example, the level of violence or disruption may be so high that it is impossible to create a sense of physical safety for the dialogue participants. In a national-level dialogue, government participation or endorsement is needed. But the practitioner would not want to proceed if the initiative originated with a government leader who seeks a particular outcome and is unwilling to empower a dialogue group. Or the problem of dialogue fatigue might have to be addressed if the conditions for new dialogue are to be created.

If the results of the quick assessment are favourable, the practitioner should move to a second level of assessment. This is the rigorous, consultative, dialogic, learning process that serves the several purposes outlined above. At this stage of a dialogue initiative, the need for both **political** and **technical** capacities begins to emerge. Political knowledge, sensitivity and skill are needed to gain access to the people who must be consulted in order to make a full assessment. There is also a need for technical knowledge and skills such as familiarity with analytical tools and process methodologies, and the capacity for interviewing and empathetic listening that is required to work dialogically. In practice, these requirements tend to dictate the expansion of the group working on the assessment, often by means of working with key information providers who can help make connections to others and make sense of the information gathered through the assessment process.

Practitioners have suggested the following as potential sources of essential information:

- government officials
- community or tribal leaders
- security forces
- international NGOs, international donors
- local universities
- think tanks
- national NGOs
- women's groups
- religious organizations
- youth organizations.

For example, in a year-long assessment process in Rwanda in 2000, Interpeace relied on four sets of key information providers to guide its broad interview process:[104]

- a group of individuals from various countries connected to Interpeace who had lived in Rwanda in the 1990s and had developed networks of Rwandans

- four Rwandans, each of them a senior public figure, who acted as an informal 'reference' group to Interpeace, especially in helping it understand conditions in the country

- a talented Rwandan who worked on a consultancy basis to deepen Interpeace's understanding and broaden its range of contacts

- 20 influential Rwandans who were interviewed and asked to recommend others who could provide a 'balanced view' of things.

> **Conducting an assessment**
> 'Generally, "good enough" thinking is required. This means accepting that the analysis can never be exhaustive, nor provide absolute certainty … Nevertheless, you should trust your findings, even though some aspects may remain unclear. Do not be discouraged; some analysis, no matter how imperfect, is better than no analysis at all.'
> See Wisdom from the Field – Sources (p. 236) for the sources of these materials.

On the basis of its experience in Rwanda and elsewhere, Interpeace has formulated three 'principles of good practice' for engaging information providers in the exploration process:[105]

- Individuals have their own networks. Different and complementary networks have to be pursued. The network of one or two individuals cannot be allowed to dominate the development and broadening of contacts and relationships.

- It must be made clear from an early stage that the intent is to have a truly inclusive and transparent process. Government officials, for example, reacted with apprehension when the team met a major opposition figure early on. These apprehensions were somewhat allayed when that meeting was openly and transparently discussed with government officials.

- The government should be engaged at a sufficiently high level. The Director of Interpeace met very senior government officials near the start of the process to make the case that the initiative would benefit Rwandans in their desire for reconciliation and durable peace.

Full Assessment: Understanding the Issue, the Actors and the Context

On a personal level, people typically initiate a dialogue because they feel that something important is missing or wrong in the current situation, and that certain changes aimed at addressing those deficiencies would benefit society. Institutions begin a dialogue in pursuit of their missions. Practitioners, however, know they cannot proceed on the basis of 'feel' alone, and that the implementation of institutional missions must be informed by the reality on the ground. It is essential to make the effort to understand the actors involved in the situation and the context in which they are operating, in order to:

- be clear that dialogue is the right way to proceed in the current situation

- advocate proceeding to a dialogue, if that is the best next step

- establish a sound basis for knowing how to proceed with the greatest prospect of success

- begin enrolling people as supporters of and/or participants in the dialogue process

- establish a baseline for monitoring and evaluation.

See Chapter 2.2 on Finding the Most Appropriate Path Forward

See Chapter 2.2 on Making the Case for Dialogue

See Chapter 2.3 on Designing the Dialogue Process

See Chapter 2.4 on Implementation

See Chapter 2.5 on Monitoring and Evaluation.

The decision to pursue a dialogue initiative must be grounded in a solid understanding of the problem or challenge to be addressed, the context that shapes the challenge and the key participants. Developing sufficient understanding of these aspects of a situation can be an enormous task. In a workshop, one practitioner group likened it to assembling a jigsaw puzzle. Fortunately, however, there is a substantial body of concepts, approaches and tools for this undertaking, many of which are accessible on the Internet. Here we provide a basic overview of the task and some suggestions on how to approach it, as well as an introduction to the tools available and information on where to find them.

Parameters of the Exploraton

There is a variety of analytical frameworks and approaches to choose from. Many of them come from the field of conflict prevention, but there is also a growing body of information on 'participatory' or 'multi-stakeholder' processes that are
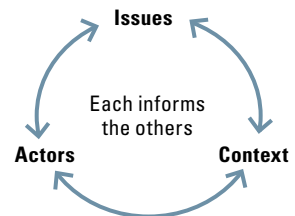
not specifically conflict-related but focus on economic and human development, or on strengthening democratic governance. Each framework provides a specific list of topics to consider and questions to ask. Common to all of them is an effort to understand three basic elements, here termed the *issue*, the *actors* and the *context*.

It is important to recognize that the investigation of the context and actors will inform the definition of the challenges, and vice versa—they are not separate activities but different facets of a single exploration. Research in sources such as documents, books, newspapers or other media will be valuable, even essential in some cases. But practitioners recommend that, for the most part, the exploration should be highly participatory, whether people are drawn in through individual consultations, focus groups, polls, surveys, questionnaires or some combination of these formats. Thus it is helpful to proceed with an awareness that the process of convening the dialogue, should there be one, begins in this phase.

The Issue

This element of the assessment might be thought of as defining the problem, or the subject matter to be addressed by the dialogue initiative. In development work, it might be called a needs assessment. When conflict is the focus, it is the conflict analysis.

An initial definition of the issue provides the impetus for considering a dialogue initiative in the first place. Drawing on the body of cases referred to in Appendix 1, this initial definition may come from:

> **Understanding the issue**
> • Spending time to understand the problem is essential—this phase is as critical as the dialogue itself.
> • Focus on opportunities instead of the problem itself.
> • There are two levels of understanding the problem and several layers to each level:
> 1. How the actors understand and relate to the problem—their positions, interests, needs and values.
> 2. The facets of the problem itself—political, economic and social.
>
> See Wisdom from the Field – Sources (p. 236) for the sources of these materials.

- a government official who calls on the practitioner to help organize a dialogue process. For example,

  o President Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique calling on the Carter Center in 1997 to support a dialogue of national reconciliation

  o the Guatemalan government officials of the Departmental Commission of Attention to Conflicts calling on the OAS/PROPAZ programme to help address the problem of persistent conflict in the province of Huehuetenango

- the mission of the international organization or NGO within which the practitioner sits. For example,

  o IDEA pursuing its mission of democracy-building in the South Caucasus region, Nepal or Burkina Faso; or the Resident Representatives of UNDP

working to advance human development in Jamaica, Paraguay or Mauritania

- a crisis with violence, or the imminent threat of it, as in the dialogue initiated by the President of Argentina in 2002 amid political crisis and civil unrest.

Starting from these initial formulations, the practitioner's task is to explore more widely and deeply, in order to understand the issue from a variety of perspectives and to frame the challenge more robustly. For example, one should try to get a sense of the problem's history or background, recognizing that there are likely to be competing versions of the story and that the differences may be significant. One should also investigate the situation from different angles. For instance, one list of topics for a situational analysis in preparation for multi-stakeholder dialogues includes the following: problems and issues; visions and opportunities; biological/physical environment; organizations; infrastructure; legal, policy and political institutions; economic conditions and markets; and social and cultural conditions.[106]

Defining the problem in a conflict situation
Simply stating that the problem is 'an absence of dialogue' can appear a bit easy. There may very well have been past 'dialogue projects' and others that are continuing, while of course people in the society do 'talk' and send messages, directly or indirectly, to each other. The problem may lie more in the nature of the existing dialogues than in a total absence of 'dialogue'. Identifying 'the problem' in too general terms (e.g. 'they don't trust each other') is also not very helpful from an operational point of view. We want to look for some of the critical socio-political areas (the 'issues') where the problem manifests itself clearly, and where especially the people of the society concerned feel that a constructive dynamic towards resolution is required.

See Wisdom from the Field – Sources (p. 237) for the sources of these materials.

In many cases, conflict or the potential for conflict will be integral to the challenge. Whether or not a practitioner chooses to label the exploration a 'conflict analysis', this body of ideas and analytical frameworks can help support a rigorous and thorough approach to this essential step in a dialogue initiative. As stated in one important source on conflict analysis, the *Resource Pack on Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding*, it is common to equate conflict with overt violence. The *Resource Pack* presents an alternative view that conflict is 'all the socio-economic and political tensions, root causes and structural factors [that] have the potential to become violent'.[107]

> *[Conflict is] a natural, multi-dimensional phenomenon that is typically indicative of change within society … [It] occurs when two or more parties believe that their interests are incompatible, express hostile attitudes, or take action that damages other parties' ability to pursue their interests. It becomes violent when parties no longer seek to obtain their goals peacefully, but resort instead to violence of one form or another.*[108]

When a practitioner frames the exploration in this way, it is important not only to identify the 'root causes of the conflict', but also to look for the opportunities for change: 'the possible transformation in the driving factors and motivations of the conflicting

parties over time'. In addition, one should look at past efforts to deal with the conflict. This involves 'a critical review of previous attempts, by internal and external actors, to bring "peace", which usually means transforming the conflict either through finding "solutions" or by taking the violence out of the conflict dynamic'.[109]

The Actors

Some practitioners refer to this part of the assessment as 'actor mapping'. Others call it 'stakeholder analysis'. Regardless of terminology, however, there is broad agreement that understanding the actors, and understanding the substantive issues through those actors (both those who might participate in a dialogue process and the many others who might influence or inform it) is essential to determining the viability of a dialogue initiative. Developing this understanding is a central element of every methodology for assessment referred to in the 'Tools for Assessment' section below.

> **When mapping actors**
> - Identify expectations, incentives and disincentives.
> - Identify potential spoilers who could block or sabotage the dialogue process if they tried.
> - Identify the power brokers—people with connections to influential parties.
> - Identify those who are resources for analysing context.
>
> See Wisdom from the Field – Sources (p. 237) for the sources of these materials.

As the name suggests, 'actor mapping' involves discerning individual positions and the relationships between the actors—in effect, the dynamics of the situation. For some practitioners this literally involves creating a visual map. Others use different analytical tools. Box 2.2.1 combines some of the most common elements of various approaches to suggest a basic framework for analysing the actors, their interrelationships and their perspectives on the challenge to be addressed in the dialogue initiative.

Box 2.2.1. A Framework for Actor Mapping/Stakeholder Analysis						
Actor	Interests/ needs/ goals/ concerns	Perception of/ position on key issues	Connections to others/ quality of relationships	Openness to/ support for a dialogue process	Power/ means of influence	Potential role/ contribution

Actors. The 'actors' important to a potential dialogue include institutions and interest groups, as well as individuals. A thorough analysis deals not only with the major groups and institutions but also the diversity that may exist *within* them—for example, within 'the Church' or 'civil society' or 'the government'.

Interests/needs/goals/concerns. Deep knowledge of what is at stake for different actors in a situation is one of the most critical pieces of analysis.

> **On power relationships within stakeholder groups and institutions**
> A good actor analysis will also look at the relationship between different interest groups and their leaders, the (sometimes shifting) balance of power and, in a broader sense, what appears to be the 'political culture': the attitude to power that seems to prevail in the mind and in the actions of the major 'power brokers'.
>
> See Wisdom from the Field – Sources (p. 237) for the sources of these materials.

Perception of/position on key issues. Quite often the different constituencies in a situation tell very different stories about that situation, describing their particular realities on the basis of different perceptions, interests and concerns. The practitioner must be able to combine these different realities into a new story that adequately reflects the different perceptions of the parties.

Connections to others/quality of relationships. A good actor analysis will also look at the relationships between different actors. This is where actual mapping—visually representing where people stand in relation to others and the nature of their relationships—can lead to understanding.

Openness to/support for a dialogue process. This is critical to determining whether there is an opportunity for a dialogue initiative. At the same time, this is where there is an overlap between the activity of assessing the opportunity and the activity of building support for and enrolling people in the initiative.

Power/means of influence. This element of the stakeholder analysis assesses the actors' capacities to affect events and influence other people. For people who wield power, it assesses the nature of their power base and their tactics. It enables the practitioner to identify those who can be champions of a dialogue initiative and, just as important, those who could act as 'spoilers' and undermine or derail it if they chose to.

Potential role/contribution. Assessing what role each actor might play, both in the dialogue and in bringing about change, is a key output of all the analysis. It will inform the process of enrolling supporters, participants and other contributors in the dialogue initiative.

The Context

Much of the information gathered in the course of analysing the challenge and the actors will aid understanding of the context in which any dialogue process would unfold. It may be useful, however, to think of context specifically as something both broader and deeper than the situation at hand. Three aspects of context typically included in assessment methodologies are the historical, the political and the social/cultural.

Historical Context

Deep understanding of the current situation requires knowing the basic outlines of how the situation came about. In the conversations that are part of exploring the challenge and mapping the actors, one can gain a sense of the historical context by asking informants to tell the story of how the current situation came to be. There will be different narratives from different perspectives, of course, but taken together they will provide a rich sense of historical context. Additionally, part of this knowledge will probably be publicly available in news stories, articles, books or other documents that describe how events unfolded.

As mentioned in the section on assessing the challenge, understanding historical context also involves knowing the history of the issue(s) that the dialogue is to address. For example, what previous attempts have been made to address these or related issues, and what were the outcomes? Do people in the society feel that something has altered to create an opportunity for a different outcome, such as the removal of a long-term leader or the emergence of a powerful advocate for change? It is also valuable to understand the community's past experience with dialogue on these or other issues. Perhaps there is a tradition of deciding issues in councils of elders. Or perhaps a history of failed dialogue has made people cynical about the possibility of resolving issues in this way. Understanding these aspects of historical context can be important when determining whether the present moment is ripe for a change initiative centred on dialogue.

Political Context

Political context goes beyond the structures of governance to cover issues of power. In large part, the outlines of the political context will emerge from the stakeholder analysis. It can also be valuable, however, to develop a broader picture of the whole situation in order to discern how it may affect the viability and outcomes of a dialogue initiative. For example, the following list highlights aspects of political context in the cases covered by Appendix 1, which latter may suggest issues to consider in other situations as a guide to determining whether a dialogue initiative is feasible and, if so, what its characteristics should be:

- credibility, stability of government institutions and authorities (Argentina)
- level of cohesion or tension within the government or governing party (Bolivia)
- extent to which minority parties cooperate in the political process (Burkina Faso)
- lack of experience with or trust in democratic governance (Georgia, South Caucasus)
- political divisions along ethnic lines (Guyana)
- threats of government overthrow (Mauritania)
- need for political reconstruction in the aftermath of protracted civil war (Mozambique, Guatemala)
- political pressures from outside the country (Panama)

- corruption, and political disillusionment and apathy among the population (Paraguay)

- political crisis and confrontation (Argentina, Peru, Venezuela)

- open civil war (Tajikistan).

Social/Cultural Context

Data gathering for the purposes of problem definition and stakeholder analysis will aid understanding of this key aspect of context,

but—as with historical context—more research may be needed if the whole situation is to be grasped. A broad sense of social groups and interrelationships may be critical to assessing the opportunity for dialogue and the direction in which it might go. Here too it might be helpful literally to map out the social groups according to their levels of interdependence and cohesion or their polarization.

Cultural differences are often an essential part of the social landscape that the practitioner must try to understand. Whether they stem from ethnicity, religion, language or other defining factors, these differences tend to be deeply rooted and can impede the coordination of meaning described in Chapter 1.2. If the organizers or facilitators of a dialogue process are insensitive to such differences, the prospects of a successful outcome can be undermined.

It is also useful to consider the human resources available to support dialogue activities within a society. Education can be crucial in this regard. Practitioners point to the historical example of the emergence of dialogue groups within book clubs in Scandinavia, a development that paralleled a rise in literacy there. Wide educational disparities can significantly hamper efforts to move beyond dialogues among elites, and the practitioner's planning would have to take account of such disparities. Other societal resources can also be significant. In the Argentine Dialogue, for example, the availability of local dialogue facilitators was important. Similarly, in Bolivia the presence of a 'numerous and comparatively sophisticated' group of NGOs, 'with a capacity to research the issues and engage in public policy formulation', enabled strong civil society participation in national dialogues.[110]

Engaging the Actors in Conversation

Since exploration is really the first step in convening a dialogue, one must proceed carefully and with sensitivity to context. It is also important to start applying one's dialogue principles from the outset. There follow some steps to consider in the process.

1. Plan carefully in order to build credibility, not to erode it.

- Who one talks to, and the order in which the discussions are held, can send signals about one's intentions.

2. **Take time to prepare for each conversation.**

- Be as well informed as possible about the interviewee by reviewing prior conversations and consulting available information sources such as institutional reports and newspapers.

- Consider both the content to be covered and the quality of conversation sought. For example, plan an opening line of inquiry that will engage the interlocutor positively, and anticipate challenges that may arise.

- Reflect on whether one has a preconceived agenda, ideas, biases or fears that might impede openness and empathy in the conversation.

In these conversations, practitioners can create the possibility of engagement in a dialogue while in the process of exploring it. They do this simply by listening to people's stories, asking their opinions and trying to understand their perspectives on important issues. Below are examples of the kind of open-ended questions that can facilitate such inquiry.

3. **Consider the cost/benefit of engaging in a dialogue process.**

- What would you stand to gain by participating in such a process? What would you risk losing?

- What do you stand to gain by *not* participating in such a process? What do you risk losing by not participating?

4. **Identify the conditions necessary for engagement.**

- If you were to participate in a dialogue process to deal with this issue, what would you need to make it worth the effort?

5. **Identify other stakeholders.**

- Who else do you think would need to be involved in this process in order for it to succeed?

- Who else should we talk to?

6. **Identify the scope of the issue(s).**

- If a process were designed to deal with this issue, what other issues do you think must also be addressed in this process?

- What are the issues that should not be addressed, or that you would be unwilling to address in this process?

7. Identify expectations.

• If this process was ultimately successful by your standards, what would it look like to you?

• What is the most likely scenario if the situation continues as it is without significant change in how people are acting?

One of the greatest challenges is to keep an inquiry going in the face of a marked lack of enthusiasm. Box 2.2.2 suggests the kind of questions that might help to do that.

Box 2.2.2. Inquiring into the Reasons for not Wanting Dialogue		
Reasons for lack of interest	**Underlying assumption**	**Questions to open inquiry**
I can achieve my goals without it	• Current situation is working and is acceptable • Low interdependence	What are your goals and how can you achieve them? How do they take account of other parties and their efforts to achieve their goals?
Dialogue fatigue	• These kinds of processes are futile. Lots of talk but no real change	Tell me about your previous experiences with dialogue and where they went wrong.
Risk to personal reputation	• Participating in dialogue amounts to compromising one's position • Engaging in dialogue is a sign of weakness	What are the possible positive or negative consequences of choosing not to participate? What possible outcomes of a dialogue would make it worthwhile to take the risk?
Deep distrust	• Inadequate safety • Expectation of negative outcomes from cooperation	What would it take to make you feel comfortable enough to participate? If things continue as they are, what is the most likely future you can imagine?

Tools for Assessment

With the expanding use of dialogue in the public sphere and the growing recognition of its potential value, practitioners have begun to work towards systematizing methodologies and tools so as to make them more readily available to others. As mentioned earlier, a number of Internet sites offer access to this important field-building

work. Here we profile two that we consider to be particularly helpful for this task. Appendix 2 of this Handbook provides further information on and links to other web sites.

1. **The *Resource Pack on Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding*.**[111] Readers of this Handbook may find this source extremely useful, whether or not they frame their immediate challenge in terms of conflict. Indeed, the *Resource Pack* makes a convincing argument for the value of being 'conflict-sensitive' in approaching any societal intervention, such as a dialogue initiative. Chapter 2 provides a basic framework for conflict analysis, with three main elements.

- **Profile**: 'a brief characterization of the context within which the intervention will be situated'

- **Causes of conflict**: 'potential and existing conflict causes, as well as possible factors contributing to peace'

- **Actors**: 'all those engaged in or being affected by conflict … individuals, groups, and institutions … as well as those engaged in dealing with conflict'.

In an annex to that chapter, the *Resource Pack* provides a comprehensive overview of 15 assessment methodologies used by a wide range of organizations, including those that participated in creating this resource. Each overview considers several features of the analysis tool:

- main purpose
- intended users
- levels of application
- conceptual assumptions
- main steps and suggested process
- guiding questions/indicators
- required resources
- current applications
- lessons learned
- commentary on the tool
- available reports.

In short, a wealth of information is available to help practitioners adopt the tools presented or adapt them to particular needs and circumstances.

The *Resource Pack* also presents Figure 2.2.1 below, which illustrates a helpful framework for thinking about an intervention (such as a dialogue initiative) in a holistic and dynamic way.[112] This includes understanding how the initial assessment both guides and supports whatever undertaking it may lead to.

Figure 2.2.1 Framework for Intervention
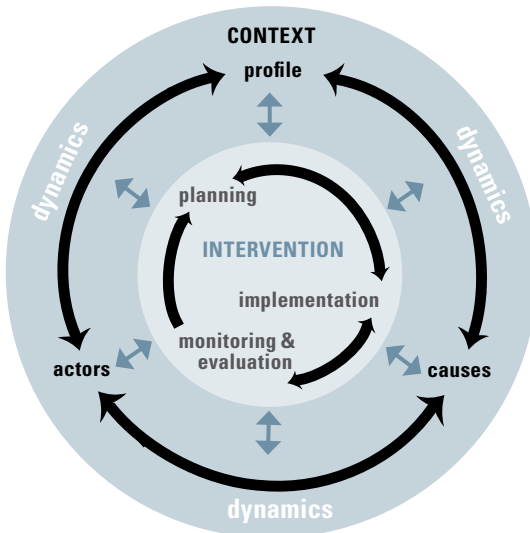
Figure 2.2.1

The **outer circle** represents the conflict analysis of the pre-existing context, organized as profile, actors, causes and their dynamic interaction.

The **inner circle** represents the project cycle of the proposed intervention, organized as planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation components.

The **short arrows** represent the assessment of the interaction between the context and the project.

Source: International Alert et al., *Resource Pack on Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and Peacebuilding*, a joint publication by the Africa Peace Forum, the Center for Conflict Resolution, the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies, the Forum on Early Warning and Early Response, and International Alert (2004), Chapter 1.

2. **The Multi-Stakeholder Process (MSP) Resource Portal**. This is a site developed by the Wageningen International Centre at Wageningen University in the Netherlands. The Centre offers courses for practitioners on how to organize and facilitate multi-stakeholder processes, all centred on its stated focus on learning, participation and systems thinking, and the way they can combine to help develop capacity for sustainable development. The MSP Resource Portal provides a thorough introduction to multi-stakeholder processes, covering concepts, methodologies, tools, facilitation skills and current literature. It also includes case studies, a glossary of terms in the field and links to related websites.

The MSP Resource Portal provides a number of tools that complement those in the *Resource Pack*. They can support a participatory assessment process, inform the planning of a dialogue initiative and be useful in the dialogue process itself. To guide practitioners in deciding when and how each tool may be useful, the Portal maps them onto the following diagram of the cycle of learning from experience, as conceptualized by David Kolb.[113]

Figure 2.2.2 Map of Learning and Analysis Tools

EXPERIENCE

Rich pictures

Brainstorming

Cause-effect mapping

Visioning

Semi-structured interviewing

Mindmapping

Locality mapping

ACTING/IMPLEMENTING

EXPLORING

EXPERIMENTATION

REFLECTION

DECIDING

ANALYSING

Action planning

Nominal group technique

Cause-effect mapping

Vern diagrams

Matrix analysis

Card techniques

Card technique

Interrelationship diagrams

Historical analysis

Row diagrams

Time line

Issue analysis

SWOT analysis

Tools for stakeholder analysis

CONCEPTUALISATION

Learning/analysis tools mapped on the experiential learning cycle.
Source: Multi-stakeholder Process Resource portal, by kind permission.

The learning cycle considers how people move from the sphere of action, which produces experience, to observation and reflection, abstract conceptualization of a new plan of action, and testing that plan through experimentation with further action. Figure 2.2.2 suggests how different tools are relevant to different stages of that cycle, as well as to the specific activities of exploring, analysing and deciding, all of which are part of the assessment task in dialogue work. Like the *Resource Pack*, the Portal provides an overview of tools that practitioners may find useful during the course of a dialogue process.

Finding the Most Appropriate Path Forward

Part 1 of the Handbook explains why practitioners believe that dialogue is a necessary part of creating sustainable change that will have an impact on societal challenges. At the same time, they recognize that a dialogue process may not be possible or appropriate in certain circumstances. Indeed, practitioners caution that launching a dialogue process prematurely may be more detrimental than beneficial.

When circumstances are unfavourable, however, dialogue need not be abandoned. Other steps may be called for, often including simply allowing time for conditions to change and the opportunity to ripen. Here, the dialogic approach becomes important, so that alternative strategies are pursued in a way that also prepares parties for future dialogue.

As with the quick assessment described above, the information gathered from a full assessment may suggest that the time is not right for dialogue. Here we consider positive and negative indicators more fully, suggest some steps that may be taken when the circumstances are not favourable for a dialogue initiative, and offer some recommendations on how to make the case for dialogue when they are.

Indicators Suggesting Ripeness for Dialogue

- There is **broadly based or growing support for participatory processes**. An example is Interpeace's initiative in Rwanda, when 'the new Commissions on National Unity and Reconciliation, Human Rights, the Constitution and Demobilization and Reintegration all adopted some form of consultative approach, and it looked as if an opportunity might be emerging to make a contribution through an impartial but widely connected platform'.[114]

- There is **momentum behind the desire for positive change**. IDEA's dialogue process in Guatemala, for example, featured 'momentum created by the signing of the peace [agreements], a government with high levels of popular support (and with still two years before the electoral race was due to begin), the opening up of spaces for dialogue, enthusiasm of the civil society, and the commitment of international actors to the process'.[115]

- There are **individuals who are willing to lead the way** in trying to address society's challenges through dialogue. Amid a civil war in Tajikistan, for instance, a few prominent citizens were willing to take the risk of talking across the societal divide and agreed to participate in a 'non-official dialogue' that continued for over a decade.

- There is a **sense of urgency** about the need for change that makes people feel responsible for finding solutions and open to taking risks to do so. In the Argentine Dialogue, for example, an archbishop described the leadership role of the Catholic Church in the dialogue process as a 'daring gesture . . . unprecedented in its intention to contribute to the social reconstruction of social links. What was demanded of all with imagination and creativity, the Church had implemented in this way'.[116]

- There are **issues on the public agenda** that leaders feel compelled to address. In the case of the Bambito dialogues in Panama, for example, the challenge of taking control of the Canal and Canal Zone was a topic that everyone in the country

considered highly important. After Bambito III, Panamanian leaders agreed to stop the dialogue until another issue arose that required it.

Basic Conditions for Dialogue

OAS experiences in Latin America, particularly those acquired in peace-building missions, indicate that the following are the basic conditions needed to implement an effective dialogue process.[117]

- **Communication**. Regardless of what kind of dialogue is chosen, the ability to listen and jointly create a broader understanding of the issues, interests and needs of each party, as well as to foster closer interpersonal and inter-institutional relationships, is crucial. The success or failure of the dialogue process will depend on the quality of the interactions and the communication between actors.

- **Political will**. It is essential to find political will and support in the different social sectors, as well as in the state, so as to ensure transparent dialogue and therefore heighten the prospect of reaching an agreement.

- **Upholding legal structures and institutional processes**. The right of actors to engage in free and equal decision-making processes will be strengthened if there is a legal framework to protect that right. This framework must facilitate the interaction between the state and the strategic social sectors.

- **Flow of information**. Social actors and government institutions should have equal and fair access to reliable and relevant information.

- **Training and education**. Successful dialogue requires new and innovative training for actors, enabling them to secure a comprehensive vision of the dialogue process.

- **Financial resources**. The design and implementation of dialogue processes and training depend mainly, but not solely, on financial resources.

In reality, dialogue initiatives often proceed when conditions are less than perfect. Nevertheless, if circumstances such as those in the following checklist prevail, serious consideration might have to be given to the possibility that the time is not right—that certain conditions may have to be strengthened before proceeding with the dialogue process.

Checklist: A Dialogue Process May Not Be Advisable If …

- ✓ There seems to be a significant imbalance of power that will inevitably compromise the dialogue, raising the possibility of cooptation by the more powerful group.

- ✓ Violence, hate and mistrust are stronger than the will to find common ground.

- ✓ Key groups or sectors are insufficiently organized internally, or lack a coherent sense of collective identity.

✓ Key parties lack the will to participate.

✓ Key parties express willingness to participate but seem to be 'going through the motions', with no intention that the process should lead to anything.

✓ Time pressure is too great.

✓ Key parties lack the capacity to follow through, such as when a government has lost credibility or faces an imminent election challenge.

If Not Dialogue, Then What?

When the factors that favour initiation of a dialogue process are absent, what can the practitioner do to bring about the minimum conditions for dialogue to take place? Here is a list of some possibilities:

- **Coalition-building**. One way of contributing to a relative balance of power is to promote coalition-building, in which dialogue can play a crucial role. According to conflict experts, this is the 'primary mechanism through which disempowered parties can develop their power base and thereby better defend their interest'.[118]

- **Intra-group dialogue**. When sectors or groups are simply not ready to participate in a dialogue, it may be possible and wise to promote dialogue internally in order to help them reach the point of readiness—for instance, a dialogue involving only civil society actors to overcome fragmentation and build consensus before they engage with the government.

- **Partial dialogue**. When not all key stakeholders are willing to participate, it is not always necessary to wait until everyone is ready. Another strategy is to proceed with a partial group and build on progress made in that group so as to draw others into the process.

- **Bilateral conversations**. Sometimes a practitioner can draw resistant parties into the dialogue by speaking individually to people who refuse to talk to each other, thereby starting a dialogue by playing an intermediary role.

- **Advocacy**. It might be possible to bring the pressure of public opinion, or world opinion, to bear on reluctant parties by raising awareness about the challenge that needs to be addressed and the opportunity for dialogue on the issues.

> **Working towards dialogue in a polarized society**
>
> 'You know, many of the positive dynamics we associate with dialogue—analysing the problem together, revealing things that were unrevealed before, coming to a shared understanding of what the problem is and therefore a shared vision of what can be done about it—just don't seem to be part of the vocabulary here [in Cyprus] … We are only able to get people to sit down together if we don't talk about what the end product is. We don't talk about the fact that perhaps the goal of this project is for a common vision of what should be done about a particular issue, such as HIV/AIDS, or traffic safety, or animal diseases. Instead, we emphasize the benefits to each community separately. So we say, for example, on the issue of the environment, "Look, this is an issue that affects the island as a whole. It makes sense for you to work on this particular problem. So, it is in your self-interest, as Greek Cypriots, to collaborate with the Turkish Cypriots, because you will have a greater impact by tackling this problem together".'
>
> See Wisdom from the Field – Sources (p. 237) for the sources of these materials.

- **Negotiation/mediation**. In situations of violent or potentially violent conflict, these tools may be needed to establish an environment in which dialogue can proceed. And they can be used in a dialogic way so as to help lay the foundation for dialogue at a later stage.

Making the Case for Dialogue

Throughout a dialogue initiative, and particularly in the exploratory and design phases, the practitioner will be in the position of having to make a case for dialogue. We hope that readers will be able to draw on the concepts and the many examples in this Handbook to support them in that task, always remembering that each case must be shaped by its context. There are no universally applicable dialogue processes. There follow some other things to consider when formulating and presenting the case.

- **Values are important**. Dialogue is defined by principles that are value-laden. One should make these values explicit when talking about the process. A dialogue can be presented as a way of identifying and building on the values that diverse stakeholders share.

- **Different audiences require different approaches**. Stakeholders vary in their perspectives and ways of seeing the world. One should be careful to select topics, priorities and language that respect the audience's sensibilities.

- **All stakeholders in a dialogue have a constituency**. Make the case in a way that will help them communicate to their constituencies that the end result of the dialogue can be a win–win situation for all stakeholders.

- **Dialogue may not be the best or most appropriate term to use**. Consider using others; in Ghana, for example, the term 'national conversations' was used.

Everyone has a stake in the outcome, including the individuals and institutions providing 'technical support' for the dialogue. Practitioners should try to be aware of their own investment in whether the dialogue proceeds—for example, in pursuing an institutional mission, building a career as a process expert or simply being a successful intervener in a problematic situation. In making the case for dialogue, and throughout the exploration process, practitioners should be rigorous in looking at the entire picture. This means paying attention to the evidence *against* dialogue at a particular moment, not focusing solely on the evidence that seems to favour proceeding.

Chapter 2.3: Designing the Dialogue Process

This chapter takes the reader step by step through the design phase. It considers who should be involved in the design, the tasks to be completed and the choices to be made. The collective experience of the institutional community of practice provides concrete illustrations that may help inform those choices.

Basic Design Criteria

Dialogue processes come in many shapes and sizes. No single process design will be right in every circumstance. Rather, there is a range of process tools to choose from, depending on the cultural and political context of each case. The assessment conducted in the exploration phase will provide information to help guide those choices. And, as in the exploration phase, adopting a dialogic approach to the design and drawing in others will increase the likelihood of a positive outcome, both by expanding the information base and by creating a sense of ownership among key stakeholder groups.

In developing a design, it is also important to preserve a balanced focus on three crucial aspects of the dialogue initiative that will shape its success—the people, the problem and the process. Figure 2.3.1 presents the 'triangle of satisfaction' developed by Christopher Moore of CDR Associates to illustrate this point.[119] Moore's triangle is a tool for conflict analysis that distinguishes among the different interests that people have in the kinds of situations that dialogues are designed to address. It can help practitioners keep in mind the characteristics of a good design.

Figure 2.3.1 Triangle of Satisfaction
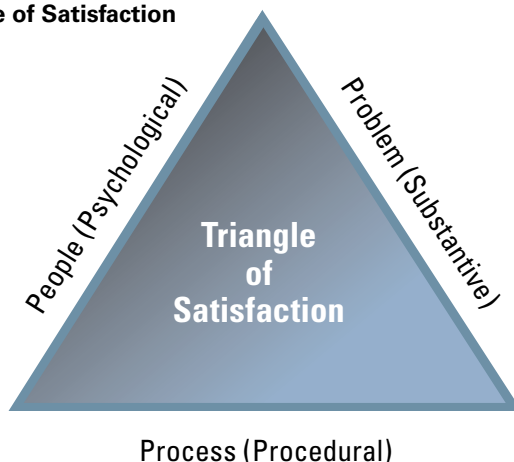
Source: CDR Associates, Boulder, Colorado, by kind permission.

A good design addresses all of the following:

- **Psychological issues**. The people who are part of a dialogue process—as sponsors, conveners, participants and interested onlookers—have an emotional or psychological interest in feeling recognized, respected and heard. The design process determines who should be involved, and should do so in a way that meets the participants' psychological needs.

- **Substantive issues**. The problem to be addressed is central to the content or goal of the dialogue initiative. The design must establish a clear purpose and clarify the scope of issues to be discussed, so as to meet the participants' interest in securing results on the substantive issues.

- **Procedural issues**. The way in which the process unfolds helps determine whether people perceive the dialogue as legitimate, fair and worthwhile. Hence procedural issues must be considered carefully in the design process.

Regardless of the context, the success of the dialogue initiative will depend largely on the extent to which its design and implementation satisfy all of these interests together. Failure to address one side of the triangle adequately in the design can undermine the chances for success of the overall process.

How to Proceed: Assembling a Project Team

The assessment conducted in the exploration phase should provide a good sense of the stakeholders to be involved, the scope of the issues, the nature of the relationships, potential resources to draw on, and so forth. Understanding of the political and cultural context, deep knowledge of the main issues to be addressed and technical process

expertise are all needed to meet the success criteria of the satisfaction triangle. It is easier to build a successful dialogue process if the practitioner can ensure that specific kinds of knowledge and expertise are available to inform the design and to carry the initiative through to completion.

It is not always possible, however, to assemble a new team for a specific initiative. Often, the initiative must be undertaken with the team already in place, whether or not it includes all the knowledge or skills needed. In such circumstances, our guidelines on assembling a team offer ideas about what to look for from people who are outside the official team and who may be willing to provide input and support.

Profile of a Project Management Team

Although the management team is responsible for the formal aspects of execution, it must also be sensitive to the human dimension of dialogue and continuously serve as a hub of internal and external communication. As the dialogue unfolds, the management team will have to deal with things such as budgets, schedules and logistics, and at the same time with people's fears and expectations of the dialogue. The kinds of characteristics the team needs to perform its role effectively include:

- skilled, well-organized, professional, ethical, non-partisan

- competent in managing resources and relationships

- respected by participants

- politically astute, sensitive to local culture and history

- sensitive to the human dynamics of dialogue

- able to convey genuine caring and commitment

- able to learn and adjust to changing realities.

> **The qualities needed for effective leadership of dialogue initiatives**
>
> - Leadership requires technical skills, political understanding and a capacity to convince people.
> - The leader must be able to continually update his or her understanding of the context, since changes in the context affect the process itself.
> - The leader must be tireless in lobbying and opportunistic in resource mobilization, and here, too, a nose for politics is essential.
> - The leader must be aware of the risks and face them, and not drop out in midstream.
>
> See Wisdom from the Field – Sources (p. 237) for the sources of these materials.

Common components of a project management team include the following:

- **An advisory board or steering committee**. This is a senior group that provides strategic assessment and direction, and that monitors the project as it unfolds.

- **A project manager or technical secretary**. These individuals are responsible for implementing the decisions made by the advisory board. In some situations, it may be desirable that they work full-time on the project. The things for which they are responsible in the design phase include:

o   supporting the formation of the project management team, including recruiting and hiring the necessary experts

o   coordinating the design process, including supporting a broad process of co-design, as discussed in The Principle of Co-design, below

o   bringing in the information from the assessment

o   coordinating and supporting the mobilization of financial resources for the dialogue initiative.

- **A convener or promoting group**. In the section on the convening process we address various aspects of convening, including the desired characteristics of the conveners. Members of the process management team need not have formal decision-making authority but, because of their position and critical role in the dialogue initiative, they must be involved in shaping it.

- **A process expert/facilitator**. If the practitioner has not already begun to work with a process expert, this is the time when it becomes a necessity. Beyond providing technical input to the process design, this person is likely to move increasingly into a leadership role as the design emerges and the dialogue initiative proceeds to the implementation phase. The following is an overview of the qualifications of a process expert:

o   familiarity with various approaches and process tools for group facilitation, as well as an understanding of their applicability in different situations and for different objectives

o   experience working in different political and cultural contexts and commitment to adapting processes to the current context

o   understanding of the different kinds of roles and functions required for good process execution

o   political intuition—ability to grasp the political dimensions of the context that will permeate and influence the process

o   cultural sensitivity—ability to adjust to situations of cultural diversity

o   a collaborative work style—a non-prescriptive approach

o   communications/advocacy skills.

In the list of process expert qualifications, we suggest trying to find someone who is knowledgeable about a variety of process tools. This may be somewhat difficult, since many process experts specialize in one approach or method. If that tool is not appropriate for the dialogue's context or purpose, the dialogue may fall short of its goals. Appendix 2 provides an overview of dialogue process tools and their applications. This information can help guide the practitioner to a process expert who is likely to match the needs of the particular dialogue initiative. In the list of qualifications, we also emphasize characteristics such as political intuition, cultural sensitivity, a collaborative approach and willingness to adapt. This is because, whatever process tools are to be used, it is important that they be adapted to the particular context.

The Principle of Co-design

Like exploration, the work of designing a dialogue process is best viewed as an integral part of that process, not something preliminary and separate. The practitioner's goal is to design the dialogue in a way that builds a sense of ownership among key parties to it, by engaging them in shaping the dialogue process. This is the principle of co-design. When conducted in this way, the design phase is a critical step in convening the dialogue.

Essential inputs for good design include:

- a comprehensive assessment
- context knowledge
    - political
    - cultural
- substantive expertise
- process expertise
- good leadership/facilitation.

There are various ways to undertake co-design, such as the following.

- A technical team drafts a proposal on the basis of a comprehensive assessment, and then circulates it for feedback from key actors in the dialogue.

- The dialogue sponsors host a working session in which key actors, with facilitation and technical support, can develop a process design together, as illustrated in the shaded area.

- A design emerges through 'shuttle diplomacy' in the form of a series of bilateral conversations.

Co-design—an example

To do the key task of defining and prioritizing the issues to be addressed, the Kettering Foundation often conducts 'Dialogues of Naming and Framing'. For example, in Argentina, one group spent a day filling three big blackboards with lists of the problems related to hunger. Then they boiled it all down to four big issues and named them—a powerful exercise.

See Wisdom from the Field – Sources (p. 237) for the sources of these materials.

- The design develops iteratively through an expanding circle of conversation that draws ever more people into the process.

The benefits of co-design. In many cases, it may seem as if the urgency of the situation precludes engaging a broad spectrum of actors in designing a dialogue process. But if the process is designed and implemented unilaterally there is a significant risk of dissatisfaction with it—for example, because there is no sense of ownership among key constituencies, or because the design itself is ill-conceived as a result of limited input. In contrast, there are significant benefits to co-design:

- a stronger sense of ownership of and responsibility for the process—a basis for satisfaction on the psychological dimension

- a design that is informed by multiple perspectives and concerns—a basis for satisfaction on the substantive dimension

- clarity among the actors about the process and its underlying logic—a basis for satisfaction on the process dimension.

A co-design process enriched by preparatory training can further enhance all these benefits. Training sessions can raise awareness about process issues such as the principles of dialogue and the dialogic approach. Dialogue participants tend to focus mainly on the issues. Raising their awareness of the role of process, while engaging them in designing a dialogue, can help develop capacities that may be critical to the immediate success of the dialogue initiative and to achieving long-term objectives for societal change.

Elements: Decisions to be Made

To meet the goal of satisfaction in the process dimension, often what is first negotiated is the process itself. Process design should produce some kind of document in order to make monitoring and evaluation possible as the dialogue proceeds. To build trust in the process, this might be a formal document, such as a 'concept paper' or a 'process proposal' that the parties involved contribute to and agree on. Or, depending on the situation, it might be a background document to guide the technical team, while the parties to the dialogue are comfortable with a more informal agreement on the nature of the process.

DESIGN CHECKLIST
☑ Objectives and strategy
☑ Participants
☑ Definition of roles
☑ Information communication
  system
☑ Timeline/schedule
☑ Resource mobilization
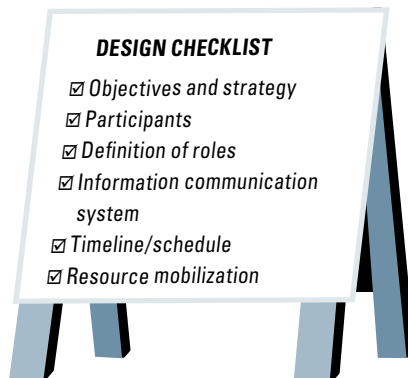
This design checklist suggests the key elements to be considered and agreed upon at some level. This agreement can be important for a variety of reasons:

1. to help potential dialogue participants feel able to trust the process, especially when there is a high level of mistrust towards people and issues

2. to provide a mandate for the dialogue initiative that gives everyone a clear sense of what to expect

3. to avoid manipulation by others of what the process is about

4. to support the critical thinking needed to ensure process methods conform to the context

5. to support learning and evaluation.

