



**American Friends
Service Committee**

Quaker values in action



Zone 5, Guatemala

The **LOCAL PEACE** Network Handbook

**Latin America
and the Caribbean
Learning Community,
on Local Peace
and Conflict
Transformation**

**A reflection
and action guide
for local violence
reduction**

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE. AFSC.
American Friends Service Committee. AFSC.
The Local Peace Network Handbook. A reflection and action
guide for local violence reduction
Plus Impresos, 1st. Ed., Guatemala, 2013. (80 pags.)



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AFSC records the contributions of Virtual Learning Community,
duly recognized in the acknowledgments section.

This publishing was made with the support of Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst, EED.

What are Micro Peace Networks?



Micro Peace Networks and Local Peace Networks are two different levels but complementary of one same strategy for local peace building.

Micro Peace Networks are groups of about 8 to 12 people that frequently gather to find a better understanding among the neighbors in their community, where:

- 1) They Analyze local conflict
- 2) They promote a non-violence culture
- 3) Reflection takes place starting from daily practice and group learning

What is a Local Peace Network?



It is a broader group where many small groups gather to think about the community as a whole, and reflect about their conflicts and its main causes proposing transformation actions involving local institutions and influence in the Government.

Acknowledgements

The editing committee acknowledges more than 40 participants of the Latin American and the Caribbean Learning Virtual Community convened by the AFSC, for the contributions that came together for the creation of this handbook. They were part of previously published material production such as: “Urban Insecurity and Conflict Transformation: Towards a New Paradigm” (2010), “Youth Action Networks” (2011) and the original version of this manual, which was discussed and broadened during the exchange and dialogue seminar in Port-au-Prince city, Haiti, from August the 24th through the 26th of 2012. Their names and contributions are recorded in these documents.

We acknowledge and thank the members of other organizations external to AFSC who participated in the Port-au-Prince seminar: Marco Castillo (Asociación Grupo Ceiba Director, based in Guatemala), Kirenia Criado (Martin Luther King Jr. Center of Cuba), Manuel Dammert (Research Professor, Universidad Católica de Lima), Enrique Oviedo (from ECLAC, Chile), Filiberto Terrazas (from the Government of the State of Chihuahua, Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua), Frantz Greandiot (from the Justice and Peace Committee), Jean Weibert, Saint Charles Borromeo School Local Peace Network Coordinator, Haiti, Sister Gloria Gonzalez, Saint Charles Borromeo School Principal, Haiti, and Licerio Camey from Flacso-Guatemala.

There was also participation from the AFSC Team: the Latin America and Caribbean Program Director (2012), Jorge Laffite, to whom the editorial team would like to, express their gratitude for the contributions made for this handbook. From the Guatemala team: Ulises Urusquieta, Ignacio Gutierrez, Marleny Montenegro and from Haiti: Ivan Monzon, Reniteau Jean, and France Remy.

We acknowledge and thank the permission granted from the Collaborative Learning Projects – CDA, for allowing the translation of the Connector and Divider analysis tool, which has been very helpful for the Local Peace Network development, we would also like to thank the Peace Resources Institute IRENEES, and the Modus Operandi Organization, for its permission to quote the description of the tool published on the virtual platform, as well as our gratitude to other sources quoted in due time, which are now for the public usage.

The editing committee

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Introduction

A collective construction

According to UNICEF, in the Caribbean, violence is the greatest cause of death among young people and teenagers between the ages of 15-24. And Latin America as a whole presents a homicide rate up to seven times greater than Europe. About 220 children and teenagers younger than 18 years old die every day, victims of domestic violence – the equivalent to 80,000 children per year¹. And the majority of fire weapon victims on the streets are young men.

But conditions for women aren't encouraging either. To quote just a few examples, from domestic violence, to sexual assault and different forms of exclusion and discrimination, makes life in large cities of Latin America and the Caribbean more insecure. Behind the scenes, the region finds itself with a deep history of repression, and armed violence, armed conflict scenarios, dictatorships, and closest to our reality, criminal organizations that operate internationally, making local territories a battlefield.