On managing expectations

'In framing objectives, those who promote and lead dialogue initiatives sometimes find themselves caught in a trap of their own making: having raised people's expectations to possibly somewhat unrealistic heights, putting ambitious objectives in the project proposal in order to convince donors and to stimulate the interest of those actors they want to participate in the dialogue …

'The project team that instigates, facilitates, and steers the dialogue process has a primary responsibility in managing the expectations. Greater clarity and realism about the objectives, and review of the stated objectives as the process unfolds, can help to prevent a situation where one sets [the dialogue process up] to be judged a "failure", [despite its] meaningful achievements. Actively and regularly engaging the various stakeholders to the dialogue, including the donors who fund it, to discuss and review the expectations about the process, is the best way to avoid major "disappointments" and possibly harsh and "unfair" judgments at the end of the project.'

See Wisdom from the Field – Sources (p. 237) for the sources of these materials.

Defining Objectives

In the broadest sense, the purpose of a dialogue initiative arises from the societal challenges that people feel need to be addressed, as discussed in Chapter 1.2. In practice, it is often necessary to define objectives more narrowly, focusing on specific issues or problem contexts. A definition of purpose that encompasses the role that the dialogue is to play in achieving it is a critical step towards creating a mandate for the process. Undertaking the task of definition rigorously is a way to address three fundamental process challenges:[120]

1. to ensure that dialogue is the best instrument in the circumstances

2   to be clear that dialogue is not the goal; it is the means to achieve the goal

3. to create hope and trust in the dialogue process without creating false expectations about what it can achieve.

Koenraad Van Brabant of Interpeace recommends three discrete steps in defining objectives: stating outcome objectives as specifically as possible; specifying process objectives; and considering objectives in relation to the context and how it might evolve as the initiative proceeds.[121]

Outcome Objectives

Defining outcome objectives involves envisioning the concrete impact the dialogue process will have. As suggested by the purpose statements of the dialogue initiatives in Appendix 1, these objectives are often quite broad. To provide clear direction for process design, it will probably be necessary to clarify the meaning of such broad purpose statements as precisely and concretely as possible. It may be helpful, for example, to describe what specific changes would be evident if the objective were achieved. These might include some quite tangible outputs, such as a specific agreement, legislation or policy. Or they might be intangible changes, such as enhanced capacities or greater understanding across differences. In that case, it may be necessary to specify some concrete indicators that those changes had occurred, such as more people taking action or playing a leadership role, or greater cooperation between groups formerly unable to cooperate.

In *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners*, Mary Anderson and Lara Olson provide a framework that may be helpful in setting objectives. It distinguishes between two levels of impact: the individual/personal and the socio-political.[122] Impact at the individual/personal level alone is not enough to meet the kinds of purposes listed in Appendix 1. It must translate into impact at the socio-political level. Here are four ways in which this can happen, illustrated by examples from the three cases presented in Part 3 of the Handbook.

- **Specific actions**. This is when dialogue participants take actions in their professional or political capacity that reflect the changes in their understanding wrought by the dialogue process. For example, in Nepal, the representatives and leaders of political parties and civil society who participated in the Dialogues on a Constitutional Process were subsequently able to develop a 'minimum common position'.

- **Adoption of ideas into official structures or political negotiations**. This is when ideas and language developed in the dialogue process are carried over into formal processes and official structures. This result is exemplified by the four agreements that emerged from the dialogue conducted by OAS/PROPAZ in Huehuetenango,

Guatemala: on peaceful coexistence, strengthening the municipal institutions, resolving problems of personal documentation and municipal proceedings, and investigating cases of disappeared persons.

- **Changes in public opinion**. This is when the climate of public opinion and discourse shifts to become more aligned with the model established by the dialogue process. For example, in Mauritania, following two failed coup attempts, more than 400 local and national leaders took part in a discussion of the country's needs in relation to the Millennium Development Goals. This created a climate of public opinion in which the government felt compelled to moderate its response to opposition and to make commitments to projects on legal reform and human development.

- **Rising demands by constituencies**. This is when dialogues mobilize large numbers of people to voice demands for change, making it difficult for politicians to ignore them. Following the Dialogues on a Constitutional Process, for example, Nepalese civil society began 'openly debating, even challenging the role of the monarchy, [and] became more self-confident and vocal in assessing the root causes of the political and constitutional crisis, in demanding political negotiations with the Maoists and the convening of a Constituent Assembly'.

Process Objectives

It is useful to distinguish two types of process objectives: start-up objectives and intermediate process objectives.[123] **Start-up objectives** establish the criteria for launching the dialogue process on a sound footing. They might include:

- putting together an effective team to implement the dialogue process design
- establishing contacts and building interest and engagement across a broad spectrum of social actors
- creating and protecting a neutral 'space' for the dialogue that all key actors can accept, have basic trust in, are able to come to, and will respect
- achieving inclusive participation of all key stakeholders and adequate levelling of the playing field
- increasing the diverse stakeholders' ownership of and responsibility for the process.

In many dialogue initiatives, **intermediate process objectives** may also become an important part of the process design. 'The precise nature of intermediate process objectives will very much depend on the specific context', says Koenraad Van Brabant. Indeed, some may 'spring up rather unexpectedly in the course of a dialogue process, [to be] pursued for tactical reasons'. For example, a government decision to create a commission to study an issue central to the dialogue might create a 'window of opportunity' for the dialogue process team and participants to engage with that initiative.[124]

Other intermediate objectives, however, may have to be specified at the outset. This is particularly true when stakeholder groups are simply not ready to engage in dialogue with each other. There might be extreme polarization between groups or fragmentation within them. Or some advance preparation may be part of a programme to 'level the playing field' in dialogue initiatives that will bring together groups with significant differences in power, status or access to information. On the basis of its experience with dialogues in Latin America, OAS/PROPAZ (the OAS programme in Guatemala) developed the diagram shown at Figure 2.3.2 to help illustrate how these intermediate process objectives inform the overall design.[125]

Figure 2.3.2 Intermediate Process Steps

Source: Philip Thomas for OAS/PROPAZ, 1998.
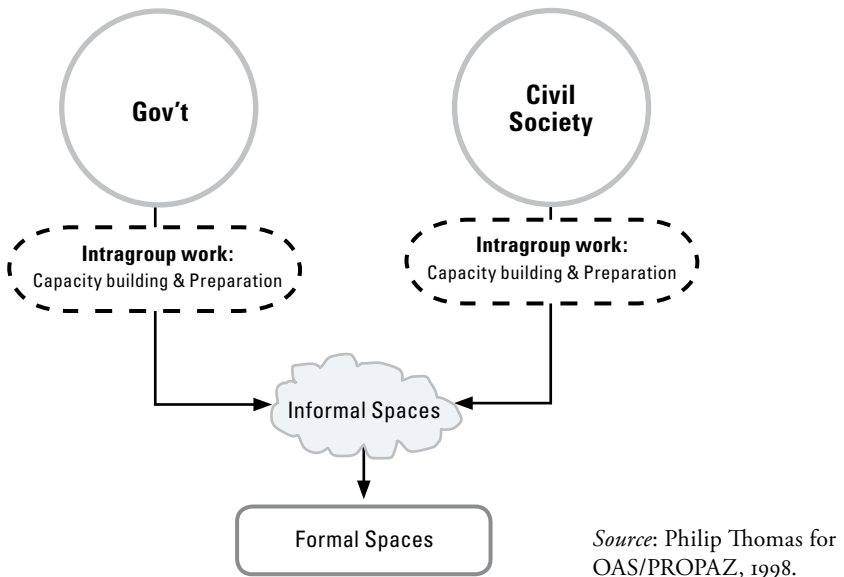
The following may help to meet a variety of intermediate process objectives:

- **Intra-group work**. This might be some form of preparatory training, such as awareness-raising, sensitization training, learning helpful frameworks for analysis, strengthening communication skills, learning decision-making procedures or developing a common base of information. Or it might be an internal dialogue to help define and strengthen the group's sense of identity and goals.

- **Inter-group work in informal spaces**. This might be an unofficial dialogue that brings together a few willing members of polarized groups to test the possibility of more formal encounters. Or, again, it might consist of a training programme that can provide a relatively non-threatening way to bring people together, one in which there is less at stake than in a formal dialogue space but that gives them a sense of what a dialogue process might be like.

Objectives in Context

Finally, Koenraad Van Brabant suggests it may be important to consider the context shaping the objectives of the dialogue initiatives and how changes in that context might affect them. The understanding of context developed through the initial assessment process will make it possible to consider how the dialogue initiative should position itself in its socio-political context in order to achieve its objectives. Additionally, however, part of the process design might be to envisage possible scenarios of how that context might change as the process unfolds, and how those changes might require adjustments to the objectives. For example, how might electoral processes create delays, disruptions or new opportunities? How likely is an outbreak of violence and what impact would that have? What are the prospects for sustained funding of the initiative, and how would shifting levels of donor support affect it? Explicitly examining these possibilities at the outset can enhance the initiative's ability to sustain itself by adapting effectively to unfolding events.

Developing Strategy

The Role of Dialogue in Achieving Objectives

The selection of specific process tools is mainly a technical decision, but the purpose that the designers of the dialogue process aim to achieve should guide it. By considering what role the dialogue needs to play in achieving the change envisioned, the designers can provide that guidance and help ensure that the process choices will be appropriate. Four broad categories of role can be described, drawing on the work of members of the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation in the USA, who collaboratively developed this framework as a basis for comparing and contrasting well-known dialogue proces tools.

- **Exploration—awareness raising**: to encourage people to learn more about themselves, their community or an issue, and possibly discover innovative solutions

- **Relationship-building—working through conflict**: to resolve conflicts, foster personal healing and growth, and improve relations among groups

See Table 2.4.2, Dialogue Process Options, Chapter 2.4 and Appendix 2.

- **Deliberation—working through tough decisions**: to influence public decisions and public policy, and to improve public knowledge

- **Collaborative action—multi-stakeholder, whole-system change**: to empower people and groups to solve complicated problems and take responsibility for the solution.

Box 2.3.1 Process Design Worksheet

Dialogue process being designed

Context
What is the general context in which this process will take place?

Underlying premises
Simply state explicitly the reasons why undergoing such a process within the context specified is considered important and strategic. What assumptions are we making?

Desired changes being sought
State explicitly the goals or desired changes this process seeks to bring about.

Link to other processes
Identify any links that exist (or need to be created) between this initiative and other initiatives or processes related to the desired changes of this process.

Specific objectives of this process
State explicitly the specific goals or desired changes of the process being designed. Frame them in terms of immediate results visible upon completion, as well as desired impact over time.

Success indicators
- *Immediate result*: What will be immediate indicators of success?
- *Impact over time*: What would success look like over time?

Minimum conditions required
Identify and make explicit certain conditions upon which success of this process depends. We often take these for granted, so the idea is to explicate them.

Force field analysis of environmental factors worthy of consideration
Dialogue processes never occur in a vacuum. External forces (things we do not control) may favor or hinder the process.

Supporting forces *Factors that favor our desired outcome*	*Opposing forces* *Factors that oppose desired outcome*
• • •	• • •

Strategy
- description with explanation of underlying logic
- ways of taking advantage of supporting forces and addressing opposing forces
- resources necessary (human, material)
- action matrix:

Type of action	*Goal of action*	*Duration*	*Who*
1.			
2.			
3.			

Sustainability
What steps will help ensure the sustainability of the impacts of the dialogue process?

Integrating Objectives and Strategy

The process design worksheet shown in Box 2.3.1, developed by Philip Thomas for OAS/PROPAZ, offers a framework for an integrated approach to articulating objectives and strategy, building on information developed during the exploration phase. It provides guidelines for capturing the thinking behind the design. Among other things, it invites thinking through and documenting the thinking on three essential building blocks, both for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and for the continuous learning and adaptation it should support as the dialogue process unfolds: theory of change, the specific change objectives and the definition of success.

1. **The theory of change**. The design worksheet calls for documenting the 'underlying premises' of the dialogue process and the 'underlying logic' of the strategy that guides it. Taken together, these amount to a 'theory of change', which may be defined briefly as 'a set of beliefs about how change happens'. Cheyanne Church and Mark Rogers describe ten theories of change identified by peace-building practitioners as being currently in use in their field. Some that are relevant for dialogue practice are the following (we suggest the connections to dialogue practice in italics):[126]

> **For further reading**
> For more information about 'theory of change' as a tool for planning, see <http://www.theoryofchange.org>.

- **The individual change theory**. 'Peace comes through transformative change of a critical mass of individuals, their consciousness, attitudes, behaviors and skills.' *The individual transformations that occur in dialogue processes become the source of change in social groups, institutions and the wider society.*

- **The healthy relationships and connections theory**. 'Peace emerges from a process of breaking down isolation, polarization, division, prejudice and stereotypes between/among groups. Strong relationships are a necessary ingredient for peacebuilding.' *Dialogue is an essential tool for breaking down barriers and building connections across the divides in society.*

- **The institutional development theory**. 'Peace is secured by creating stable/reliable social institutions that guarantee democracy, equity, justice, and fair allocation of resources.' *Dialogue provides a process for advocating and guiding institutional reform that models the qualities of inclusiveness, equality and fairness desired in the reformed institutions.*

- **The political elites theory**. 'Peace comes when it is in the interest of political (and other) leaders to take the necessary steps. Peacebuilding efforts must change the political calculus of key leaders and groups.' *Dialogues create spaces in which leaders can begin to develop a vision that embraces the whole of society, not just the sector or interest group of which they are part.*

- **The grass-roots mobilization theory**. 'When the people lead, the leaders will follow. If we mobilize enough opposition to war, political leaders will have to pay attention.' *Dialogue processes provide the basis for deliberative democracy, empowering ordinary citizens to take responsibility for bringing about societal change.*

Church and Rogers say there is consensus 'that all theories of change are important and necessary; however, different theories may yield greater results under different circumstances'. The field of dialogue practice represented in this Handbook has yet to reach the stage of developing such a clear overview of the relevant theories of change. Nevertheless, it is important within each dialogue initiative to capture these key underlying assumptions about how change happens and how the dialogue initiative will contribute to specific changes in the specific context. Articulating these at the outset aids clarity and transparency, helps keep activities 'logically aligned' with objectives within the initiative and provides a basis for coordinating with other initiatives that may be working towards the same goals. Finally, only if the theory is explicit will it be possible to test the relevance of the theory of change to the context in which it is being applied.

2. **Specific change objectives**. To lay a firm foundation for M&E, as well as for the management of the dialogue initiative, it is helpful to have clearly defined outcome goals. The Iceberg Model introduced in Chapter 1.4 (Figure 1.1.1) depicts various kinds of change outcomes:

- individual, internal changes in mental models, feelings and perceptions

- the formation of new relationships and social networks

- new behaviour

- agreements

- coordinated action.

> *It is important within each dialogue initiative to capture the key underlying assumptions about how change happens and how the dialogue initiative will contribute to specific changes in the specific context.*

Within each category of change (and this is not an exhaustive list) the specifics will vary according to the purpose of the dialogue initiative and its context, and to the theory of change guiding the dialogue's design. The more clearly and concretely all of these connections can be specified, the easier it will be to assess progress and make course corrections if necessary as the initiative moves forward.

3. **Definition of success**. What will success look like? This is a critical question to explore before launching an initiative if the intention is to proceed in a mode of continuous learning and adaptation. It has two components:

- How will we know if the changes have occurred? Answering this question involves thinking through what the indicators of specific changes will be and how they can be discerned. This

definition is needed to determine what information needs to be collected and monitored, and to guide the evaluation when the time comes to review and reflect on the information gathered.

- What will it take to judge the overall initiative a success? 'Success is an arbitrary determination of progress and can be set at any point along the continuum in the desired direction of change', say Church and Rogers.[127] In most cases, they suggest, it is not feasible to carry M&E to the point where it would be possible to evaluate success at the level of impact.

See Figure 2.5.3, Worksheet for Monitoring and Evaluation, Chapter 2.5.

Selecting the Participants

Together with the definition of purpose, the actor-mapping work associated with exploration provides the basis for deciding who should be invited to participate in the dialogue process. The dialogue's success will be closely linked to these decisions. Not only do participants contribute their ideas, experiences and diverse points of view, but they can also carry out the undertakings agreed in the dialogue when the process ends; or by changing themselves they can contribute to the process of change in the institutions and social sectors from which they come. In designing the process, therefore, a critical step is to develop criteria for choosing participants.

Inclusiveness: Assembling a Microcosm of the System

See Chapter 1.3.

The principle of inclusiveness dictates an effort to create a participant group that is a microcosm of the social system where the challenge to be addressed is located. In practice, this involves choosing a diverse group of stakeholders using criteria such as age, gender, ethnicity, geography, social sector, socio-economic class and political position, depending on which are most relevant in the specific context. In one workshop that considered this issue in depth, however, practitioners emphasized that securing a true microcosm is much easier said than done. The three mini-cases from Latin America presented in the shaded area (on p. 89) capture some of that circumstance.

Five things to keep in mind about trying to assemble a microcosm of the system:

1. It can be helpful to frame the effort in terms of bringing different voices into the dialogue, rather than focusing entirely on differences among specific individuals. This is especially relevant in contexts where certain voices have historically been excluded from the conversations that matter.

2. Even though it may fall short of creating a microcosm, the dialogue can have positive results, as the cases in the shaded area suggest. If this is appreciated in the design phase, a graduated approach might be adopted—moving forward in the hope that success will catch the attention of others and convince them they would gain more from being inside the process that outside.

3. Depending on why the participant group has fallen short of being a microcosm, however, it may be more prudent *not* to move forward, but to work on developing

broader acceptance and support before proceeding—for example, to avoid creating or exacerbating 'dialogue fatigue'.

4. The design phase should anticipate the need to be flexible, in case the dialogue prompts the emergence of an issue that may implicate other actors who should be brought into the process. The goal is to avoid addressing the issue without the presence of important actors, thereby undermining the intention of the original design.

5. Regardless of who participates, one challenge will be to connect the participant group back to the larger society it represents, and which has not had the benefit of the dialogue experience.

Seven Perspectives on Criteria for Selecting Participants

There is no simple formula for selecting participants to ensure that a dialogue initiative will meet its objectives, but there is much practical wisdom on how to consider the matter. Depending on the context, one or more of the perspectives presented here may help support a rigorous approach to this aspect of process design.

1. **Key people vs more people**. In *Confronting War*, Anderson and Olson distinguish between two basic approaches to translating individual/personal-level impacts into socio-political impacts: working with more people or with key people.[128] The 'more people' approach focuses on increasing the number of people who are engaged in and support the effort at societal change that the dialogue initiative represents. The 'key people' approach focuses on specific individuals because they:

- are 'entry points' to the larger population, or to key stakeholder groups

- have leverage beyond themselves to influence opinion or effect change

- must be part of any agreement if it is to be sustainable.

Figure 2.3.3 More People or Key People?

Source: Mary B. Anderson and Lara Olsen, *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners* (Cambridge, MA: The Collaborative for Development Action, Inc., 2003), p. 69.
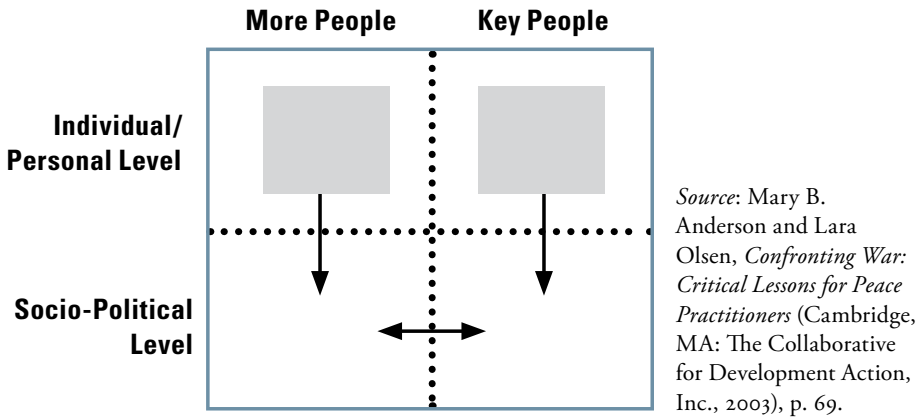
Figure 2.3.3 illustrates two points about these approaches.[129] First, either approach is valid, depending on the context, as long as the dialogue process is designed and implemented in such a way as to have socio-political effects. The downward arrows capture this idea about impact, while the dotted lines dividing the four quadrants are meant to suggest that the distinctions between the approaches are more fluid than rigid. Second, neither approach by itself is sufficient for socio-political impact: 'work with More People is not enough if it does not reach Key People, and work with Key People is not enough if it does not reach More People'. The arrows connecting the lower two quadrants capture this idea.

Of course, the choice to focus on either key people or more people has implications for the size of the dialogue group. As the overview of process tools in Appendix 2 indicates, there are established approaches for dealing with groups from as small as three members to as large as 3,000. Thus, while many practitioners are most comfortable working with small numbers, size need not be a significant constraint on design decisions. For this to be the case, however, it is important that the process expert or experts involved be flexible enough to provide a range of process options.

2. **Top–down vs bottom–up**. This analytical framework may be seen, in one sense, as a variation on the idea of key people vs more people. But it is more narrowly focused on power dynamics, which may be highly relevant to the particular change objectives of a dialogue initiative. The two case examples in the presented in the shaded area on the opposite page here suggest the kind of analysis and decisions about participant selection that are likely to emerge from using this framework.

3. **Individuals vs representatives**. Some practitioners advise that it is important to be precise about whether dialogue participants should be invited to take part as individuals or as representatives of organizations or groups.[130] In either case, when the goal is to reach agreements and move to action, it is important to assemble a group of 'strategic actors' who are capable of offering and accepting commitments.

    *   **Representatives**. It is fairly easy to identify representatives from well organized groups such as political parties or NGOs. The task may be much more difficult with civil society movements that lack a clear structure. To select two representatives from each municipality for the Honduran Grand National Dialogue, every community held an open assembly and an election—all on the same day. Two suggestions:

        o   The representatives chosen should have the political skills to communicate to their constituencies that the end result of the dialogues is a win–win situation for all stakeholders, and should also have the political credibility to win their support.

        o   Dialogues confer a kind of legitimacy on the participants, so it is possible that the selection of a representative could upset the balance of power within groups. This may not be a bad thing, but care should be taken.

    *   **Individuals**. The reality is that all participants enter the dialogue space both as individuals and as representatives of a group. With or without formal credentials, they will always feel an obligation to represent that group faithfully. A few tips:

        o   Select on the basis of representation, leadership of groups or individual character such as open-mindedness or progressiveness; select an agent of change but consider the nuances of this criterion, as suggested in 'Dealing with potential spoilers' (point 6) below.

Considerations of top–down vs bottom–up approaches in selecting participants

Sustained Dialogue in Tajikistan

'The participants selected were generally at the second or third level of the groups they identified with—the Vice Chairman of the party, the Vice Chancellor of the university, the Vice President of the Uzbek Association. We deliberately avoided top people precisely because we had no authority to mediate. Besides, we felt that the conflict was not yet ripe for any of the formal processes of mediation or negotiation. We have often said that Sustained Dialogue is a process to transform relationships among people who are not ready for the formal processes of conflict resolution … [Also,] we deliberately concentrated on the second and third levels to avoid leaders who would have to defend their positions, to find individuals who reflected the positions of the groups with which they identified in an authentic way, and individuals who would be listened to by the senior leaders of the groups with which they associated.'

Interpeace in Rwanda

'The team was now ready to initiate the dialogue process. It had to consider three questions: Where to start, what "methodology" to follow, and how to strengthen the confidence and trust in the project team and in the process. [After consulting the government in a transparent way] the team decided to start its consultations not with the leadership but among ordinary people living "on the hills". This way, they would be able to bring the views of the population at large to the sociopolitical elite in the country, a trajectory that would build them credibility and legitimacy.'

See Wisdom from the Field – Sources (p. 237) for the sources of these materials.

o   In focusing on individuals who are leaders, anticipate the problem that their ability to make a commitment to a dialogue process may be limited because their agendas are overloaded and they are overwhelmed by responsibilities. These are often people who are prepared to confront immediate situations but have difficulty paying attention to the longer term.

o   Be alert: simply because a dialogue has begun, a new actor can arise who previously was not relevant.

4.   **Taking a tri-sectoral perspective**. A number of dialogue practitioners, especially those working on global issues, consider it essential to engage all three major societal sectors—government, business and civil society. A clear statement and example of this principle are provided in Nicanor Perlas's study, 'Social Threefolding: Towards a New Concept and Practice of Democracy and Societal Governance: The Case of the Philippines'.[131] The question of sectoral representation, however, is relevant to a number of issues that arose in practitioner workshops: the role of global economic forces in national issues and national dialogues; the relationship between the dialogue and government institutions, and how that affects its ability to have an impact; and the relationship between political and economic elites and the rest of society. Where these issues are important, a process design group may want to consider applying this perspective to the selection of participants.

> **For further reading**
> On the significance of working across sectors, see Steven J. Waddell, *Societal Learning and Change: How Governments, Business and Civil Society are Creating Solutions to Complex Multi-Stakeholder Problems* (Sheffield: Greenleaf Publishing, 2005).

5.   **Managing situations of crisis**. Many practitioners believe that, in times of crisis, different rules apply to the criteria for selecting participants. As one person said, referring to the economic emergency that was the context for launching the Argentine Dialogue, 'You don't call on the whole society to put out a fire. You call upon those who can help you solve the problem.'[132]

> See Chapter 2.6, on the key challenges in dialogue work, which addresses the potential pitfalls in this approach in 'Moving beyond Dialogues of the Elite'.

6.   **Dealing with potential spoilers**. In general, dialogue practitioners try to find participants who are 'open minded' and potential 'agents of change', as suggested by the above criteria for selecting individual participants. Sometimes, however, it is necessary to develop a strategy for dealing with people whose participation would jeopardize the progress of the dialogue and who are in a position to block or undermine the legitimacy of solutions that come out of the dialogue process—in other words, spoilers. In Jamaica's Civic Dialogue for Democratic Governance Project, for example, a central topic was crime and violence. The challenge was how to deal with the 'dons'—leaders of the criminal element similar to the mafia. If they came into the dialogue, others would not participate, but if they were not part of

it, they could block change. The solution was to use 'proxies'—community workers who had credibility in both spheres and could move between them. In contrast, the conveners of Destino Colombia did not find a way to bring the voice of drugs traffickers into the dialogue and they felt, in retrospect, that this diminished the impact of the process.

Some tips for thinking about the issue of 'spoilers':

- Include potential 'spoilers' as participants when:

  o there is reasonable hope that they can engage positively or that engagement can neutralize their capacity to undermine the process

  o there can be no solution without them.

- If the decision is *not* to include them as participants, consider other ways to bring them into the process (see 'Different modes of engagement', point 7).

7. **Different modes of engagement**. Often, for one reason or another, people whose ability to influence others makes it important that they support the dialogue are not good candidates to join as participants. In this case, it is still possible to design the process in a way that enables them to engage.

> **The challenges of 'spoilers'**
>
> '[In conflict situations] many dialogues attract people who are already open to contact and communication with the other side. The dialogues go well, but participants have more views in common with fellow moderates on the other side than with their own leadership or public opinion. They avoid involving the difficult people or those seen to be perpetuating the conflict. They end up having limited impact because they create "islands of moderation".'
>
> [But a] '*caution*: There are limits to the principle of inclusivity. It may be counterproductive to include people who will simply sabotage the meeting because they are unwilling to listen to the other side or engage in a serious way with them. This not only wastes an opportunity but also reinforces negative stereotypes among other participants, thus having real negative effects.'

- If they are supporters, ask them to step forward as endorsers or champions.

- Invite them in as observers at key moments.

- If they are experts or authorities on particular issues, invite them to make presentations to the dialogue group.

- Hold regular briefings for key people not included in the dialogue group.

Defining 'Third-Party' Roles

People and institutions can play a variety of roles to help a dialogue initiative achieve its goals. Part of process design involves determining what roles are necessary and how they can be fulfilled. The list in Box 2.3.2 presents eight kinds of roles that outsiders can play. The examples, drawn from cases prepared to support this Handbook (Appendix 1), suggest how those roles can be filled.

Box 2.3.2. 'Third-Party Roles'	
Function *Roles*	**Examples**
Legitimization • *Convener* • *Observer*	• In the Dialogue on Land and Property in Nicaragua, the US and Spanish ambassadors, Mexican and Spanish embassy officials and representatives of the Inter-American Development Bank and the Central American Economic Integration Bank served as observers.
Information • *Witness* • *Legal adviser* • *Researcher* • *Process documenter*	• In the Argentine Dialogue, organizations of the UN system, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), along with the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, played a supporting role through research and analysis. • In Rwanda, Interpeace used video to capture interviews and dialogues, and the video footage played a key role in spreading the dialogue and creating impact.
Psychological / relationship assistance • *Conciliator* • *Counsellor* • *Spiritual guide*	• In moving towards the Mesa de Diálogo in Peru, there was a breakthrough when the parties accepted the OAS mission as a mediator, one that represented the international community and facilitated a dialogue among Peruvians. • In the Argentine Dialogue, the Catholic Church accepted a role in the dialogue, 'not as another member but as someone that provides an environment, not only physical but also spiritual, to give legitimacy to all the proposals, to the actors' initiatives that pass around the table'.
Process assistance • *Logistics coordinator* • *Facilitator* • *Moderator* • *Process adviser*	• The Carter Center and African Futures provided methodological and technical assistance to the Mozambique 2025 dialogues. • In the Inter-Party Dialogue in Ghana, the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) was the facilitating institution in Accra, providing strong and effective administrative set-up, spacious and well furnished conference halls, excellent relations with the Ghanaian media and political impartiality with strict enforcement of agreed rules and procedures. • The organizers of the first Bambito Dialogue in Panama called on two highly respected former presidents, Belisario Betancourt of Colombia and Julio María Sanguinetti of Uruguay, to serve as facilitators.
Substantive assistance • *Adviser* • *Expert*	• In the Dialogues on a Constitutional Process in Nepal, IDEA brought in experts with comparative experiences in constitutional processes from Sri Lanka, India, South Africa, Kenya, Afghanistan, Thailand and Cambodia. • To support the Multiparty Dialogue in Guatemala, the organizing group invited in Guatemalan and foreign politicians, academics and leaders of Guatemala's main social and business movements as experts. They were careful to ensure that the speakers represented all ideological positions, in order to build trust in the dialogue group.

Box 2.3.2. 'Third-Party Roles' (continued)	
Preparation • *Trainer* • *Animator / motivator*	• In the Zimbabwe Youth Dialogue, the South African non-profit organization the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) provided the project with technical support through 'sustained dialogue' training and periodic coaching to the dialogue's moderators, as well as advice and monitoring tools to support the work of the management team. • To support the Honduras National Dialogue, the OAS Special Program for the Promotion of Dialogue and Conflict Resolution facilitated two initial design sessions for the technical team and provided a facilitation skills training session for the dialogue facilitators. It also observed several dialogue sessions, including thematic round tables and regional dialogues, and provided feedback on these events.
Provision of resources • *Funder*	• In dialogue experiences in Cyprus, the international community provides invaluable support to bi-communal groups and activities in the absence of adequate domestic resources. Funding is not only for specific dialogue encounters and events, but also for research and the dissemination of information.
Implementation • *Monitor* • *Guarantor*	• In the Constructive Engagement process in Guyana, a stakeholder group was established 'to monitor the implementation of the decisions arrived [at] in the process, provide support to advance the constructive engagement process and to ensure a fair degree of transparency and neutrality in the process'.

Managing Information/Communication

One lesson many dialogue practitioners have learned through experience is that the societal impact of even a highly successful dialogue process will be limited if few people are aware that it has taken place. In the case of San Mateo Ixtatán, for example, most people were unaware that the dialogue had produced significant agreements because of the lack of communication between participants and their constituencies. As a result, tensions and the threat of violence remained high, even though the agreements addressed most of the underlying grievances.

Our case material captures a variety of ways to communicate: through public information campaigns in newspapers and on radio and television (Argentina, Colombia, Guatemala, South Africa); through powerful videos of the dialogues themselves (Rwanda); through a dialogue 'theme song' played on popular radio (Jamaica);

Communicating with the public

'What is the reason for [the public's] lack of knowledge? There are many reasons, but one of them is the lack of a narrative—a story that is accessible and that enables people to understand the purpose of the dialogue and how it is done. This is not something original. The history of civilization clearly shows us that each time people have wanted to transmit complex or deep truths, they have resorted to myth, allegory, metaphor, parable … This is extremely important in a world where the media has the importance it presently has.'

See Wisdom from the Field – Sources (p. 237) for the sources of these materials.

and through an official launch of the proposals produced by the dialogue group and televised debates on the issues (Georgia). Not all dialogue processes require a large-scale public communication strategy, but all will have 'public relations' issues that require careful planning.

We offer the following list to support consideration of a communications strategy as part of process design.

Elements of a communication strategy to be considered in process design:

- procedures for official documentation of the dialogue process and its outcomes

- a plan for bringing constituents and/or the public along with the process

- guidelines on how representatives participating in the dialogue will interact with their constituents

- an approach to setting expectations for the flow of information about dialogue events

- guidelines on communication with the public media.
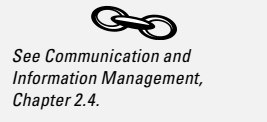
Establishing the Time Line/Schedule

Time and timing are critical considerations in designing dialogue processes. There is a strong consensus among practitioners that plans should cover years, not months. That said, there are often short-term goals that may be critical in a given context. In the Argentine Dialogue, for example, there was a need for agreement on an emergency programme to alleviate the suffering created by the economic crisis in the winter of 2001–2. Tension between time line and objectives is a common phenomenon in dialogue initiatives.

Moreover, practitioners advise that it is essential to be flexible about the time line, so as to adjust to changes in the context that may help or hinder the dialogue's progress. The design of the Inter-Party Dialogue in Ghana, for example, envisioned a continuous, year-round, long-term process and did not anticipate the disruptive impact of election campaigns. '[This] reality dawned on dialogue partners only in an

On timing

'The whole process of dialogue follows what I would say is political timing—not chronological timing. In other words, the dialogue evolves as part of the political process and at the speed at which that political process allows it to move forward, which means it may accelerate, it may stop, it may go on underground for a while if the political space closes. It's a long-term process, which becomes part of the political process.'

'[In regard to the timing of dialogues in Panama], there are moments when things can be pushed and there are moments when the conditions no longer allow the promoting of [dialogue] processes.'

See Wisdom from the Field – Sources (p. 238) for the sources of these materials.

election year, 2004, when all parties hit the campaign trail.' After that experience, the team became attuned to the need to make adjustments in election years.[133]

Many other cases in our database confirm this need for flexibility, especially when working with busy leaders and politicians. Indeed, effective timing can be a critical success factor. As the field report on IDEA's Dialogue for Democratic Development in Guatemala notes:

> *The importance of the timing to enter a country cannot be underestimated. In the case of Guatemala, the decision to become involved came at the right moment. The momentum created by signing of the peace [agreements], a government with high levels of popular support and with still two years before the electoral race was due to begin, the opening up spaces for dialogue and enthusiasm of the civil society and the commitment of international actors to the process.[134]*

In a workshop,[135] one practitioner group offered these important time considerations:

- planned times will differ from actual times

- there will be a tension between time pressures and achieving the results desired

- to ensure that participants remain engaged throughout the process, it can be useful to talk about time in terms of stages or phases

- in determining times, take into account the law of diminishing returns

- the dialogue process should have a clearly established end point.

Mobilizing Resources

One of the most important tasks of the project management team is to mobilize resources to ensure effective implementation of the dialogue design and to increase the potential for achieving impacts. Having adequate financial and human resources, including people's time, is critical for keeping a dialogue process running smoothly. Our work with practitioners suggests three main issues to consider in thinking about resource mobilization.

1. **Be aware of the challenges of securing funding.** It is worthwhile being prepared for the fact that it is often difficult to find funders, especially in the early stages of an initiative, as

Raising support for dialogue in Rwanda
'Mobilizing donor interest and donor support for a "dialogue process" that deliberately avoids a pre-set agenda and pre-determined outcomes is intrinsically difficult. Many donor representatives were skeptical. They did not see the relevance of such a national dialogue six years after the genocide, and did not want to add "another project" to their already full portfolios. In the end, it was particularly the Scandinavians (Sweden, Norway and Finland) who believed in the project and provided the first funding.'
See Wisdom from the Field – Sources (p. 238) for the sources of these materials.

the experience of Interpeace in Rwanda illustrates (see shaded area on p. 97). The team is responsible for developing an advocacy strategy and presenting the project to different potential donors, for example by organizing donor round tables. This is one point at which it is important to manage expectations and avoid overstating the expected impacts. The experience of the Interpeace Rwanda team and many others was that it became possible to attract additional funding once the project had produced some initial results. This common pattern, that funding is available in phases, creates another uncertainty that calls for maximum flexibility in the approach to process design and implementation.

2. **Where the funding originates raises other issues**. As one practitioner noted in a workshop, 'Who pays for the dialogue is also very important, not only because the viability of the dialogue is linked to this, but also because it is linked to issues of power'.[136] For example, despite the difficulties it creates, participants in the Mesa de Cobán in Guatemala adhere to strict limits on acceptance of funds in order to avoid any appearance of bias in a process that aims to deal fairly with conflicts between peasants and landowners in the Alta Verapaz region.

   Many practitioners advocate trying to obtain funding from a variety of sources (the national government, the local community, internal or external donors), depending on what mix makes most sense in the circumstances. Support for a dialogue process by the constituencies involved can have symbolic as well as practical implications, as a way of cementing acceptance and support, and a sense of responsibility for the process and its outcomes. This was the case with IDEA's Dialogue for Democratic Development in Guatemala. After the first year's work, funded by IDEA itself, the project received financial support from a number of other sources, including some within Guatemala. This change had significant implications for IDEA's leverage and image in the country.[137]

3. **Anticipate the variety of needs for which funding will be required**. Experience to date indicates that a number of characteristic funding needs emerge in dialogue initiatives:

   • funding for multiple phases of the initiative: exploration; planning and organizing; preparatory conversations and meetings; the dialogue phase, including both dialogues and in-between work; and a follow-up phase

   • funding for professional support for key roles: subject experts; process experts and facilitators; a logistics team; a team to capture, present and disseminate the proceedings and their outputs; and a core project management team. It is important that these roles be anticipated and adequately funded in order to ensure a high-calibre effort. As one project evaluator noted, having people who will serve as volunteers is a positive sign of commitment to creating change, but 'amateurism' in key roles can undermine the sustainability of the process and its impact[138]

- funding for participant support: this is often needed to achieve diversity in the group, since it makes attendance possible for those who could not afford to pay their expenses or, perhaps, take time away from their work. For example, the first attempt to launch the Inter-Congolese Dialogue was abandoned after only a few days 'because of technical and financial problems which allowed only 80 persons out of the 360 planned participants to come'.[139]

The Convening Process

The process of convening—inviting people in to participate in the dialogue—spans the steps of exploration, design and implementation. It is not an isolated act, but an integral part of the initiative as a whole. The ultimate goal of convening is to assemble a set of participants

> *It is critically important to convene a dialogue in a way that builds public awareness and credibility, so that the process will have an impact beyond the immediate participant group.*

who, together, can achieve the purpose of the dialogue initiative. It is critically important to do so in a way that builds public awareness and credibility, so that the dialogue will have an impact beyond the immediate participant group.

In practice, the convening process is an expanding circle of conversations about the need for dialogue, the issues to be addressed and who should participate. Often this phase starts with a 'passionate advocate', a person who has identified or is facing a problem that may be solved through dialogue. Since it is very unlikely that one individual alone has the power to convene all sectors, this initial advocate may involve a group of conveners. They can be notable citizens, institutions or organizations, such as intergovernmental institutions representing the international community, a respected non-profit organization, high-profile political or business leaders or institutions, or religious leaders or institutions. It is important that these individuals and institutions have both convening power in their own right and the capacity to form alliances. Especially in situations of deep divisions and distrust, it may be necessary to create a convening group that is representative of all sides and that, in effect, models the openness to dialogue it is trying to promote.

Essential Characteristics of the Convener

A convener should:

- enjoy respect and credibility
- be a legitimate entity
- be perceived as neutral and trustworthy
- have moral authority or power (or both)
- be honourable and willing to make the process transparent
- have the capacity to build alliances

- *not* be in a position that is likely to change—for example, an official near the end of his or her term—during the life of the dialogue process.[140]

In the exploration phase, conveners play a critical role in guiding the assessment, drawing on their own knowledge of society and the political context, and establishing connections through their networks. They are also key participants in the process design phase, helping to engage essential contributors to the co-design. Moving into the implementation stage, conveners also play an important role in engaging participants in the dialogue process, usually inviting them personally and encouraging their participation. As implementation proceeds, they may continue to be important—for example by providing feedback on public perceptions, taking the pulse of changes in the political context and helping refine the dialogue's purpose in response to these inputs. Ideally, the conveners will stay close to the dialogue, including attendance at the dialogue meetings if appropriate.

Practitioner Tips on Enrolling Participants[141]

Another aspect of convening is enrolling the participants in the dialogue initiative. Here are some ideas on how to do that effectively.

- Have a vision that is broad enough to draw people in. A widely acceptable public agenda, such as achievement of the Millennium Development Goals or Agenda 21, can help provide this.

- Enlist the help of champions. The Catholic Church played this role in Argentina, as did President Ramos in the Philippines (see 'Six Convening Experiences' below).

- Raise awareness through the press, or bring in people who attract the interest of the press, so as to help promote involvement.

- In a polarized situation, or if dialogue fatigue is a problem:

  1. Talk to each stakeholder individually before the dialogue—to create an agenda, prioritize issues, open the process and create trust.

  2. Organize informal meetings between parties who are willing; a neutral party can record the discussions. No press should be involved during the crisis phase or until the participants feel comfortable.

  3. Call a meeting to listen to a report, simply to bring everyone together. Do not yet call it a 'dialogue'.

Six Convening Experiences

The following mini-cases on convening, drawn from the full cases assembled for this Handbook, illustrate a variety of approaches in different national contexts. The Tajikistan case illustrates the role that external parties can play as conveners in highly polarized situations. The Guatemala and Rwanda cases provide variations on a pattern in which external parties help form an internal group with legitimacy and convening power. The Argentina and Philippines examples illustrate convening by a national president in different contexts. The Honduras case is an example of convening by government

officials through a democratic process wherein groups are invited to send representatives to the dialogue.

Argentina
At his inauguration in January 2002, amid economic crisis and social unrest, Argentine President Eduardo Duhalde publicly called for a national dialogue to address the pressing issues facing the country. Duhalde asked the Catholic Church and UNDP to join the government in forming a Dialogue Board to advance the process. This was an essential step in establishing the neutrality of the dialogue process and its legitimacy, given that most people in the country saw the political leadership, of which Duhalde was a part, as responsible for the financial crisis. According to one participant, 'the first, most difficult, dialogue was within the [Dialogue Board] itself, among the nine members', as they agreed to establish the relationship of the dialogue to governmental institutions in a 'respectful' manner, while also maintaining the moral authority to propose institutional reform. The Dialogue Board then conducted individual conversations with 650 leaders of different social sectors to build support for the dialogue and produce the agenda for the dialogue table.

Guatemala
The United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) came to the Alta Verapaz region to monitor the implementation of the peace accords. The staff of the MINUGUA office in Cobán realized that many human rights violations stemmed from unresolved land conflicts. In mid-1997, MINUGUA invited a group of community leaders from the city of Cobán to meet and discuss what could be done to help resolve land conflicts in the area. MINUGUA argued that government institutions alone would never be able to address problems of land conflicts in Alta Verapaz and that the creation of a negotiation forum that included state agencies, as well as representatives of landowners and landless peasants, was necessary. MINUGUA contacted the Catholic Church, the Ministry of Labour, the regional association of coffee growers, leaders of peasant organizations, directors of local NGOs and others. As enthusiasm spread, the people involved began to invite others—representing sectors directly and indirectly linked to land and work conflicts—to join the initiative.

Honduras
The President of Honduras asked the OAS to help convene the Grand National Dialogue 2021 at a time when the government was experiencing its lowest level of citizen approval. The accumulated resentment of various social actors with the Honduran Government and its predecessors for failing to fulfil previous commitments had bred widespread scepticism about the viability of a national dialogue. There was a sense of dialogue fatigue from previous dialogue initiatives that had not produced results. More importantly, the continuation of conflicts—some involving violence and repression— with various social sectors on a variety of high-profile matters (public employees, health

care issues and education) affected the government's credibility and the legitimacy of the dialogue process. A coordinating committee comprising well-known individuals of all political factions and from various social sectors gave credibility to the process. But the committee had to work very hard to reach out to the unions involved in conflicts with the government, and even then many social groups and political parties declined the invitation to participate in the dialogue.

The Philippines

The period 1992–1998 was a brief golden age of dialogue in the Philippines, coinciding with the presidency of Fidel Ramos. Ramos assumed office one month after the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, which produced Agenda 21, a commitment to pursue sustainable development signed by 150 countries. Ramos invited the leaders of civil society who had participated in the events in Rio to draft an executive order for his approval, one that would set out how to align the various government laws, policies and programmes with Agenda 21. What emerged was essentially a dialogue initiative involving the government and representatives of civil society. By executive order, this group became the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development. The Council included representatives of 16 government ministries and 18 representatives of diverse elements of civil society, and Ramos entrusted it with determining how to implement the Agenda 21 goals in the Philippines.

Rwanda

In wide-ranging consultations, Interpeace determined that neither the National Commission on Unity and Reconciliation nor the Centre of Conflict Management at the University of Butare—both recommended as potential conveners—were seen as sufficiently independent and 'neutral spaces' by all Rwandans. The option of running the dialogue as a UN project was quickly discarded, given the feelings in Rwanda about the role of the UN at the time of the genocide. Interpeace's profile as an international NGO posed problems of its own, which might have made it difficult to gain government endorsement and participation. The discussions led to the decision to set up a new and independent Rwandan entity, the Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace (Institut de Recherche et de Dialogue pour la Paix, IRDP) that would drive and manage the process in partnership with Interpeace. This had the added advantage that a governing board, comprising ten men and women of perceived integrity, could represent the diversity of Rwandans. This convening group strengthened the 'national ownership' of the dialogue, helped mobilize engagement for it in the networks of board members, and was able to protect the process from unwarranted interference if necessary.

Tajikistan

Some of the Russian participants in the Dartmouth Conference Regional Conflicts Task Force (RCTF) went to Tajikistan and talked with more than 100 potential participants. They explained the role that the RCTF had played in the Soviet–US relationship in the last decade of the cold war and invited Tajiks to talk about their civil war in the RCTF. As the Russians said: 'The Tajiks would not have accepted an invitation from

Russians without Americans, nor from the Americans alone. But they would accept an invitation from what they called an "international movement"—namely, the Dartmouth Conference'.

The Dialogue Process Design

Having reviewed the checklist of design considerations, we offer in Figure 2.3.4 a schematic diagram of a dialogue process to suggest what the output of this phase of work might look like. Depending as always on the purpose and the context, the following components are likely to be important elements of the process design:

- preparatory work within groups to strengthen their ability to participate effectively in a dialogue process

- the major dialogue events

- activities between events

See Processes and Process Tools, Chapter 2.4.

- continual monitoring and adjustment of the process in response to data on which aspects of it are working well and which may require change.

As we have said, there is no recipe book for successful dialogue. But neither is it necessary to design every dialogue process from scratch, as if no useful models existed. The field of dialogue work has matured to the point of having a variety of well developed process options. And there is sufficient understanding of them that practitioners can make informed choices and adaptations based on the purposes and circumstances they are dealing with. Chapter 2.4 presents an array of these process options.

Figure 2.3.4 Dialogue Process
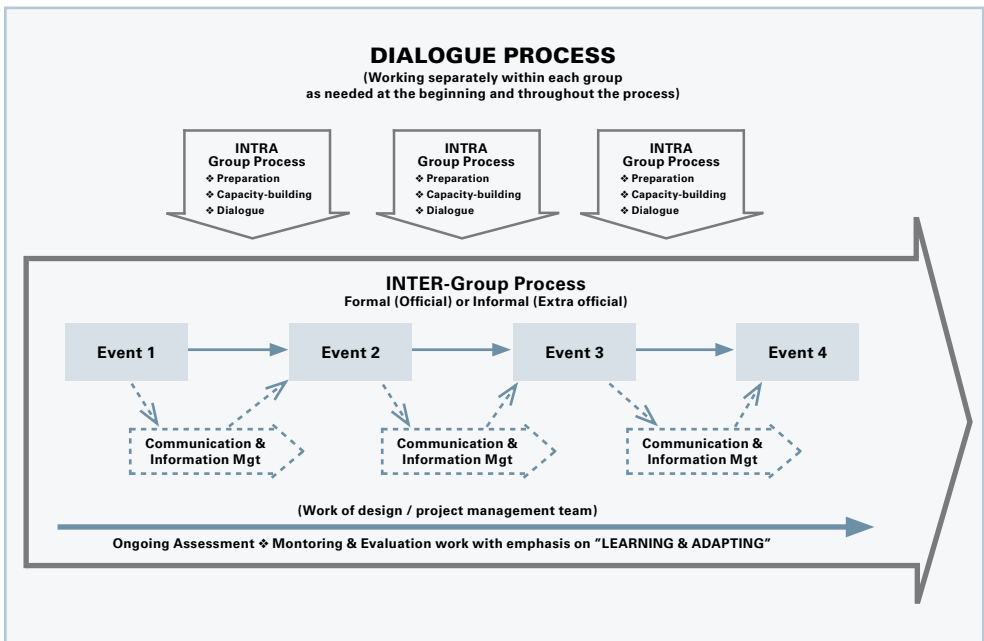
Chapter 2.4: Implementation

This chapter takes the reader from process design to implementation, with the caveat that there is likely to be continuous iteration between the two as the dialogue initiative develops. The chapter includes technical information on approaches, tools and techniques that is mainly relevant to the work of process experts. However, it also provides an overview of how a dialogue process unfolds and the issues to be addressed if it is to be successful—information that all practitioners, including promoters and decision-makers who sponsor dialogues, need in order to participate effectively in advancing an initiative.

Monitoring, Learning and Adapting: Keys to Success

Once the dialogue process is under way, the capacity for adaptation will be a critical part of enabling it to achieve the purpose for which it was designed. 'Dialogue can fail for a variety of reasons', writes Daniel Yankelovich in *The Magic of Dialogue*. 'At times, violence, hate, and mistrust can prove stronger than the motivation to find common ground ... Or differences in interests can pose massive obstacles to dialogue. *But the most frequent reason that dialogue fails is simply that it is not done well.*'[142]

Design

Shaper of...
Shaped by...
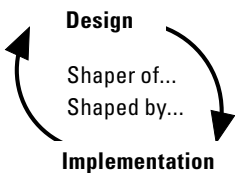
Implementation

Of course, 'doing it well' calls for having adequate facilitation skills on the implementation team. But the fluid and unpredictable nature of dialogue processes—their high level of dependence on the participants and susceptibility to changes in the context—means that doing it well often depends more on the capacity for learning and adaptation than on the ability to execute the original design exactly. Most important is to approach each event on its own terms and not simply do what was planned, no matter what. In this sense, design and implementation should be seen not as separate, sequential steps but as interdependent and overlapping activities extending over the life of the dialogue initiative. This calls for flexibility in three key areas as the process unfolds:

- letting go of the idea that it is essential to 'get it right the first time'

- being willing to re-examine the assumptions that went into the original design decisions in the light of new information or changed circumstances

- being open to trying out a fresh approach, even in a familiar context, if the familiar approach is not producing results.

Dialogue Events: Creating a Safe Space

As discussed in Part 1, an environment in which dialogue participants can feel comfortable talking and listening openly is an important aspect of how dialogue processes contribute to change. People feel 'safe' in this way when they are comfortable on all three dimensions of the satisfaction triangle discussed in Chapter 2.3: they feel respected and valued; they feel they are entering into 'conversations that matter'; and they understand and trust the process. Effective facilitation can be an important part of achieving a safe space, but by itself it is not always enough. The physical setting in which dialogue events take place and the quality of logistical support can help determine how comfortable, welcomed and relaxed people feel, while clear ground rules can provide them with a sense of confidence about what they can expect from the process.

Logistics

Timely and well-managed logistical support can also help create an environment that is conducive to dialogue. In most dialogue processes, at least some participants come in with distrust or scepticism, questioning the motives of the conveners and suspecting them of 'hidden agendas'. A solid logistics strategy, implemented both before and during the dialogue meeting, can help dissipate such concerns. This involves:[143]

Before the meeting
- supporting the invitation process. Making invitations and follow-up calls may be the task of conveners, but logistics staff can help by
  - o making sure that every participant receives an invitation, a meeting agenda and reading materials before the meeting
  - o making certain that one-to-one follow-up calls are made to ensure that each participant feels truly invited
- setting up all the transport to the meeting
- meeting in advance with hotel/venue staff and providing detailed instructions of what you expect from them
- defining the roles of support and logistics staff (including secretaries, transcribers, translators, film-makers and recorders)
- bringing workshop materials, computers and audiovisual equipment with you to the venue
- preparing participant evaluation forms.

At the meeting
- making sure participants know who to turn to for solving problems
- meeting venue staff to address contingencies
- reviewing good practices or difficulties daily

- making workshop outputs available as needed to participants
- having interpreters on hand to surmount language barriers
- being present to support the needs of the group
- having an attitude of service.

Venue

Often, the place where a dialogue meeting takes place is a critical factor in giving the group a feeling of safety, beyond the basics of physical security. It is also important in creating an environment conducive to open conversation and reflection. Finding a venue that will achieve this desired effect may involve various considerations. Table 2.4.1 illustrates some common ones with case examples.

Table 2.4.1 Venue Consideration

Venue considerations	Case example
Neutrality	The Inter-Congolese Dialogue was planned to happen in South Africa and the rebels were supporting that choice, but the government was firmly opposed to the location because South Africa then had close relationships with Rwanda, which was backing the rebel forces. Holding the conference in South Africa would not have respected the requirements of a neutral environment. The venue was changed to Addis Ababa.[144]
A setting conducive to dialogue	(1) 'The venue chosen for the Mont Fleur Civic Scenario work in South Africa was a quiet, small, remote conference centre, with natural light, beautiful, wild surroundings with walk pathways and recreation, no television in rooms, good food and a nice place to gather in the evenings.' [145] (2) In the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, 'the second [meeting] opened in the South African resort of Sun City … At the beginning of the talks, the participants were moved away from the hotels. The relocated venue was a village of white canvas tents separated from the entertaining area of the resort. This new location helped the participants focus more on the issues raised.' [146]
Symbolic significance of location	(1) In Mauritania, 'the different locations of the workshops were highly strategic in that they represented as many geographic or economic and social and cultural interests. This helped to develop the ownership of the project all around the country and contextualized the discussions'. [147] (2) With respect to the dialogues on a Constitutional Process in Nepal, 'the meetings were not held only in five-star hotels in Kathmandu and the surrounding valley, but also in Banke (east), Jhapa (west) and Chitwan (south)'. [148]
Infrastructure for logistics, security	In the Case of San Mateo Ixtatán, 'the negotiation process took place in Huehuetenango city, the head of the department. The city was chosen because it was thought of as a neutral location and for having the best logistical conditions and infrastructure for the development of the process. Moreover, a place with political-ideological neutrality was needed to ensure security and safety for participants.' [149]

Venue considerations	Case example (continued)
Accessibility to participants	'There were some disadvantages in choosing Huehuetenango. Its long distance from San Mateo Ixtatán and the lack of easy access entailed additional expenses and time. Generally, though the sessions only lasted two days, participants were forced to miss four days of work and their personal lives every 15 days—which imposed an economic burden on many of the participants.' [150]

Ground Rules

The purpose of ground rules is to create safety and fairness. Ground rules provide a structure that can help lessen anxiety and build confidence in the dialogue process. They can be an important expression of core principles and can help establish habits of dialogic interaction. Sometimes the structure of an event, as much as or more than the facilitator, carries the burden of creating an environment conducive to dialogue.

An initial proposal for ground rules can be a product of the process design stage, but in many cases they require some discussion and acceptance by participants—either in the opening event, or in training or orientation sessions if they are part of the process design. Depending on the context, ground rules may usefully provide guidelines in several different areas.

Behavioural Guidelines

In any context, setting ground rules for how dialogue participants should behave is an important step in creating the 'safe space' that enables people to feel comfortable and engage fully in the process. According to Hal Saunders in *A Public Peace Process*, 'Participants need to know what will be expected of them and what they may expect of others as a basis for judging whether they want to get involved'.[151] He suggests developing these ground rules and getting people to agree to them individually before the dialogue starts. Talking about the ground rules with potential participants can help conveners determine whether they will be able to participate effectively. Then, when the group members meet for the first time, Saunders advises that they should discuss and agree to the ground rules together, perhaps even formalizing them as written 'compact' or 'covenant' to further emphasize their importance. The shaded area on the next page shows a sample covenant of behavioural guidelines used for a 'sustained dialogue' process.

Saunders's suggestions focus particularly on his 'sustained dialogue' process to address situations of deep-rooted conflict. Practitioners using other processes in different situations will work with dialogue participants to develop ground rules appropriate to that context. Indeed, this can be a critically important opening moment that will establish the tone of the conversations to follow.

Some other possible behavioural ground rules are the following:[152]

- be present and punctual
- be attentive both to what other people are saying and to your reaction to what is being said

- speak for yourself
- be concise and concrete
- no advising, no setting each other straight, no helping others out.

Procedural Guidelines

Being as clear as possible from the outset about what rules will govern key aspects of the dialogue process is one way to give participants confidence. Here are some procedural areas in which such guidelines may be important.

- **Guidelines for playing specific roles** (see the overview of roles in Chapter 2.3). Clearly defining and communicating what role various individuals and institutions are to play helps establish the boundaries within which they agree to operate as the process unfolds. Having clarity and transparency in this area can be important to participants.

- **Guidelines for managing participation**. These guidelines may simply make the criteria and process for participant selection open and transparent. In addition, they may address participation issues that might arise, such as rules governing the selection and integration of new participants, or substitutes for participants who cannot attend all events.

Guidelines for Managing Information/ Communication

- **Information about the dialogue process**. Organizers of the dialogue process can contribute to participants' sense of comfort by stating at the start how participants will be informed of such matters as changes or developments in the process, or scheduling and rescheduling events.

- **Drafting documents**. It is important to acknowledge the power that lies in the production of the documents that emerge from or represent the dialogue process—the power to establish the 'official' story and to shape the message of the dialogue group. In many instances, such as when there is competition or conflict among the participants or one aim is to produce some kind of agreement, establishing clear ground rules for how this task will be accomplished can be an essential part of securing people's full and confident participation.

- **Dealing with the news media**. The news media can play an important role in helping a dialogue to have impact, both by participating in the process and by disseminating information about it. At the same time, the way participants communicate with the media can either advance or undermine the process. Setting ground rules for this can be critical to creating an environment in which people are willing to speak freely. Depending on the nature of the dialogue and the context, the creation of a safe space may require highly transparent media coverage, or a private, completely off-the-record session with no media coverage at all, or something in between. Practitioners have identified the following as possible strategies for dealing with the media, depending on the context in which the dialogue takes place.

  o Include the media, not as observers, but as participants in the dialogue.

  o Keep the media out until participants agree on what to say, then designate a spokesperson that everyone accepts.

  o Avoid having people speak individually to the media (see 'Behavioural guidelines' above).

  o Inform the media but provide security to the participants.

  o Have private technical meetings but also public plenary meetings to which the media are invited.

  o Manage the media so that they approach topics from the perspective of the individuals, not from that of the roles they play.

Substantive Guidelines

Often, especially when people are deeply divided, setting boundaries on the subject matter to be addressed in a dialogue process is an essential part of making people feel comfortable enough to participate.

- In the Zimbabwean youth dialogue, the conveners did not invite young people into a dialogue about political violence but instead invited them to discuss issues of common concern, such as HIV/AIDS and unemployment.[153]

- In Mauritania, dialogue organizers considered the Millennium Development Goals a 'safe entry point' for a first experiment in dialogue in the context of 'fragile' political stability.[154]

- In Guatemala, participants in the Multiparty Dialogue agreed that their objective was to frame a national agenda that would define the 'what' and the 'why' but not the 'how' of achieving its goals. 'The How would remain each party's distinctive piece, corresponding to its particular ideology and perspective. This approach enabled the parties to reach consensus while maintaining the basis for competition.'[155]

- For 'sustained dialogues' dealing with deep-rooted conflict, Hal Saunders suggests that 'there will always be two items in the agenda: the particular problems the participants need to talk about and the underlying feelings and relationships that cause these problems'.[156]

Facilitation

Not every dialogue process requires a professional facilitator or facilitation team. A respected, experienced individual can often do the job effectively and may make a better choice for a variety of reasons. Such an individual may be an 'insider'—a leader who emerges within a dialogue group—or an 'impartial' outsider who also plays a convening role. International organizations, such as those sponsoring this Handbook and their partners, including the Carter Center, Interpeace and the Institute for Sustained Dialogue, have served and continue to serve as impartial third-party facilitators in dialogues throughout the world.

In many Latin American countries, the Catholic Church or prominent individuals who have wide credibility and respect have served as facilitators of national dialogues. Third parties can provide an aura of neutrality to the process, dispelling doubts about manipulation and improvisation. Particularly in contexts where the parties are polarized or fragmented, third-party participation may help catalyse commitment or absorb emotions that would otherwise be directed from adversary to adversary.

Regardless of who is doing the facilitation, his or her objective is to create the 'safe space' that allows dialogue participants to feel trust in the process and to talk openly. Experienced practitioners note that 'heavy handed' facilitation, 'such as when facilitators decide unilaterally on the participants and agenda, or control the communication patterns, set strict ground rules, or conduct elaborate exercises', is likely to be perceived negatively by participants and may make it less likely that they will follow up independently on agreements reached in the process.[157] At a minimum, good facilitation involves adhering to the fundamental principles of dialogue, as expressed in the dialogic approach. Establishing a structure with clear guidelines can also be important in establishing and maintaining the safe space, as noted above.

See The Dialogic Approach in Chapter 2.1.

In addition, effective dialogue facilitation requires skills in a variety of roles.

An experience of poor facilitation
'The regional facilitators lacked adequate training to perform the assigned duties effectively. The facilitators lacked basic facilitation skills such as issue identification, reframing, summarizing and recording. Frequently, the participants' discussions centered on immediate and short-term needs instead of visualizing the long-term. The facilitators did not adequately probe contradictions, and dilemmas and many important points that the participants surfaced lost relevance due to the lack of follow-up. The facilitators had difficulty capturing and recording the results and incorporating all the demands into one final document. The final document did not reflect the discussions carried on during the sessions nor the specific demands and needs of each of the regions. In sum, the lack of adequate facilitation inhibited in-depth discussion of key issues and affected the quality of outputs.'

An experience of strong facilitation…
'At Bambito, Betancourt and Sanguinetti [Belisario Betancourt, former president of Colombia, and Julio María Sanguinetti, former President of Uruguay], as facilitators, did whatever was necessary to make the process work. Said one participant, "if they had to serve a glass of water, if they had to sit down with the person who was being left out of the discussion, if they had to write a little paper" they did it. None of it was planned or pre-determined. The strategy was simply to keep people focused on "state policy", that is, on the few key topics that could be dealt with above the political fray.'

See Wisdom from the Field – Sources (p. 238) for the sources of these materials.

Key Roles and Qualities of the Facilitator

Hosting: creating, shaping, keeping the space (see the shaded area on 'Guidelines for Dialogue Facilitators')

Modelling inquiry: 'leading with curiosity'—asking questions that show respect for diverse perspectives without taking sides, and that help the group's common humanity to emerge, such as 'What do you fear if the other side gets its way?' and 'What do you think the other side fears if you get your way?'.[158]

Reframing: listening to and reflecting back what is said, to enhance understanding and foster reflection

Summarizing: providing a sense of what has been accomplished; highlighting areas of agreement and disagreement

Recording: creating an artefact to support group memory—a written document or, in the case of graphic recording, a visual representation of the collective process, created as it ufolds.

In *A Public Peace Process*, Hal Saunders presents a list of essential qualities in people who play this role—which he calls 'moderator'—in dialogues addressing deep-rooted conflict:

- sensitivity to the human dimension of problems—why people are hurt, what participants as human beings really need, why people may be understandably angry—and the ability to relate to participants on that level, rather than treating them as trainees to be instructed

- commitment to the overall purpose of reconciliation between groups that have real grievances against each other

- the ability to convey genuine caring and commitment at a human level

- realistic expectations of the pace at which people can change

- some depth of experience with related problems, and an ability to conceptualize that experience so as to draw on it in this group

- the ability to help people see common elements in their experiences and views

Guidelines for dialogue facilitators

Listen and watch. That is, do not just listen to what people say, but watch what they do and try to feel what is going on.

Be flexible. Let things crop up, let debate, to the extent it is constructive, arise.

Be optimistic—towards yourself and with respect to the group. A group has great potential so you have to let it flow; voice its opinions and transcend.

Allow the dialogue participants to further shape the process and the products.

Be aware that every situation is unique. You cannot take the Kosovo Plan and apply it in Argentina. You must adjust your designs.

Be patient. Resist pressure for fast results, because you have to let conditions ripen—you cannot create the conditions.

Be open and supportive of the emotional cathartic elements and needs of any dialogue process, and do not be afraid to allow the emotions to enter the dialogue.

Avoid issuing any technical or political opinion—leave that to the experts.

Impartiality is not only a point of entry, it must be maintained throughout. And if maintained, it inspires confidence and respect in the group.

Be professional. This is not something to be learned entirely on the job—obviously you will learn while you are doing it, but there is expertise you need, both local and international. If you are going to do something like this, get assistance from people who have done it before and have the expertise.

See Wisdom from the Field – Sources (p. 238) for the sources of these materials.

- sensitivity to the cultural uniqueness of the groups involved

- the capacity to design agendas that build on previously expressed ideas, so as to advance and deepen the process

- a sense of political process—an ability to see the whole picture, keep a destination in sight and not take sides

- the ability to help participants organize their thoughts

- respect from participants as a caring person and as an experienced professional.

Roles within a Facilitation Team

Often, the facilitator—the person who leads the dialogue events—receives support from co-facilitators and/or others who play some of the following roles:

- facilitator/moderator—the person who leads the meetings

- process adviser—someone with knowledge of process issues and diverse process tools, including a strong sense of the distinctive benefits and limitations of each

- context adviser—someone aware of the dynamics of relationships in the participant group, cultural and political issues, historical background, and so on

- recorder—someone skilled at capturing the proceedings.

Impartiality and Neutrality

Often, third-party institutions are called upon to provide facilitation because the parties to a dialogue view them as 'neutral' or 'impartial'. Two individuals who have played this role suggest that, in order for the facilitation to be effective, it is important to be clear about what exactly it entails in any given context.

Goran Fejic of IDEA distinguishes between neutrality and impartiality.

> *I think it can be useful to distinguish between the concepts of 'neutrality' and 'impartiality' of the facilitator. This distinction was used in some human rights monitoring missions such as MINUGUA in Guatemala. 'Neutrality' was interpreted as equal distance from all the parties involved' while 'impartiality' was taken to mean: judging all parties by the same criteria. For example, a facilitator from an international organization or civil society group will hardly be neutral when basic principles of human rights or democracy are violated or denied, but s/he needs to display impartiality in the way s/he assesses the respect of those principles by all the parties involved. Indeed, the facilitator may have to be neutral in some situations and impartial in others.*[159]

See Defining 'Third-Party' Roles, Chapter 2.3.

Francisco Díez, a practitioner working in Latin America, identifies difficulties with the concepts of neutrality and impartiality and suggests the term 'multipartiality' as an alternative way of framing this aspect of the facilitator.

When we work as facilitators or third parties in dialogue processes, it simply is not possible to be neutral because working on behalf of UNDP we carry and represent certain values and principles that identify us as United Nations. Thus, we are not neutral. On the other hand, it is said that third party facilitators should be impartial, and act in a way that favors neither side. In order to not become contaminated, one maintains a 'prudent distance' from each of the other parties. Yet this creates tremendous difficulties when working in the midst of conflictive situations where the success of third parties depends on their ability to establish and build trust with each of the other parties. And trust is built through closeness and proximity, when empathy is experienced and the parties feel listened to, understood and legitimated in the eyes of the third party. That is why we prefer to talk about ourselves as 'multi-partial' rather than 'impartial,' because the way in which we work consists of creating this closeness and trust with each and every party at the same time, legitimating our relationships with them, and acting with complete and absolute transparency. This assures them that we come from a position loaded with values and principles related to democracy, peace and development and that we work on behalf of them all (rather than impartially on behalf of no one). We show them trust and need their trust in order to facilitate processes that help them construct sustainable solutions.[160]

Dialogue Events: An Overview of Process Options

As mentioned in Chapter 2.3, the current state of the field is such that many dialogue process experts work with and know only one process. Depending on the process design, however, even within a single dialogue initiative, specific dialogue events may call for processes with specific and different characteristics. The list below suggests a number of areas in which these characteristics may differ.

The role of dialogue

- Exploration: awareness-raising
- Relationship-building: working through conflict
- Deliberation: working through tough decisions
- Collaborative action: multi-stakeholder, whole-system change.

Participants

- Stakeholders: identified leaders, representatives of stakeholder groups
- Public: a broad range of ordinary citizens, in public events convened by open invitation.

Scale

- Small (intimate): 8–12 participants
- Standard: 15–40 participants
- Large group: 40–4,000 participants.

Space

- Formal vs informal: institutionalized spaces with decision-making power and in which agreements are binding, against ad hoc spaces that are non-binding
- Public vs private: publicized and publicly scrutinized, against 'behind closed doors', with no public awareness of the event and no press coverage.

Agenda

- Structured: traditional meetings with substantial advance preparation, establishing the agenda and outcome objectives beforehand
- Emergent: the agenda emerges in the event; the outcomes are less predetermined.

Why Consider Process Options?

Our purpose in providing an overview of many different process options is to open up the possibilities practitioners can consider as they strive to create the best outcome from a dialogue initiative in a particular context. In recent years, the streams of work of many practitioners using different methods in various settings have begun to coalesce into a field of practice. One sign of this emerging field is the proliferation of efforts to codify process knowledge. This codification is a significant advance, because it makes a broad range of process options available for consideration, including processes that have emerged in different parts of the world.

The provision of extensive information on specific processes is beyond the scope of this Handbook, but we strongly encourage practitioners to investigate a variety of options in order to avoid simply relying on what is familiar. Here we draw on two significant pieces of codification work (see the shaded area) to provide a brief introduction to a range of process options from which dialogue process design teams and dialogue facilitators can select, according to their goals and the context in which they are working. Table 2.4.2 groups the processes by the role each is best suited to play in a dialogue initiative. Appendix 2 provides a brief description of each process, as well as information on where readers may find more detailed descriptions on the Internet.

> **For further reading**
>
> The two sources from which our list is adapted are:
> 'Well-Known Processes for Dialogue and Deliberation', created by the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD) and available at <http://www.thataway.org>; and
> Marianne Bojer, Marianne Knuth and Colleen Magner, *Mapping Dialogue: A Research Project Profiling Dialogue Tools and Processes for Social Change* (Johannesburg: Pioneers of Change Associates, 2006), available at <http://www.pioneersofchange.net/research/dialogue>.
>
> Both these sources provide a comparative analysis of the processes they profile, offering guidance on which processes are relevant for different goals and contexts.

Table 2.4.2. Dialogue Process Options

Exploration—awareness-raising	Relationship-building—working through conflict	Deliberation—working through tough decisions	Collaborative action—multi-stakeholder, whole-system change
• World Café • Conversation Café • Open Space • Circle Processes • Lekgotla Process • Theatre of the Oppressed	• Sustained Dialogue • Inter-Group Dialogues • Deep Democracy • Public Conversations Project • Israeli–Palestinian School for Peace • Participatory Action Research	• AmericaSpeaks 21st Century Town Meeting • Citizen Choicework • Citizen Deliberative Councils • Consensus Confluence • Study Circles • Deliberative Polling • National Issues Forums	• Appreciative Inquiry • Future Search • Change Lab • Scenario Planning

Processes and Process Tools

In the context of this Handbook a further distinction may be useful, between processes and process tools.[*]

- **Processes** provide a template for a complete process design. In some cases, the design of a dialogue initiative may call for a single event. In most cases, it encompasses a number of events, often calling for connecting activities in between events, as depicted in Figure 2.3.4 at the end of Chapter 2.3.

- **Process tools** are the methods used in the events themselves. Within a single process, different events may use different process tools, depending on the specific objectives of each event and its role in the overall process.

Practically speaking, every process tool can be a process if the dialogue initiative is designed in such a way that there is only one event or the same tool is used in every event. Indeed, in the current state of the field, many process experts work with a single process tool and tend to apply only that tool in process design. But dialogue initiatives that seek to address the complex problems discussed in Chapter 1.2 often need to engage participants in multiple ways—they need to engage in exploration *and* conflict transformation *and* decision-making *and* collective action. Process design teams must therefore be informed consumers of process expertise, and must ask the critical questions that will enable them to ensure that the process tools used for each event are appropriate. Table 2.4.3 groups the processes we have described using this distinction.

> *If you only have a hammer, every problem looks like a nail.*

---

[*] Other sources do not make this distinction between processes and process tools. For example, the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD) source referenced here calls everything 'processes', while the Pioneers of Change *Mapping Dialogue* report calls them all 'process tools'. Despite the potential confusion, we think the distinction is useful in this Handbook in connection with the distinction we draw between dialogue processes and the individual events that make up the process.

Table 2.4.3 Dialogue and Deliberation Processes and Tools

Dialogue and Deliberation Processes and Tools	
Process only	**Process and process tool**
• AmericaSpeaks 21st Century Town Meeting • Citizen Choicework • Citizen Deliberative Councils • Consensus Conference • Deliberative Polling • Public Conversations Project • Study Circles • Sustained Dialogue • Future Search • Participatory Action Research	• Appreciative Inquiry • Inter-group Dialogue • Open Space Technology • Circle Processes • World Café • Conversation Café • Theatre of the Oppressed • Store Dialogue • Learning Journeys • Web-based tools • National Issues Forums—Deliberative study guides

Process Tools for Large Groups

In the last decade, practitioners have developed a number of innovative processes for working with large groups (from 40 people to thousands). For example, among those profiled here, Open Space Technology, Appreciative Inquiry Summits, Future Search Conferences, and the 21st Century Town Hall Meetings of AmericaSpeaks are all suitable for such groups. These innovations offer ways to move beyond the limitations of more traditional dialogue processes, which confine participation to small groups of representatives or decision-makers.

For further reading

For an introduction to large group processes, see
Michael R. Manning and Ghazi Faisal Binzagr, 'Methods, Values, and Assumptions Underlying Large Group Interventions Intended to Change Whole Systems', *International Journal of Organizational Analysis* 4/3 (1996); or Barbara Benedict Bunker and Billie T. Alban, *Large Group Interventions* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1997).

Such limitations may yield unsatisfactory results when there is a need to bring the 'whole system' into the conversation. These processes often involve the use of small groups-within-the-group, the 'right' amount of structure, technology such as laptop computers and wireless communications, and professional facilitation. The sources referenced in the shaded area here provide a review of these methods and the underlying logic of large-group processes.

The Dialogue Journey

Chapter 1.4 outlined the core dynamic in dialogue processes, which creates change by enabling participants to gain perspective on their own thoughts and thought processes, and on the way those thought processes shape their perceptions of reality. As they share their perspectives or stories and listen to the stories or perspectives of others, in Hal Saunders's words, 'the rigidity of their own picture loosens'. They may begin to 'pay attention to facts they would rather ignore [and as they] modify their own
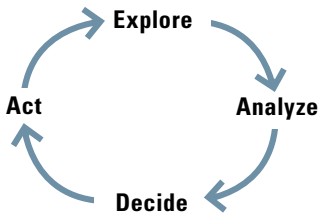
The Kolb Learning Cycle
Source: David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984).

pictures of reality, they may begin to see past behavior as counterproductive'.[161]

This section examines this dynamic in greater detail and addresses some of the practical issues and challenges involved in bringing it about within a dialogue initiative, using the metaphor of a journey. This image and the steps of the journey are similar to the Kolb Learning Cycle, which the MSP Resource Portal also uses to understand the dynamic of dialogue and to structure dialogue processes.

See Figures 2.4.1 and 2.4.2; and see Chapter 2.2.

These are not rigid models but frameworks for planning the events that make up a dialogue process. Any given event may focus on one step in the journey or may take participants through the whole journey, depending on the overall process design. These models can provide the clarity needed to ensure each event is designed to achieve its purpose within the larger process. For each step of the journey, we (1) provide an overview of the task of the group and the related goals of the facilitator; (2) address difficulties or challenges that may arise, depending on context; and (3) offer some tips and strategies for tackling this step successfully.

Figure 2.4.1 The Dialogue Journey: A Metaphor

Stages of the journey
1. Starting out
2. Eliciting perspectives
3. Enriching perspectives and achieving understanding
4. Framing choices and deliberating
5. Deciding
6. Implementing and taking action
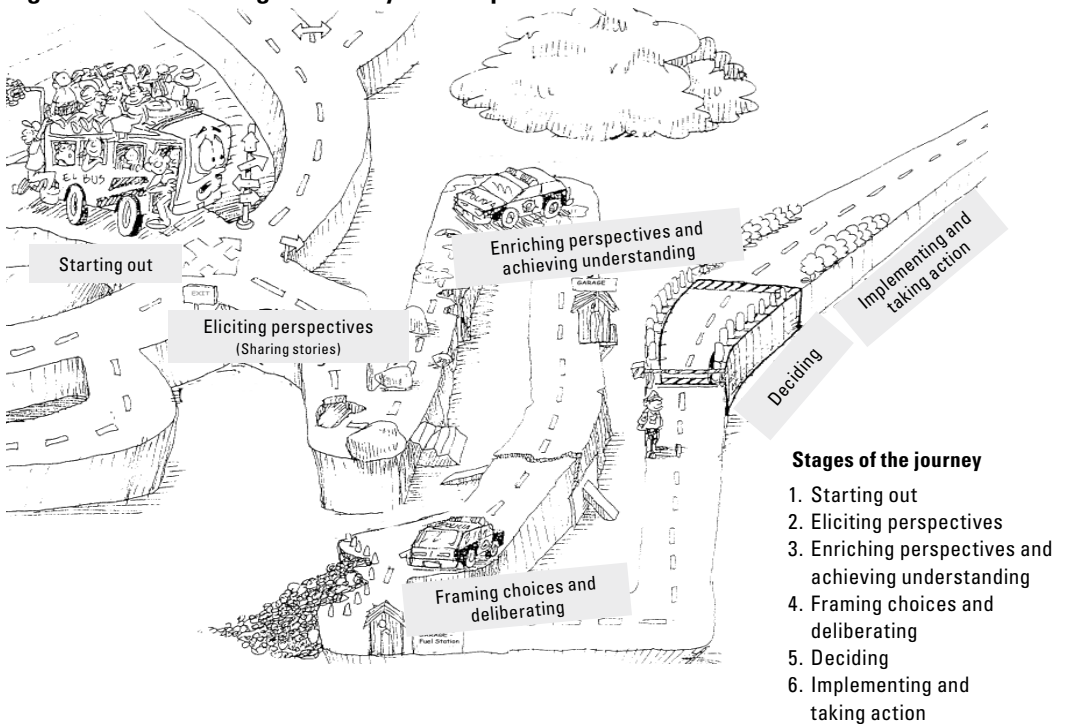
Source: Developed by Philip Thomas for OAS/PROPAZ (1998). Artist: Alfredo Burgos, El Salvador.

Figure 2.4.2 The Metaphor of the Journey Decoded

Metaphor of Journey decoded	
The bus	The group
The driver	Group procedures/dynamics/facilitation
Petrol and mechanical condition	Minimum or basic conditions for dialogue
The road	The process to follow in its different stages
Police, transport laws and regulations	Authority to which group is accountable: ground rules, laws, interests and needs of constituents represented in the process
Mechanical garages, gas stations	The need for periodic check-ups (monitoring)—assessments of how we are doing in terms of triangle of satisfaction (psychology, process, problem)
Flooding, holes in road, landslides	Problems and difficulties encountered in the process
Dark cloud	Pressures and difficulties generated by external forces that are beyond the control of the group (press, actions of other sectors, and so on)
Steps (merging on/off ramps)	Possibility that some abandon the process and others join

Source: Developed by Philip Thomas for OAS/PROPAZ (1998).

Getting Started

1. Goal of facilitation/task of group

- Build interest and commitment among participants by attending to the triangle of satisfaction, clarifying the 'what' and the 'how'.

- Establish conditions for a 'safe' space.

- Help participants encounter each other in a way that will begin building trust and connections between them as human beings, not just as representatives of a group or position.

- Ensure substantial equality of conditions within the group—pertaining to status, roles, information, skills and cultural appropriateness—while still recognizing the inequalities that exist outside the group experience.

2. Potential challenges or difficulties

- **Participation**:

  ✓ Important actors refuse to participate in the process.

  ✓ Participants differ significantly in their positional authority within the groups they represent. For example, some organizations send senior directors while others send subordinates; or civil society participants in multi-sectoral dialogues insist on participation by high-level government officials. This is a challenge

when people are not comfortable with or do not value working with others not perceived as peers.

- ✓ People encountering the process for the first time as dialogue participants, especially in highly polarized settings where no trust exists, come to the first event highly cynical and sceptical about the possibility of accomplishing something productive.

- ✓ Socio-economic differences among participants and differences in positional power replicate the societal inequalities the dialogue aims to address.

- ✓ Different levels of capacity in the group—for example, in literacy, language, communication skills, access to information and formal analytical skills—recreate existing inequalities and thereby make authentic dialogue difficult.

- **Agenda**:

  - ✓ The agenda is too broad or too ambitious, hampering the prospect of success or movement in the right direction and potentially fuelling frustration. Or it is too ambiguous, making it difficult to clarify stakeholder relationships.

  - ✓ Participants differ on which issue should be addressed first. Some insist on dealing with the most 'important' (i.e. difficult) issue first, suggesting that all else depends on that issue. Others want to choose a less divisive issue in order to create movement or establish a 'history of success'.

  - ✓ One group or sector tries to use the dialogue's agenda as a 'Trojan horse'—a means of bringing in *every* issue. This is a potential problem, especially when the government is a sponsor or participant.

3. Helpful tips and strategies

- When key actors refuse to participate, there are basically three choices.

  - ✓ Begin without them, in the hope that as they see the process develop they will sense a need to participate or a stronger interest in doing so.

  - ✓ Delay starting and strive to develop the right conditions to induce their participation.

  - ✓ Consider other ways of involving them, such as in private, low-risk, parallel processes.

- To deal with different levels of authority represented in the group, establish clear expectations about what level of representation groups or institutions will send to the dialogue, as well as mechanisms for communication between dialogue participants and the groups they represent.

- To deal with doubts or cynicism and to make people feel comfortable about the process:

  - ✓ Use the journey metaphor in a preparatory meeting or training session to talk about the process and

See Figures 2.4.1 and 2.4.2.

all the potential pitfalls. If people discuss what obstacles might arise, or who might use the on- and off-ramps and why, they may begin to feel confident that the conveners are not naïve about the challenges facing the process and that the dialogue will be a safe space within which to address difficult issues.

✓ Use videos of similar processes to show what dialogue can be like and to convince participants of what is possible.

- Preparatory training for dialogue participants, either for separate groups or all of them together, can be a valuable and strategic part of getting started in a number of ways.

✓ It offers a 'safe' entry point to dialogue for those who are sceptical or negative.

✓ It creates a shared experience, a common language and common reference points, since everyone goes through the same training exercises. This is true whether the stakeholder groups receive the training separately or together.

✓ It creates a foundation of awareness about the dialogue process, as distinct from its outcomes or content.

✓ It helps mitigate initial unevenness in the participants' capacities.

- Other ways to avoid recreating inequitable societal patterns within the group include:

✓ a logistics strategy that ensures that everyone is supported in attending the dialogue, that they all receive the same information at the outset and that they are treated respectfully at the dialogue venue, as discussed under Logistics, Chapter 2.4

✓ clear behavioural ground rules, established at the outset and applied equally to everyone, help 'level the playing field' and make participants feel comfortable with the process

✓ facilitation techniques that ensure everyone participates and has an opportunity for self-expression also help mitigate differences in socio-economic status and capacities, as discussed under Facilitation, Chapter 2.4.

- To avoid potential difficulties with the agenda for the dialogue, pay particular attention to setting ground rules on what will be discussed, as described under Substantive Guidelines, Chapter 2.4.

- Some useful facilitation techniques for letting all voices be heard are as follows.

  o *Talking tokens.* Each participant receives several tokens (coins, beans, and so on) at the beginning. Each time an individual speaks, he or she must deposit one of the tokens received. When all tokens have been used, that person may no longer speak until everyone else has expended their tokens. The ground rules can also include a time limit (two minutes per token, for example), so that people who speak for more than the specified time must surrender an additional token.

o **Talking objects.** An object, often something of symbolic value or sacred meaning, indicates who may talk. When individuals want to make a comment, they must first request this 'talking object' and wait until they have it in their possession before speaking. An additional rule requires each person, before speaking, to summarize what the last person said. This technique can slow the pace and/or moderate the tone of a conversation, and make it more difficult for powerful speakers to dominate.

o **Small groups.** The dialogue group divides into small groups of two to four people for initial discussion of topics or story-telling, and they then share some of their conversation or conclusions with the whole group. Ground rules for the small group conversations can help create conditions in which stronger voices will not dominate.

Eliciting Perspectives

1. **Goal of facilitation/task of group**

- Establish the foundation for dialogue by helping participants appreciate that:

   ✓ They do not already know the full story of how others see the world.

   ✓ Each individual perspective is only a part of the whole story.

   ✓ Stories provide a guide to how people are making sense of the world—how they are connecting events and making them coherent.

- Ensure the inclusion of all perspectives in such a way that all participants or those affected by an issue feel an identification with the stories told.

- Create a safe place and facilitate successful communication that empowers both the act of *speaking* and the act of *listening*:

   ✓ Help participants speak so that others want to listen.

   ✓ Help participants listen so that others want to speak.

   ✓ Help the group move beyond politeness or 'downloading'—people saying what they always say, or what they think they are supposed to say—to more authentic sharing of perspectives.[162]

   ✓ Help participants develop at least cognitive empathy for the experiences and perspectives of others.

2. **Potential challenges or difficulties**

- Some participants violate ground rules against interruptions and judgements in ways that shut down stories rather than opening and deepening them.

- Some participants express impatience and discount sharing stories as too 'light' or 'fluffy' and a 'waste of time'.

- Initial downloading:

- ✓ People start out offering 'official' positions and demands without describing the broader framework or story that shapes and informs them.

- ✓ People tell their stories in abstract terms, disconnected from individual experience.

- ✓ People offer a generalized, simplified story that masks the complexity of perspectives within a group, making the group seem more cohesive and consolidated than it might actually be.

- Participants insist on debate, offering contributions that are based on reactions to others' perspectives or stories rather than being a full presentation of their own account of or perspective on the issues.

- An important actor or group is absent from the initial event and therefore does not hear others' stories or contribute an important story that may be an essential part of the initial foundation upon which the process will rest.