Simultaneously, the increase of local population is without cease. These realities have revolutionized peace definitions. Peace concepts in the great treaties of the 20th century where «The only true foundation for long-lasting peace lays in the voluntary cooperation of all free peoples that, in a world without the threat of aggression, can enjoy of economic and social security»² nowadays they have had to “lower their standards” to speak of the life in the neighborhoods, and of daily relationships in high level insecurity countries.

Nowadays, peace lived in the streets, within the intimacy of the household, life in schools or in neighborhoods is no longer considered as a “private” matter, it's rather more like a central issue in public debate.

Nowadays in the Americas, there are more people dying because of delinquency than they are from wars. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the strong presence of drug-trafficking, youth violence (in many cases such as Peru, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras they are generations that have been raised after armed conflicts) and conflicts resulting from high levels of exclusion and social unfairness have also made necessary to think about peace from a daily relationship and survival point of view. And large cities are by far the places where this conflict can be seen more frequently.

This brutal change justifies the development of new strategies for local communities, starting from the transformation of the relationships among their members. This is how AFSC in alliance with Asociación Guatemalteca Grupo Ceiba, developed a pilot experience during the years 2009 to 2012 where a mobile center for

1 [http://www.unicef.org/lac/Fast_facts_SP\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/lac/Fast_facts_SP(1).pdf)

2 St. James Palace Declaration, London, 1941

conflict mediation was implemented, along with a non-violent citizen participation system in two of the most violent neighborhoods in Guatemala City, where this methodology was implemented.

In this handbook, the main conclusions and application guidelines are gathered, based on an Exchange and Dialogue program celebrated in Guatemala on March the 28th and the 29th of 2012, and from a second seminar celebrated in Port-Au-Prince on August the 24th through the 26th of 2012, but both are part of a greater process that has been carried out since the year 2008, in which a Latin American and Caribbean network of professionals and peacemakers, have contributed with their experiences and ideas to build different ways to approach citizen insecurity in a non-violent way.

This handbook was created as a tool so that community leaders, local institutions and organizations that work in the community may apply the Local Peace Network strategy.

The material can be used in different ways:

1. As a first enquiry to explore what a Local Peace Network is (and its small Micro Peace Network constellation)
2. As a support textbook for community leader training
3. As a guide for community work (chapter 3)
4. As a guide for evaluation (chapter 4)

Throughout the book, we will be putting together (as a good pastry chef), different necessary ingredients to achieve a wholesome learning.

- a. Stories and examples
- b. Reflection exercises for community leaders
- c. Theoretical outlines on the method's ideas or principles
- d. Key concepts and questions
- e. Summaries for every chapter

The objective of these elements is to allow each reader to “dialogue” with the handbook, to come and go, take notes, create discussions and group exercises, or to develop new ideas based on the presented foundations.

1. How to know what really works?

The Theory of Change



The Esperanza community is a nearly three thousand house neighborhood, located in the old part of the city. A long time ago, this community had been built to locate people through a housing project implemented by the government on the edge of a cliff. But even though each family had a small house with two bedrooms, the residents of “la Esperanza” had not enough access to drinking water or public services besides the fact that it was also a vulnerable zone for landslides during rainy seasons.

Many household leaders, fathers and mothers work in textile processing factories or informal businesses and leave their children in school, or under the supervision of other neighbors. Some parents who live in the United States of America have even left their children under the care of their grandparents or uncles for as long as months or years.

More than 15 years ago, drugs started to come into the neighborhood, and new conflicts started to happen among neighbors, due to a local market construction project promoted by the local city council. Finally the project took place but a part of the neighborhood was not pleased so they built

their own market. Until this day, relationships between both neighborhood parties are tense.

Lately, some local gangs have started to collect “taxes” among the owners of the stores, fire arms and drugs have circulated, even within the School. Some kidnappings have been unveiled in the area. The latest mishap, last month, happened while two of the main groups were having a territorial fight in the middle of the main street. 5 people died, among them a little boy who was walking in the street when the fight went off.

If you were a member of the neighbor committee of that neighborhood, what do you think could change in that neighborhood? How do you think those changes can come to pass?