3. Helpful tips and strategies

- Strong guidance from the facilitator at the outset can help make ground rules stick.

- Training and orientation: raising participants' awareness of the role of stories in a dialogue process and teaching them tools for analysing and making sense of different stories or perspectives can promote fuller participation in this step.

- Facilitation moves that may help elicit fuller sharing of perspectives:

  - ✓ Model curiosity: being curious about others' perspective makes them feel heard and encourages them to tell their story more fully.

  - ✓ Demonstrate interviewing techniques: ask questions that encourage uncovering underlying assumptions, or that draw out more of the history that has shaped the perspective.

  - ✓ Provide structure for listener responses: offer an opportunity for questions of clarification—not statements or reactions disguised as questions—or questions that elicit more depth, for example:

    - o 'What I would like to know more about is …'.

    - o 'What surprises me most is … ' (something new about this perspective I had not known or understood).

    - o 'What I do not yet understand is … Or What is most difficult for me to understand is …

- Recording the event: this is important for creating 'group memory' and making it possible to inform participants who were absent from the event. It also provides continuity in the process from one event to another. Finally, letting participants see

their ideas captured as part of the record is an effective way to make them feel heard and valued. There are various types of recording:

✓ regular note-taking, minutes, and so on that constitute group memory on flip charts, and that can be compiled and distributed as a formal record of what happened

✓ graphic recording: artistic recorders use images and colours, as well as words, to capture what the group has shared and discussed. Often, these graphic recordings capture the shifts in tone and mood within an event in a way that written documents do not.

For further information

on graphic recorders and graphic facilitators, see <http://www. visualpractitioner.org>.

✓ audio or video recording makes possible a more literal, and potentially more powerful, account of the proceedings, through verbatim quotes or video images and sound.

• Useful facilitation techniques for structuring participation are as follows.

o *Imaginary continuums.* Establish an imaginary line in the room between two points representing two extremes on a given issue. Ask the group to take up positions along the line according to their thoughts or beliefs on that issue. This allows everyone to see clearly the diversity of positions within the group, and allows each participant to see where others are positioned on the issue, which may force them to revise their preconceived ideas or initial perceptions. Usually it is helpful to do this with a variety of questions so that people can see that they are far from other participants on some issues, while on others they may be close to those same participants. This is one way of allowing participants to express or position themselves without having to talk. It sets the stage for revealing and exploring the underlying assumptions within a group.

o *Interviews.* Select several people who can represent the different perspectives likely to be present in the group, and interview them in front of the whole group. Whoever conducts the interview must do so in an informal and friendly way with the goal of eliciting, understanding and summarizing the interviewees' perspectives. It may be helpful to begin with a more personal question in order to put people at ease and build trust, such as 'would you tell me a little bit about yourself?'. On finishing the interviews, one might ask the larger group if there is another perspective that has not been adequately expressed and, if so, invite someone who can speak from that perspective to be interviewed.

o *Samoan circle.* This is a way of sharing perspectives in a mid-sized group. Place three to five chairs in a small circle within a larger circle of chairs on which participants are seated. Individuals representing different perspectives are invited to sit in the smaller circle and begin a conversation with each other. Only individuals in the inner circle may speak. As individuals in the outside

circle want to join the conversation, they move to the inner circle and stand behind one of the chairs until it becomes available. When an individual seated in the inner circle has finished his or her comments, he or she returns to the outer circle, allowing others to occupy that chair. Those seated in the outer circle are expected to listen and observe, and to refrain from speaking unless from within the inner circle.

An alternative is to place a 'listening chair' in the middle and explain that whoever is speaking can request any other person to occupy this chair. The person seated in the 'listening chair' can only listen and summarize what is being said. If that person then wants to comment, he or she must first leave the 'listening chair' and occupy one of the chairs in the inner circle where speaking is allowed.

Enriching Perspectives and Achieving Understanding

1. **Goal of facilitation/task of group**

- Analysis: uncover and explicate points of convergence among the stories; sharpen the areas of disagreement between them; develop an integrated understanding of all the stories together.

Figure 2.4.3 Shifting Perspectives

Source: Not available.

- Shift in perspective:
  - ✓ from several, independent stories to a single, interdependent story
  - ✓ from 'us' and 'them' to an interconnected 'we'
  - ✓ from a simplistic, fragmented view of current reality to a complex integrated view.

- Development of shared understanding: collectively define the problems, challenges and issues to be addressed; collectively create ways of addressing them and moving into the future.

2. **Potential challenges or difficulties**

- People are used to focusing on the content of what is communicated in their own and others' stories, rather than on the process by which they make sense of those stories. But it is essential to shift the focus to this sense-making process in order to move the group from simply *communicating* to *understanding*.

- Some participants remain stuck on demands, or push for predetermined solutions, before more fully understanding, defining and 'naming and framing' the problem. This creates the danger that an ill-defined problem will yield ill-conceived solutions.

- Some participants remain stuck in the past, seeking or demanding that past wrongs be addressed, while others insist on focusing on the future. The challenge is to

achieve an acceptable balance between the relative importance given to the past and the future in constructing a shared understanding of the present.

• Collective analysis often needs to get 'messy'—bogged down in complexity—before becoming more clear. This holds the potential for frustration and disillusionment with the dialogue process.

3. Helpful tips and strategies

• Using the journey metaphor from the outset, and as a reference point throughout the dialogue, can help create a willingness among the participants to be patient and trust the process, even when things seem most messy.

• Facilitation skills that become especially important here include:

  ✓ modelling inquiry and reframing (see 'Key Roles and Qualities of the Facilitator' above)

  ✓ recognizing and drawing attention to differences of meaning and interpretation

  ✓ asking questions that foster critical reflection and help participants examine more deeply the stories told, and that begin to uncover underlying assumptions, and that subject them to careful examination. The following questions are examples.[163]

• Questions to uncover underlying assumptions and reveal sense-making:

  ✓ What has contributed to the perspective you now hold? What underlying assumptions can you identify in your perspective?

  ✓ What facts or details are you emphasizing, and what others are you choosing to de-emphasize or ignore so that your perspective remains coherent?

  ✓ What are the primary language and set of categories you have used to make sense of and explain your experience? What other language and categories might you use to produce a different story about your experience?

  ✓ How has the story you tell about the world shaped how you understand and explain your experience with others?

  ✓ What events or experiences with others are central to that story, and which have you excluded or forgotten because they did not fit into the story?

• Questions to facilitate new ways of thinking:

  ✓ What are some alternative stories or ways of explaining your experiences with others?

  ✓ What stories might arise if you chose to include or even emphasize those facts, events or experiences that are de-emphasized in or omitted from the current story?

  ✓ Regarding your relationship with others, what is the story you most want to live and tell? Is this a story that others would wish to co-author with you?

✓ How has the meaning you have attributed to facts, events and experiences contributed to or blocked this desired story?

✓ What should you and others do to bring the new story into being together?

• Analytical tools can help participants become more aware of their own and others' sense-making processes.

✓ From the 'coordinated management of meaning' theory and practice:[164]

o 'Episodic analysis' asks the storyteller to consider how his or her interpretation of an event or experience might change if it were viewed within a different timeframe—a year, five years, a decade, generations.

o The 'Daisy Model' (Figure 2.4.4) uses the image of a daisy to make the point that every individual can tell her or his story from a variety of perspectives, each of which is represented by one petal of the daisy.

For further reading

W. Barnett Pearce, 'The Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM)', in William Gudykunst, ed., *Theorizing Communication and Culture* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2004), pp. 35–54. This and other sources are available and referenced at <http://www.pearceassociates.com>.

Figure 2.4.4 The Daisy Model: Multiple Stories of a Single Individual
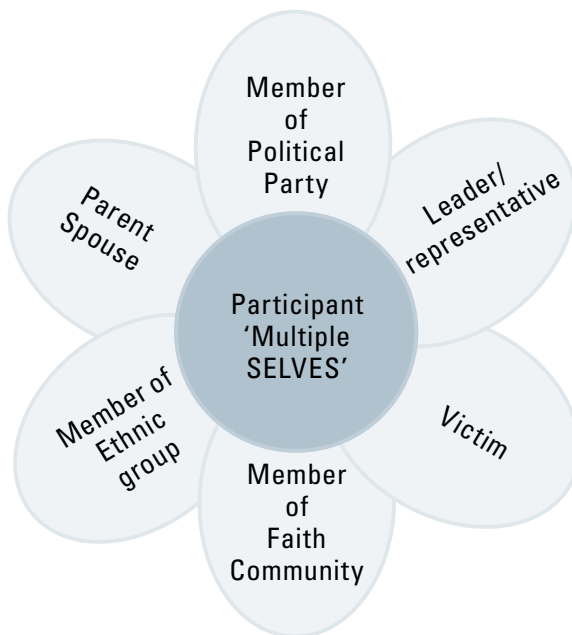
- o The 'LUUUTT Model' inquires into the differences between stories lived, untold stories, unheard stories, unknown stories, stories told and story-telling.

- ✓ From action science:[165]

  - o The 'left-hand column exercise': analyse a selected conversation by drawing a line dividing a sheet of paper into two columns. In the right-hand column write what was actually said. In the left-hand column, write what you were thinking but not saying. This exercise helps people become more aware of the unstated assumptions that guide their communication. It can be used as an individual exercise for critical reflection or shared with others as a way of deepening conversation.

  - o The 'ladder of inference' (Figure 2.4.5) uses the image of a ladder to analyse how people move from observable data (the bottom rung) to data selection, based on beliefs, to an interpretation of the selected data, invested with cultural and personal meaning, to assumptions based on the added meaning, to beliefs about the world, which shape actions and feed back into the process by influencing the selection of data we pay attention to.

Figure 2.4.5 The Ladder of Inference
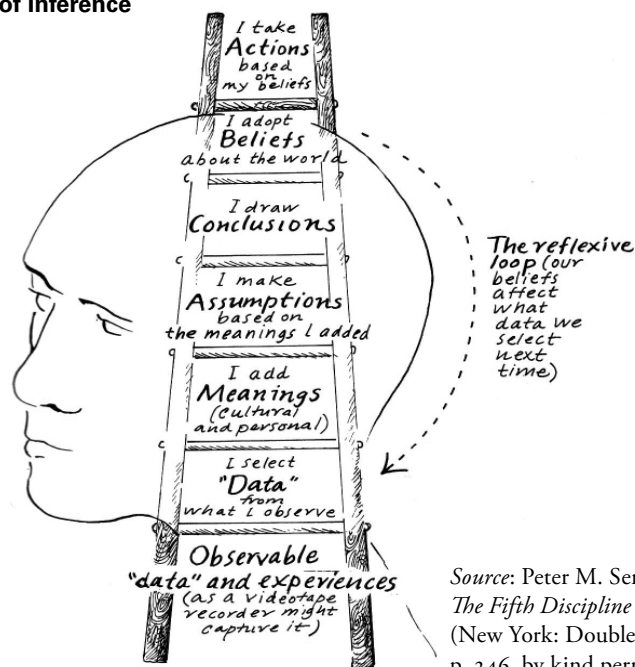
Source: Peter M. Senge et al., *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), p. 246, by kind permission.

- Contributions from subject experts can also help participants gain some perspective on the stories they brought to the dialogue, by introducing important information on the substantive issues. The key to doing this effectively, however, is to ensure that several expert perspectives are heard. Policy dialogues, in particular, are not just a matter of individual stories; they require that participants be adequately informed by expert information and analysis. But it is important to recognize that there is rarely a universally accepted 'expert' perspective that is unchallenged by competing viewpoints.

- World Café, Open Space and Appreciative Inquiry are process tools that are well-suited to enriching perspectives.

- Useful facilitation techniques for enriching perspectives and achieving understanding are as follows.

  o *Role-reversal interviews.* A participant agrees to be interviewed while playing the role of someone who holds views on the issue under discussion that are the opposite of his or her own. The interviewee then answers questions from the perspective of that role. Begin with personal questions that help the person more fully assume the role.

  o *Role-reversal presentations.* Several individuals are asked to speak with those holding an opposing view in order to fully learn their perspective and then present it convincingly to the rest of the group, speaking in the first person as if it were their own perspective.

Framing Choices and Deliberating

1. Goal of facilitation/task of group

- Move from analysing and understanding perspectives to considering the practical implications—choices and actions that should flow from what the dialogue group has learned. Often this step aims to produce a formal decision or agreement. Even in dialogues that are simply for 'exploration', however, the group should work towards agreement on what its members have discovered together, and consider the implications for the next steps.

- 'Name and frame': specify the problem or issue to be addressed in a way that reflects the various perspectives, agreements and disagreements in the group.

- Put the options on the table: articulate the choices as alternative paths forward, expressing clearly the core values that shape each choice.

- Deliberate dialogically: carefully evaluate each choice, inquiring rigorously into its underlying assumptions and values, as well as its potential benefits and costs for each group and for the whole.

See Defining Dialogue as a Distinctive Kind of Process, Chapter 1.3.

2. Potential challenges or difficulties

- A sense of urgency to deal with a pressing problem or crisis seems to preclude considering options for longer-term solutions.

- Participants fall back to the initial demands or positions with which they entered the dialogue, and do not reflect the new understanding achieved during the process.

- New participants join the process at this stage with proposals that do not reflect advances in the group—for example, when a participating organization decides to send a new representative to the event.

- Proposals are framed in excessively expert or technical language that is inaccessible to non-experts and the broader constituency affected by the proposal. This limits their involvement in discerning and making judgements about the trade-offs and questions of values at stake in each of the choices being considered.

- The groups that dialogue participants represent react to the choices proposed in ways that that do not reflect the broader, more complex understanding achieved within the dialogue.

- The options that emerge involve or implicate other stakeholders who are absent from the process—for example, a choice involving legislation when the corresponding authorities are not present.

- The group decides there is a need to engage citizens more directly in the deliberation process.

3. Helpful tips and strategies

- When a pressing problem has to be dealt with urgently, it helps to be explicit about the time frame (short-term, mid-term, long-term) associated with different choices, and about the impact of time pressure on the deliberation. This makes it possible to accept a short-term 'fix' while still being clear that the deeper roots of the problem have been addressed.

- Facilitators have to choose how to deal with the proposals or 'solutions' that participants bring into the process at the outset:

  - ✓ Invite them to present these ideas as part of sharing and enriching perspectives.

  - ✓ Insist that people refrain from introducing 'solutions' until the deliberation step, when the group as a whole has framed the problem or issue and starts to think about options. This choice requires group awareness and acceptance to the overall process, for which purpose a discussion of the journey metaphor can be helpful.

- The challenge of new participants entering at a late stage in the dialogue is one that requires clear ground rules that are agreed upon early in the process (see 'Ground Rules' above). Staying in touch with participants in between events is also important. If a group must send a new representative, it may be possible to prepare

that person in advance, or agree on how he or she can participate if not prepared (see 'In Between Dialogue Events' below).

- Avoid having experts hijack a deliberative event by ensuring that there is a critical mass of non-experts in the dialogue group from the beginning, and by framing the deliberative dialogue as a conversation about values and trade-offs. To quote Tom Atlee, author of *The Tao of Democracy*, 'keep the experts on tap, not on top'.[166]

- Negative reactions by constituencies to the options or proposals produced at this stage typically reflect a gap in communication between the participants and the groups they represent. The communication strategy for the dialogue process must anticipate this problem and avert it as much as possible by supporting the between-event communications of participants. This can be done with minutes or summaries of events that go beyond reporting agreements or disagreements, and that capture some of the thinking about different perspectives and the assumptions that inform them. Monitoring tools that capture participants' reflections at the end of events can provide input to these communications. Within the event itself, the dialogue group can consider how to describe or model new understanding and new relationships in their communication between events.

See Chapter 2.5.

- When policy options arise that require engaging with stakeholders who are not participating in the dialogue, or when it becomes clear that broader public engagement in the deliberation process would be desirable, various processes are available to expand the conversation, such as study circles and deliberative polling.

See Appendix 2.

- The National Issues Forums (NIF) study guide template is a useful tool for structuring a deliberative dialogue and capturing, in one document, the alternative proposals with an analysis of corresponding trade-offs. Study guides help people understand that the proposals they had at the outset are simply among various options and that, for the complex problems that dialogue processes typically address, there are no simple answers.

See Figure 2.4.6.

For further reading

See David Mathews and Noëlle McAfee, *Making Choices Together: The Power of Public Deliberation* (2003), available with many other resources provided by the National Issues Forums Institute at <http://www.nifi.org>.

Figure 2.4.6 NIF Study Guide

NIF Study Guide	Issue Area	
Problem Description: General Overview The problem/issue is (succinct statement)….		
Perspective A	**Perspective B**	**Perspective C**
What should be done		
Argument in favour		
Arguments against		
What costs and trade-offs are required?		
Other questions to help explicate differences …		

Deciding

1. Goal of facilitation/task of group

- Agree as a group on what actions will flow from the dialogue, for example:

  - ✓ agreement by political actors to abide by specific electoral rules; or a binding peacekeeping agreement between parties formerly in conflict

  - ✓ agreement on an agenda for change (political, economic, social) that calls for specific follow-up actions by dialogue participants

- ✓ agreement to continue the dialogue as it is, or to expand it
- ✓ agreement to disseminate the lessons of the dialogue as broadly as possible within society.
- Frame the agreement in a way that gives participants a sense of shared ownership and a commitment to follow through.

2. Potential challenges or difficulties

- The movement to decide causes participants' initial lack of trust or sense of polarization to resurface, raising the prospect of a stalemate or breakdown in the process.
- Disagreements in the group threaten the possibility of consensus.
- Some participants seem to be undercutting or manipulating the process, for example:
  - ✓ A representative of a decision-maker says that he or she is not authorized to make a given decision—perceived as a last-minute power play.
  - ✓ A group tries to take advantage of progress made in the process to introduce a new set of issues at the final stage—the 'Trojan horse' again.
  - ✓ Some participants require significantly more time than others to consult or persuade their constituents, creating a clash of expectations over the time line for completing the decision-making process.
- Lack of support from constituencies delays or threatens the decision the group has made; the constituencies are not involved or do not feel represented in the outcome, and threaten not to honour decisions made by their 'representatives'.
- The group reaches a decision that exceeds its mandate or jurisdiction—for example, by calling for a new law when no government representatives are present.

3. Helpful tips and strategies

- To avoid breakdown at this critical stage, it is especially important to maintain the sense of safety and trust that has been fostered within the dialogue group. Important steps include:
  - ✓ careful framing of the decision and the decision-making process, to avoid setting up what seems to be a win–lose scenario
  - ✓ strong reinforcement of collective commitment to ground rules
  - ✓ agreement on specific ground rules for decision-making, for example, by consensus, majority vote, only framing recommendations and deferring to an external decision-making authority
  - ✓ careful management of communication to the news media, especially if there is a sense of public expectancy about what agreement will emerge.

- To keep the possibility of consensus alive in the face of disagreements, maintain the spirit of dialogue by inquiring into the nature of the disagreement. This can be done, for example, using the 4-3-2-1 method, a common tool of facilitation whereby participants are asked to rank their responses to the proposal in question as follows:

    4. I agree with the proposal or decision.

    3. I am in general agreement but I want some things clarified or modified before I will fully support it.

    2. I am not prepared to accept the proposal yet, because I do not fully understand it or need more information.

    1. I am not in agreement for the following reasons …

    The group uses the resulting data to explore the nature and scope of disagreement and to focus on what can be done to address it.

- Additionally, raise the question of whether complete consensus is required on every item. It may be sufficient to issue a statement about where there is agreement, and to acknowledge remaining disagreements.

- When actions seem deliberately intended to stall or manipulate the decision-making process, it helps to avoid labelling them negatively and inquire into the reasons for them; the reasons are sometimes understandable and legitimate. It should be recognized, however, that participation in a dialogue process is inherently voluntary, as is compliance with the ground rules or other agreements. Reaffirming and reinforcing the original ground rules may help to avert such actions, or eventually it may be necessary to confront the behaviour directly.

- A number of steps can help to avoid disconnects between advances in the dialogue group and the constituencies represented in it, for example:

    ✓ a communication strategy that supports participants in representing the dialogue process to those who have not been part of it

    See Communication and Information Management, Chapter 2.4.

    ✓ careful monitoring of the context and attention to the flow of information between events, which can help determine if advances in the group are disconnected from the constituencies outside the dialogue.

- To help the group avoid exceeding its mandate, the facilitator and project team should remain alert for shifts in the direction or scope of the dialogue that may call for other actors to be included in the conversation, or for the group to revisit its original agreements about purpose and content.

Implementing and Taking Action

1. **Goal of facilitation/task of group**

- Coordinated action that reflects decisions made in the process

- Group attention to maintaining constructive relationship dynamics

- Continued communication and exchange of information during the implementation stage

- Effective, proactive management of problems that arise so that they do not lead to a re-emergence of mistrust.

2. **Potential challenges or difficulties**

- The process design has not fully anticipated and planned for this stage, and some people considered the process to be over once decisions are reached.

- Participants are unable to move forward or sustain the changes they have committed themselves to, because of problems of re-entry into their institutions or constituencies, for example:

  ✓ institutional/group inertia or resistance is too strong, such that the participant loses commitment or leaves the institution

  ✓ people are simply overloaded with commitments and become absorbed by business-as-usual.

- Events and developments in the implementation phase threaten to undermine group trust, cohesion and commitment, for example:

  ✓ problems or delays in implementation create the perception of a failure to comply with agreements and lack of goodwill

  ✓ misunderstandings about the nature of the agreements arise as implementation proceeds

  ✓ insufficient clarity about indicators of success creates ambiguity and fosters perceptions of non-compliance

  ✓ one party really does renege on the agreements.

- Factors external to the dialogue process limit the prospect of agreements being implemented, or constrain the potential for visible impact and threaten to create disillusionment, for example:

  ✓ The changes envisioned by the group involve broad, societal-level change.

  ✓ The influence on formal structures and policies is minimal.

  ✓ Where government support is important, there is a transition to a new government that does not feel obliged to honour agreements made by the previous government.

✓ A new crisis takes priority, diverts attention from the dialogue follow-up or causes parties to fall back into dysfunctional relationships.

3. Helpful tips and strategies

- The planning for action that arises from the dialogue begins with the initial process design, for example:

  ✓ From the beginning, start to identify and ally with other processes or organizations that are working for change.

  ✓ Plan for the dialogue group to devote substantial attention to developing a strategy to implement its decisions, and plan to provide resources to support an organized implementation effort.

  See Box 2.3.1, Process Design Worksheet, Chapter 2.3.

- To help participants cope with the challenges of re-entry:

  ✓ Structure the strategy for communication between events to provide support to participants as the process unfolds (see 'Communication and Information Strategy' in the section on 'In Between Dialogue Events' below).

  ✓ At the closing meeting of the group, invite people to anticipate and discuss what they will face on their return, as a way of recognizing the problem and creating understanding that it is a natural part of the process.

  ✓ Participants should leave the facilitator and project team with self-addressed postcards that can be sent out after an agreed period as a reminder of their commitments.

- To avoid breakdown in the face of implementation problems or delays, it is important for the group to be proactive and discuss the following as part of the decision-making process:

  ✓ the kinds of things that can cause such problems to arise, such as lack of funding, a change in the context, constraints on timing or resistance from key parties

  ✓ procedures for handling these challenges when they arise in the future, including inquiring into their causes before concluding that people are reneging on agreements. For example, agree to a system of verifying and interpreting information; make a phone call or some kind of connection that preserves the social capital developed in the dialogue

  ✓ what would success look like? The more specific the group can be about this definition, the easier it will be to sustain mutual trust and confidence in the process.

- Sometimes it is necessary to face the fact that a party to the dialogue has acted in bad faith or reneged on agreements. It may then be important for others in the process to nurture the relationships they have formed, remain connected and

continue to work for change. Remaining connected as a social network and using this relational capital may prove an effective way of leveraging the moral authority needed to hold others accountable.

- Dealing with the frustration and disappointment caused by resistance from external factors can be easier if the dialogue process is framed as part of a long-range strategy that acknowledges the complexity and difficulty of significant societal change. Some elements of this strategy might be:

  ✓ building alliances with other processes and groups to promote a broad agenda for change and a 'culture of dialogue'. For example, the Third Side Network (<http://www.thirdside.org>) provides resources that support the work of those who are building alliances to promote dialogic ways of addressing societal challenges

  ✓ using the press and other media outlets to position the dialogue in public opinion and to promote the dialogue's agenda as a public agenda

  ✓ expanding the dialogue to include others

  ✓ maintaining the relationships created in the dialogue process. They provide the basis for a network of like-minded individuals who can sustain the change agenda informally and keep it alive, even in periods when the context is not supportive.

In Between Dialogue Events

The dialogue process design illustrated at the end of Chapter 2.3 indicated two major streams of work running between dialogue events:

- a stream of communication and information management linking the events
- a stream of assessment that supports the monitoring, learning and adapting that should take place continuously as the process unfolds.

Communication and Information Management

As our detailed description of the dialogue process suggests, the level of support provided to dialogue participants and their constituencies between events plays a critical role in avoiding or mitigating many of the problems that can arise within events, particularly in the latter stages of deliberation and decision-making. This involves staying in contact with people, keeping them engaged in the issues and supporting them in staying the course. As

the project manager of the Guatemalan Multiparty Dialogue noted, 'You can't be content to wait and see if they attend the next workshop, but you have to call them between workshops to ask how things are going, how their parties are doing, if they need anything, etc.'.[167]

Figure 2.4.7 Horizontal and Cross-Level Communication

Figure 2.4.7 illustrates between-event communication. It suggests that this nurturing flow of communication must do more than engage the participants, sustaining their commitment to the process, as suggested by the project manager above. Between-event communication must also support participants in engaging the stakeholder groups they represent. Indeed, it usually falls to the project team and facilitators to ensure that 'representation' works two ways.

- Dialogue participants stay in touch with their stakeholder reference groups so that they can adequately and appropriately represent the perspectives of their 'constituents' in the dialogue process.

- Dialogue participants represent the dialogue process to their constituencies in ways that bring the stakeholder groups along, so that they can support the understandings or agreement that result.

Planning for this critical flow of communication should begin in the design phase, but execution is one of the most important aspects of implementation. To a great extent, the success of the overall process depends on it.

Ongoing Assessment

Chapter 2.5 addresses M&E for the process as a whole. Some tools, however, apply specifically to events and are designed to guide the continuous assessment and improvement of event design and facilitation. These include reviews of specific events, interviewing participants between events for deeper reflections and monitoring the broader context in which the process unfolds.

Debriefing Event

Individual events can be reviewed in a variety of ways: as part of a group reflection near the end of the event; in a participant questionnaire immediately following the event; or as part of the reflection process of the facilitator and project team. As a framework for this activity, we propose the 'triangle of satisfaction' introduced in Chapter 2.3, which considers psychological, substantive and process issues as the critical dimensions to be explored. Some questions can help to guide these reflections:

The substantive side

- o   What issues were discussed?
- o   What progress did we make?
- o   What did we learn or accomplish?
- o   What questions have emerged?
- o   Did we reach, or change, our objectives?

The process side

- o   How did you feel about the process?
- o   Did we take all perspectives into consideration?
- o   What difficulties or obstacles did we encounter?
- o   What strategies were most helpful for overcoming them?

The psychological side

- o   Have you felt heard and understood?
- o   Have you fully expressed your perspectives and ideas?
- o   Have you been able to understand others?
- o   Have you felt respected?

Interviews

The purpose of interviews is to explore more deeply how the participants are experiencing the process. If some have abandoned it, we want to understand why. We also want to know why others remain committed to it—what is working well that we should enhance or build on? Interviews can also provide useful information on the challenges or difficulties participants are encountering, both within and outside the dialogue process, with their constituents or institutions. What external forces are shaping their experiences and may affect the process and its results?

Context Update

The co-design team (conveners, facilitators and so on) monitors those developments within and outside the process that may affect stakeholder relationships and the process under way. The team must remain alert to the need for safety, sufficient transparency

to build trust, and the challenges of coordinating the different meanings attributed to these events. The team members' task is to explicate these events and help the group negotiate or manage the impact they may have on the process. Some guiding questions would be:

- What events have been reported? Who was involved?
- How might other stakeholders perceive or 'make sense' of this situation, and what difficulties might this cause?
- What impact is this likely to have on the stakeholders and the process?

Learning and Adaptation

Perhaps the most important between-event activities are evaluating and responding to the information gathered by debriefing, and interviewing the dialogue participants and others. The project team should assess the context in which the dialogue process is unfolding, determine which aspects of the process design are (or are not) working well and adjust accordingly. All of these activities can be considered part of M&E, the subject of Chapter 2.5, but in practice they are an integral and essential part of implementation.

> **Monitoring progress**
>
> 'It is important to note that the kinds of questions asked in these assessment components are ones that good moderators would already be intuitively asking themselves between meetings. The goal of setting up a monitoring system, therefore, is to standardize the questions asked and to ensure that the answers are captured for the future use of the dialogue group and to assist future moderators in similar settings.'
>
> See Wisdom from the Field – Sources (p. 238) for the sources of these materials.

Chapter 2.5: Monitoring and Evaluation

M&E is a big subject, and one covered by an extensive literature. This chapter seeks to introduce readers to key issues in the field as they relate to dialogue, and to provide a clear sense of how to undertake M&E in a dialogue process. To be fully effective, M&E should be part of the process from the beginning, and hence we suggest that this chapter be read in close conjunction with Chapter 2.3, 'Designing the Dialogue Process'.

The Purpose of M&E

As mentioned earlier, the project management team's willingness and ability to respond to what emerges in the process and its context will probably be at least as important as the strength of the original process design in determining whether the goals of the dialogue initiative are met. M&E is what makes such responsiveness possible. When it is an integral part of implementation, M&E serves two important functions.

- It provides the necessary inputs for *learning and adaptation* during the dialogue process and, over the longer term, is the basis for improving dialogue practice and contributing to process knowledge.

- It is the basis for *accountability* to the institutions that provide resources to make dialogue processes possible. Those institutions have a legitimate interest in understanding how and how well their investments are fulfilling their goals.

M&E for dialogue processes is part of a larger field, one that is evolving from mainly emphasizing accountability to placing greater emphasis on learning and adaptation.[168] Traditionally, definitions have maintained a clear separation between **monitoring**, an activity of the project management team and a continuous process that focuses mainly on data gathering, and **evaluation**, a time-bound activity that focuses on analysing and drawing conclusions from the data. Evaluation is conducted by external evaluators, often after the process has concluded. As greater emphasis is placed on learning and adaptation, however, these distinctions are becoming less clear. Increasingly, project management teams are taking responsibility for analysing and interpreting information in order to act on it, while evaluators are developing ways to integrate their work into

Monitoring and evaluating outcomes are appropriately the central focus of the reflection and mid-course corrections for which the project management team is responsible as the dialogue initiative unfolds.

current initiatives so as to contribute to project management as it is taking place.

Following this trend, we treat M&E as a unified stream of activity that is appropriately part of the dialogue process from beginning to end, as depicted in the schematic overviews of the dialogue process in Figure 2.1.1 and Figure 2.3.2. A useful definition for this purpose is the following:

> *Monitoring and evaluation is an integrated process of continual gathering and assessing of information to make judgements about progress towards particular goals and objectives, identify unintended positive or negative consequences of action, and provide insight into why success or failure has occurred.*[169]

Five Aspects of Good M&E Practice

Defining Clearly What is to be Evaluated

As we discussed in Chapter 2.3, there are various levels to consider in defining objectives for a dialogue process. In an M&E process, it is important to distinguish and separate them in order to achieve a fair and useful evaluation.[170]

- **Outputs** are the direct results of the activities that are part of the dialogue process. These encompass the start-up and intermediate process objectives described in Chapter 2.3, the activities specified by the process design, such as a number of dialogue events involving a certain number of participants, and follow-up activities in which some of those participants are interviewed.

  Monitoring and evaluating the project management team's performance in meeting output objectives provides the most basic level of accountability.

- **Outcomes** are the changes that the activities produce or contribute to in the short term, such as an agreement reached through the dialogue, or the new perspectives and skills gained by the dialogue participants. These can be intended outcomes, formulated as objectives in the planning process, and unintended outcomes, for better or worse, that the planning group did not anticipate. Monitoring and evaluating outcomes is the central focus of the reflection and mid-course corrections for which the project management team is responsible as the dialogue initiative unfolds.

- **Impact** is the larger or longer-term effect of the outcomes, such as new laws or policies that emerge as the result of an agreement or the leadership of dialogue participants. Assessing impact is challenging because impacts typically become evident only after a number of years, and because it is difficult to establish a clear causal link between outcomes and impact.[171] Important as this task is, therefore, it is beyond the scope of M&E per se. It is to be undertaken by researchers who have the benefit of hindsight and the resources to scan broadly for data on how the dialogue process outcomes contributed to change.[172]

Building M&E into the Dialogue Process

The conveners, co-designers and project managers lay the foundation for effective M&E in the phase of designing the dialogue process. This requires planning, and the provision of resources that allow the project management team to undertake periodic review and reflection (see 'Essential Elements of an M&E Process' below). It also calls for maximum clarity in articulating the overall purpose of the initiative, the strategy for achieving it, and the short- and long-term objectives that flow from the strategy.

The Process Design Worksheet presented in Chapter 2.3 provides guidelines for these important tasks and for capturing the thinking behind the design—the guiding theory of change. These steps provide the essential foundation for 'double-loop learning'—deep reflection

See Box 2.3.1, Process Design Worksheet; and the discussion of the theory of change in the section on Developing Strategy.

that questions underlying assumptions. This is another useful concept from action science. Figure 2.5.1 shows that 'single-loop learning' takes for granted the starting assumptions about the issues, the context and the goals. It evaluates the strategies used and, to the extent that the stated outcomes have not been achieved, focuses learning on how to improve the strategies—to do the same, only better. In contrast, double-loop learning involves re-examining the initial thinking behind the definition of the problem, strategy and desired results. It aims at *thinking* differently, as opposed to simply doing something differently.

Figure 2.5.1 Double-loop Learning
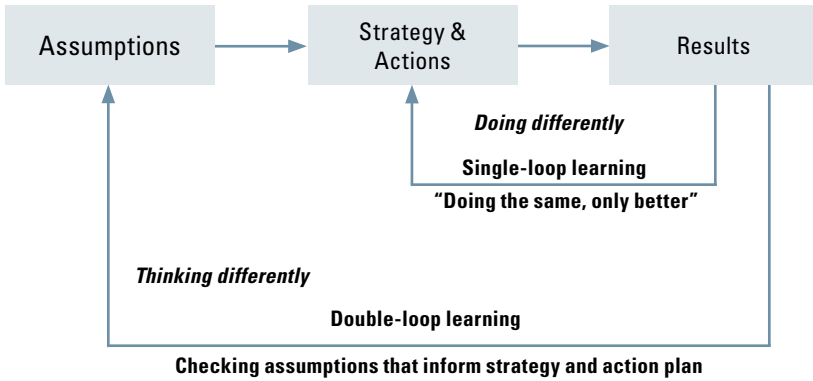
Involving Stakeholders

Making the evaluation of a dialogue process a participatory exercise is considered to be good practice of M&E in various fields. In the case of dialogue processes, this approach is consistent with guiding principles such as inclusiveness and joint ownership, and it expresses an appropriate sense of accountability to the participants and all stakeholders. A participatory evaluation that is embedded in the dialogue process can support the constructive dynamics generated by the dialogue and foster the key stakeholders' interest in and enthusiasm for continuing the process. The shaded area here provides links to resources on participatory M&E approaches.

Participatory M&E is also part of capacity-building for future dialogue processes, in the sense that openness to and skills for evaluative thinking become part of the social capital that can support a dialogic approach to problem-solving. Those stakeholders actively involved in an evaluation develop an increased capacity to interpret evidence, draw conclusions and make judgements. These are also capacities that contribute broadly to democracy, inasmuch as an 'informed citizenry' must not only have information but know how to use it—how to weigh evidence, consider contradictions and inconsistencies, articulate values and examine

For further reading

On participatory M&E processes, see Janet Donnelly, ed., *Who Are the Question-Makers? A Participatory Evaluation Handbook* (New York: UNDP, 1997). Available at <http://www.undp.org/eo/documents/who.htm>

A variety of resources developed by the Communication for Social Change Consortium, including Will Parks, *Who Measures Change? An Introduction to Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation*

and

Allish Byrne et al., eds, *Measuring Change: A Guide to Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation of Communication for Social Change* (South Orange, NJ: Communication for Social Change Consortium, 2005-2006). Available at <http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org>.

An innovative M&E framework called Most Significant Change offers an alternative to the use of predefined indicators of change. It is a participatory approach that involves the collection and systematic analysis of 'significant stories' of change as experienced by stakeholders. A manual for this approach is available at <http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCguide.pdf>.

For links to more sites specializing in M&E processes and issues, see <http://www.mande.co.uk/specialists.htm>.

assumptions.[173] Woodhill notes that the inclusion of this empowerment objective represents 'the broadening of accountability to include "downward accountability" aimed at beneficiaries'.[174]

One source on participatory M&E, *Measuring Change: A Guide to Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation of Communication for Social Change*, identifies a list of core principles.

- *The approach stems from the belief that whether a development [or dialogue] initiative is successful should be determined by those it is intended to benefit, on their own terms.*

- *Space is created for intended beneficiaries to reflect, and for they themselves to determine whether they have benefited, how, and what could be improved.*

- *A wide range of people are actively involved as subjects in a participatory process, from design onwards.*

- *The process is applied and of practical value to those participating.*

- *Local (lived) knowledge and experience is respected and emphasized; inequities of power and voice are acknowledged and addressed.*

- *Traditional hierarchies are broken down, including those between people (different stakeholders) and between types of knowledge (expert versus indigenous or lay).*

- *Capacity-development (reflection, analysis, learning, problem-solving) is central to the process, as skills and attributes of wider relevance to be nurtured.*

- *There is conscious attention to strengthening mutual learning, beyond the boundaries of the project.*

- *Understanding and mutual respect are deepened through a collaborative learning process.*

- *The process is educational and empowering.*

- *In general, affected people and communities evaluate and outsiders facilitate.*

- *Attitudes [of] openness to change are critical.*[175]

This list suggests that, in principle, there are many reasons to use a participatory approach and advantages to doing so. At the same time, practitioners should be aware that there are also challenges. Participatory evaluations require more time than those conducted entirely by outside evaluators and/or the project management team, and they must be designed very differently. It is an approach that will not be suitable for a top–down style of project design and management, since 'meaningful participation' entails handing over considerable control. In addition, participatory M&E can be challenging for the evaluators, who must become more facilitators than detached observers. 'A lack of capacity to appropriately and effectively use participatory tools and methods often leads to poor implementation and hence poor outcomes from supposedly participatory processes', writes Jim Woodhill, Director of the Wageningen International Centre.

'Further, a naivety or deliberate avoidance of power issues has led to much criticism of participatory processes.' These challenges need not discourage adoption of a participatory approach, but they make it even more important to integrate M&E fully into the process design and implementation, and to approach it with a focus on learning.[176]

Developing Quantitative and Qualitative Indicators

In the M&E field, indicators are data (quantitative and qualitative) that provide information about change—whether or not it has occurred and, if so, how much. 'Where the desired change is concrete, tangible, and measurable, indicators are not needed', write Church and Rogers. 'Where the intended change is more abstract, indicators help approximate the change.'[177] For example, if the change goal of a dialogue is to produce an agreement so that elections can take place, there would be no need for indicators to determine whether an agreement was reached and elections in fact took place. But if the objective is to increase public confidence and engagement in democratic processes, the number of people voting might be a necessary and useful indicator of whether the desired outcome has been achieved.

Many of the sources referred to in this chapter provide guidance on how to develop indicators.[178] In doing so, it is important to establish a mix of qualitative and quantitative data. Counting the number of people voting in the example above is relatively easy, since the data are concrete and easy to count—this is a quantitative indicator. Voting data alone, however, will neither capture the underlying shifts in attitudes that brought people to the polls nor say anything about their intentions in voting. Generating that qualitative information on people's opinions and attitudes is more difficult and time-consuming. But it is the kind of information required if our understanding of the change and why it happened is to have nuance and depth.

Woodhill points out that M&E has traditionally emphasized quantitative indicators, which can seem more 'reliable and objective'. As it moves towards a learning orientation, however, the field is making greater use of qualitative data as a means of offering a truer picture of the complex reality confronting efforts at societal change, thereby providing the information that a project management team needs in order to assess how it is doing and make any necessary adjustments. Woodhill also notes that the means used to gather qualitative data, such as surveys or interviews, make it possible to detect unexpected changes that are not disclosed by quantifiable measures—another advantage for learning. Finally, the distinction between the two kinds of indicators may be less meaningful than traditionally assumed, since qualitative data can often be expressed in quantitative terms—for example, the percentage of voters giving similar explanations for their decision to vote.[179]

> **Quantitative vs qualitative indicators**
> 'As any experienced ... practitioner knows, if a donor asks for a report full of numbers, they will get the numbers. However, whether these numbers have any bearing on reality is a different question.'
>
> See Wisdom from the Field – Sources (p. 238) for the sources of these materials.

Balancing a Learning Orientation with an Outcome Orientation

Sometimes it may seem that an approach that emphasizes learning and adaptation is inconsistent with rigorous M&E that incorporates goal-setting in the initial process

design. As Koenraad Van Brabant argues, however, the project management team must strike a balance between flexibility and openness to what emerges, and responsibility to the stakeholders in the dialogue—participants and supporters alike—for producing results.

> *Articulating objectives for what has to be an interactive process is intrinsically difficult. It becomes even more so, when we as process initiators and process managers do not want to impose either agenda or timetable, [but want to] allow the stakeholders from the society concerned more scope and 'ownership' to do so. We know that we want to effect 'change' and 'transformation,' but cannot and may not even wish to predefine the nature of the changes sought. We also cannot guarantee that they will take place. It is tempting then to argue that 'the journey is more important than arriving at the destination,' and there is a lot of truth in this. Yet at the same time, we do not want to engage people in a journey into uncharted territories, where we ultimately end up running around in circles.*[180]

Essential Elements of an M&E Process

As mentioned above, a key aspect of good M&E practice is to build the processes for monitoring and evaluation into the overall process design. The following overview suggests what those M&E processes might involve. These elements can be useful, regardless of the specific approach or tools adopted.[181]

- **Reflective practice**. Reflective practice is experience-based and practice-oriented critical thinking. All you need is an inquisitive, analytical and reflective attitude. Many of us do it on the job: we make a mental or physical note of what went well and not so well and why, how to pursue something, what to clarify, which pitfalls to avoid, how to manage a certain relationship and certain sensitivities or apprehensions. Most of the time we do it informally, on our own (e.g. thinking about the day on the way home in the evening) or with colleagues (e.g. chatting in an office corridor or in the car on the way back from a field visit). These informal reflections influence our next steps if we remember them the following day. The chances that the process is well managed overall, however, will be further enhanced by also creating a team atmosphere in which (1) critical but constructive thinking is encouraged and enabled; and (2) people are not constantly overloaded with urgent tasks, leaving them no time and energy to take a step back and look at what is happening in a more detached way.

  In a well-functioning project team, people have the confidence to share their reflections because they know they will be listened to and that valuable points will be picked up, irrespective of where they come from in the formal hierarchy. Sometimes there really is no additional energy or time to ensure that such team reflection is properly written up. In that case one option is simply to record it on tape, and to index and store the tapes for future reference.

- **Impartial reflective partners**. Even when reflective practices are well established, it will always be a challenge for people in the midst of a situation and a process to keep an eye on 'the big picture' and to continue thinking 'creatively' about how and

where to steer the process. It is usually helpful to have one or more people who are familiar with the situation but are not as much 'in the midst of it' on a daily basis, and whose questioning, thinking and advice we have learned to respect. These people can act as 'sounding boards' to the team or the team leader. They may come from within the stakeholder groups represented in the dialogue or be outsiders—perhaps at least one of each is desirable. A good sounding board not only raises many good questions and makes us see the multiple aspects of any situation. We need someone who can also suggest solutions, offer alternatives and provide practical guidance on how to proceed in a situation full of uncertainty and ambiguity.

- **Periodic reviews**. Reflective team practice and interacting with a respected sounding board constitute a form of almost continual and informal 'monitoring' that influences our management of the process. But this form of 'monitoring' also has weaknesses: it is not structured, comprehensive or in-depth enough, and it is typically not documented or explicitly communicated. Good process management, therefore, also calls for periodic reviews.

  Periodic reviews should not be as often as weekly, nor as rarely as yearly. When and how often to organize them will depend on how dynamic the context and the process are, and which 'natural' moments for pausing, looking back and looking ahead present themselves. The project team is the central player in a periodic review. But, again, the presence of people who are both inside and outside the process, and even the country, can be most helpful. This role can be played by the people acting as 'sounding boards' and/or one or more people from headquarters who are the reference points for this dialogue project. For certain sessions of the review, invitations might be extended to some participants in the review who are active supporters of the dialogue process, and/or supportive representatives of international assistance organizations.

  Done well, periodic reviews require responsibilities and resources. They will not happen—or not realize their full potential—unless project managers are committed to them, they are written into the work plan, there are budgetary resources set aside for them and staff members are assigned responsibilities to prepare them logistically and substantively. Equally important is their documentation, which is another task and responsibility to be assigned.

Basic Steps of Monitoring

- **Create a critical decision trail**. Managers of the dialogue process are faced with an intrinsic element of 'dilemma management'. Sometimes this can become acute, resulting in 'critical decision moments'. The decisions made will influence the next steps and possibly the longer trajectory and achievements of the dialogue process. Documenting these critical moments, the decisions taken and the arguments that informed the decisions provides a valuable reference for periodic reviews and for a later evaluation.

- **Collect stories of effects and influences**. Interim reflective team sessions, especially periodic reviews, provide opportunities to collect stories about outcomes—intended

and unintended, positive and negative—and examples of the dialogue process's apparent influence. Over time, more and more such stories arise. Some of them will come to the team as clear feedback. Others will arise in informal settings and a team member may only learn of them coincidentally. Team reflection should be the occasion to put them together, consider what they indicate about the dialogue, and choose some for further inquiry and more in-depth documentation.

- **Review and monitor against indicators**. If you have set yourself indicators, and differentiated between the project process (the framework with which to manage your resources within an agreed time period) and the dialogue process (the socio-dynamic interaction that you catalyse and try to facilitate in a constructive direction) indicators, then a periodic review is the opportunity to monitor developments against the indicators, and also to check the quality of the indicators.

  It should be clear, however, that the periodic review is not structured around the indicators, but is a progressive exercise of reflection and critical inquiry. This is deliberate: too often, the indicators initially chosen prove not to have been the most appropriate, or it is simply too complex to monitor them practically. Moreover we do not typically set indicators for unintended effects. These may be important and positive, but we may fail to take note of them if we are guided by our pre-set indicators. In short, the review should encompass the indicators, rather than the indicators shaping the review. After some reviews you will probably have some indicators that you are confident about, and that it is practical to monitor.

- **Plan the next review**. Periodic reviews are first and foremost a management tool. They are in-depth and critical, but they take place during the process/project and will help decide the next course taken. When conducted in a constructive spirit with and by a team that is used to a reflective attitude and atmosphere, the reviews also provide an important learning opportunity. They ensure retroactive process documentation but are also the moment to formulate or reconsider the dialogue's intermediate and overall objectives. They offer an opportunity to decide how to enhance the quality of participation and of the relationship between participants, the substance of the dialogue, and how to protect or strengthen the political space for the dialogue in pursuit of our transformational objectives.

M&E Tools

As suggested in the sources referred to in this chapter, dialogue practitioners can borrow many M&E frameworks and tools, and adapt them to their specific needs and circumstances, so as to help develop the content of the

See Ongoing Assessment, Chapter 2.4.

reflective exercises described above. In Chapter 2.4, we presented three M&E tools (debriefing events, interviews and context update) that also serve as an integral part of implementation. Here are two additional M&E tools.

Structuring Periodic Reviews[182]

Draw a time line for the period under review and then identify key periods and events on that line for the three most critical dimensions: the context, the dialogue process and the work of the project team. Figure 2.5.2 shows how such a time line might look. Use it to guide a review on the three key dimensions.

Figure 2.5.2 Sample Process Time Line
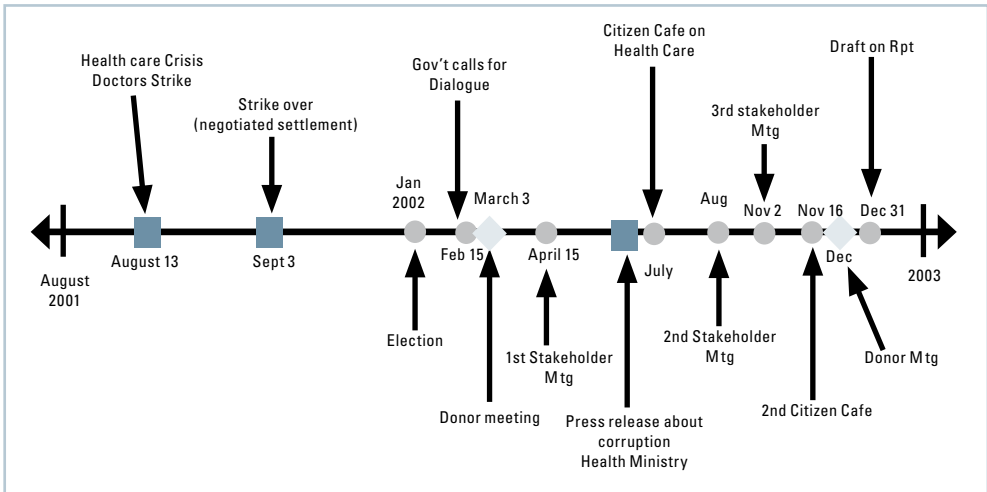
1. **Focus on contextual developments to review:**
-   the assumptions about how the context that guided the process design would evolve
-   the baseline actor analysis: are there new actors, different actor configurations, changed 'actor dynamics'?

2. **Focus on the dialogue process to look at:**
-   the nature and quality of participation: type and number of participants; the selection process; inclusion; representation; level of interest and engagement with the process; participants' attitudes; and changes in participants' level of engagement and attitudes
-   the trajectory travelled: what course have we followed; did we go off track; are we currently on track; why?
-   what opportunities and threats presented themselves and what diversions came up; were we aware of them at the time; what choices did we make and why; were or are there opportunity costs?
-   what has been the rhythm of the process and what have been the main factors shaping the rhythm and altering it (acceleration, slowing down)?
-   the quality of process facilitation so far.

3. **Focus on the 'project events' to evaluate resource elements:**
-   financial—the level and timing of cash availability; the quality of finance (flexibility or not)

- logistical—the timely availability of means of transport, meeting places, communications equipment and so on; the impact of breakdowns in logistical facilities, if any
- human resources—the skills within the team and how they are deployed; the cohesive and effective functioning of the team
- planning—how the actual project implementation corresponds (or not) to the original work plans; why does it do so?

4. **Examine the correlations between contextual, process and project developments:**

- Have the actor configuration and actor dynamics changed for reasons that have nothing to do with our dialogue process, or perhaps precisely because our dialogue process begins to exert influence, attract more attention and raise expectations?
- Do we need to reposition ourselves in a changed actor arena?
- How should we respond to important contextual developments, such as a new and highly controversial topic at the top of the political agenda?
- What has been the impact on the project of, for example, the hiring of a new team member with particular connections and skills, or the late arrival of a grant disbursement?
- If the dialogue process is working well, has it started to influence the wider 'actor dynamic' and might this require adjustments of the terms of the project (planned activities, schedule, budget and cash flow requirements, as well as intermediate and overall objectives)?

> **For further reading**
>
> Additional M&E tools have been developed for sustained dialogue processes by Teddy Nemeroff, Aly Kelman and Jessica Mann. See Nemeroff, 'Monitoring and Evaluation for Sustained Dialogue' (2004), available at <http://www.idasa.org.za>.

Evaluating and Systematizing Key Learnings

The Worksheet for Monitoring and Evaluation in Figure 2.5.3 is a companion to the Process Design Worksheet presented in Chapter 2.3, and is designed to help structure a final evaluation of the dialogue process. The questions in this worksheet can support those involved in the design and implementation of the process in reflecting not only on the results but also on how the process unfolded, the strategies used and the underlying assumptions upon which it was based. A final evaluation of this nature will help crystallize important learning that can inform future practice.

See Box 2.3.1, Process Design Worksheet, Chapter 2.3.

Figure 2.5.3 Worksheet for Monitoring and Evaluation[183]

<div style="border:1px solid #000;padding:10px">

Worksheet for Monitoring and Evaluation

1. Process

2. Objectives
- To what extent have the objectives of this process been met?
- What have been the immediate results of this process? Illustrate with indicators.
- What were some unanticipated results of the process?
- What might be the potential impact of these results over time?
- In what way were the objectives modified during the implementation of the process? Why?
- On the basis of this accumulated experience, how would you frame the objectives now, if you had a chance to do it over again?

3. Minimum conditions
- How was the process affected by the presence or absence of the minimum conditions identified as necessary for success in the Design Worksheet? If some conditions were absent, what was done to generate these conditions?
- Were other conditions discovered that were not considered in the design worksheet and that you would now identify as minimum for a process of this type to be successful?

4. Favouring and opposing forces in the environment
- What factors beyond your direct control contributed to achieving the goals of the process?
- What factors beyond your direct control hindered the process?
- What factors, not contemplated in the design, also influenced the results of the process?

5. Strategy
- Which parts of the strategy seemed on target?
- Which parts were less appropriate and had to be changed?

6. Sustainability
- What makes us think that what was accomplished will be enduring?
- What is now necessary to ensure a greater probability of sustaining successes?

Conclusions, Key Learnings:
What would be our best counsel, based on our experiences, for someone interested in doing a similar process in future?

Definitely make sure you ...	Definitely make sure you do not ...

Success in a process like this will depend largely on the following minimum conditions:

Be cautious and careful about:

We now see that success in this process rests on:

</div>

Chapter 2.6: Dilemmas and Challenges

In the preceding chapters of Part 2, we presented the knowledge and know-how of practitioners about how to explore, design and implement dialogue processes. We also addressed how to conduct M&E in a way that supports reflection, learning and more effective execution of dialogue initiatives. Here, we offer some concluding observations about issues we see facing the field—the field of dialogue in general and democratic dialogue in particular.

Some of the issues present the kinds of challenges that any field must meet in the process of maturing. We see two as particularly important at present:

- the need to develop a language for communicating about dialogue outside the field itself, a language that is free of jargon and can convey the essence of the practice to people who are not experts in the field

- the need to develop a clear understanding of how dialogue can complement other processes and approaches—such as truth-and-reconciliation processes, public awareness-raising and advocacy, and negotiation and mediation—within a larger strategy for societal change.

In addition to these challenges, the field faces a number of issues for which there is no definitive answer or 'solution'. We label these issues 'dilemmas', because they simply exist as tensions to be continually managed, with no expectation that they will ever be resolved. This is in contrast to what we call 'challenges': those issues that the field as a whole must address as it strives for greater efficacy and broader impact.

Dilemmas

Thinking in terms of dilemmas, rather than in terms of problems to be solved, can provide a helpful framework for dealing with many of the complex issues related to dialogue practice. A dilemma presents two or more competing concerns, each of which is valid and important, and which tend to be interrelated. Two common ways of framing dilemmas are:

- How do we do 'A' while not doing 'B'?

- How do we do 'A' and 'B' at the same time?

There follow three current dilemmas in dialogue.

Tangible vs Intangible Outcomes

How do we focus on producing the tangible results that dialogue supporters and participants expect, while avoiding paying too little attention to producing the intangible outcomes upon which sustainability often depends?

Often, dialogue practitioners experience a tension between the pressure to produce concrete outcomes and the basic premise of dialogue that sustainable outcomes require change at deeper levels in relationships, mental models,

See Figure 1.4.1, The Iceberg Model: Levels of Change, Chapter 1.4.

feelings and perceptions. It can be debated whether transformed relationships lead to tangible changes or vice versa, but in the long run both are necessary. New-found trust and empathy that do not lead to results can lead instead to disillusionment. By the same token, agreements and action plans that are not rooted in mutual understanding, trust and commitment are more likely to be superficial and/or short-lived.

Managing this tension involves holding the position that means are as important as ends. In practice, it calls for working towards concrete outcomes while ensuring that the process for producing them remains 'dialogic' throughout, as defined by the governing principles expressed in Chapter 1.3. In monitoring and evaluation, practitioners must gather the kind of data that will help make visible the invisible, and that will link intangible changes to concrete outcomes.

Short-Term vs Longer-Term Vision

How can we respond in a relevant way to a crisis situation and at the same time work towards addressing the deeper structures that, left unchanged, are likely to produce more of the same kind of crisis?

This dilemma captures the tension in the need to sustain the long-term perspective required to create time for deep change to occur, while being responsive to political and financial supporters' urgent wish to see concrete results. It is closely related to the dilemma of tangible vs intangible results. 'Democratic dialogue does not deliver many tangible outcomes in the short term and may therefore be perceived as too long and too costly', notes Elena Díez Pinto, Technical Director of UNDP Democratic Dialogue Project, based in Guatemala. 'This is a huge limitation when dealing with an urgent crisis or in a political culture where decisions are made quickly.'[184]

To help manage this tension, practitioners can be rigorous in distinguishing between short-term and long-term objectives. They can avoid advancing dialogue as the best means to accomplish every goal. In addition, from the early stages of a dialogue process, they can identify what other initiatives or processes exist or need to be created in order

to address the situation at hand and establish a link between the dialogue and those other processes.

Working with Representatives vs Being More Broadly Inclusive

How can we remain respectful of the current system of representative democracy and at the same time address the exclusion of those who do not currently feel represented?

Dialogue practitioners aim to complement and strengthen the institutions of representative democracy such as legislatures, political parties and elected governments, not to circumvent or replace them. Even when they remain subsidiary, however, dialogue initiatives pose a challenge to established powers because it is fundamental to the nature of multi-stakeholder dialogue to give voice to the voiceless and to question the status quo. In the areas of practice presented in this Handbook, reform of structures, policies, processes and political leadership is invariably a central element of the dialogue agenda. The tension lies in the need to bring both those who hold power in the current system and those who are powerless into conversations about how to change the system. This can be particularly delicate for the power-holders because the change is likely to involve a reformulation of their power, beginning with the conversation itself.

This dilemma presents difficulties at every step: in framing the purpose of the dialogue initiative to open the way to meaningful change that engages and includes existing institutions and their representatives; in assembling an inclusive dialogue group; and in designing and implementing the dialogue process in a way that effectively manages the issues that arise from bringing together people from very different positions in the existing power structure. Within the field, practical knowledge of how to handle these difficulties well remains underdeveloped, and the accumulated experience has yet to be compiled and codified in a form that can guide practice.

A Challenge

Moving beyond Dialogues of the Elite

Getting beyond dialogues of the elite to engage large numbers of ordinary citizens in the conversation presents a dilemma and also a challenge, especially for the field of practice we label 'democratic dialogue'. In Chapter 2.3 we described various ways to determine who should participate in a dialogue process, including the strategies presented by Mary Anderson and Lara Olson in *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners* of involving either 'key people' or 'more people'. In democratic dialogue, where an overarching purpose is to strengthen democratic governance, these choices carry particular significance. Efficacious as the key people approach might be in the short run, and difficult as it may be to engage significant numbers of ordinary citizens, building a culture of dialogue requires finding a way to do so. In the words of Guatemalan political scientist Braulia Thillet de Solórzano, '[In democratic dialogue] we must be careful not to repeat the mistakes of the past, that is, the errors of representation by which people don't feel represented. This can happen with dialogues too—the people who are left outside of the dialogues say, "this dialogue is useless because I am not included"'.[185]

See Selecting the Participants, Chapter 2.3.

Table 2.6.1 suggests how the choice between convening a dialogue with elites representing stakeholder groups, on the one hand, and engaging ordinary citizens on the other, presents itself as a dilemma. Each option has a number of positive benefits. Each also carries some risks, and the pursuit of one approach only might have negative consequences—not managing the tension between them but favouring one side of the dilemma over the other. The arrows in the table make the point that the negative consequences can be mitigated by embracing the other side of the dilemma and establishing greater balance.

Table 2.6.1 The Participation Dilemma[186]

Interventions limited to the 'elite'	Involving ordinary citizens in deliberations
Positive benefits	*Positive benefits*
▲ Well known and understood way of functioning ▲ Quick, controllable, predictable ▲ Respects established leadership ▲ Perceived as more legitimate and relevant ▲ International sponsors and donors are comfortable with people they know ▲ Has decision-making authority.	▲ Recognizes and involves the general public ('we the people') ▲ Promotes civic responsibility ▲ Enriches information base, recognizes complexity ▲ Limits political game-playing ▲ Promotes and strengthens critical skills (participants learn to listen and think more critically) ▲ Promotes dialogue at all levels and generates curiosity.
Risks, disadvantages	*Risks, disadvantages*
▼ Excludes the general public, fails to recognize 'we the people' ▼ Information in the society is limited or distorted ▼ Fails to recognize complexity, discourse becomes simplistic ▼ Perpetuates political game, reduces general public to mere spectators ▼ Atomization of issues ▼ Deterioration of critical skills ▼ Fosters polarizing debate and the desire to 'win' and 'not lose'.	▼ Innovation and sense of chaos is perceived as risky, less predictable, loss of control of results ▼ Key issues become diluted because of long, slow processes ▼ Runs risk of reaching poor and misguided decisions ▼ Undermines established leadership ▼ Not practical or realistic ▼ May be considered culturally inappropriate ▼ No one is 'neutral or impartial', everyone is a stakeholder.

Source: Philip Thomas, 'Where's the Public in These Democracies? Dialogue and Deliberation: Mechanisms for Exercising Civic Engagement', Paper presented to the International Conference on Mediation, Guatemala City, Guatemala, 2 September 2004.

In its current state, the practice of democratic dialogue is unbalanced in favour of dialogues of the elite that, in the words of one observer, '[fail] to reach beyond a limited audience of stakeholders—established political and business powers along with a collection of public interest groups'.[187] Righting the balance is a challenge for the field. As Figure 2.6.1 illustrates, part of the challenge is that these dialogues are effective

in the short term but have the unintended consequence of undermining a longer-term commitment to strengthening democratic culture and governance. This diagram is chiefly informed by Philip Thomas's extensive experience with dialogues in Latin America but it captures dynamics that characterize dialogue practice in all regions, as exemplified by the following reflection on the Mauritanian dialogue described in Chapter 3.3:

> *The dialogue was carefully prepared and organized. Special attention was given to the composition of the participants (ethnic belonging, gender, geographic and political representation, sectoral representation) and of the conveners (exclusively Mauritanians). Nevertheless, the dialogue process focused on the elite and a big part of the population could not be represented. A subsequent effort to 'democratise' the dialogue is necessary to enable a real change in the Mauritanian society.*[188]

In Figure 2.6.1, the shaded loop illustrates a common pattern of practice when an issue of public concern emerges. Specific interest groups or stakeholder groups affected by the issue begin to organize and position themselves in order to maximize their influence in how this issue is framed and resolved. Though the issue is inherently complex, stakeholders tend to talk about it in simplified, distorted and often polarizing language as a way of influencing and winning the opinions and support (votes) of ordinary citizens and the constituency they claim to represent, thereby strengthening their social power base. As interest groups coalesce around their specific private interest in the issue, confrontations between groups begin to arise and the conflict intensifies, becoming a political battle and escalating to a crisis.[189]

In the interest of preventing a crisis and further social instability, a process is designed to facilitate dialogue and joint problem-solving. Its designers strive to create a legitimate and credible process by ensuring that it is inclusive and involves the participation of those affected by the issue. But a sense of urgency, a perceived need for quick results and recognition of the complexity of the issue force a design that limits participation to leaders and representatives of stakeholder groups, as well as other experts and professionals with the knowledge and experience required to deal responsibly with the issue.

The design of this process, which might appropriately be characterized as 'elitist', excludes the direct participation of ordinary citizens as voices of the 'public' on the basis of the following justifications or assumptions.

- Deliberation and decision-making on issues of public policy are complex processes that require expert or professional knowledge and experience. Those who participate in these processes (elected representatives, experts and leaders) do so because they have greater knowledge and at the same time presumably share the public's goals and values. Embedded in this assumption is another: good information leads to good judgements or decisions.

- Though directly affected by these issues, ordinary citizens are not sophisticated enough to understand the complexity of public issues and are not informed enough

Figure 2.6.1 The Limits of Working with Elites[190]

Recognition of and dependency on third party and traditional patterns of intervention

Leads to

Reduces interest in...

Note: the hourglass symbol signifies a delay

Intervention
Meetings of the 'ELITE'
Involvement of key stakeholders (leaders/activists, politicians, experts, professionals, representatives)
If Successful...

Reduces

Recognition of the importance of public involvement

Reduces

Common pattern of practice

Leads to

Sense of urgency, immediacy and importance
Legitimacy and credibility depend on capacity to respond quickly

Temporarily Reduces / resolves

Unexpected secondary results

Investment in strengthening 'the public' and the role of civic engagement in system of democratic governance

Social Issue turns to conflict/crisis

SUSTAINS/PERPETUATES
Context of simplified, distorted and polarized conversations and discourse that constitute seedbed of social polarization
Increased cynicism and disengagement

Leads to

Professionalization of politics
Widening expert – public gap
Increasing crisis of legitimacy
Increasing public fragility & volatility

to participate in meaningful ways. Any direct involvement of ordinary citizens would be superficial at best and simply impractical.

- In representative democracy, citizen or 'public' participation is achieved through the electoral system, which offers the opportunity to vote for representatives or in referendums. Another vehicle for citizen participation is through the organization of and affiliation with specific interest groups.

- All affected citizens are adequately and legitimately represented in one way or another in the group of identified stakeholders participating in the process. These stakeholders assume the responsibility of educating, informing and consulting the constituents they represent.

- Public involvement is important, but given the sense of urgency and political importance of quick results, as well as limited time and resources, this is not the time or place for long-drawn-out processes of public engagement.

When this process works well (and it often appears to), the dialogue produces negotiated agreements. When implemented, these yield short-term results that either resolve or diminish the conflict surrounding the issue. But this apparent success has significant costs, indicated in Figure 2.6.1 by the dotted arrows composing the larger loops of the graphic. These depict secondary or unintended consequences that occur over time.

To the extent that elitist mechanisms yield viable and important short-term results that reduce social conflict and crisis, stakeholders and politicians alike (as well as donor and other organizations committed to strengthening democratic governance) experience relief and some measure of success in their work. This success reinforces the pattern of avoiding forms of civic engagement that move beyond the circle of elites. Scarce resources are committed to these short-term intervention designs, driven by a sense of urgency, thereby sacrificing longer-term investment in the development and use of processes and methodologies to enhance public participation.

Moreover, as the outer left loop illustrates, learning occurs over time, further reinforcing the established pattern of intervention. When a crisis occurs or a polarizing issue emerges, what has worked in the past continues to inform what is done in the present. Driven by the same sense of urgency and the reality of scarce resources, the traditional pattern of working with 'elites' is again repeated at the cost of deeper and broader civic engagement.

Moving to the bottom of the diagram, we see a pattern that sustains under-investment in creating an opportunity for citizens to genuinely participate in what concerns them. Though well-intentioned, therefore, elitist practices of dialogue and other similar forms of intervention preserve the marginalization and exclusion of the general citizenry affected by these issues, and contribute to patterns that undermine the culture of democracy rather than strengthen it, such as:

- the professionalization of politics—a system in which 'ordinary citizens become increasingly disengaged and cynical about politics because they see it as an exclusive

game for professionals and experts, such as politicians, campaign managers, lobbyists, pollsters, journalists, talking heads'[191]

- the widening of the expert–public gap

- an increasing crisis of legitimacy for democratic institutions

- increasing public fragility and volatility: citizens become increasingly less aware of the complexity inherent in issues of public interest, and their own way of thinking and talking begins to mirror the overly simplistic and distorted discourses of leaders and politicians. Public superficiality and incompetence, learned and reinforced by the system, then continue to justify the exclusion of ordinary citizens in elitist processes designed to decide on issues of public interest.

A vicious cycle or pattern is perpetuated in which the more citizens withdraw in anger and hopelessness, the more politicians ignore them. The more politicians act irresponsibly and ignore or marginalize their constituency, the greater the anger, cynicism and sense of hopelessness. The seedbed of polarization persists, awaiting the next issue of public concern to emerge and present itself as yet another social crisis that demands another round of what might be called anti-democratic intervention among and with the elite.

Real-world conditions of urgency, limited resources and rapidly changing political landscapes often require dialogues of the elite that are politically and economically viable, as well as capable of yielding short-term results. Many positive changes can come out of them. But it remains a challenge for the field to move beyond its over-dependence on this form, and to use some of the process tools available for engaging large groups of citizens at least some of the time.

See List of Ten Positive Outcomes, Chapter 1.4, p. 43 and Process Tools for Large Groups, Chapter 2.4.

Part 3:

Applications

Chapter 3.1: Introduction

The objective of this Handbook is to promote and support the wider use of dialogue to address societal challenges. We do not insist that organizing a dialogue process be the approach of choice in every instance, nor do we advocate a particular process design or process tool. Rather, we aim to promote sufficient understanding of dialogue to enable people to determine when dialogue is the appropriate choice—alone, or combined with other tools such as negotiation or mediation—and to develop an approach that is responsive to the context at hand. Each practitioner must make those determinations on the basis of the particular circumstances she or he is confronting. This part of the Handbook offers some perspective on what this may mean in practice, by looking in depth at three dialogue experiences in three quite different contexts.

Parts 1 and 2 draw extensively on case material to illustrate specific aspects of dialogue concepts or practice. The Overview of Dialogue Initiatives in Appendix 1 provides a broad cross-sectional view of a great variety of cases from many different countries. This section offers a more comprehensive picture of how dialogue processes unfold in the field. The case of San Mateo Ixtatán in Guatemala was a regional dialogue, sponsored and supported by the OAS, that sought to address the deep-rooted issues underlying persistent conflict in that area. The UNDP case of the Dialogue on the Millennium Development Goals in Mauritania provides an example of the use of dialogue at the national level to help defuse a potentially violent political conflict and open the way for factions to begin addressing pressing issues of economic and human development. The final case presents an example of a thematically focused dialogue sponsored by IDEA in support of democratic constitutional development in Nepal.

Taken together, the three cases explore the application of dialogue processes to three major areas of need: conflict prevention, development, and strengthening democracy. They convey a sense of how these organizations use dialogue to advance their missions. At the same time, these cases illustrate how practitioners must respond to the conditions presented by the context at hand and the political nature of democratic dialogue.

Chapter 3.2: Dialogue on Peaceful Coexistence, Guatemala

In 2001, the OAS was called upon to assist an effort to resolve a dispute and prevent violence in San Mateo Ixtatán, a region of Guatemala still deeply divided by the animosities created by the country's long civil war. Rural villagers and urban inhabitants were locked in a battle for political control of the regional government and in need of negotiated agreements that would allow them to coexist peacefully. The aim of the dialogue process was to go beyond negotiation and to build the mutual respect and trust necessary to transform the underlying conflicts that were causing the political competition to erupt into violence and threaten a fragile peace.

Context

San Mateo Ixtatán is a municipality of the Department of Huehuetenango on Guatemala's northern border with Chiapas, Mexico. It is one of the most impoverished municipalities of Guatemala and was adversely affected and divided by the country's armed conflict, which lasted for more than three decades.

Most of the population of Huehuetenango is of Mayan Chuj origin, but there is no official population count because births and deaths are not regularly registered. The municipality has no reliable population statistics or documentation. During the civil war the civil registry was burned, registry books were re-compiled and residents had great difficulty obtaining personal identity documents. After the signing of the peace accords in 1996, which brought an end to the 36-year civil war, many displaced and repatriated persons returned to the municipality, significantly increasing the population.

The persistent conflict in the municipality is also rooted in the extreme poverty present in the region, the lack of state- or NGO-provided services, and an old struggle between urban and rural residents. During the armed conflict, the region's urban and rural communities aligned themselves on opposite sides: the inhabitants of San Mateo Ixtatán, an urban area and the region's official centre, supported the civil self-defence patrols; the rural villagers supported the guerrilla groups. Although the signing of the peace accords ended the civil war, these divisions and the bitter feelings they created remained strong.

In 1996, eager to overcome the social exclusion they had historically experienced, the rural inhabitants decided to challenge the power of the urban area. They organized themselves and nominated a mayoral candidate who campaigned on the promise that there would be an increase in state services such as development projects and infrastructure in the rural area. The rural candidate won the 1996 mayoral election.

The urban authorities, however, refused to accept the results of this election or to cede municipal management to the new mayor. In response, the departmental governor presented a judicial order to the town, authorizing the transfer of the municipal corporation to Bulej, the new mayor's home town. Ultimately, a force of more than 300 police and soldiers was needed to intervene in order to secure the transfer of the municipality's documents and registries.

In the three and a half years when the municipality was located in Bulej, services were provided and activities were carried out that mainly benefited the local community and surrounding areas. Local residents and those of neighbouring communities made arrangements to establish Bulej permanently as the head of the municipality. During that period, however, the mayor and the members of the municipal corporation were accused of mismanaging municipal funds. This situation weakened the mayor's authority, and tensions mounted among leaders of the rural area. As a result, a mayoral candidate representing the urban area won the 1999 elections.

The transfer of power from the rural to the urban leader created new tensions and conflicts. The outgoing mayor agreed to transfer authority to the newly-elected mayor but refused to hand in some record books and other official municipal items. In response, the new mayor reinstalled the head office of the municipality in San Mateo Ixtatán and brought legal proceedings against the ex-mayor. Leaders of the rural villages declared that the communities would be willing to solve the problem only when an auxiliary civil registry of the municipality was created in Bulej. The urban leaders refused to agree to this request on the grounds that acceding to it would entail the creation of a new municipality.

In 2000–2001, the Guatemalan Government made two unsuccessful attempts to negotiate a settlement to this dispute. In both instances, through a combination of miscommunication and mismanagement of information by government representatives, and inflamed tensions between the opposing groups of citizens, efforts to resolve the conflict led to violent incidents. In March 2001, facing the threat of a return to civil war in the region, the government formed the Presidential Unit of Conflict Resolution (UPRECO). Its mission was to respond to conflicts of national, state or municipal governability. At the departmental level, the Departmental Commission of Attention to Conflicts (CDAC) was created as a formal mediator to represent the government and to support UPRECO's work. Comprising the same governmental institutions as UPRECO, the CDAC began to address conflicts in the department of Huehuetenango. It also asked the Culture of Dialogue Program: Development of Resources for the Construction of Peace (PROPAZ), which the OAS had initiated in Guatemala, to provide technical assistance and support to its effort.

Purpose

From the perspective of OAS/PROPAZ, this situation called for a consensus-building dialogue, 'a collaborative and participatory problem-solving initiative designed to bring parties together in a proactive manner to generate options and reach mutually agreeable solutions to specific problems, where decisions are taken, agreements are created, and compromises are made'.[192] There was a clear need for negotiation, but also a need for dialogue to address the underlying causes of the struggle for power between the rural and urban populations in the municipality.

It was believed that dialogue could address the pressure the population experienced as a result of a lack of attention to poverty, the absence of economic development and the suffering caused by the armed conflict. In the short term, dialogue was recognized as the best alternative to alleviate tensions between the parties to the conflict, avoid escalation and end sporadic acts of violence. It was also an appropriate means of tackling the controversies, improving the relationship between the parties and finding creative solutions to each party's demands.

It was recognized that the structural problems in Huehuetenango would not disappear instantaneously. In addition to compliance with the agreements reached between the two parties, there was a need for continuing development efforts to address those underlying issues. In the long term, the dialogue sought to build a strong and productive relationship between the leaders of the rural and urban communities, so that together they could address and resolve the municipality's problems as they arose in the future, without depending on outside assistance.

The Dialogue Process

The dialogue in San Mateo Ixtatán proceeded in stages from 2001 to 2002. To a great extent, the process and its pace developed in response to unfolding events in the region.

Stage 1: Awareness-Raising

Strategically, UPRECO/CDAC and OAS/PROPAZ decided that, in the beginning, it was necessary to work separately with the leaders of the rural and urban areas. The first phase was to convince key representatives of the communities that dialogue was an adequate means of finding mutually satisfactory solutions to the conflict. Beginning in May 2001, for each group, OAS/PROPAZ led an awareness-raising/sensitivity training process on negotiated exits from the conflict.

This training had three goals: to provide potential participants with knowledge and techniques for analysing and resolving conflicts; to specify the use of dialogue as an alternative method for the transformation of the municipality's conflict; and to determine the minimum conditions necessary for the parties to hold joint meetings in order to negotiate the issues that divided them. The training also sought to raise awareness of how to deal with social interactions during a dialogue, and to facilitate in-depth understanding of the emotional nature of the process.

Stage 2: The Call to Dialogue

The call to the dialogue was different for each side. Rural community leaders, who had just participated in the sensitivity training sessions, called for open, public assemblies for all residents in their respective communities. These assemblies had three fundamental objectives: to make clear to the populations the purpose and process of the dialogue; to confirm their acceptance of the dialogue as a mechanism to confront the existing conflict; and to ensure that the participants from the rural area were properly authorized to represent their fellow citizens. The residents produced a document that confirmed their acceptance of the dialogue process, and they approved the participants chosen to represent their interests by signing their name or giving their fingerprints. The document also detailed the selected representatives' responsibility to inform their communities of advances in the dialogue process.

In the urban area, the call was simpler because it relied on an existing representative structure. That structure included both elected members of the municipal council and non-elected community leaders who were part of councils of elders—traditional authorities of the indigenous culture. Nevertheless, as with the rural representatives, the urban leaders had to present a document that endorsed their authority to represent the interests of the community, and in which they promised to inform the community of progress in the dialogue.

In general, the rural representatives were community leaders and/or former members of guerrilla groups who had formed a political party when the armed conflict ended. There was minimal representation of NGOs in the rural area—only one rural NGO participated in the dialogue process. The urban area was represented by employees of NGOs, community leaders with basic educational skills and small business owners. Not all of the urban and rural population participated in the dialogue, but an attempt was made to represent as many groups as possible.

Stage 3: The Dialogue Process

The dialogue in San Mateo Ixtatán was convened in October 2001. From that point forward, meetings were held every 15 days, with some interruptions. Each meeting lasted about two days, and at the end of each the date and agenda for the next were set. The convening, reminders and extra sessions were planned through letters and phone calls. The process was prolonged because of external circumstances not directly related to the process itself. For example, community participation in the dialogue diminished during the rainy season, since farmers had to prepare the land for cultivation. The dialogue concluded in November 2002.

The meetings were held in the city of Huehuetenango, the head of the department. The city was chosen as a neutral location and because it had adequate logistical conditions and infrastructure. A politically and ideologically neutral place was needed to ensure the participants' security and safety. There were some disadvantages in choosing Huehuetenango. Its long distance from San Mateo Ixtatán and the lack of easy access entailed additional expenses and time. Generally, though the sessions only lasted two

days, participants were forced to miss four days of work and their personal lives every 15 days—which imposed an economic burden on many of the participants.

Officially, the facilitation group comprised five government entities: the Coordinating Commission for Presidential Policies on Issues of Human Rights; the Secretariat of Strategic Analysis; the Secretariat of Peace; the Presidential Commission for the Resolution of Land Conflicts; and the Secretariat of Executive Coordination of the Presidency. OAS/PROPAZ was invited to 'accompany' those governmental actors responsible for the transformation of the conflict and to offer them feedback on their actions. At crucial moments, however, OAS/PROPAZ assumed the leading role in the design and facilitation of the dialogue. At these points, the CDAC, representing the governmental facilitation group, limited its activities to observing and learning from the facilitators of the OAS/PROPAZ programme. During this process, an adviser provided legal assistance to OAS/PROPAZ.

In addition, NGOs and parishes of the Catholic Church acted as observers, a practice that was decided upon and accepted by both parties. The media were also present, particularly in 2001 when the repercussions of violence and the total breakdown in relations between the rural and urban areas were highly evident. Once the dialogue began, however, coverage was minimal. OAS/PROPAZ and the CDAC designated spokespersons to represent each side and to discuss progress in the dialogue with the media. Coverage of the events did not in any case affect the dialogue process.

In the period before the negotiation process, OAS/PROPAZ and the CDAC tried to understand the interests of both sides, and to create an agenda that would address those issues and be mutually acceptable. This agenda included three main themes: requirements for peaceful coexistence; strengthening the municipality; and municipal proceedings. During the dialogue's inaugural session, the proposed agenda was presented to the participants for their ratification. From that point forward, the dialogue group worked through each topic of the agenda one by one. The facilitators helped structure the discussions in such a way that the parties could identify their interests, generate options, evaluate the choices and select the solutions that would satisfy the interests of both parties. Although this outline seems simple, the topics presented varying degrees of difficulty and the group discussed each topic for months.

In the first meeting, the participants also laid ground rules for coexistence during the ensuing process. Among these rules were various points on mutual respect and due forms of communication and behaviour. Both parties agreed that when either of them violated the rules, the facilitators could insist that they follow those rules. In this first session, the participants also decided to use consensus as the method for decision-making.

As they proceeded under these ground rules, the participants were able to overcome their mutual distrust, open channels of communication and create a safe and healthy environment in which to share perspectives, one that allowed for increased mutual understanding of their different viewpoints. The high degree of confidence achieved

between the parties allowed the process to evolve into a true dialogue, as opposed to a mere multiparty negotiation. The parties were able to express their opinions of the conflict openly, and established good communication with each other.

In a defining moment of the talks, the parties were able to share with each other the pain and suffering the civil war had caused. They spoke of the harmful effects of the conflict in their lives and communities, and throughout the municipality. This honesty exposed many people's feelings and actions in the conflict and the civil war, but the exchange did not cause a stalemate or an interruption of the process. Instead, participation in the open environment produced a commitment to develop an Agreement of Peaceful Coexistence, as each party acknowledged and recognized that the war had caused suffering on both sides.

Outcomes and Impact

The successful results of the San Mateo Ixtatán dialogue and negotiation process are evident in three significant agreements. But it was the conditions of trust, transparency, mutual respect, tolerance and responsibility created during the dialogue that led to the transformation of the conflict. These conditions opened up a space in which the agreements could be discussed and reached.

The Agreement of Peaceful Coexistence

At an early stage in the process, the participants decided that one topic on the agenda should be to create an Agreement of Peaceful Coexistence, under which all the municipality's rural and urban residents would follow the same rules of conduct. This agreement was reached once the parties agreed on two key points: first, that no judges, police officers or government representatives—who could exert pressure on the process or dictate a solution—would participate in the dialogue; and second, that the agreements resulting from the process would be a commitment reached between the parties and the communities they represented of their own free and good will.

This agreement was a commitment on both sides to continue the dialogue and comply with certain rules, thus ensuring friendly relations between the parties. Personal accusations, offensive statements and defamatory language were prohibited. The agreement also allowed for free movement between urban and rural communities, since at one point during the conflict the communities had levied tolls on people travelling through the area. The agreement laid the foundation for the other agreements that followed.

The Agreement to Strengthen Institutionalization in the Municipality

By this accord, which emerged from informal and formal conversations, the participants agreed to maintain a single, undivided municipality. The agreement allowed for municipal mayoral elections to be held without confrontation and established that both communities would accept the winner, regardless of his or her political affiliation. The two parties had had clear positions on the issue: rural inhabitants threatened to create a new municipality, while the urban dwellers opposed such a division. Taking

the rural sector's threat seriously, facilitators and observers worked with that party's representatives to analyse the economic consequences of creating a new municipality and to consider the many and costly governmental requirements to form one. Finally, the rural groups recognized that it was not feasible to create a new municipality and renounced their formal position. The dialogue progressed as a result, since both parties recognized a common goal: the strengthening of the municipality's institutions.

The Agreement on Problems of Personal Documentation and Municipal Proceedings

After the dialogue group decided that the municipality would not be divided, representatives of the rural communities expressed the need for improvements in documentation. Coincidentally, there was a 30-day window of opportunity before the expiration of the extraordinary law on personal documentation, a temporary law that had extended the period for Guatemalan citizens to request personal documents they lacked. It was suggested that residents should take advantage of the time left to secure the documentation.

Hence it was proposed in the dialogue group that residents organize documentation days in the whole municipality. The rural and urban representatives had to work together, with the aid of OAS/PROPAZ and the CDAC, to collect the money and to arrange these registrations days. For the rural inhabitants, the registration of 734 people was a significant achievement. This collaboration between the parties helped foster mutual trust. In turn, there was a greater willingness to agree on solutions to related issues. In particular, the parties reached an agreement stipulating that municipal issues of personal documentation and other proceedings would be entrusted to the Municipal Development Council, which would be responsible for finding a lasting solution to these problems.

The Agreement on the Clarification of Missing Persons

The Agreement on the Clarification of Missing Persons was not a formal agreement like the previous accords, but rather a procedural agreement that was noted in the minutes of a particular session of the negotiation process. In it, participants decided that any issues regarding disappearances should be presented to the appropriate authorities, such as the Public Ministry or the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman.

Follow-Up Work and Commitments

When the dialogue process ended in November 2002 the parties promised to comply with the agreements reached but made no plans for follow-up activities. National and municipal elections were to be held in 2003, however, and there were signs of a resurgence in the conflict between the rural and urban areas as a result of the presidential and municipal campaigns. OAS/PROPAZ contracted two consultants from the Soros Foundation in Guatemala to begin an information campaign, using radio broadcasting in the local language, to inform the entire municipality of the contents of the agreements.

Simultaneously, OAS/PROPAZ organized various workshops, each involving about 55 people, to distribute the information contained in the agreements and to inform the public of the appropriate rules of conduct for the election campaign. The workshops also served as an instrument to present the Development Councils Law, a federal government initiative to provide guidelines for citizen participation in determining development priorities. The law provided a methodology that the inhabitants of both communities had to follow to organize their Municipal Development Council.

Despite the tensions created by the elections of 2003, there were no further violent confrontations between rural and urban inhabitants of San Mateo Ixtatán. The rural area's candidate won the elections, and he discharged his duties from the head of the municipality without objections from either side. The new mayor endorsed the agreements reached during the dialogue process and supported the creation of the Municipal Development Council in particular.

Although the CDAC disappeared, its members have continued to collaborate with other governmental entities to prevent an outbreak of new conflicts in the area. A departmental network for conflict resolution, which included NGOs, was also created. The ProPaz Foundation has been set up as an autonomous, national NGO and has assumed the objectives and intentions of OAS/PROPAZ. In this capacity, the foundation facilitates workshops to analyse, mediate and resolve conflicts, develop constructive communication skills and build consensus between the parties.

Lessons Learned

Building Trust

The San Mateo Ixtatán conflict, which originated in competition between the rural and urban communities for control over municipal power, was directly influenced by the distrust created in both communities as a result of more than three decades of armed conflict. If mutual accusations had continued unabated, the dialogue process would have been jeopardized. OAS/PROPAZ and the CDAC took several measures to avoid this. For example, they provided awareness training separately to the parties before the dialogue and secured the participants' agreement on ground rules for the process. Those rules helped ensure mutual respect and appropriate forms of communication and behaviour. During the process, the participants decided that the Agreement of Peaceful Coexistence should be an agenda topic, and they successfully created a safe and structured environment in which they could express the pain caused by the civil war. It is not easy to create a safe space for such key exchanges or to manage it once it has been set up. In addition to applying techniques such as those described, therefore, it is important to involve personnel who are capable of effectively overseeing these environments.

A Dissemination Campaign

From the outset, the CDAC and OAS/PROPAZ recognized that participants in the dialogue would have to inform their communities of the successes achieved. This was

one of the duties specified in the documents conferring authority on the representatives. But neither the CDAC nor OAS/PROPAZ followed this activity closely, leaving it to each representative. Unfortunately, the presidential and municipal election campaigns, which began immediately after the negotiation process ended, threatened to destabilize the agreements achieved, jeopardizing the peace of the whole municipality. This circumstance was directly linked to residents' unfamiliarity with the agreements reached during the negotiation.

OAS/PROPAZ was able to address this problem by initiating an information campaign to publicize the agreements. This case, however, demonstrates the importance of an effective strategy for informing the public of progress in the negotiations, and the need to incorporate this strategy into the negotiation process as a whole. If this is to be a responsibility of the facilitators, it should be specified before the process begins.

Economic Resources

This case also reveals the importance of having the necessary resources to carry out the dialogue process and avoid its being delayed or stagnating. Since San Mateo Ixtatán is one of the poorest municipalities in Guatemala, and since the central government has scant economic resources, OAS/PROPAZ had to secure financing for the entire project. This included covering the costs of representatives' participation every 15 days, so that the dialogue would continue. Private donations paid for the participants' logistical expenses, such as transport, food and lodging. On the basis of this experience, OAS/PROPAZ developed criteria for its future involvement in similar processes. It is important to ensure that minimum resources are available to hold the dialogue and meet unforeseen needs. It is equally important to avoid the proliferation of commitments, such as raising funds or disseminating and monitoring the agreements. In this regard, dialogue processes should indicate those responsible for disclosing and monitoring the agreements, and how to ensure that they will perform their duties.

Definition of Roles

As the dialogue was taking shape, the members of the OAS/PROPAZ team assumed the role of facilitators to the process. It is important to maintain communication among organizing entities, so as to have a clear understanding of the conditions under which the roles should change. It is crucial to recognize that dialogues of this type are extremely fragile, and that the entire process can be threatened if the coordinating organizations display a lack of skill and/or knowledge during the process. Hence the contracted facilitators must judiciously balance their responsibilities with the parties involved and with the governmental organizations that are making it possible.

Knowledge of the Language and the Context

The facilitation group's unfamiliarity with the Chuj dialect precluded their understanding many of the issues discussed until the moment the agreements were to be reached. For OAS/PROPAZ, this meant that the team was excluded from many discussions. In order to be completely immersed in a dialogue process, the facilitators should be able to communicate in the participants' language.

The San Mateo Ixtatán case also demonstrates the importance of conflict analyses and the difficulties involved in conducting them. The complexity of the situation often calls for urgent action and does not allow for an in-depth study of the conflict's historical context. It is very likely that a high level of tension forces the dialogue organizers to intervene quickly and begin resolving the conflict in order to obviate its escalating. Although facilitators need to be informed, it is imperative that they are not overwhelmed with information that will sway them or make their decisions partial. A systematic increase in information is recommended both before and during the process. This allows for a better understanding of the conflict, such that the main themes can be identified and articulated, and the process's potential obstacles and strengths can be recognized.

Structural Problems and Dialogue Outcomes

The San Mateo Ixtatán conflict was exacerbated by several structural problems. The limitations of state institutions constrained the options for possible solutions to resolve the dispute. At the same time, some of the agreements that the parties reached depended on the capacity and willingness of the municipal and central governments to comply with the decisions made during the dialogue. For OAS/PROPAZ, the structural problems—such as the lack of economic resources, laws and decision-making authority—meant that other mechanisms would have to be found so that the dialogue would be conducive to creative agreements and would not be interrupted by structural inefficiencies.

This case shows that, even when resources are extremely limited, dialogues can have concrete and positive outcomes. The parties, for example, successfully maintained a unified municipality and agreed upon the rules of conduct necessary to avoid a resurgence of conflict and violence. Compliance with the agreements was possible because the relationship between the parties had improved throughout the dialogue process. An in-depth analysis of the tangible and intangible advantages of dialogue is always recommended. At the same time, a dialogue process should not be abandoned on the grounds that structural limitations will preclude viable resolutions. On the contrary, one should trust in the participants' abilities to find creative solutions to resolve their differences.

Chapter 3.3: Dialogue on the Millennium Development Goals, Mauritania[193]

In 2004–2005, UNDP in Mauritania supported a dialogue project that engaged local and national elites in addressing the challenge of achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Political stalemate had given rise to coup attempts against the Mauritanian Government in 2003 and 2004. The dialogue aimed to avert violent conflict and break the political deadlock that was keeping the country from implementing coherent, multi-stakeholder initiatives to deal with the social and economic issues confronting it. The topic of the Millennium Development Goals provided a neutral platform for addressing those issues, so that the government, opposition groups and civil society all became involved, directly or indirectly, in this dialogue project.

Context

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 152nd out of 177 nations on the 2003 Human Development Index. The country covers a vast area, 90 per cent of which is desert, and its 2.5 million people face a number of severe challenges. These include high levels of poverty and inequality, widespread malnutrition and hunger, high levels of maternal and child mortality, a rapidly rising rate of HIV infection and high mortality rates from diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria, and environmental problems, especially continuing desertification.

A society that arose at a key intersection of Arab and African peoples, Mauritania is also challenged by a history of slavery and continuing discrimination by the ruling, fair-skinned Maures against citizens of African origin, especially former slaves. As recently as 1989–1991, there had been a violent conflict stemming from these human rights violations. Mauritania's social fabric is also weakened by patterns of strong tribal identification and a relatively limited sense of national identity. On the other hand, an established pattern of alliances and intermarriage between ethnic groups exerts a moderating force on the conflicts within society.

The political context was tense and deteriorating in 2003–2004, as the idea of a dialogue on the Millennium Development Goals was emerging. After 20 years of military rule, the

country had adopted a democratic constitution in 1991, but democracy remained largely a formality. President Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya and his party, the Democratic and Social Republican Party (Parti Républicain Démocratique et Social), had become increasingly isolated and autocratic since coming to power in 1992. The opposition parties had boycotted the 1992 elections but had subsequently competed successfully in municipal elections, and had won several seats in the National Assembly in October 2001. However, relations between the governing party and opposition parties were hostile, and there was virtually no communication between the two sides. President Taya's decision to establish diplomatic contacts with Israel and his fight against Islamic fundamentalist groups in Mauritania were unpopular policies, widely viewed as seeking mainly to strengthen his own hold on power. Finally, the prospect of substantial oil and gas revenues from the exploitation of oil reserves discovered off the coast of Mauritania in 2001 fuelled all of these tensions by dramatically raising the stakes of the political contest.

With elections due to take place in November 2003, opponents of the Taya government launched three unsuccessful coup attempts, in June 2003, August 2004 and September 2004. The leader of these coups, former army major Saleh Ould Hanenna, declared at his trial that his goal was to end corruption, tribalism, poor pay and mismanagement, and discrimination against black Mauritanians. These events formed the immediate backdrop to the convening of the dialogue on the Millennium Development Goals, creating a context of political instability with the threat of further violence.

Purpose

From the perspective of UNDP, the initiative that led to the Mauritanian dialogue on the Millennium Development Goals had two major and interrelated objectives. On the one hand was the urgent need to open some channels of constructive communication between the government and the opposition in order to forestall the possibility of violent conflict. On the other was the institutional imperative to pursue the goals laid out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000: to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; and create a global partnership for development. Mauritania had signed the Declaration and made some attempts to pursue its goals, but progress to date had been unsatisfactory and few people among the general public or within the administrative offices of the government were aware of the initiative.

These two purposes were mutually reinforcing inasmuch as the topic of the Millennium Development Goals provided a safe point of departure, one that focused on aspirations for the future but that, within that framework, opened space for public conversation about the current state of Mauritanian society. Initially proposed as a political dialogue between the government, the opposition and civil society, the project immediately confronted the government's unwillingness to participate in such a format. Reframed as an initiative to advance the Millennium Development Goals, however, it could proceed

as a dialogue among political elites, with the government as an interested and active observer.

Another key objective of the initiative was to help create a culture of communication and cooperation that would ultimately enable the government, the opposition and civil society groups to take joint responsibility for advancing the Millennium Development Goals. This objective made a dialogue initiative preferable to facilitated negotiations between the parties. In the long term, UNDP aimed to establish an enduring framework for dialogue among political and civil society actors, so as to strengthen democratic institutions and culture in Mauritania.

The Dialogue Process

The dialogue unfolded over a period of six months, from August 2004 to February 2005. The initial strategy was to engage the elites of Mauritanian society, in the hope of creating a critical mass of people who could help the country proceed peacefully towards achievement of its goals. More than 400 people participated in workshops held in different parts of the country, and thousands more were able to follow the process through media coverage.

The Steering Committee and UNDP's Role

A broadly representative Steering Committee was responsible for designing and implementing the dialogue process. UNDP Resident Representative Cécile Molinier and Mohamed Saïd Ould Hamody, a former Mauritanian ambassador, were co-chairs of this group. The committee brought together ten national individuals, each well known and respected both as an independent thinker and as a representative of his or her constituency, such as the President of the Federation of Francophone Women, the President of the Association of Mayors of Mauritania, the President of the Association of Oulémas (Islamic scholars), and representatives of youth organizations, the private sector and the media. This committee helped ensure national ownership of the dialogue process.

UNDP was able to play a leading role in promoting the dialogue, partly because in 2002 the Mauritanian Government had requested its technical support for a national good governance programme, including reform of the public administration, macroeconomic governance, justice reform, strengthening human rights, strengthening civil society organizations, support for government decentralization and support to the parliament. UNDP's goal was to act mainly as a catalyst, using the neutral and universally accepted platform of the Millennium Development Goals as a basis for promoting discussions among Mauritanians of all political and social groups about their common future. At the same time, its mandate to promote good governance enabled it to advocate in particular for opening up the dialogue to human rights groups and issues, as well as a broad range of civil society organizations. The country office, drawing on the resources of various units of the UN and UNDP, supported the Steering Committee's work with advice and technical and financial support.

Stage 1: Political Dialogue for the Strengthening of Democracy

The first stage of the process included four workshops in August and September 2004, held in geographically dispersed locations, each on specific topics related to the large theme of strengthening democracy. In Rosso, in the south of Mauritania, the topics were health, water and sanitation, and the environment. In the central town of Kiffa, they were modern education, traditional education and youth culture. In Atar, to the north, the workshop focused on justice, human rights and citizenship.

About 90 people, representing the elites of the region, participated in each of these events. Each workshop followed a similar format, opening with a plenary session in which a few experts presented substantive reports on the Millennium Development Goals and the event's specific topics. Then, still in plenary, the participants brought forward the particular perspectives, concerns and opinions of the different stakeholder groups represented, and debated the issues from those perspectives. In the second stage of the workshop, participants reconvened in small working groups, each charged with developing recommendations on the issues.

Whereas the presentations and debates of the plenary session helped inform participants of the issues and allowed them to express their opinions, the smaller working groups created the setting for dialogue. Both observers and participants noted the lack of partisanship, the 'spirit of tolerance' and the calmness with which the working groups were able to talk about even the most sensitive issues. The concluding segment of each workshop was another plenary session, in which all participants considered the recommendations of the working groups and talked about them to the point that they could be approved by consensus.

Stage 1 of the process concluded with a national-level workshop of about 130 people, convened in the capital, Nouakchott, in October 2004. Participants represented the range of political parties, as well as business, labour and civil society groups. This workshop brought together all the recommendations from the previous regional workshops and focused on building a vision of Mauritanian society in 2015, having achieved the Millennium Development Goals. It also considered strategies for moving from recommendations on what should be done to attain the goals, to consideration of how to do it.

Stage 1 participant groups

- the Oulémas
- all parties in the parliament
- the Association of Mayors in Mauritania
- the University of Nouakchott
- professors' organizations
- student organizations
- employers' confederation
- labour unions
- lawyers' organizations
- the Association of Jurists
- human rights organizations
- doctors' organizations
- midwives' and nurses' organizations
- journalists' organizations
- NGOs
- Mauritania's development partners.

Stage 2: Dialogue among Economic and Social Actors to Strengthen Development Strategies and Attain the Millennium Development Goals

Stage 2 included three events, all in November 2004. The first was a workshop that assessed the Mauritanian economy's capacity to achieve the Millennium Development

Goals. It took place in Nouakchott with about 100 participants, including political leaders and civil society representatives. The workshop group addressed three major questions: What policies related to growth and the economy are necessary to achieve the Millennium Development Goals? What is the debate on the Millennium Development Goals? And what are the strengths, weaknesses and competitiveness of the Mauritanian economy within the global economy? Following the design of the earlier workshops, this gathering used working groups to produce conclusions and recommendations.

The second workshop in Stage 2 was held in Nouadhibou, a port city in the north whose economy is largely dependent on fishing and mining. The fishing sector and its prospects for development by 2015 were major topics of this workshop. Others were the mining and oil industries, and their potential role in the future of the Mauritanian economy.

On the evening of the first day of the Nouadhibou workshop, there was an additional event, a televised round-table discussion on the question 'Oil and Gas Resources: A Common Good or a Potential Source of Disparities'. The round-table format allowed a panel of 15 people, representing diverse groups within Mauritanian society, to address the matter and answer questions posed by an audience. Although the amount of concrete information available about the proposed exploitation of offshore oil reserves was limited, this event succeeded in putting this pressing issue before a larger audience and at the same time making people aware of the dialogue process.

Stage 2 also concluded with a national-level workshop that focused on combining the recommendations made in regional workshops into a unified agenda for moving towards the Millennium Development Goals. Following the established workshop format, this event produced a consensus document specifying what needed to be done and leaving most questions of implementation for later. The Steering Committee delivered the report of these recommendations to President Taya. The Committee's Co-Chair, Mohamed Saïd Ould Hamody, suggested that the report was powerful because 'it used extreme caution while it never accepted any compromise'. This 'realistic approach' made the findings compelling.[194]

Stage 2 participant groups
- the Oulémas
- all parties in the parliament
- the employers' confederation
- trade unions
- Banks and insurance companies
- the University of Nouakchott
- major business enterprises
- development NGOs
- professional associations
- media specialized in economics, social issues and the environment
- Mauritania's development partners.

Follow-Up Events

In early December 2004, the Steering Committee launched an online forum, 'Mauritania 2015', in order to broaden participation in the conversation, especially to include more women, and to develop the recommendations further. Participants could contribute in either Arabic or French, and they accepted a charter agreeing to show respect and tolerance for others' views. Actual participation was more limited than anticipated, perhaps largely because the Internet is not widely accessible in Mauritania. The forum

was more of a debate than a dialogue, but it succeeded in opening a space for discussions of issues usually considered to be out of bounds for public consideration, such as human rights abuses and inequities in education.

A second follow-up event, in January 2005, reconvened many of the participants in the Nouakchott and Nouadhibou workshops. In a two-day course, the African Futures Institute provided an introduction to its prospective visioning approach for developing long-term national development strategies. This session inspired workshop participants, including managers from business, government and civil society organizations, to launch a project to develop scenarios for 'Mauritania 2030'.

Outcomes and Impact

The Dialogue on the Millennium Development Goals had a number of positive outcomes. Among the elite of society, it induced discussions between the supporters of the ruling party and the opposition, and fostered their joint engagement in considering the country's future well-being. At the conclusion of the process, there was a general agreement that the participants had demonstrated an openness to dialogue and commitment to a pluralistic and democratic society. In the words of one former government minister, 'the project brought forth the Mauritanian conviviality in the political sector'.[195]

Tackling of sensitive issues

Additionally, while the process was organized around the non-controversial topic of the Millennium Development Goals, it eventually legitimized open discussion of some of the most sensitive issues. In the words of Ambassador Hamody, 'progressively, the workshops were relayed by the official audiovisual means (TV and radio), and [the sessions were] opened up by the provincial governors, general secretaries of ministries, and even by important ministers, even though issues that were previously considered taboos were introduced: "human rights", "slavery", "corruption", "cultural discrimination" etc.'.[196] This gradual acceptance of the substance of the dialogue extended to the President's office. When the Steering Committee co-chairs presented the final report to President Taya, he responded by committing himself to new initiatives on legal reform, including human rights, and on long-term planning for the development of Mauritania's key resources, fisheries and oil.

Defining consensus on political values

Finally, the initiative helped lay a foundation for a more participatory democracy by creating a 'critical mass of influential individuals who value dialogue, understand its dynamics, and own the dialogue process'.[197] The significance of this achievement became increasingly clear in the months following the conclusion of the formal process. In April 2005, one of the political parties allied to President Taya, which had been a major participant in the dialogue process, organized a two-day forum on 'democratic values'. Ambassador Hamody reported that 'the consensus reached between opposed parties, different labor unions, the independent press, and organizations of the civil

society resulted in the establishment of a platform that finally opened the country's political scene'.[198]

Reaching Political Commitment

This consensus on political values became extremely important after August 2005, when a peaceful *coup d'état* deposed President Taya. The leader of the coup, police Colonel Ely Ould Mohamed Vall, a former ally of Taya, became the new President. With widespread public support, the new government launched a transition to a more democratic regime. The conclusions and recommendations of the forum on democratic values provided a framework for a new initiative for a permanent structure for ongoing dialogue among the government, the National Independent Electoral Commission, all political parties, the media and civil society organizations. In June 2006, Mauritanians overwhelmingly approved a new constitution, including presidential term limits, which Col Vall promised to honour.

Chapter 3.4: Dialogue on a Constitutional Process in Nepal[199]

Context

In 2004, Nepal was in the throes of a long-running political crisis. In response to a widespread popular democracy movement, the country had established a limited constitutional monarchy in 1990. Democracy, however, had not improved the lives of the rural population, which suffered severe poverty and social exclusion. Since 1996, the Maoist Communist Party of Nepal, with its base in this rural population, had been waging guerrilla warfare with the aim of overthrowing the government. The conflict had claimed more than 12,000 lives and atrocities were committed on both sides. In 2002, with Maoists in control of most of the countryside, King Gyanendra had dismissed the parliament and the elected Prime Minister, and appointed a new Prime Minister and Cabinet of his own choosing.

In response to this situation, IDEA decided to respond to a recognized need among Nepali stakeholders for a revitalized dialogue on establishing an inclusive constitutional process. Its decision was also in response to a European Commission call for proposals for projects to help address the underlying crisis of governance that Nepal had been experiencing over the previous two years. IDEA had a long-standing engagement with Nepal, starting in 1997 when it conducted a democracy evaluation and brokered support for the establishment of a national multiparty foundation, the Center for Studies on Democracy and Good Governance (CSDGG). Since 2001, Nepal had been an important part of IDEA's democracy support programme in the South Asia region.

Purpose

The overall objective of the dialogue on the constitutional process in Nepal was to revitalize the debate among key Nepali stakeholders on conditions for an inclusive constitutional process and thereby, in the longer term, contribute to the establishment of a pluralistic democracy. Specifically, IDEA's objectives were to:

- stimulate a dialogue among a wide range of stakeholders on democracy-building through a review of the constitutional processes and reform

- assist in the process of engendering national consensus on political reform around concrete constitutional processes and institutions

- build the capacity of Nepali stakeholders to strengthen their approaches to peace-building and constitutional reform by making them aware of comparative experiences.

The project aimed to combine democracy-building and conflict transformation. It sought to induce citizens to express and exchange views on the shape and direction of the constitutional agenda. It also promoted an exchange of views among organized political actors within political parties, proxies for the Maoists, civil society organizations and representatives of established interests such as the monarchy. It was expected that by engaging several different types of actors in dialogue on constitutional reform, the capacity of Nepal as a whole to conduct such reforms would be increased—partly through better information about other countries' experiences, but also as a consequence of the improved relationships between the stakeholders that have to accept the idea of an inclusive constitution-building process.

The Dialogue Process

In this case, dialogue was not a specific method applied to a limited number of participants. IDEA's programmes aim to build countries' capacity to achieve democratic transition and consolidation, which requires both the design of the democratic reforms to be undertaken and a certain degree of shared ownership of those designs and their implementation. In this sense, it is important that there is an exchange of views between different perspectives in the polity. It is also important to introduce new knowledge and comparative experiences that enrich the perspectives of different actors, thereby helping them over the longer term to identify mutually acceptable solutions to seemingly intractable disputes.

Although it is important for a smaller group of key stakeholders to exchange perspectives and develop new ways of looking at the situation in order for progress to be made, it is also vital to engage the society in which these key stakeholders are situated. As much as possible, the same issues that are discussed behind closed doors—such as constitutional monarchy or negotiating political settlements—must also be explained to a wider audience. This is necessary for the general public to understand the outcomes of a dialogue, such as a written agreement between political parties on guiding principles for a constitutional process.

With these considerations in mind, IDEA pursued a range of activities in Nepal, beginning with a broad citizen survey and opinion poll, and continuing with a variety of forums on constitutional issues and peace-building. In support of these two major thrusts, IDEA also

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To meet the objectives set, the project methodology combined

- surveys to help the dialogue focus on citizens' real aspirations and perceptions of democracy
- democracy assessments
- dialogues on democracy catalysed by comparative experiences in democracy-building and conflict transformation.

undertook to bring in comparative experiences of constitution-making and peace-building, and to disseminate the results of all of these activities as broadly as possible within the society. Finally, it developed a supporting body of applied research on Nepali experiences of democracy and democracy-building.

Survey on Citizens' Perceptions of Democracy

Dialogues and evaluations of democracy often focus on institutional matters and exclude citizens' perceptions. Using a survey in a dialogue is a way to bring a broader range of opinion into the process. A public opinion survey also helps to assess the representativeness of the views expressed by the often organized political interests taking part in a process, who claim that their opinions reflect a greater part of the population. A fresh and credible public opinion survey on the matter under discussion can help the dialogue to be precise about the public's political aspirations. Publishing an opinion poll is also a good way of attracting media attention to an issue and thereby bringing attention to the dialogue, if that is deemed helpful.

With these considerations in mind, it was decided to conduct a country-wide quantitative sample survey of the opinions, attitudes, values and aspirations of the Nepalese. The survey focused on citizens' perception of the constitutional framework and linked it to their conception of good governance, democracy and human security. The survey questionnaire was developed in collaboration with international, regional and Nepali experts. A team of national experts agreed on the final design of the survey questions.

A sample of 3,249 persons was interviewed on a range of issues relating to democracy in Nepal. The democracy survey was conducted in 163 polling stations (31 in urban areas and 132 in rural areas) covering 38 of the total 75 districts. In two areas, Dailekh and Bajhang, the survey could not be conducted because the survey teams did not receive permission from the Maoists who controlled those areas. In one incident, the Maoists apologized for having kept the team under their 'hospitality' while deciding whether to allow the survey. In other cases they either authorized the survey or appear to have turned a blind eye and permitted the survey to proceed.

A separate booster sample of 1,000 was interviewed to capture the opinions of groups that were assumed to be missing from the general probable sampling. 'Missing people' would be those who for one reason or another do not live in the place they have announced as their address. The 'missing groups' were identified as restaurant workers, refugees of Tibetan origin, sex workers, ex-*kamayats* (bonded labour), migrant workers, internally displaced people and some nomadic groups.

The survey was presented at a media briefing and at a People's Forum that opened in Kathmandu city hall on 5 November 2004 (more information about this forum is presented later in this case study). It was presented again on 6 November at a workshop convened as a part of the People's Forum, and was subjected to much debate and analysis. The survey was discussed with the international community in an event hosted by the Delegation of the European Commission in Nepal. The results were

referred to in both the Nepali and the Indian media. The survey results continue to generate great interest and debate, and were discussed in interviews on several regional FM radio stations. Copies of the survey results were distributed to all the campuses of the Tribhuvan University around Nepal, the political parties, the Peace Secretariat, the print and electronic media, the National Planning Commission and the international community.

A key message of the survey findings was that a clear majority of Nepali citizens still preferred democracy to any other system of governance despite almost ten years of the Maoist insurgency, disappointment with the political parties, a worsening security situation and rampant corruption. Two-thirds of Nepalis disapproved of the King's intervention in 2002. To bring the armed conflict to a negotiated settlement, the majority recommended convening a round-table conference, the formation of an interim government including the Maoists, and a constituent assembly. Most of those who favoured convening a constituent assembly were expecting this initiative to bring 'peace and stability'.

Many participants in the political discussion in Nepal, and the dialogue process organized by IDEA, were relieved to find that the people of the country had convergent and essentially peaceful, consensus-building approaches to political reform and the re-establishment of democracy. The survey findings enabled the participants of the dialogue processes that proceeded during 2004 to focus on *how* a participatory constitutional process should be built, rather than questioning *if* it should take place at all.

Dialogues on Democracy, Catalysed by Comparative Experiences

Very importantly, the dialogues on constitutional processes were convened with the support of national partners.[200] The partners were identified and partnerships developed after wide and extensive consultations with many stakeholders and civil society networks. National partners proved to be tireless in the energy that they put into the programme in a variety of important ways: in finding appropriate national resource persons as dialogue facilitators; in presenting the Nepali experiences; in developing the agendas; in finding the right balance of participation; in ensuring translation, interpretation, publicity and media coverage; and in taking care of all the logistical details.

One of IDEA's important contributions as an international and impartial partner was to bring in experts with comparative experiences of constitutional processes in Sri Lanka, India, South Africa, Kenya, Afghanistan, Thailand and Cambodia. Significantly, these were regional experts who could speak about similar democracy-building challenges in the context of ethnic and religious divisions, caste stratification, poverty and diminishing national resources. Their comparative experiences helped to foster a concrete discussion of key topics, including peace negotiations, constitutional reform, the role of unique institutions such as the monarchy, and challenging processes such as affirmative action programmes that must balance individual and community rights and interests. New spaces were thus created for fresh thinking on these issues.[201]

The dialogue involved different types of sessions. 'Open space' dialogues included civil society representatives and people broadly defined as 'political activists'. There were also political party dialogues—closed spaces in which the party representatives could feel secure enough to take an attitude of inquiry rather than adopt positions. As these proceeded, a dissemination programme gave them the widest possible exposure in Nepali society. The process concluded with a large-scale People's Forum in November 2004.

The meetings were not held only in luxury hotels in Kathmandu and the surrounding valley, but also in Banke (east), Jhapa (west) and Chitwan (south). For the most part they were conducted in Nepali, and the presentations by and interactions with international experts were translated. These were essentially Nepali-driven dialogues.

Open Space Dialogues[202]

Each of the open space workshops within the dialogue process discussed a theme of relevance to resolving the political situation. The themes included (1) negotiating political settlements, with comparative experiences from South Africa and Sri Lanka; (2) developing inclusive constitutional processes, with experiences from South Africa, Sri Lanka, Kenya and Afghanistan; (3) the role of the monarchy in a democracy; and (4) developing inclusive and participatory processes through electoral reforms and affirmative action policies. A final meeting discussed possible elements of a future political agenda, drawing on the four topics discussed in the other meetings.

Each meeting was attended by between 40 and 60 participants from a wide variety of stakeholders and opinion-makers. They included the facilitators of previous peace talks, trade unions, women's organizations, Dalit communities, royalists, ethnic nationalities, religious leaders, human rights activists, political parties, student leaders, the media, academia and either former Maoists or their current proxies.

Political Dialogues

Closed space dialogues with political parties were held to discuss the same themes, but in a different setting. Political parties nominated the participants for the meetings and requests were made to ensure a gender balance and ethnic balance. (These requests, especially for ethnic balance, were not fully met.) About 25 participants attended each meeting. At the outset, much time was spent persuading the political parties to participate, but towards the end of the series a genuine interest in the programme had been established among party members. Some party members participated in more than one dialogue and found them valuable.

One important outcome of these dialogues was that the political parties agreed on a framework document, 'Future Political Agenda for Re-building Peace and Democracy in Nepal', which draws on the proceedings of the dialogues and provides options in the following areas: (1) negotiating a political settlement; (2) designing a constitutional process; (3) defining the role of the constitutional monarch; (4) defining the people's sovereignty; (5) the nature and scope of minority rights and reservation; (6) state restructuring;

(7) drawing up of a road map to peace and democracy; and (8) transitional arrangements. In this framework document, party representatives also agreed on the importance of stimulating greater awareness of governance reforms—including political party reform—to increase trust in political institutions.[203]

Dissemination

A dialogue process, particularly one that deals with a broad and complicated national issue, often generates much valuable information. This is in the form of inputs to the process, to inform the participants, and at the end of the process it manifests more or less the shared knowledge, if not the agendas, of the participating individuals and organizations. On the assumption that a better-informed society can more easily make appropriate choices on issues regarding its own future, it is important that the dialogue process have a well planned dissemination policy so that wider circles of people and stakeholders can take part in discussions.

In this process, reports of the dialogues were printed in both Nepali and English. The report from the National Dialogue on Affirmative Action and Electoral System in Nepal was subsequently published as a book. Additionally, much of the subject matter discussed in the open and closed space dialogues was shared in public lectures, attracting audiences of between 300 and 500 people to listen to presentations on: (1) negotiating political settlements, with comparative experiences from South Africa and Sri Lanka; (2) developing inclusive constitutional processes, with experiences from South Africa, Sri Lanka, Kenya and Afghanistan; and (3) the role of the monarchy in a democracy, with experiences from Cambodia and Thailand. These meetings were reported in the press, and were attended by national stakeholders and the representatives of the international community.

To enhance the realism and factual basis of the various dialogues, IDEA commissioned a body of expert assessments to enrich the results of the surveys of people's perceptions. These assessments were discussed in a working group held as a part of the People's Forum programme. They were further edited and published as a separate volume in 2006.

The People's Forum

To conclude the programme and to review the experiences and outcomes of the constitutional dialogues, a People's Forum was convened in early November 2004. It was attended by more than 800 people from Kathmandu and the regions, representing a wide range of social and economic sectors such as youth, students, academics, trade unions, teachers, lawyers, the private sector, Dalits, Madhesis, women, indigenous peoples, political leaders, human rights activists and peace campaigners. The civil society networks that helped organize the dialogue took complete ownership of the Forum, arranging logistics and media coverage, booking venues, and ensuring the attendance of the national resource persons. Most participants travelled to the Forum by road, which is a cheap form of transport but time-consuming and uncomfortable. In

Kathmandu they were hosted by local families. They attended the Forum because they felt motivated rather than induced to do so.

The Forum began with a plenary session at Kathmandu's city hall. It then continued in groups in the city's various campuses: 26 parallel working groups on different themes, such as armed conflict, constitutional reform, human rights, political parties and the role of the monarchy. It concluded with another plenary at the college campus. An unusual aspect of the concluding plenary was the presentation of the workshop expenses to ensure full transparency and financial probity.

The objective of the People's Forum was to develop a plan of action enabling civil society to advance the inclusive constitution-building process further. It was envisaged that civil society, like the political parties, would develop a minimum statement of common intent to present to the palace and the Maoists, with a view to restarting negotiations for a political settlement and rebuilding a constitutional order. In the end there was no formal statement, but the thrust of the popular demands was clear—that there should be a negotiated settlement to the conflict with the Maoist rebels, an all-party conference leading to a constituent assembly, and a new draft constitution based on popular and broadly-based consultations. The People's Forum also recommended a nationwide campaign geared to the cessation of hostilities. It called on all political parties to seriously consider internal democratization, and requested all political forces to express a clear view of the relevance of constitutional monarchy.

Outcomes and Impact

Many outcomes are expected of this kind of programme, which involves a large number of activities whose common aim is to improve the quality of interaction between people and thereby contribute to democratization. The proposal for the process envisaged that the project would generate some broadly defined outputs, such as:

- greater public access to information on, and tools relevant to, comparative constitutional processes

- greater awareness of citizen expectations of the political process

- increased national capacity to launch initiatives that advance debates on constitutional reform processes when the political openings emerge.

Raising Awareness

To a great extent, these outputs were achieved. One of the most notable outcomes was the publicity and broad interest that the process generated. High-level political actors within the political parties, the Peace Secretariat, the civil bureaucracy, the military, civil society and the international donor community were aware of the programme and engaged in it on various levels: by participating in meetings; by following the activities through the media; and by commenting on and supporting them in formal and informal ways. Political party members who participated in the closed space dialogues commented on the value of the discussions, and on how the process helped bring them together to develop a minimum common position. On hearing the experiences of political

negotiations from the South African expert, and the careful planning, preparations and follow-through required, the former peace negotiators and facilitators commented that they were not surprised in retrospect that negotiations with the Maoists had been unsuccessful to date. They expressed a willingness to assist the Peace Secretariat in building on their experiences, and to succeed where previously they had failed.

Fostering Collaboration with Key Actors

Another significant outcome was that the extensive range of the activities—the survey, the dialogues with civil society in Kathmandu and the regions, the dialogues with political parties and the public meeting—created a new energy and momentum within the civil society networks. The Dialogue on a Constitutional Process in Nepal brought the largest networks of NGOs together to advance common agendas. Some of them had been engaged in these processes independently, and the dialogue provided them with a space to come together, to pool resources, and thus to advance their objectives. Although this was not an explicit objective of the programme, these national civil society networks now have independent access to international resource persons and have developed confident relationships through which they can consult those individuals directly and seek their advice.

The organizers of the dialogue process were unable to make direct contacts with the Maoists (except during the survey research) and secure their official engagement in the dialogues, although some proxies and former Maoists attended the dialogues and public meetings. Nonetheless, all the material was made available to the Maoists electronically and they have acknowledged receipt of it. The organizers were also unable to gain access to influential sources from the palace, beyond what they learned from the media coverage, which was a severe constraint on the accomplishment of project goals.

Opening Spaces for Discussion and Debate

By the conclusion of the project, the political context in Nepal appeared to have changed. The project partners became extremely vocal and publicly critical of human rights violations by both the security forces and the Maoists, and they called for the restoration of democracy. Civil society was openly debating, even challenging, the role of the monarchy. It became more self-confident and vocal in assessing the root causes of the political and constitutional crisis, and in demanding political negotiations with the Maoists and the convening of a constituent assembly. There was a broader acceptance that the existing constitutional structures are inadequate and that the processes by which they were developed were not inclusive. The project had provided opportunities to discuss alternative ways to restructure the state and polity on the basis of greater inclusion, and the debate was now wide open.

These developments did not cause the ensuing events in Nepal, but undoubtedly they were contributing factors. In early 2005, the political situation took a dramatic turn against constitutional democracy when King Gyanendra dismissed his appointed Prime Minister and assumed the authority to govern directly, vowing a new assault on

the Maoist insurgency. Declaring a state of emergency, he placed a number of former prime ministers under house arrest and imposed strict censorship on the press. Other political leaders fled the country.

Within a little more than a year, however, this situation was completely reversed. An alliance of political parties reached an agreement with the Maoists to work together towards a multiparty democracy. During the early months of 2006, a wave of protests, violently suppressed by government forces, grew into massive public demonstrations. In April 2006, the King bowed to these public demands and restored the parliament, calling on the alliance of political parties to form a new government. In May, the Maoists declared a ceasefire and entered peace talks on the basis of an agreement with the government to form a constituent assembly for constitutional reform.

One of the main commitments of the institutional community of practice from which this Handbook comes was to pool their efforts to 'map' the field of dialogue practice as represented by their collective work. The goal of this exercise was to establish a foundation for common learning about what the work is, in what situations it is valuable and how to do it effectively. For the mapping exercise, institutions developed brief case write-ups, using a common format to facilitate comparison.[*] The table below provides an overview of this broad-ranging dialogue work. It includes the categories of context, purpose and results in order to convey why the organizers undertook to use dialogue and what they think they accomplished with it.

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[*] The full set of topics included: Name of dialogue and country; Brief history and major actors; Political context; Challenges faced; Major breakthroughs; Purpose; Scope; Results; Follow-up work and commitments; Conveners and facilitators; Venue; Timeline; Methodology; Lessons learned. The complete set of cases is available in the Learning Library at <http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org>.

Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
Argentine Dialogue 2002–2003 **Case contributed by UNDP**	Deep political, institutional and social crisis following an economic recession of more than three years, resulting in a sudden rise in poverty and unemployment. Almost half of Argentina's families were unable to afford basic services. Institutions and authorities, at all levels and in all sectors, lacked credibility and stability. The society had become fragmented and disoriented; the population was deeply polarized and turned to open confrontation and rioting.	– To engage political, corporate, labour and social forces to confront social dislocation and polarization – To define a sustainable national project – To overcome resistance to dialogue from various social sectors – To promote widespread social involvement – To construct a legitimate dialogue environment in the society – To contribute to consensus-building	– Recovery of dialogue as a consensus-generating instrument in the country – Breaking down cross-sectoral tensions and recovery of a commitment to common welfare – Development of social reform policies – Government ministers praised the achievements of the dialogue and pledged to work with the dialogue methodology

Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
Argentine Roundtable on Justice Reform 2002–2003 **Case contributed by UNDP**	As above	– To strengthen the Argentine Dialogue by drawing up proposals from the Justice Board to be integrated into the National Agenda of Governance, to guide the actions of future governments – To create a space in which all relevant sectors can meet, discuss and learn from one another – To devise lines of consensus that allow for the sector's reorganization and reform – To create a shared vision of a more effective, efficient and trustworthy justice system – To reflect on and repair the relationship between the justice system and the rest of society – To train local facilitators to replicate the Civic Scenario methodology – To generate proposals to be applied immediately at the national and provincial levels	– A change in the participants' consciousness of the need for reform and their potential role in transforming the judiciary – Development of consensus and closer relationships between the participants
Bolivia Towards the 21st Century 1997–1999 **Case contributed by UNDP**	The recognized problem was the need to establish trust between the government and civil society as a basis for working towards poverty reduction. Bolivia has a large and comparatively sophisticated civil society sector with a capacity to research the issues and	– To reach consensus on the implementation of a programme of social and economic development based on four pillars: equity, opportunity, institutionalization and dignity, all aimed at serving the central objective of poverty reduction – To establish working groups	– Development of the participants' capacity for dialogue – A report, 'Proposals Against Poverty' (October 1998), outlining possible public policy responses to poverty – Mobilization of donor resources, improved donor coordination for the early years of the government

	Context	Objectives	Outcomes
	engage in public policy formulation. Through the Law of Popular Participation, there was a commitment to and history of closer collaboration between decentralized government and civil society on public policy issues. However, rising tensions within the government's own coalition made for a challenging political context.	– To produce a report outlining possible public policy responses to poverty	and successful negotiations on international debt, based on consensus on the four pillars – Creation of a foundation for the National Dialogue II, which started in May 2000
Bolivia **National Dialogue 2000** **April 2000** **Case contributed by UNDP**	Social unrest and protests on issues concerning poverty reduction during the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) process consultations imposed important constraints on the PRSP's preparation. These external factors, combined with the decentralized character of the participatory process and the presence of influential umbrella groups and associations, created sources of tensions and unresolved conflict, even after the PRSP was prepared.	To develop a Poverty Reduction Strategy with ample participation of state and civil society representatives, focusing on the allocation of World Bank/IFC Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) II debt resources	– Development of a Poverty Reduction Strategy that addressed four strategic components and three cross-cutting issues. Under these components, more than 40 pro-poor targeted measures were identified – Agreement on the allocation of HIPC II debt relief resources – Legal institutionalization of the dialogue process in the Dialogue Law, requiring that such a process take place at least every three years – Descriptions of the 'Government Listens' workshop included in the PRS presented to the World Bank and the IMF – Recognition that economic opportunities for poor people are crucial to poverty reduction – Inclusion of concepts of gender equality as strategic actions in the PRSP – Creation of means of direct contact between government and society – Broad, deep debate on poverty in Bolivia

Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
Burkina Faso **1997 and continuing** **Case contributed by International IDEA**	The dialogue arose from conflict. Tensions were high between the majority and opposition political elites regarding the way to manage democratic transition, and democratic institutions suffered a lack of legitimacy. The opposition had boycotted the presidential elections following adoption of a new constitution in 1991 and threatened to again boycott an election process it deemed unfair. The situation was in danger of degenerating into violence.	– To increase opportunities for dialogue, consultation and consensus-building in order to invigorate the democratic movement, analyse challenges for democratic consolidation and promote sustainable democracy – To help build and restore confidence among political parties	– Adoption of consensual electoral reforms by the government and National Assembly – Major concessions by the President that brought the moderate opposition into the government – Establishment of a committee to make recommendations to end the crisis and endorsement of some of the reforms that arose from the dialogue by the committee, government and political parties – Greater understanding: actors developed an appreciation for democratic dialogue and the virtue of mutual respect in discussions – Creation of the Center for Democratic Governance to carry on the dialogue process – Publication of reports on democracy and reform of the electoral system
Colombia **Destino Colombia 1996–2000** **Case contributed by UNDP**	The dialogue was formed in response to a general demand to address the consequences of the civil war. The prolonged armed conflict had resulted in daily political upheaval, a fragmented democracy, social polarization, corruption and violence. The economy was in a precarious state, lagging behind the rest of Latin America and on a global scale, and internally causing unemployment and inequality. The	– To generate a process of reflection and stimulate discussion of the country's possible futures – To collectively formulate a vision and sense of responsibility for the country's future – To support the process of peace-building	– Greater understanding: a deeply human experience generated personal reflection, learning and analysis; participants were forced to change individual mental maps, open eyes to different options, rethink concepts and actions, reconsider paradigms and acquire new capabilities – Greater trust, tolerance, respect, consensus and optimism; new channels for communication – Generation of collective knowledge of the country's circumstances, and greater sensitivity to diverse visions

drug trade remained prominent and controversial.		– Development of four possible scenarios for the country's future – Improved quality of long-term thinking – Collective understanding of the importance of creating spaces for dialogue in the future – Potential to contribute to the Colombian peace process	Specific agreements to be followed by implemented policies, for which the local administration took responsibility
Colombia **Pasto Participatory Budgeting** **2001 and continuing** **Case contributed by UNDP**	Mayor Eduardo Alvarado of Pasto in Colombia defined the three main problems of the municipality as unemployment, corruption and insecurity, and set out to encourage participation, education and productivity in an effort to respond. This move can be considered part of the decentralization process emerging from the 1991 national constitution, which paved the way for tax redistribution among municipalities, the popular election of mayors, and decentralization of education and health services. In addition, a culture of participation had gradually been developing in the region, especially in rural areas, as space was opened up and strong logistical support was provided by the mayor's office.	– To make progress in the formation of public culture – To create and consolidate a local participatory planning system and strengthen the formation of social capital – To strengthen channels of communication between different social sectors and between these sectors and the municipal administration – To adopt a model for public administration based on citizen participation, the primacy of general interests, trustworthiness, service, efficiency, equity and creativity – To promote development of the municipality and the building of the region on the basis of collective effort – To renew and strengthen community leadership, a sense of identity with the municipality, and citizen commitment to the process of local and regional development

Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
Georgia **Democratic Assessment through Dialogue Program 2001–2004** **Case contributed by International IDEA**	The need for an assessment of the country's fledgling democracy was felt for many years, as the challenge of engaging citizens in politics and fostering their participation in reform processes, societal changes and the resolution of conflicts remained. In a context where 'democracy' tended to be associated with mass privatization, social injustice and 'façade reforms', it was essential to engage wider circles of the population—including various social groups and movements—in an in-depth assessment of and dialogue about the local relevance and meanings of democracy in post-communist Georgia, and the substance and direction of reforms.	– To advance democracy by facilitating a serious and comprehensive reflection on political, social and economic problems, by articulating a democratic reform agenda, and by generating solution-oriented thinking and actions – To enable the rural population to interact with the elite from the capital and raise their concerns	– Contribution of stimulus and support to the reflection and dialogue process regarding democracy-building in Georgia – Enhancement and encouragement of communication among the diverse participants at the national level – Contribution to regional cooperation, essential for stable sustainable democracy in the region – Development of 12 discussion papers in Georgian and English – Development of an agenda for debate in Georgian, English and Russian
Grenada **Constitutional Review Project 2002–2003** **Case contributed by UNDP**	The dialogue was initiated to address latent problems with Grenada's 1973 independence constitution. Since the constitution focused on independence, it was not adequately equipped to deal with the issues of governance and development. In view of the imperative demands of social and economic development, it was thus undergoing	– To consider, examine and inquire into the Grenada Constitution Order 1973, taking into account all laws, policies, conventions and practices – To address the basic question 'Is the constitution of Grenada resilient enough to meet the challenges of the present and the foreseeable future?' – To carry out 'fair and fearless' consultations	– Distribution of a document as a teaching tool to provide citizens with a functional introduction to the constitution – Extension of the Constitution Review Commission to include one female commissioner, a display of flexibility that underscored the participatory goals of the project

and deliberations

– To develop a new culture of citizens' awareness and active civic engagement with national constitutions

– To enhance democracy in Grenada

real strains. The constitution also failed to provide adequate mechanisms for addressing issues such as regionalism, globalization and trade liberalization, or for promoting good governance, public accountability and grass-roots democracy. Citizens felt a strong sense of exclusion from the governance process and a lack of capacity to become involved. Civil society organizations lacked networking capabilities and capacities to contribute meaningfully to the country's democratic governance processes. There was an acute need to build constitution awareness across the entire sub-region.

Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
Guatemala **War-Torn Societies Project** **1995–1998** **Case contributed by Interpeace**	Guatemala was just emerging from its 36-year civil war and finalizing the peace accords. There was a recognized need in the country to overcome the legacies of its authoritarian and confrontational history: political and social polarization, exclusion, distrust in public institutions and a weakened state that was unable to undertake the necessary political, economic and social development.	– To rebuild trust, respect, security, solidarity and confidence in order to achieve national reconciliation – To foster local capacity to facilitate collective reflection, analysis and problem-solving, and to incorporate all sectors and regions in the reconstruction of society – To identify and analyse common values and interests, and the country's main problems – To reach consensus on operational policy recommendations for social, economic and political recovery, with wide participation that would confer legitimacy and sustainability on future policies – To create a space for dialogue and to generate a peaceful and inclusive political culture – To contribute to the consolidation of the peace accords and a democratic state	– Greater understanding: opened up a non-hierarchical, neutral space for dialogue, inviting the participation of organizations normally excluded from discussions of public issues. This process resulted in greater trust, confidence, tolerance, solidarity, collective identity and respect between sectors and regions, and helped generate a democratic culture. – Achieved consensus on challenges facing the country and made recommendations
Guatemala **Dialogue for Democratic Development** **1996–1998** **Case contributed by International IDEA**	Important social and political forces appeared to be losing interest in complying with the recently signed peace accords. Progress was modest in consolidating the country's peace process and its democracy. The country suffered from a weak democracy, marked by low levels of political	– To develop a strong sense of country ownership of the peace process and engage all active forces in the country in making the implementation of the accords a joint project for society – To gauge the status of the peace accords and the democratic system to implement them – To produce a widely shared consensus on	– Greater understanding and trust among the actors involved – Establishment of a dialogue space in Guatemalan society – 'Democracy in Guatemala: The Mission of an Entire People'—a report that diagnosed the situation, identified priorities and presented a minimal draft agenda based on the peace accords.

	and electoral participation and by ethnic and gender discrimination and exclusion. The window of opportunity and momentum opened by the signing of the peace accords could have been lost if a vast, collective effort on behalf of all Guatemalans was not directed towards fulfilling the accords.	priorities and proposals, with the eventual aim of designing a concrete minimum public agenda – To continue the momentum of the peace accords, consolidate peace and strengthen democracy	It is a source of analysis and ideas for continued dialogue in Guatemala
Guatemala **Mesa de Cobán: Negotiation Roundtable for Land Conflicts in Alta Verapaz** **1997** **Case contributed by the OAS**	The Guatemalan province of Alta Verapaz was renowned for a high level of land-related violence. The conflicts were usually between communities of indigenous peoples, but disputes between indigenous communities and private landowners also abounded. Impoverished Mayan communities would frequently occupy lands to plant crops to feed their families, or simply to harvest planted crops. The costs for landlords to evict these 'invaders' could be considerable, and the process often resulted in violence and loss of life. In addition, it was not uncommon for lands to be 'reinvaded' shortly afterwards, either by the same group or by another community. These confrontations often resulted in large losses for both sides, especially when the crops went unharvested.	– To meet community needs by helping people deal with land ownership issues and land disputes – To enhance governance by helping government institutions operate more effectively – To model the use of dialogue as a tool for resolving conflict	General understandings and, at times, specific, non-binding agreements, for example: – Resolution of a 'land invasion' with an agreement in which a landowner allowed *campesinos* who had planted crops on land they did not own to harvest the crops and leave peacefully, and provided funds—a fraction of what he would have paid in legal fees if the dispute had gone to court—to help them settle elsewhere – Agreement by a landowner to pay the back wages of *campesinos* in land rather than money – Project 'Participation and Democracy', a national, multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary group with its own domestic board, chartered to follow up on the recommendations established in the report 'Democracy in Guatemala', continues to function on its own

Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
Guatemala **Towards a Security Policy for Democracy 1999–2002** **Case contributed by Interpeace**	The project arose from a conflict. High levels of political and social polarization blocked the necessary reform of a security sector previously built according to the needs of a repressive, counter-insurgent and authoritarian government. Throughout the century, the armed forces had been a key political actor, intervening continually in politics and at times directly exercising political power. The 1996 peace accords identified basic transformations required to begin adapting these institutions to the needs of the new peaceful and democratic context. But by 1999 the level of implementation of the accords was very low, and more formal than substantive because of institutional resistance by the military and conceptual and political weakness on the civilian side.	– To mobilize the authorities' political will to undergo needed reform, promote conceptual understanding of the problem and the development of concrete policy proposals, and promote the active participation of civil society in such policy formulation – To address the following problems: persistence of distrust between sectors and within the military; the weakness of civil society institutions to conceptualize the problem, because of from scant training and little information; and the weakness of the civilian political leadership to design, negotiate and implement the policies required to reform the security sector – To investigate six specific subjects related to security policy within a democratic framework: the conceptual framework of democratic security; a security concept and agenda; the function of the army in a democratic society; a military doctrine; the intelligence system; and civilian intelligence	– Construction of trust and mutual recognition that surmounted prior prejudices – Production of inter-sectoral synergy, alliances and consensus – Contribution of a new conceptual and analytical baseline for security policy formulation – Production of a group of civilians and military officers better equipped to confront the society's security-related issues – Agreement by working groups on four proposals: basic concepts and recognition of the pending tasks in the matter of security; reform of the security system; reform of the intelligence system; redefinition of the military's role
Guatemala **Intersectoral Dialogue Tables 2002–2003 and continuing**	The dialogue responded to a general demand to address the return to polarization and distrust, confrontation, and political and social instability following the signing of the peace	– To generate a wide and open process of reconciliation and dialogue between the state and diverse social sectors, and to instil a culture of dialogue, tolerance, consensus and planning	– Intersectoral Dialogue Table—Culture of Peace and Reconciliation: approval of the 'Declaration on Social Principles and Values in a Culture of Peace' to serve as a basis for the development of a new and democratic coexistence in the framework of a

Case contributed by the OAS			
	accords that ended Guatemala's civil war. The context was also marked by widespread negative perceptions of the reliability, effectiveness and legitimacy of fundamental political institutions, political parties and civil society organizations, and of their capacity to fulfil the peace accords.	– To generate the conditions of mutual trust needed to help create an appropriate atmosphere for good governance, and to strengthen efforts to fulfil the accords – To carry out a productive exchange of visions to construct an agenda for each of the themes – To achieve substantive and, when possible, binding agreements on problems related to the themes of the dialogue tables; and to identify actions to be taken by the state and participating actors	culture of peace; to be disseminated – Progress reports of each table presented to the consultative group in May 2003

Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
Guatemala **Multiparty Dialogue Program 2002–2003** **Case contributed by the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy and UNDP**	The dialogue responded to a recognized problem—the need to reinforce the political party system in Guatemala, in keeping with the peace accords, and to overcome the fragmentation and lack of confidence existing in the country.	– To promote the strengthening of political parties with a view to building solid and coherent democratic political institutions – To support political parties in the creation of a shared national agenda, which would identify the country's main problems and the main lines of action to resolve them, taking into consideration the basis provided by the peace accords and UNDP *Human Development Report* – To help develop electoral programmes and the formulation of government plans and political agendas for the opposition	– Deep and shared understanding of Guatemala's current circumstances based on delegates' discussing and identifying the country's main political problems and how to solve them – Establishment of interpersonal communication networks based on trust, respect and tolerance, and enabling political dialogues outside the context of the programme – Establishment of inter-party communication networks that opened opportunities for multiparty alliances and coalitions, joint activities – Personal enrichment of the participants through their interventions – A Shared National Agenda: a set of minimum accords to transform Guatemala's future. Addressed political and economic matters, the peace process, and socio-environmental issues, while taking into account cross-cutting themes (inter-ethnic relations, gender and ethics). Also identified a series of themes for future debate. Constitutes a long-term vision for the country and a long-term commitment to it on the participants' part – Definition of a basic route to achieving national development
Guyana	The critical national issue of establishing a development strategy remained pending as the division among	– To produce a national development strategy that would enable Guyana to secure further aid flows and strengthen the justification	– Government inclusion of non-state actors in a long-term policy-making exercise for the first time – A national development strategy that enjoyed

| National Development Strategy 1995 and continuing

Case contributed by the Carter Center | the country's two main political forces and corresponding ethnic communities was growing. The Indo-Guyanese community, which enjoys a numerical advantage over the Afro-Guyanese, backed the ruling party. The Afro-Guyanese community backed the main opposition party. Political divisions were exacerbated by economic segmentation: the Indo-Guyanese population is largely tied to agriculture and the rural economy; the Afro-Guyanese live in urban areas and are prevalent in the public service sector. The interplay of ethnicity and politics with a winner-take-all electoral system was proving inherently unstable and left both communities feeling insecure. The results of the 1997 election were contested by the opposition, throwing the country into a protracted period of political tension and uncertainty for most of 1998. Political relations again deteriorated between the ruling party and the opposition after the 2001 elections, resulting in a 13-month boycott of parliament by the opposition. | for its preferred policy approaches with the international community (government)
– To create greater stakeholder consultation and participation in decision-making processes in the light of the previous decades of dictatorship, the new demands of democracy and the bitter experiences of structural adjustment (government)
– To promote greater government willingness to engage and accommodate civil society and the opposition in the country's governance (civil society and the opposition)
– To develop a shared vision and solutions to Guyana's governance dilemmas (all sides in Guyana)
– To promote greater country ownership of development strategies, increase the participation of civil society in governance and policy-making, and facilitate effective international cooperation and partnership (the Carter Center) | broad support, seen as a document of Guyanese civil society—the first development policy created exclusively by Guyanese, with the input of external consultants and advisers
– A consensus-based national development strategy that helped strengthen Guyana's relations with the international financial institutions
– Consolidation of civil society and an increase in its capacity to influence policy, thereby strengthening democratic institutions in Guyana
– A promising example of how civic leaders from across Guyana's social and political spectrum can play an influential and moderating role in divisive political situations |

Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
Guyana **Constructive Engagement 2003** **Case contributed by UNDP**	Following the violently disputed elections of 1997, the leaders of the ruling party and the opposition engaged in a UNDP-supported dialogue with three Caribbean Community (CARICOM)-appointed facilitators. This process resulted in the joint signing of the Herdmanston Accord, which proposed an audit of the disputed elections, a process of constitutional reform, a moratorium on public demonstrations and the development of a sustained dialogue process between the parties. Among other things, the agreement defused post-election tensions and launched a process of constitutional reform in time for the 2001 elections. But it failed in several respects. A sustained dialogue never materialized; public demonstrations, disturbances, violence and looting continued; and failed agreements led to greater bitterness and polarization between the parties. The media were continually involved in the 'constructive engagement' dialogue process; press conferences were	– To advance needed constitutional and institutional reforms in order to consolidate the role of the parliament and to further democratic governance in the country	– Creation of much initial optimism, helping to dilute social tensions and enhance stability – Contribution to breaking the political impasse, with more consensus-building and inclusiveness at all levels – Movement towards resolution and implementation of outstanding constitutional reforms from 2000–2001 – Agreement on need for parliamentary and constitutional reforms vital for democracy – Setting up assemblies, committees and commissions – Progress in areas such as improving physical facilities in the National Assembly, presentation of an interim report by the Disciplined Forces Commission, and tabling electricity sector agreements in the National Assembly

held after each meeting between the leaders.			– A greater appreciation by socio-political actors of the value of dialogue as a tool of democratic governance—the most significant outcome – A national accord expressing a consensus on the long-term goals of the dialogue process and a commitment by the political parties, organized civil society, local authorities, community representatives and the state to respect and implement the agreements reached – A set of guidelines outlining those state policies that could guide the activities of national actors for the long-term attainment of national development objectives – Advancement of long-term social and economic objectives – A programme of internal and external financing aligned with long-term social and economic goals – Follow-up and evaluation mechanisms to verify that the agreement reached was carried out, that policies were executed and that the goals were met
Honduras **Grand National Dialogue 2001–2003** Case contributed by the OAS	Honduras had not had a coherent, long-term development programme since independence and faced several serious developmental challenges. On UNDP *Human Development Index*, Honduras was placed 30th among the 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. This was also a period in which the government was experiencing its lowest level of citizen approval. Various social actors' accumulated resentment with past Honduran governments and the current one for failing to fulfil previous commitments bred widespread scepticism about the viability of a national dialogue. There was a perception that the Grand National Dialogue process would elicit results similar to those of previous dialogue initiatives, and that the implementation of the dialogue's results would suffer a similar fate, making another dialogue futile. More importantly, the continuation of conflicts (some involving violence and repression) with various social sectors on a variety of high-profile issues (public employees, health care and education) affected the credibility of the government and the legitimacy of the dialogue process.	– To create consensus on a vision of the country for 2021 that could give rise to state policies capable of coping with the challenges the country would face in the future	

Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
Jamaica **Civic Dialogue for Democratic Governance 2002–2004** **Case contributed by UNDP**	The gradual weakening of Jamaica's democratic governance was evident in its reduced rating on the democratic index, and a slip, both absolutely and relative to the rest of the Caribbean, in its freedom rating. A stagnating economy, and increased public disillusionment with government and democracy, were problems compounded by a variety of social ills: a breakdown in traditional social structures, values and attitudes; increasing cultural fragmentation; labour insecurity; political rivalry; corruption; and high levels of crime, violence, drugs-related charges, civil disobedience and AIDS.	– To made progress in three action areas identified as top Jamaican priorities—crime and violence, employment creation, and the fight against corruption – To encourage advocacy, communication and capacity- and partnership-building – To achieve success similar to that of dialogue experiences in Guatemala, South Africa etc.	– Development of four scenarios and unanimous support for a desired scenario, 'Get Up, Stand Up' – Development of recommendations for the government, the private sector and civil society – Consensus that Jamaica needed to develop a new approach to include community participation in development dialogue, and to establish a mechanism to turn talk into action
Mozambique **Agenda 2025 1997–2003** **Case contributed by the Carter Center and UNDP**	In 1992 Mozambique ended a 17-year civil war, but strong political tensions persisted between the ruling party and the main opposition party, leading to violence and loss of life following the 1999 general elections. Despite a consolidated peace and high GDP growth rates, most Mozambicans remained in extreme poverty. Ranking 170th out of 175 countries on the	– To promote national unity – To establish, through a participatory process, a common long-term national vision – To prepare, through a participatory process, a national development strategy that set out the policies and programmes needed to respond to the goals identified in the national development vision – To increase the capacity of the government, Mozambican institutions and civil society to	– Agenda 2025 National Vision and Development Strategies document, developed through regional and sectoral workshops, presented to the President, June 2003 – Public debate on the national vision and strategy, producing a final version of the document in 2004

define and implement national economic and social policies, programmes and projects
– To guarantee consistency between short-, medium- and long-term social and economic policies
– To increase the government's capacity to take the lead in coordinating and managing development cooperation

UNDP Human Development Index, it is one of the world's least developed countries. The country's development pattern has been uneven. Urban areas in the southern region of the country have received large inflows of foreign direct investment while rural areas throughout the country suffer endemic poverty. Many in Mozambican society felt that the country—notwithstanding the significant gains that had been achieved since the peace agreements of 1992—had reached a critical juncture and needed to devise a long-term, sustainable and home-grown strategy that would allow for both the consolidation and more equitable distributions of those gains.

Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
Nicaragua **Dialogue on Land and Property** **1994–1995** **Case contributed by the Carter Center**	The country was in a state of conflict. The issue involved peasants waiting for clear title for land granted under the Sandinista agrarian reform, Sandinista and Contra ex-combatants seeking land in the countryside, and previous owners from Nicaragua and abroad demanding the return of or compensation for houses, factories and land confiscated, expropriated or abandoned in the past. By 1992, roughly 40% of the country's households found themselves in conflict or potential conflict over land tenure issues because of overlapping claims by different people on the same property. The situation was further complicated by many legal uncertainties and an inadequate administrative system. Addressing property disputes and an uncertain legal framework for property rights was critically important, since the resulting problems impeded investment and economic recovery, and generated political polarization, destabilization and conflict, sometimes violent.	– To resolve the clash between those who had lost and those who had benefited from agrarian reform, since land disputes posed a persistent problem, causing conflict and destabilizing the government – To address debates over whose rights to property should take precedence, administrative and legal impediments to resolving multiple claims to individual pieces of property, and modernizing the titling system	– An atmosphere of respect and constructive problem-solving: the forum (and the fact it could take place and all) reflects an important maturing of Nicaraguan society as participants from all sides of the issue were able to discuss their differences. It jump-started the slowly building consensus and galvanized the participants to act rapidly – Broad consensus that the small beneficiaries of urban and agrarian reforms should be protected, former owners should be compensated with improved bonds, recipients of larger properties should pay for or return those properties, and abusers of property laws during the last two months of the Ortega government would be prosecuted in the court system – A new property law was passed, encompassing most of these elements of the agreement
Panama **Bambito I, II, III** **1993–1994** **Case contributed by UNDP**	In 1993, the country faced deep political divisions and turmoil following two decades of dictatorship, the US invasion of 1989 and the replacement of Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega	– To foster an open dialogue in order to achieve effective political, economic and institutional transition – To generate a commitment to dialogue and consensus, and to work towards consolidating	– Greater understanding: development of consensus, building trust and confidence among actors, reducing political tensions; overcoming traditional positions and sectoral interests – Creation of a climate of calm and confidence,

with a transitional government in 1989. The challenge of making the complex transition to democracy was compounded by the urgency of forming transitional arrangements to ensure the smooth handover of the Panama Canal from the United States to Panama on 31 December 1999. The country was also dealing with corruption, social polarization and institutional insecurity. By the time of Bambito III in 1994, the political context was significantly different. A government had been democratically elected and there was little perceived need to call for a national dialogue.

democracy
– To establish the main lines of state action and priority areas before the elections (Bambito I)
– To create an agreement among presidential candidates to reiterate their commitment to the Bambito I declaration (Bambito II)
– To institutionalize political dialogue and produce agreements for social policies (Bambito III)

which contributed to the holding of fair and transparent elections in 1994 and, more generally, to the transition to democracy and the return of the Canal
– Identification of priority topics and development of related programme proposals (Bambito I)
– Confirmation of the spirit of détente, boost in confidence, reiteration of the commitments of Bambito I

Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
Panama **Coronado '2000 Panama Encounters' 1995–1996** **Case contributed by UNDP**	The country faced an urgent need to produce agreements to ensure the smooth takeover and administration of the Panama Canal and Canal Zone, to be handed over to the country by the United States on 31 December 1999.	– To create a new space for dialogue and consensus on the fundamental themes of the country, focusing specifically on the future of the Canal – To address the handover of the Canal, its future and its governability (Coronado I) – To study, discuss and seek agreement on draft bill on the Canal Authority (Coronado II) – To discuss the General Land Use Plan of the Interoceanic Regional Authority (Coronado III)	– Greater understanding: contribution to the culture of transparency, participation and trust – A visualization from different perspectives of the implication of having the responsibility of administering the Panama Canal and the benefits that that represented for the country – Overcoming ideological–political differences and sectoral interests to work collectively; demonstration of a genuine potential for dialogue and capacity for consensus in the country – An agreement and vision, 'Visión Nacional Panamá 2000 … y Adelante', consisting of a long-term vision to achieve the objectives of development and democratic governance, and a commitment to the effective administration of the Canal, separate from partisan and sectoral interests
Panama **National Vision 2020 1997** **Case contributed by UNDP**	There was a general demand felt in Panama for the political divisions, social polarization and institutional insecurity still present as a result of decades of dictatorship to be addressed, in order to complete the complex transition to democracy and effectively assume ownership of the Panama Canal from the United States.	– To complete the country's transition to a sovereign, multicultural, modern, democratic state by addressing five key elements: democratic institutionalism, self-determination, economic development, justice and sustainability – To achieve dialogue and consensus between national actors – To develop a long-term vision and the operational goals and objectives to achieve it	– Greater understanding: developed common values and collective long-term thinking; visualized the future from different perspectives; achieved consensus, overcoming political and ideological bias – Demonstration that democratic governance can be strengthened by the will of all sectors – Creation of the scenario 'Una Estrella en el Apagón': a vision of the future provides hope and light to the present – Endorsement of a final document by 14

Name	Context	Objectives	Outcomes
Visión Paraguay **2000–2002** **Case contributed by UNDP**	The need for institutional change in Paraguay was generally acknowledged. More than a decade after the end of dictatorship, the authoritarian culture of fear and a conservative and fatalistic mentality still predominated. Political, social, judicial and economic insecurity reigned. Political crimes, persistent corruption and a succession of unstable governments had created a politically passive citizenry and challenged the effective institutionalization of democracy. Low productivity and economic recession resulted in intense poverty, negative socio-economic indicators, social dislocation and widespread disillusionment.	– To develop a space for consensus and construct a shared vision to help overcome societal divisions (sectoral, cultural, socio-economic and so on) and influence the country's development – To disseminate results widely – To produce a group of national leaders with shared mental maps and plans for change	representatives of civil society, the Catholic Church, all the political parties and the government in May 1998 – Improvement of the capacity for dialogue between these participants – Greater understanding: participants accumulated some degree of empathy, tolerance, respect for one another; benefited from listening/learning, thinking of their country from others' perspectives; had a chance to express themselves honestly; and gained capacity for reflection – Initiation of a short-term collective effort to define the future by learning about the present – Reflection by leaders about the need for future social and political action Construction of three scenarios: 'Bad Night', 'Uncertain Dawn' and 'Luminous'

Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
Peru **National Accord** **2001–2003** **Case contributed by** **UNDP**	The country was in the midst of a triple crisis: of political legitimacy, government credibility (caused by corruption and human rights violations) and the economy. Former President Alberto Fujimori had fled Peru a year earlier as a result of a dramatic corruption crisis that resulted in high tension, political confrontation and distrust, and street disturbances.	– To create a shared national vision for the future and formulate state policies to achieve it – To affirm a national identity, shared values and responsibilities – To encourage citizenship participation and a space of consensus to change the anti-political climate – To help reduce poverty, increase the country's competitiveness and establish the stability required for sustainable development – To consolidate the democratic transition and the legitimacy of the political system, by creating a culture of transparency, dialogue and consensus	– Greater understanding: development of tolerance, respect and learning between sectors, without sacrificing natural and political differences – Generation of long-term strategic thinking and consensus – 30 state policies; 268 sub-policies; 817 indicators; 747 goals
Tajikistan **Inter-Tajik Dialogue** **1993–2001 and** **continuing** **Case contributed by the International Institute for Sustained Dialogue**	The civil war that broke out in the former Soviet Republic of Tajikistan following its independence in 1991 was at its peak. In 1992, the main question once central Soviet governance collapsed was who would govern Tajikistan. In 1992 an effort to form a coalition government failed. A group representing people close to the former system then took over the capital and the government to form the base of what ultimately became the government. A vicious conflict raged,	To see whether a group can be formed during a civil war that can design a peace process for their own country	– Contributions of participants in the dialogue to the peace process in Tajikistan – Formation by the dialogue participants of the Public Committee for Promoting Democratic Processes, based on the deep personal conviction that they could make a contribution to the democratization of Tajikistan by creating pockets in the country where citizens could experience their capacities as political actors to accomplish results that are beyond the reach of governments

	with atrocities on both sides. A reported one of every seven citizens had fled their homes. The immediate challenge was to end the civil war and produce agreement on how the country would be governed. Beyond that, there remained the question of what the roots of a Tajik identity are. The Tajiks had been part of a Central Asian Khanate and then under Soviet rule for 70 years, and they were groping for a sense of identity.		
Trinidad and Tobago **National Strategic Plan for an Expanded Response to HIV/AIDS** **2002** **Case contributed by UNDP**	HIV/AIDS is among the leading causes of death among young adults. Increasing numbers of young women are at risk of contracting the virus. While the national prevalence rate for HIV is 1.3%, for young persons aged 15–19 years the rate is estimated at 7%	To develop a National Strategic Plan to guide Trinidad and Tobago's expanded response to HIV/AIDS	– Creation of conversation and consensus-building among critical players and stakeholders in the private, public and community sectors in Trinidad and Tobago, who were knowledgeable about issues related to the HIV/AIDS epidemic – Creation of broadly-based 'buy-in' to the national strategic planning process and, by extension, commitment to a national plan – Development of sufficient information to augment and support the situation and response analysis – Identification of the broad strategic areas for action as a foundation for crating a framework for a National Coordinating Mechanism, which was eventually adopted by the government and funded by UNDP

Dialogue Process	Context	Purpose	Results
Uruguay **Agenda Uruguay 2001–2003** **Case contributed by UNDP and the University of Peace**	The country faced a difficult economic and social situation, and was dealing with an economic recession that had begun in 1999. It was also facing the prospect of greater integration in an increasingly complex and uncertain international system, with numerous obstacles, discriminatory business practices and asymmetrical benefits.	– To include a wide array of societal actors in a collective effort to identify common interests and achieve national consensus, collaboration and cohesion – To foster a space for dialogue and deep reflection, and to envisage the conditions needed for modernization – To formulate state strategies and policies to tackle the country's fundamental challenges: public services, energy, telecommunications, education for a knowledge society, international insertion and the role of political parties – To help deepen the state reform process	– Greater understanding: achieved consensus despite the presence of diverse political outlooks – Establishment of an open and pluralistic environment for dialogue – Creation of an informal but permanent dialogue network between the political parties, changing the conventional relationships between the parties and between these and the government. This new network provided a forum to plan and negotiate medium- and long-term government programmes
Venezuela **Negotiation and Agreement Table 2002–2003** **Cases contributed by the OAS and the Carter Center**	For much of President Hugo Chávez's term in office (since 1998), the country had been struggling with economic volatility, escalating poverty and corruption. Tensions had been increasing since 2001 and reached a peak in April 2002, when a coup was attempted against the President. A new President was inaugurated but rapidly removed. It was in this climate of high mistrust and polarization that the Chávez government decided to set up a dialogue. As the process proceeded,	– To win time and avoid higher levels of social unrest (the government) – To find a rapid but democratic solution to the crisis through mediated agreements with binding results (the opposition) – To look for an agreement to resolve the crisis via the electoral system. – To address the following themes: strengthening the electoral system, disarming the civilian population and installing a functioning Truth Commission	– Negotiation of a 19-point agreement assuring respect for human rights, freedom of expression, the right to petition for recall referendums of all elected officials—including the President—and the establishment of a follow-up commission – Reiteration of the participants' commitment to reject violence and follow the principles of various democratic charters, including disarming the civilian population and creating a climate conducive to electoral processes

social unrest and massive strikes
paralysed and crippled the country
and its economy for several months
(December 2002–February 2003).

Throughout this Handbook, we emphasize the importance of adapting the design and implementation of a dialogue process to its context and purpose. In this overview of process options the reader will find an array of processes and process tools for dialogue and deliberation to support the task of adaptation. Drawing mainly on the two sources noted in the shaded area, we provide here a brief description of each process and an Internet source for further information.

We present the processes in groups, according to the role that each is best suited to play in a dialogue initiative: exploration and awareness raising—sharing knowledge and ideas; relationship-building—working through conflict; deliberation—working through tough decisions; and collaborative action—multi-stakeholder, whole-system change. We also indicate what size of group each process is designed to accommodate, using this scale:

• small (intimate): 8–12 participants
• standard: 15–40 participants
• large group: 40–4,000 participants.

In addition to these basic distinctions, the reader will find that these processes originate in different places and cultures—many from the global North, but some from Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. In some cases, this may be an important selection criterion. Moreover, as the authors of *Mapping Dialogue* note, most of these processes and process tools 'have a set of principles attached to them, and this is a significant part of what makes them work'. The examples they provide are: 'rotate leadership' (Circle); 'access the wisdom of the minority' (Deep Democracy); 'explore questions that matter' (World Café); and 'whoever comes are the right people' (Open Space).[204] These core ideas can also help practitioners determine whether a particular process is right for their specific needs.

The website (<http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org>) contains a rich array of case material and related reports contributed by the members of the institutional community of practice. It also offers an expanded resource for readers wishing to pursue further the stories, ideas, practices and tools presented here.

For further reading

The two sources from which our list is adapted are 'Well-known Processes for Dialogue and Deliberation', created by the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD), available at <http://www.thataway.org>;
and
Marianne Bojer, Marianne Knuth and Colleen Magner, *Mapping Dialogue: A Research Project Profiling Dialogue Tools and Processes for Social Change* (Johannesburg: Pioneers of Change Associates, 2006), available at <http://www.pioneersofchange.net/research/dialogue>.

Both these sources provide a comparative analysis of the processes they profile, offering guidance on which processes are relevant for different goals and contexts.

Exploration and Awareness-Raising: Sharing Knowledge and Ideas

World Café

Group size: large, up to hundreds
World Cafés enable groups of people to participate together in evolving rounds of dialogue with three or four others while remaining part of a single, larger, connected conversation. Small, intimate conversations link and build on each other as people move between groups, cross-pollinate ideas and discover new insights into questions or issues that really matter in their life, work or community. For further information see <http://www.theworldcafe.com>.

Conversation Café

Group size: single group or several small groups
Conversation Cafés are hosted conversations that are usually held in a public setting like a coffee shop or bookstore, where anyone is welcome to join. A simple format helps people feel at ease and gives everyone who wants to speak a chance to do so. For further information see <http://www.conversationcafe.org>.

Open Space Technology

Group size: from standard to hundreds
Open Space Technology is a self-organizing practice that invites people to take responsibility for what they care about. In Open Space, rather than beginning with a predetermined agenda, a group creates a marketplace of inquiry wherein participants identify the topics they feel passionate about and want to work on together. The agenda emerges from the group. It is an innovative approach to creating whole-system change and to inspiring creativity and leadership among participants. For further information see <http://www.openspaceworld.org>.

Circle Process

Group size: small
The Circle Process is a small group dialogue designed to encourage people to listen and speak from the heart in a spirit of inquiry. By opening and closing the circle with a simple ritual of the group's choosing, using a talking object, and inviting silence to enter the circle, a safe space is created wherein participants can be trusting, authentic, caring and open to change. These are also referred to as a council process, wisdom circle, listening circles or talking circles, common among indigenous peoples of North America. For further information see <http://www.wisdomcircle.org> or <http://www. peerspirit.com/htmlpages/circlebasics.html>.

Lekgotla Process[205]

Group size: small to standard

This is one of two African village circle processes described in the *Mapping Dialogue* report. The authors caution that their research into these African dialogue traditions is just beginning, but it is important that the field as a whole becomes more informed about them. The authors write: 'it is in some ways absurd to import dialogue processes from the West into Africa, where conversation is so deeply ingrained in the indigenous culture.' The name 'Lekgotla' comes from Setswana, a language spoken widely in Southern Africa, and means a public place where consultation and judicial proceedings are conducted. This form of an African council process is always held in the open air, because the outdoors belongs to no one. This provides a sense of freedom, openness and invitation to people to attend and speak honestly. There is also no time limit to the process. It may continue for days or weeks until the issues being addressed have been resolved. This freedom from time restrictions enables participants to suspend judgement and to be willing to listen to someone's point of view and story in context, without rushing them. The Lekgotla meets in a circle. The circle represents unity and the participants are aware that only if they are whole and united can they address their problems. The circle also ensures that they face each other and speak honestly to one another. As they gather, they greet each person around the circle. They make sure that those who really matter to the process are present. Though they may be seated by rank and speak in order of a hierarchy, the emphasis is on every voice being heard equally. For further information see <http://www.pioneersofchange.net/library/dialogue>.

Theatre of the Oppressed[206]

Group size: small to standard

The Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) is a method developed in Brazil that uses the language and techniques of interactive theatre to engage the public on key issues related to the core social problems and power structures of their particular communities and society at large. The method involves using theatre to pose a dilemma to the group that ends with a negative outcome. Participants are asked to assume the role of one of the actors in order to try to change the outcome. They are invited to imagine new possibilities and solutions, and to try to make them happen in the moment. As a result of the group problem-solving, highly interactive imagining, physical involvement, trust, fun and vigorous interpersonal dynamics, the participants learn how they are a part of perpetuating their own problems and how they can be the source of their own liberation. For further information see <http://www.theatreoftheoppressed.org>.

Relationship-building – Working through Conflict

Sustained Dialogue

Group size: small

Sustained Dialogue (SD) is a process for transforming the relationships that cause problems, create conflict and block change. SD is not a problem-solving workshop

but a sustained interaction that develops through a sequence of meetings over months or years. The process moves through five recognizable phases: deciding to engage; mapping relationships; probing problems and relationships; scenario-building; and acting together. For further information see <http://www.sustaineddialogue.org>.

Public Conversations Project

Group size: small

The Public Conversations Project (PCP) helps people with fundamental disagreements about divisive issues to develop the mutual understanding and trust essential for strong communities and positive action. The PCP dialogue model is characterized by a careful preparatory phase that maps old, 'stuck' patterns of conversation and explores times when 'new' conversations have taken place. Potential dialogue participants are involved in designing the process at an early stage. PCP has used this model, mainly in the United States, to facilitate dialogue on deeply polarized issues such as abortion, sexual orientation, faith and the environment. There is a comprehensive handbook on how to use this process. For further information see <http://www.publicconversations.org/pcp/index.asp>.

Deep Democracy[207]

Group size: small

Deep Democracy, which originated in South Africa, is a facilitation methodology based on the assumption that there is wisdom in the minority voice and in the diversity of viewpoints, and that this wisdom has value for the whole group. The approach helps to bring to the surface and give expression to what is otherwise left unsaid. It ensures that the minority's views and concerns are genuinely addressed. In turn, this allows for decision-making to proceed having taken account of the insight or wisdom of the minority view. This insight will be pertinent to the direction and decision made by the majority. Deep Democracy is most useful when things are unsaid and need to be brought into the open; people are stuck in roles and conflict may be arising; there is a diversity of views in a group, and different sides to an issue must be considered; power differences are affecting people's freedom to act; there is a need to win the acceptance of a minority; and/or people are being 'labelled' by others. For further information see <http://www.deep-democracy.net>.

Intergroup Dialogue

Group size: single or multiple small groups

Intergroup Dialogue is a social justice approach to dialogue. It focuses on both societal power relations of domination–subordination and the creative possibilities for engaging and working with and across these differences. Intergroup Dialogue aims to move people beyond the point where they see these differences as divisive—for example, by generating ideas for new ways of being powerful without perpetuating social inequalities. This approach coincides with core social work processes of empowerment—building

connections with others, increasing critical consciousness about social inequalities, engendering commitments to social justice and developing competencies to interrupt social injustices and engage in social change. For further information see <http://www.depts.washington.edu/sswweb/idea>.

Israeli–Palestinian School for Peace[208]

Group size: small

The School for Peace is a process developed in the Middle East by Arabs and Israelis together. It involves encounter groups structured to bring participants together, not just as individuals but as representatives of their group identities. In this way the process aims to get at the sources of conflict that are based in deeply rooted beliefs, and that do not change simply as a result of connections made at the individual level. This approach assumes that (1) the beliefs and outlooks on which a person's identity and behaviour are constructed are deep-seated and stable, and generally resistant to change; (2) the conflict rests on an encounter between two national groups, not between individuals; the group is seen as having an essential importance, beyond the sum of its individual members; (3) the group is a microcosm of reality and thus offers an avenue for learning about the society at large; and (4) the encounter group is an open entity, linked to and influenced by the larger reality outside. For further information see <http://www.sfpeace.org>.

Participatory Action Research

Group size: standard

Participatory action research (PAR) has its roots in the 'pedagogy of the oppressed' of Brazilian educator Paolo Freire. At its core is the idea that ordinary people can be empowered to take charge of changing their circumstances by inquiring into the underlying causes of the events that shape their world. The inquiry and the actions that result from it comprise the 'action research', which is always conducted jointly by the researchers and the subjects of the research. Since Freire first put forward the idea in 1970, PAR has been widely adopted as an intervention strategy for agencies and institutions seeking to support human development in various regions of the world. From its inception as the War-Torn Societies Project, Interpeace has used this process for conflict prevention, peace-building and strengthening democratic governance in societies emerging from violent conflicts. In this process, 'dialogue and research are used together to help participants identify options for policy formation and priority setting … building consensus among the main actors involved in post-conflict rebuilding through regular meetings in a neutral setting'. For further information see <http://www.crdsomalia.org/crd-background.shtml>.

Deliberation – Working through Tough Decisions

Citizen Deliberative Councils[209]

Group size: small

Citizen Deliberative Councils (CDCs) are made up of ordinary citizens reflecting the diversity of the population from which they were drawn. They are convened on an ad hoc basis to serve as a microcosm of a community, state or country and report on the views and concerns of that community, state or country in an interactive setting. Participants may be selected randomly, or scientifically, or by a combination of both methods. But they differ from the participants in most other forms of citizen deliberation in that they are not chosen as representatives, stakeholders or experts. They take part simply as themselves, citizens and peers. In their role as a citizen council, however, they may consult representatives, experts or other stakeholders, so as to improve their understanding of the issues they are exploring. There are many varieties of CDCs (citizen juries, citizen assemblies, wisdom councils, planning cells and consensus conferences) but they all share one general purpose: to inform officials and the public of what the people as a whole would really want if they were to think carefully about the matter and discuss it with each other. For further information on various models of citizen councils see <http://www.co-intelligence.org/CDCUsesAndPotency.html>.

National Issues Forums[210]

Group size: several small groups to hundreds

National Issues Forums (NIF) is an independent network of civic and educational groups that use 'issue books' as a basis for deliberative choice work in forums based on the town meeting tradition. Many people can participate, but the conversations take place in small groups. NIF issue books use research on the public's concerns to identify three or four options or approaches to an issue (they never produce just two alternatives). Presenting issues in this way invites citizens to confront the conflicts among different options and avoids the usual debates in which people lash out with simplistic arguments. The term 'National Issues Forums' refers both to a network of organizations and to a deliberative process (see Choicework below). For further information see <http://www.nifi.org/>.

Citizen Choicework[211]

Group size: several small groups to hundreds

Too often, 'community forums' are merely panels of experts telling people what is good for them. Or they are public free-for-alls, where the loudest voices prevail. In contrast, Citizen Choicework is based on a deep respect for the public's capacity to address issues when circumstances support, rather than thwart, dialogue and deliberation. Given the right conditions, the public's ability to learn, get involved and make decisions is far greater than most people realize. This process is based on a commitment to helping citizens—individually and collectively—confront tough choices in productive ways. By

doing that, people work through values conflicts and practical trade-offs, and develop a sense of priorities and direction. Key principles include non-partisan local leadership, inclusive participation and unbiased discussion materials that 'start where the public starts'. For further information see <http://www.publicagenda.org/pubengage/pe_citizen_choicework.cfm>.

Study Circles

Group size: several small groups to hundreds

Study Circles enable communities to strengthen their ability to solve problems by bringing large numbers of people together in dialogue across divides of race, income, age and political viewpoint. Study Circles combine dialogue, deliberation and community organizing techniques, enabling public talk to build understanding, explore a range of solutions and serve as a catalyst for social, political and policy change. For further information see <http://www.studycircles.org/en/index.aspx>.

AmericaSpeaks 21st Century Town Meeting[212]

Group size: hundreds to thousands

The 21st Century Town Meeting focuses on discussion and deliberation among citizens rather than speeches, question-and-answer sessions or panel presentations. Diverse groups of citizens participate in round-table discussions (10–12 people per table), deliberating in depth about key policy, resource-allocation or planning issues. Each table discussion is supported by a trained facilitator to ensure that participants stay 'on task' and that each table has a democratic process. Participants receive detailed and balanced background discussion guides to increase their knowledge of the issues under consideration. Computerized note-taking and voting transform the individual table discussions into synthesized recommendations representative of the whole room. Before the meeting ends, results from the meeting are compiled into a report, which is distributed to participants, decision-makers and the media as they leave. Decision-makers actively engage in the meeting by participating in table discussions, observing the process and responding to citizen input at the end of the meeting. For further information see <http://www.americaspeaks.org>.

Deliberative Polling

Group size: standard to hundreds

Deliberative Polling combines deliberation in small group discussions with scientific random sampling to provide public consultation for public policy and for electoral issues. Members of a random sample are polled, and then some members are invited to gather at a single place to discuss the issues after they have examined balanced briefing materials. Participants engage in dialogue with competing experts and political leaders on the basis of questions they develop in small group discussions with trained moderators. They are then polled again to track how this deliberative process has affected their opinions. For further information see <http://www.cdd.stanford.edu/polls/docs/summary>.

Collaborative Action – Multistakeholder, Whole-System Change

Future Search

Group size: 60–80

Future Search is an interactive planning process that brings the 'whole system' together in a 16-hour retreat of three days and two overnights. The process centres on common ground and future action, while treating problems and conflicts as information, not action items. The group moves from discussing the past, to identifying present trends and common ground, to imagining future scenarios and planning joint actions to bring the desired future. For further information see <http://www.futuresearch.net>.

Appreciative Inquiry[13]

Group size: standard to thousands

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is very different from the traditional problem-solving approach that focuses on diagnosing what is wrong and then developing strategies to fix it. Instead, it involves the systematic discovery of what gives 'life' to a living system when it is most alive, most effective, and most constructively capable in economic, ecological and human terms. AI centrally involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate and heighten positive potential. It mobilizes inquiry by devising the 'unconditional positive question'. AI follows a process of discovering the best of what is, dreaming and identifying what could be, and designing to bring the desired reality into being on the basis of existing positive seeds for success. For further information see <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/>.

Scenario Planning[214]

Group size: small to standard

Scenario Planning builds on the notion that the world is inherently uncertain. Scenarios are used not so much as a tool for predicting the future but rather as a process to challenge the assumptions, values and mental models of various stakeholders about how uncertainties might affect their collective futures. By encouraging scenario-planning processes at different levels of an organization or community, old paradigms are challenged and innovation is encouraged through surprising possible stories of the future. Scenarios therefore help develop new and valuable knowledge. By bringing many perspectives into a conversation about the future, a rich and multidimensional variety of scenarios are created. Scenarios encourage story-telling and dialogue between people who would not necessarily share their perspectives with each other. For more information see <http://www.arlingtoninstitute.org/future/How_to_change_the_world.pdf>.

Change Lab[215]

Group size: standard

The Change Lab, a multi-stakeholder dialogic change process, is designed to generate the shared commitment and collective insight needed to produce breakthrough solutions to complex social problems. Each Change Lab is convened around a particular societal problem to which no obvious solution is in sight. It is convened by one or more organizations that are committed to effecting change and aware that they cannot solve this problem alone. The convener(s) bring(s) together 25–35 key stakeholders of the issue who represent a 'microcosm' of the problem system. These people must be influential, diverse, committed to changing the system and open to changing themselves. The process that they move through together in the Change Lab draws inspiration from the 'U-Process' co-developed by Otto Scharmer and Joseph Jaworski (see figure below[216]). For further information see <http://www.synergos.org/partnership/about/uprocess.htm>.

Overview of a Change Lab

Sensing: uncovering current reality through transforming perception

Presencing: uncovering shared purpose through transforming self and will

Realizing: enacting a new reality through transforming action

Convening and Launch

Learning Journeys

Innovation Retreat

Design Studio

Prototyping and Piloting

Venture Meeting

Institutionalizing
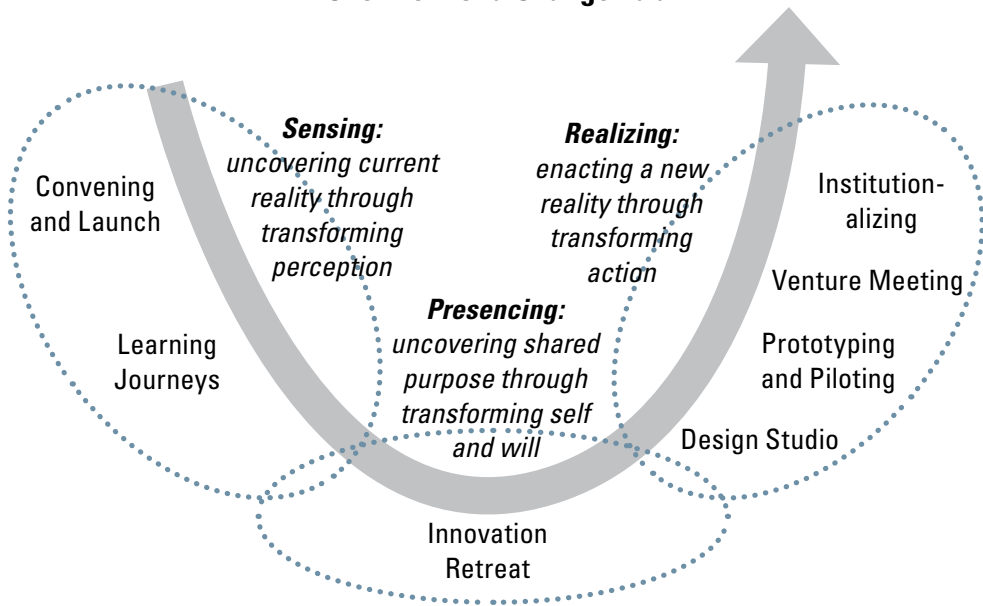
Source: © Generon Consulting 1999-2004. Adapted from Joseph Jaworski and C. Otto Scharmer, "Leadership in the Digital Economy: Sensing and Actualizing Emerging Futures" (Cambridge, Mass.: Society for Organizational Learning and Beverly, Mass.: Generon Consulting, 2000), <http://www.dialogonleadership.org>.

Other Tools

Learning Journeys[217]

In a learning journey, a dialogue group visits an organization or community and is invited to sit down one-on-one or in small groups in empathetic dialogue with local stakeholders in order to understand their circumstances. Before such a visit, learning journey participants clarify their own intentions and questions; often, they receive training in how to 'suspend judgement' and listen not only with an open mind, but also with an open heart and open will. After a visit they hear each other's perspectives and, through conversation, attain a deeper understanding and a more complete picture of what they have experienced together. They become aware of what others saw that they themselves may have been blind to, and discover the value of broadening understanding of what it means to see. For further information see <http://www.pioneersofchange.net/research/dialogue>.

Story Dialogue[218]

The Story Dialogue technique builds on traditional, oral communication and learning techniques. The process is structured so that valuable personal experiences are used to draw out important themes and issues affecting the community, and then action can be planned around these insights. This process uses a mixture of story and structured dialogue based on four types of question: 'what?' (description), 'why?' (explanation), 'so what?' (synthesis), and 'now what?' (action). Open questions are asked of the story-teller by the other members of the group and this generates dialogue, but with a particular set of objectives in mind: to move from personal experience to more generalized knowledge (insights) and action. For further information see <http://www.evaluationtrust.org/tools/story.html>.

Graphic Facilitation and Information Design

Graphic Facilitation involves the work of a 'graphic recorder' who captures the essence of the conversation on large sheets of paper, using colourful images and symbols as well as words. An information designer also captures dialogue content but renders it in diagrams, tables and models. Both these processes support the dialogue by enabling participants to reflect together on the ideas and themes emerging in the conversation. For further information see <http://www.visualpractitioner.org>.

Listening Projects and Dialogue Interviewing

One way of reaching people who may never participate in an organized dialogue event is through one-on-one interviews conducted by individuals trained in active listening and dialogic interviewing. Interviewers take time to build trust and understanding so that interviewees can go deeper into their fears, distress, hopes, needs, feelings and ideas.

Web-Based Tools[219]

In recent years, more and more groups have been using innovations in collaborative technology as a way of extending their practice in dialogue and deliberation. Many tools and venues for online conversation and decision-making have been created, for use in the public realm, that help people engage in meaningful conversations about public issues. For instance, AmericaSpeaks is a pioneer in using collaborative technology to enhance and connect face-to-face deliberations involving large numbers of people. In addition to creating forums for online dialogue, deliberation and discussion, high-tech. collaboration tools can be used to enhance face-to-face dialogue and deliberation in a number of ways:

- by enabling groups to vote quickly on options or opinions

- by mapping out a discussion visually for all to see

- by enabling facilitators of large groups to gather and share demographic and other factual information quickly with the group, enabling participants in large-scale programmes to feel more connected to others in the room

- by more effectively gathering the notes, themes and decisions made by each small group in large-scale programmes

- by giving participants an added sense of importance or 'officialness' (having their discussion and outcomes immediately submitted elsewhere can create a greater sense of value for the discussion)

- if face-to-face dialogue happens either before or after an online component, the tools can enhance the process by providing participants with another means of expressing themselves and by allowing people with busy or conflicting schedules to interact for a longer period.

For a review of many of the online tools and services available, see the website of the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation at <http://www.thataway.org/resources/practice/hightech/intro.html>.

Notes

Introduction

1. In addition to the three institutions sponsoring this Handbook, the members of the community of practice are the Carter Center, Generon Consulting, the Global Leadership Initiative of the Society for Organizational Learning, the Hewlett Foundation, the Inter-American Foundation, the International Institute for Sustained Dialogue, the Mediators Foundation, the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Third Side Network, the United Nations Department of Political Affairs, the University for Peace, and Interpeace. Three units of UNDP also participated: the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, the Oslo Governance Center and the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean.
2. Paraphrased from Mark Gerzon, 'Strategic Outlook on Dialogue', internal UNDP report (June 2005), p. 20.

Chapter 1.1

3. An Italian international NGO, the Coordinating Committee of the Organizations for Voluntary Service (COSV), sponsored the dialogue together with a Zimbabwean partner, the Amani Trust, and with the technical assistance of the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA). This description is based on a case study prepared by Teddy Nemeroff, 'Empowering Zimbabwean Youth through Sustained Dialogue' (Institute for Democracy in South Africa, 2005). Available at <http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org>.
4. Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Random House, 1999), p. 153.

Chapter 1.2

5. Carlos Santiso, 'Field Reports: Four Years of Support for Democratic Development in Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Guatemala, Romania, Indonesia', unpublished report for International IDEA (June 2000), p. 20.
6. Roel von Meijenfeldt, interview with Katrin Käufer (2005).
7. Naasson Munyandamusta, Jean-Paul Mugiraneza and Koenraad Van Brabant, *Rwanda Case Study* (Geneva: Interpeace, 2005). Available at <http://democraticdialoguenetwork. org/file.pl?files_id=11;folder=attachment>.
8. 'Negotiation Roundtable for Land Conflicts in Alta Verapaz—the Mesa de Cobán', under 'Dialogue Experiences' in the Learning Library at <http://www.democratic dialoguenetwork.org>.
9. Von Meijenfeldt interview.
10. For more on the Bambito dialogues, see the Learning Library at <http://www.demo craticdialoguenetwork.org>, including an overview in 'Dialogue Experiences'; and a full case in Spanish in 'Cases'. See also a report on a Bambito case presentation in Bettye Pruitt, 'Second Learning Workshop on Democratic Dialogue: Gamboa Rainforest Resort, Panama, December 2–4, 2002', in Pruitt, *Reports from Learning Workshops 2003–2004: Democratic Dialogue Regional Project*, Working Paper 5 (New York: UNDP, October 2004). Available at <http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org>.
11. For the quotation, from a report on a case presentation of the Guatemala Multiparty Dialogue, see Bettye Pruitt, 'Third Learning Workshop on Democratic Dialogue:

Plaza Hotel, Buenos Aires, Argentina, December 1–3, 2003', in Pruitt, *Reports from Learning Workshops*, p. 146.

12. Joseph Stiglitz, 'Participation and Development: Perspectives from the Comprehensive Development Paradigm', *Review of Development Economics* 6/2 (2002), pp. 163–82, quoted in Roel von Meijenfeldt, Carlos Santiso and Martin Ängeby, 'Democracy Evaluation through Dialogue: Presenting the IDEA Experience', Paper presented to the SLEVA Conference, Colombo, Sri Lanka (June 2001), p. 19.

13. Carlos Sarti et al., Special Program for the Promotion of Dialogue and Conflict Resolution, *Dialogue and Governance in Latin America*, Working Paper 4 (Guatemala City: OAS, 2004), pp. 5–6. Available at <http://www.ddpa.oas.org/oprc/docs.htm>.

14. Von Meijenfeldt, Santiso and Ängeby, 'Democracy Evaluation through Dialogue', p. 4.

15. 'OAS Secretary General Outlines Hemisphere's Major Challenges', 21 October 2005. Available at <http://www.OAS.org>.

16. This paragraph and the next are based on Bettye Pruitt, 'UNDP Civic Scenario/Civic Dialogue Workshop, [Hotel] Antigua, Guatemala, November 8–10, 2000: Workshop Report', pp. 13–15. Available in the Learning Library at <http://www.democratic dialoguenetwork.org>.

17. Yadira Soto, interview with Katrin Käufer, 2005.

18. Adam Kahane, email 'Comments on the report of the May workshop in Antigua', 11 September 2002.

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19. Sarti et al., *Dialogue and Governance in Latin America*, p. 7.

20. Gerzon, 'Strategic Outlook on Dialogue', p. 2.

21. Juanita Brown, *The World Café: Shaping our Futures through Conversations that Matter* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 2005).

22. Jurgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 2 vols, transl. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston, MA: Beacon, 1981, 1987); and Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: Viking, 1968).

23. Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, *The Tree of Knowledge* (Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications, 1987); Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Penguin, 1972); and Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, 2nd edn, transl. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Scribner, 1958).

24. For comparison to the present-day uses of dialogue as a tool for logical reasoning and analysis, see the work of Douglas Walton, including 'The Place of Dialogue Theory in Logic, Computer Science, and Communication Studies', in *Synthese* 1/23 (2000), pp. 327–46. Available at <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca>; and *The New Dialectic: Conversational Contexts of Argument* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1998).

25. Hal Saunders, *A Public Peace Process: Sustained Dialogue to Transform Racial and Ethnic Conflicts* (New York: Palgrave, 1999) p. 22.

26. Roel von Meijenfeldt, Carlos Santiso and Martin Ängeby, *Dialogue for Democratic Development: Policy Options* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 1999), p. 8.

27. Quoted in 'What Are Dialogue and Deliberation?', on the website of the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, <http://thataway.org/index.php/?page_id=490>.

28. Saunders, *A Public Peace Process*, pp. 82–83.

29. David Bohm, *On Dialogue*, ed. Lee Nichol (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 6–7, also quoted in Saunders, *A Public Peace Process*, p. 82.

30. Bassam Nasser, Programme Coordinator, Palestinian Center for Democracy and Conflict Resolution (PCDCR) (<http://www.pcdcr.org>), interview with Katrin Käufer, 2005.

31. Quoted in Gerzon, 'Strategic Outlook on Dialogue', p. 11.

32. Saunders, *A Public Peace Process*, p. 85. For an update on the Inter-Tajik Dialogue after 1999, see the case overview prepared by Saunders among 'Dialogue Experiences' in the Learning Library at <http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org>.

33. Philip Thomas, 'Where's the Public in These Democracies? Dialogue and Deliberation: Mechanisms for Exercising Civic Engagement', unpublished paper presented to the International Conference on Mediation, Guatemala City, Guatemala, 2 September 2004, p. 17.

34. Saunders, *A Public Peace Process*, p. 88.

35. Santiso, 'Field Reports', pp. 3–5.

36. Saunders, *A Public Peace Process*, p. 88.

37. Gerzon, 'Strategic Outlook on Dialogue', pp. 8, 11.

38. 'Experiences with National Dialogue in Latin America: Main Lessons from a Roundtable Discussion, San Salvador, El Salvador, November 20–21, 2000', p. 6. Available at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/CDF/Resources/elsalvaenglish.pdf>.

39. Elena Díez Pinto, 'Policy Note', unpublished UNDP document, 2005, p. 5; and Bettye Pruitt, 'Third Learning Workshop'.

40. Von Meijenfeldt interview.

41. Based on Bettye Pruitt, notes from a dialogue practitioner workshop sponsored by IDEA, UNDP, the OAS and CIDA in Geneva, Switzerland, 29 March–1 April 2005.

42. David Bohm, Donald Factor and Peter Garrett, 'Dialogue—A Proposal' (1991). Available at <http://www.david-bohm.net/dialogue/>.

43. Cécile Molinier, interview with Bettye Pruitt, 18 May 2005.

44. Quoted in 'What Are Dialogue and Deliberation?', on the website of the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, <http://thataway.org/index.php/?page_id=490>.

45. For example, see 'Guiding Principles for Dialogue for Democratic Development', in von Meijenfeldt, Santiso and Ängeby, *Dialogue for Democratic Development*, p. 44. Gerzon, 'Strategic Outlook on Dialogue', pp. 10–11, also offers a list of core principles.

46. Quoted in Gerzon, 'Strategic Outlook on Dialogue', p. 10.

47. Von Meijenfeldt, Santiso and Ängeby, 'Democracy Evaluation through Dialogue', p. 17.

48. Sarti et al., *Dialogue and Governance in Latin America*, p. 11.

49. Von Meijenfeldt interview.

50. Quoted in Gerzon, 'Strategic Outlook on Dialogue', p. 10.

51. Bettye Pruitt, notes from Geneva Practitioner Workshop, 29–30 March 2005.

52. The Indonesia case is examined in *The PDA: Workshop Facilitation Guide*, booklet 4 of the *Peace and Development Analysis Resource Pack* (New York: UNDP, 2005), p. 6.

53. Quoted in Pruitt, *Reports from Learning Workshops,* p. 130.

54. Leena Rikkilä, Programme Manager, Asia, International IDEA, interview with Katrin Käufer, January 2005.

55. Quoted in Gerzon, 'Strategic Outlook on Dialogue', p. 10.

56. Von Meijenfeldt interview.
57. Pruitt, *Reports from Learning Workshops,* p. 26; see also Juanita Brown's focus on 'conversations that matter' in Brown, *The World Café.*
58. Quoted in Pruitt, *Reports from Learning Workshops,* p. 130.
59. Quoted in Gerzon, 'Strategic Outlook on Dialogue', p. 7.
60. William Isaacs, *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together: A Pioneering Approach to Communicating in Business and in Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), p. 419 and *passim.*
61. Von Meijenfeldt, Santiso and Ängeby, 'Democracy Evaluation through Dialogue', p. 16; quotation from Gerzon, 'Strategic Outlook on Dialogue', p. 11.
62. Pruitt, notes from Geneva Practitioner Workshop.
63. Von Meijenfeldt, Santiso and Ängeby, *Dialogue for Democratic Development*, p. 8.
64. Quoted in Gerzon, 'Strategic Outlook on Dialogue', p. 10.
65. Isaacs, *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together*, p. 419.
66. As recorded in Betty Pruitt, 'First Learning Workshop on Democratic Dialogue: Hotel Antigua, Guatemala, May 22–26 2002', in Pruitt, *Reports from Learning Workshops.*
67. Saunders, *A Public Peace Process*, p. 82.
68. Bohm, *On Dialogue*; and Bohm, Factor and Garrett, 'Dialogue—A Proposal', p. 2.
69. Meenakshi Gopinath, Principal, Lady Shri Ram College and Honorary Director, Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP), India, interview with Katrin Käufer, January 2005.
70. Pruitt, notes from Geneva Practitioner Workshop.
71. Mary B. Anderson and Lara Olson, *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners* (Cambridge, MA: The Collaborative for Development Action, Inc., 2003), p. 71.
72. Pruitt, notes from Geneva Practitioner Workshop.
73. Yadira Soto and Betilde V. Muñoz, 'The OAS Experience in Guatemala: "Culture of Dialogue: Development of Resources for Peace-Building, PROPAZ"', Internet Forum on Conflict Prevention, 2003.
74. International IDEA, unpublished case study on Burkina Faso (2000), p. 12.
75. Quoted in Bettye Pruitt, 'First Learning Workshop'; see also the record of an Interpeace case report, pp. 43–9. Available in the Learning Library at <http://www.democratic dialogueworkshop.org>.
76. '"Transformation" in Zimbabwe: An Analytical Record of the UNDP-Supported "Conflict Transformation" Programme', internal UNDP document (2005).
77. Sarti et al., *Dialogue and Governance in Latin America*, p. 8.
78. Munyandamusta, Mugiraneza and Van Brabant, *Rwanda Case Study*, p. 3.
79. Gopinath interview.

Chapter 1.4
80. Geert Van Vliet, 'Impact Assessment of the Burkina Faso Programme and Options for Further Action', internal IDEA document (13 July 2000).
81. Iceberg Model by Katrin Käufer, adapted from Otto Scharmer, 'Organizing Around Not-Yet-Embodied Knowledge', in G. v. Krogh, I. Nonaka and T. Nishiguchi, eds, *Knowledge Creation: A New Source of Value* (New York: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 36–60.
82. Gopinath interview.

83. Louise Diamond, interview by Julian Portilla (2003). Available at <http://www.beyond intractability.org>.

84. Katrin Käufer, 'Learning from Civic Scenario Projects: A Tool for Facilitating Social Change?', in *Learning Histories: Democratic Dialogue Regional Project*, Working Paper 3 (New York: UNDP, 2004). Available at <http://www.democraticdialoguenet work.org>.

85. Learning histories, another tool from the organizational learning field, are case studies that draw on extensive interviewing to tell the story in the words of participants. Peter M. Senge et al., *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook* (New York: Doubleday, 1994). The learning histories on which Käufer bases her analysis are Glennifer Gillespie, 'The Footprints of Mont Fleur: The Mont Fleur Scenario Project, South Africa, 1991–1992'; Elena Díez Pinto and Alfredo de León, 'Destino Colombia 1997–2000: A Treasure to Be Revealed', and Díez Pinto, 'Visión Guatemala', all in *Learning Histories.*

86. Bohm, Factor and Garrett, 'Dialogue—A Proposal', p. 2.

87. Saunders, *A Public Peace Process*, p. 96.

88. Bohm, Factor and Garrett, 'Dialogue—A Proposal', p. 3.

89. Quotation from Bohm, Factor and Garrett, 'Dialogue—A Proposal'; and Saunders, *A Public Peace Process*, pp. 118–9.

90. Molinier interview.

91. William N. Isaacs, 'The Dialogue Project Annual Report, 1993–1994', pp. 17–18. Available at <http://www.solonline.org>.

92. Learning history quotations from Díez Pinto, 'Visión Guatemala', quoted in Adam Kahane, *Solving Tough Problems: An Open Way of Talking, Listening, and Creating New Realities* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Kohler, 2004), pp. 116–7; and Gillespie, 'Footprints of Mont Fleur', p. 36.

93. See the case of San Mateo Ixtatán, Chapter 3.2.

94. See the case of Bambito I, II, and III in Appendix 1 and at <http://www.democratic dialoguenetwork.org>.

95. See the case of IDEA's dialogue in Burkina Faso in Appendix 1 and at <http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org>.

96. See the case of the Mont Fleur Civic Scenario process at <http://www.democratic dialoguenetwork.org>.

97. Pruitt, notes from Geneva Practitioner Workshop.

98. Ibid.

99. Quoted in Pruitt, 'First Learning Workshop'.

100. Thomas, 'Where's the Public in These Democracies?', pp. 11–16.

101. Jan Pronk, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for the Sudan, interview with Bettye Pruitt, 19 July 2005.

Chapter 2.1

102. Gopinath interview.

103. Quoted in Pruitt, *Reports from Learning Workshops*, p. 90.

Chapter 2.2

104. Munyandamusta, Mugiraneza and Van Brabant, *Rwanda Case Study*, p. 3.

105. Ibid.

106. 'Situation Analysis' at the Multistakeholder Process (MSP) Resource Portal, at <http://portals.wdi.wur.nl/msp/>.

107. *Resource Pack on Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and Peacebuilding*, a joint publication by the Africa Peace Forum, the Center for Conflict Resolution, the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies, the Forum on Early Warning and Early Response, and International Alert (2004), Chapter 2, p. 1. Available at <http://www.idrc.ca>.

108. *Resource Pack on Conflict-Sensitive Approaches*, Introduction, p. 1.

109. Koenraad Van Brabant, 'Practical Tools for Project Planning, Review, and Evaluation', Paper prepared to support the Handbook project (2005), pp. 1–2.

110. 'Bolivia towards the 21st Century', in the Learning Library at <http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org>.

111. The *Resource Pack* is the product of a team of practitioners from five organizations engaged in conflict prevention: the Africa Peace Forum, the Center for Conflict Resolution, the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies, the Forum on Early Warning and Early Response, and International Alert. A consortium of international agencies provided guidance and financial support, including the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ, Technical Cooperation Agency) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

112. From International Alert et al., *Resource Pack on Conflict-sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding*, Chapter 1. Available at <http:/network.idrc.ca/en/ev-60789-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html>.

113. David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984). For a full bibliography on the topic of experiential learning, see <http://www.learningfromexperience.com>.

114. Munyandamusta, Mugiraneza and Van Brabant, *Rwanda Case Study*, p. 3.

115. International IDEA, 'Dialogue for Democratic Development, Guatemala'. Available at <http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.com>.

116. Quoted in Gerardo Noto, 'Argentine Dialogue: Learning Workshop Buenos Aires Case Study', *Case Studies: Democratic Dialogue Regional Project*, Working Paper no. 4 (New York: UNDP, 2004), p. 16. Available at <http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org>.

117. Sarti et al., *Dialogue and Governance in Latin America*, p. 10.

118. Michael Watkins and Susan Rosegrant, 'Building Coalitions', in Watkins and Rosegrant, *Breakthrough International Negotiation: How Great Negotiators Transformed the World's Toughest Post-Cold War Conflicts* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2001), p. 211, quoted in Brad Spangler, 'Coalition Building', in Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess, eds, *Beyond Intractability* (Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder), posted June 2003 at <http://www.beyondintractability.org/m/coalition_building.jsp>.

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119. Christopher Moore, *The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict*, 2nd edn (New York: Wiley, 2003).

120. The original articulation of the challenges was in a practitioner workshop, reported in Pruitt, *Reports from Learning Workshops*, p. 27.
121. Van Brabant, 'Practical Tools for Project Planning, Review and Evaluation', p. 11.
122. Anderson and Olson, *Confronting War*, pp. 49, 69–70.
123. Adapted from Van Brabant, 'Practical Tools for Project Planning, Review and Evaluation', p. 11.
124. Ibid., p. 12.
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126. This section, including quotations, is from Cheyanne Church and Mark M. Rogers, *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs* (Washington, DC: Search for Common Ground, 2006), pp. 12–18. Available at <http://www.sfcg.org>.
127. Church and Rogers, *Designing for Results*, p. 12.
128. The following definitions of the 'more people' and 'key people' approaches are adapted from Anderson and Olson, *Confronting War*, pp. 48–9.
129. From Anderson and Olson, *Confronting War*, p. 69.
130. Based on Pruitt, *Reports from Learning Workshops*; and Report from the International IDEA practitioner workshop, Stockholm, 10–11 June 2004.
131. Nicanor Perlas, 'Social Threefolding: Towards a New Concept and Practice of Democracy and Societal Governance: The Case of the Philippines' (2002). Available in the Learning Library at <http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org>, with an overview in Pruitt, *Reports from Learning Workshops*, pp. 64–74.
132. Pruitt, *Reports from Learning Workshops*, p. 124.
133. Kwesi Jonah, *Inter-Party Dialogue in Ghana* (Accra: Institute of Economic Affairs, 2005), p. 7.
134. International IDEA, 'Field Reports: The Case of Guatemala', unpublished report (June 2000), p. 11.
135. Pruitt, *Reports from Learning Workshops*, p. 129.
136. Ibid., p. 84.
137. International IDEA, 'Field Reports: The Case of Guatemala', p. 18.
138. 'Evaluación del Diálogo Argentino', internal UNDP document, p. 10.
139. Maureen Mayne, 'The Inter-Congolese Dialogue' (UNDP, February 2005), p. 3. Available at <http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org>.
140. Adapted from Pruitt, *Reports from Learning Workshops*, p. 123.
141. Adapted from Pruitt, *Reports from Learning Workshops*, p. 126; and International IDEA, Expert Meeting on Democratic Dialogue, Stockholm, 10–11 June 2004.

Chapter 2.4
142. Daniel Yankelovich, *The Magic of Dialogue: Transforming Conflict into Cooperation* (London: Nicholas Brealey, 1999), pp. 16–17, italics added.
143. Based on Sonia Gonzalez, 'Logistics Strategy', UNDP Regional Project on Democratic Dialogue (2004).
144. Mayne, 'Inter-Congolese Dialogue', p. 5.
145. Gillespie, 'Footprints of Mont Fleur', p. 30.
146. Mayne, 'The Inter-Congolese Dialogue', p. 9.
147. Maureen Mayne, 'Mauritania Dialogue' (UNDP, February 2005), p. 7. Available at <http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org>.

148. See Chapter 3.4.

149. See Chapter 3.2.

150. See Chapter 3.2.

151. Saunders, A *Public Peace Process*, p. 105.

152. The first four rules are from Adam Kahane, Generon Consulting, as reported in Pruitt, 'UNDP Civic Scenario/Civic Dialogue Workshop', p. 18.

153. See Chapter 1.1; and Teddy Nemeroff, 'Empowering Zimbabwean Youth through Sustained Dialogue'.

154. See Chapter 2.4; and Maureen Mayne, 'Mauritania Dialogue on the Millennium Development Goals'. Available at <http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org>.

155. From Pruitt, *Reports from Learning Workshops,* p. 150.

156. Saunders, *A Public Peace Process*, p. 106.

157. Anderson and Olson, *Confronting War*, pp. 73–4.

158. The concept of 'leading with curiosity' is from Kim Pearce, *Making Better Social Worlds: Engaging in and Facilitating Dialogic Communication* (Redwood City, CA: Pearce Associates, 2002).

159. Communication from Goran Fejic, International IDEA, 3 May 2006.

160. Communication from Francisco Díez, UNDP, 8 April 2006.

161. Saunders, *A Public Peace Process*, p. 96.

162. For further explication of downloading as compared to other types of conversation in dialogue processes, see the 'conversation matrix' developed by Claus Otto Scharmer in Claus Otto Scharmer, 'Self-Transcending Knowledge: Sensing and Organizing Around Emerging Opportunities', *Journal of Knowledge Management* 5/2 (2001), pp. 137–50.

163. From Philip Thomas, 'Toward an Ethic of Curiosity: The Beginnings of a Theory on Dialogic Negotiations Based on Narrative Analysis and the Construction of Meaning', unpublished paper (2002).

164. W. Barnett Pearce, 'The Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM)', in William Gudykunst, ed., *Theorizing Communication and Culture* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2004), pp. 35–54.

165. The ladder of inference image is from Senge et al., *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*, p. 246; used with permission.

166. Tom Atlee, *The Tao of Democracy: Using Co-intelligence to Create a World That Works for All* , rev. ed. (Cranston, Rhode Island: Writers' Collective, 2003), p. 157.

167. Quoted in Pruitt, *Reports from Learning Workshops*, p. 149.

Chapter 2.5

168. Jim Woodhill, 'M&E as Learning: Rethinking the Dominant Paradigm', in J. de Graaf et al., eds, *Monitoring and Evaluation of Soil Conservation and Watershed Development Projects* (World Association of Soil and Water Conservation, 2005).

169. A slightly edited quotation from Woodhill, 'M&E as Learning', p. 2. An alternative approach to blending M&E has been to redefine monitoring in a way that incorporates the evaluative function, for example: 'Monitoring captures the unfolding process of delivering an intervention. This includes checking that the implementation is proceeding according to plan, that the premises on which it was planned correspond to reality, that the strategies adopted are leading to the desired results and that the

original objectives are still relevant in a changing environment'. Jim Wake, 'Picking Appropriate Strategies, Gauging Their Impact, and Remembering What Works', in Anneke Galama and Paul Van Tongeren, eds, *Towards Better Peace Building Practice: On Lessons Learned, Evaluation Practices and Aid & Conflict* (Utrecht: European Centre for Conflict Prevention, 2002), p. 15.

170. For a full discussion of this typology of results, including the definitions provided here, see Cheyanne Church and Julie Shouldice, *The Evaluation of Conflict Resolution Interventions. Part I: Framing the State of Play* (Londonderry: INCORE, 2002). Available at <http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk>.

171. For a full explanation of why impact evaluation is beyond the scope of most M&E efforts, see Sarah Earl, Fred Carlen and Terry Smutylo, *Outcome Mapping: Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2001). Available at <http://www.idrc.ca>, pp. 5–10.

172. An example of retrospective study assessing impacts is the set of learning histories and the analytical overview commissioned by UNDP RBLAC: Katrin Käufer, 'Learning from Civic Scenario Projects: A Tool for Facilitating Social Change?', in *Learning Histories: Democratic Dialogue Regional Project*, Working Paper no. 3 (New York: UNDP, 2004). Available at <http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org>.

173. Michael Quinn Patton, 'On Evaluation Use: Evaluative Thinking and Process Use', in *The Evaluation Exchange* 9/4 (2003/2004), p. 20.

174. Woodhill, 'M&E as Learning', p. 4.

175. Allish Byrne et al., eds, *Measuring Change: A Guide to Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation of Communication for Social Change* (South Orange, NJ: Communication for Social Change Consortium, 2005/2006), p. 3. Available at <http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org>.

176. This paragraph, including quotations, is from Woodhill, 'M&E as Learning', p. 8.

177. Church and Rogers, *Designing for Results*, p. 44.

178. For example, Church and Rogers, *Designing for Results*, pp. 44–60; and Sarah Earl, Fred Carlen, and Terry Smutylo, 'Develop Graduated Progress Markers', in Earl, Carlen and Smutylo, *Outcome Mapping*, pp. 53–60.

179. This paragraph, including quotations, is from Woodhill, 'M&E as Learning', pp. 8, 13. On making qualitative indicators quantifiable, see also Douglas K. Smith, *Make Success Measurable* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1999).

180. Van Brabant, 'Practical Tools for Project Planning, Review and Evaluation', pp. 1–2.

181. Van Brabant, 'Practical Tools for Project Planning, Review and Evaluation'.

182. Adapted from a framework for structuring periodic reviews, developed by Koenraad Van Brabant on the basis of Performance Assessment Resource Center, *New Tools for Evaluation Exercises: Timelines, Critical Incidents Reviews, and Documentary Audit Trails* (n.d.). Available at <http://www.parcinfo.org/e-learningDownloads.asp>; and Van Brabant, 'Practical Tools for Project Planning, Review, and Evaluation', textbox 2.

Chapter 2.6

183. Designed by Philip Thomas for OAS/PROPAZ (1998).

184. Elena Díez Pinto, interview with Katrin Käufer (2003).

185. Quoted in Pruitt, *Reports from Learning Workshops*, p. 56.

186. Adapted from Thomas, 'Where's the Public in These Democracies?'.

187. Kenneth Brown, *Setting a Context for International Deliberation: Some Lessons from History and the Field* (Washington, DC: Kettering Foundation, 2002), p. 10, quoted in Thomas, 'Where's the Public in these Democracies?'.

188. Maureen Mayne, 'Mauritania: Dialogue for the Fulfillment of the Millenarian Objectives for Development' (UNDP, 2005), p. 13. Available at <http://www.demo craticdialoguenetwork.org>.

189. The text of this and the following paragraphs explaining Figure 2.6.1 are adapted from Thomas, 'Where's the Public in These Democracies?'.

190. From Thomas, 'Where's the Public in these Democracies?'.

191. Carmen Sirianni and Lewis Friedland, *Deliberative Democracy*. Available at <http://www.cpn.org/tools/dictionary/deliberate.html>; quoted in Thomas, 'Where's the Public in these Democracies?'.

Chapter 3.2

192. Sarti et al., *Dialogue and Governance in Latin America*, p. 6.

Chapter 3.3

193. This chapter is based on Mayne, 'Mauritania'; François Roux and David Nyheim, 'Mission Report: Projet de renforcement du dialogue pour la réalisation dues Objectifs du Millénaire pour le Développement', Nouakchott, Mauritania, 21–28 September 2004 and 26 October–26 November 2004; and 'Mauritania', an internal UNDP document including an interview with Mohamed Saïd Ould Hamody, Co-Chair of the Steering Committee of the dialogue process.

194. Mohamed Saïd Ould Hamody, 'Some Highlights on the Mauritanian Program', UNDP document (2006).

195. Quoted in Roux and Nyheim, 'Mission Report', p. 1.

196. Hamody, 'Some Highlights on the Mauritanian Program', p. 4.

197. Roux and Nyheim, 'Mission Report', p. 1.

198. Hamody, 'Some Highlights on the Mauritanian Program', p. 3.

Chapter 3.4

199. This chapter is based on a case study by Martin Ängeby. Unpublished manuscript, International IDEA (2006).

200. The national partners were:

(1) the Nepal South Asia Center (NESAC), a politically non-partisan NGO founded in 1993 that concentrates on action research in the fields of democracy and development. NESAC had previously carried out several dialogues and research projects relating to critical social and developmental issues. The dialogues have been documented in several books and monographs, including the country's first Nepal Human Development Report in 1998;

(2) the Collective Campaign for Peace (COCAP), a national network of peace and human rights NGOs in Nepal. It was born out of a symposium on conflict transformation and peace-building in June 2001 in Kathmandu. Today, COCAP has member organizations from around Nepal, and the regional dialogues organized within the IDEA-supported project relied heavily on this national network. Website: <http://www.cocap.org.np>;

(3) the Martin Chautari Network, which began in 1991 as an informal, nameless discussion group that allowed development professionals and academics to meet every two weeks to share their insights and experiences. Today, MC has expanded its discussions series to include research and advocacy, as well as writers' retreats. It was established as an NGO in 2002. Website: <http://www.martinchautari.org.np/>;

(4) the Enabling State Programme (ESP), launched in 2001 by the government of Nepal and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) with the aim of developing a better practical understanding of governance and identifying advocates for change. IDEA and the ESP co-organized the national dialogue on affirmative action and electoral system design;

(5) the Center for Studies on Democracy and Good Governance (CSDGG), an NGO whose Executive Board includes the general secretaries of all the political parties represented in the last parliament. It has a mandate to promote inter-party consensus on issues relating to strengthening democracy and good governance. The CSDGG was formed in 1998 as the result of an initiative supported by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and IDEA.

201. The experts included Prof. Nicholas Haysom (former legal adviser to President Mandela of South Africa) and Dr Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu (Executive Director of the Centre for Policy Alternatives, Sri Lanka) to speak on negotiating political settlements; Prof. Haysom (South Africa), Prof. Yash Ghai (Hong Kong/Kenya) and Mr Rohan Edrisinha (Director of the Centre for Policy Alternatives, Sri Lanka) to speak on inclusive constitutional processes; Mr Sam Rainsy (MP and leader of the opposition, Cambodia) and Mr Gothom Arya (former Election Commissioner of Thailand and Director of Forum Asia, Thailand) to speak on the role of the monarchy; Prof. D. L. Sheth (Centre for the Study of Developing Societies and member of the National Commission for Backward Classes, India, 1993–1996,) and Mr Yogendra Yadav (Director of Lokniti – Institute for Comparative Political Studies, India) to elaborate on the survey; Dr Arjuna Parakrama (former conflict adviser to UNDP in Nepal and Sri Lanka) to speak on affirmative action and conflict transformation; and Mr Guido Galli, International IDEA, former Political Affairs Officer in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Kabul/Afghanistan, to assist in designing IDEA's follow-up programme and to speak about the Guatemalan experience of national conferences in the process of constitution-making.

202. This term does not refer to the process tool 'Open Space' but is IDEA's term for dialogues that are open to public participation and public scrutiny.

203. In order to achieve a consensus on this framework document, references to ethnic autonomy, self-rule or devolution of power were dropped. This theme should be revisited in future efforts to push this agenda further.

Appendix 2

204. Marianne Bojer, Marianne Knuth and Colleen Magner, *Mapping Dialogue: A Research Project Profiling Dialogue Tools and Processes for Social Change* (Johannesburg: Pioneers of Change Associates, 2006). Available at <http://www.pioneersofchange.net/research/dialogue>.

205. Description from Bojer, Knuth and Magner, *Mapping Dialogue*, p. 17.

206. Description from Bojer, Knuth and Magner, *Mapping Dialogue*, p. 75.

207. Description from Bojer, Knuth and Magner, *Mapping Dialogue*, pp. 35–6.

208. Description adapted from Bojer, Knuth and Magner, *Mapping Dialogue*, pp. 44–5.
209. Description extracted from <http://www.co-intelligence.org/CDCUsesAndPotency.html>.
210. Taken from <http://www.thataway.org/resources/understand/models/nif.html>.
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212. Extracted from <http://www.thataway.org/resources/understand/models/america speaks.html>.
213. Taken from <http://www.thataway.org/resources/understand/models/ai.html>.
214. Taken from Bojer, Knuth and Magner, *Mapping Dialogue*, p. 54.
215. Description adapted from *Mapping Dialogue*, p. 25.
216. From Bojer, Knuth and Magner, *Mapping Dialogue*, p. 25.
217. Taken from Bojer, Knuth and Magner, *Mapping Dialogue*, p. 74.
218. Extracted from <http://www.evaluationtrust.org/tools/story.html>.
219. Adapted from <http://www.thataway.org/resources/practice/hightech/intro.html#intro>.

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2. **On joint ownership**, p. 29
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4. **The power of inquiry**, p. 50
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6. **Understanding the issue**, p. 59
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Koenraad van Brabant, 'Practical Tools for Project Planning, Review, and Evaluation', Paper prepared to support the Handbook project (2005), p. 2.

8. **When mapping actors**, p. 61
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9. **On power relationships within stakeholder groups and institutions**, p. 62
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10. **Historical context: Bambito I dialogue in Panama**, p. 62
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11. **Political context**, p. 64
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12. **Working towards dialogue in a polarized society**, p. 72
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About the Authors

Bettye Pruitt (PhD, 1981) is a social historian dedicated to developing practices and tools for collective learning. She is co-director of the Generative Dialogue Project, a community-building and action-oriented research initiative focused on developing understanding of dialogic processes and advancing their use in addressing global challenges (see <http://www.generativedialogue.org>). She is the author or co-author of four books and numerous reports and articles, including 'Dialogue as a Tool for Peaceful Conflict Transformation', with Katrin Käufer, *Reflections: The SoL Journal* 3/4 (2002), available at <http://www.solonline.org>.

Philip Thomas served as the Central American regional resource person in conflict transformation for the Mennonite Central Committee during the early 1990s. He then became Director of Training and Senior Advisor to the Director of the Organization of American States programme in Guatemala, OAS/PROPAZ: Culture of Dialogue. In this role, he contributed to the design and implementation of inter-sectoral dialogue processes, supported the national commissions established by the peace accords, and designed and directed the OAS/PROPAZ School for High Level Training. Now pursuing a doctorate at the Fielding Graduate Institute, he works as a consultant to UNDP, the OAS, and others, participates in the Generative Dialogue Project, and teaches courses at the Mennonite college in Goshen, Indiana, USA.

CIDA

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is Canada's lead development agency. It has a mandate to support sustainable development, reduce poverty and provide humanitarian assistance in order to promote a more secure, equitable and prosperous world. CIDA works in partnership—with governments, civil society and the private sector of developing country partners and with a broad spectrum of Canadian, regional and international organizations around the world—to support sustainable development in developing countries and to offer humanitarian assistance in areas of need.

International IDEA

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization with 24 member states. It works to strengthen democratic institutions and processes worldwide through providing capacity-building resources, developing policy proposals and supporting democratic reforms. The Institute's key areas of expertise are electoral processes, political party systems, constitution-building, and gender and democracy. It also provides tools for in-country democracy assessments.

OAS

The Organization of American States (OAS) brings together the nations of the Western Hemisphere to strengthen cooperation on democratic values, defend common interests and debate the major issues facing the region and the world. The OAS is the region's principal multilateral forum for strengthening democracy, promoting human rights, and confronting shared problems such as poverty, terrorism, illegal drugs and corruption. It plays a leading role in carrying out mandates established by the hemisphere's leaders through the Summits of the Americas. The OAS reflects the rich diversity of the hemisphere's peoples and cultures. It is made up of 34 member states: the independent nations of North, Central and South America and the Caribbean. The OAS works on a number of fronts to strengthen democratic governance, within the guidelines of the Democratic Charter. It promotes a dynamic exchange of ideas on democratic practices — not only among governments, but with political parties, parliaments and congresses, academic institutions, civil society organizations and others — as part of a broad effort to build stronger democratic institutions in the region.

UNDP

UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. We are on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. As they develop local capacity, they draw on the people of UNDP and our wide range of partners.

This Handbook, sponsored jointly by International IDEA, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), offers a comprehensive overview of the use of dialogue processes to address societal challenges in an inclusive, democratic way that engages a broad range of actors in bringing about positive change. It is addressed to people actively or potentially engaged in doing dialogue work—organizing, sponsoring, promoting, or facilitating dialogue processes within their institutions and societies. Most importantly, it is thoroughly grounded in the experience of dialogue practitioners from around the world.

The Handbook provides a conceptual framework that speaks to critical questions: 'Why dialogue?', 'What is dialogue?' and 'How does dialogue contribute to positive change?'. It offers a detailed guide to putting these concepts into practice, offering practical guidance and concrete examples from the field for each step: exploring whether a dialogue process is appropriate in the context; designing and then implementing a dialogue process; and conducting a meaningful process of monitoring and evaluation throughout. A third major part of the book anchors all of this information in the reality of three fully developed case studies showing different approaches in different regions—Latin America, Africa and Asia. In two appendices, the Handbook also provides a comparative overview of more than 30 cases and a guide to the rich array of dialogue processes and process tools that practitioners can consider for use, or just for inspiration.

'The authors of this Handbook on Democratic Dialogue have undertaken the difficult but necessary task of gathering the vast comparative knowledge accumulated in the field of dialogue and translating it into clear concepts and practical options for dialogue facilitators. Sponsored by and drawing upon the experience of three international organizations (IDEA, UNDP and the OAS) and one development cooperation agency (the Canadian CIDA), the Handbook offers helpful insights into contemporary conceptual approaches to dialogue and provides practitioners with concrete sets of options on how to design, start, convene, conduct, monitor and evaluate a dialogue process. The multiple options offered stem from practice, and the case studies presented . . . illustrate how these options may be applied in real life.'
—from the Foreword by
Lakhdar Brahimi, former Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General