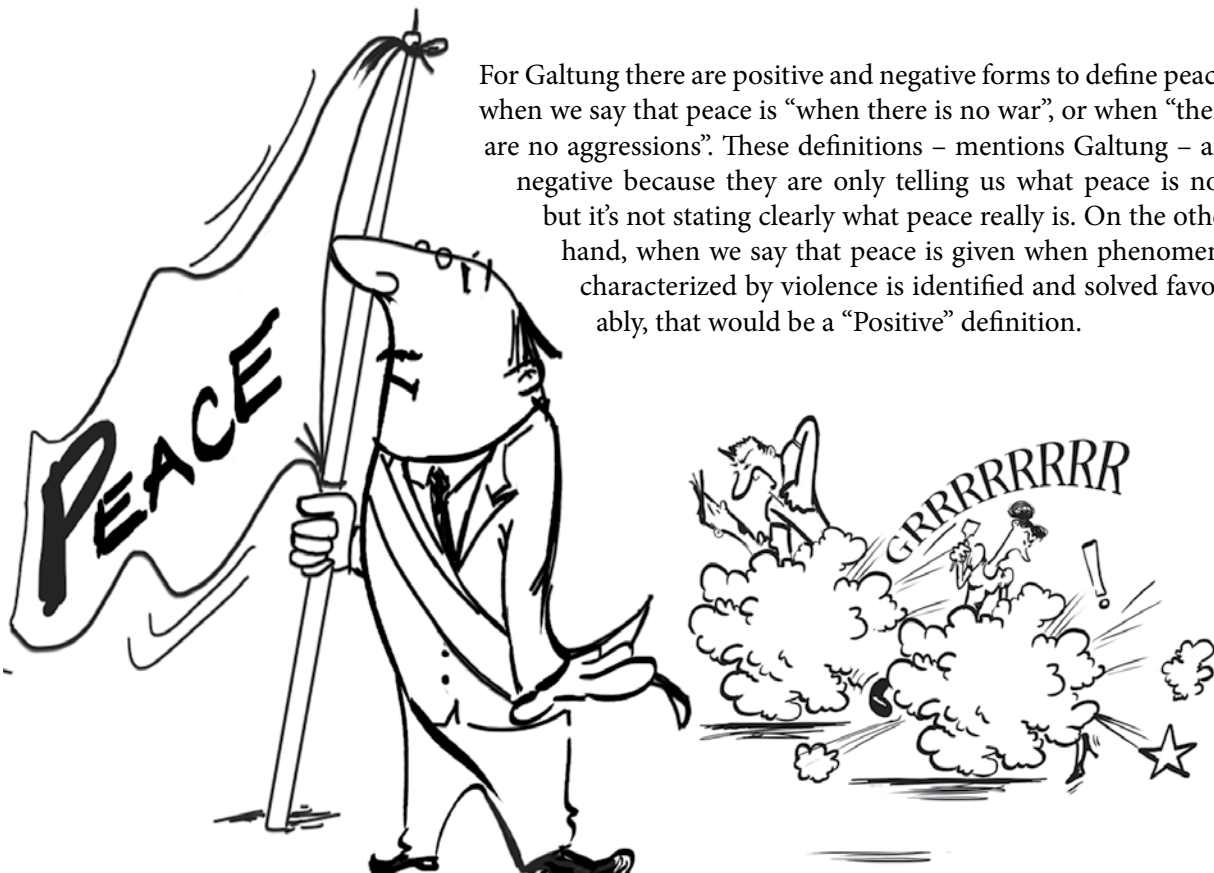
Throughout this material, we will be constantly talking about the “Theory of Change”. A theory of change is nothing else but the way we think of producing a positive impact on a problem.

Many “recipes” of citizen participation and conflict transformation seem pretty easy on paper, but when taking them to a neighborhood or community they might not work because there are other elements that weren’t considered from the beginning. Therefore, in each community and in each neighborhood or city, it is necessary to develop a particular theory about how to produce transformations that will help reduce violence.

We will never be able to develop a good change theory until we truly understand what is really happening in our communities, which are the roots or primary reasons for those problems and which capabilities are needed to face them. This is why the Theory of Change in a community will always go hand in hand with their problem analysis.

What are we basing ourselves on to say that change is possible?

When mathematician and sociologist Johan Galtung distinguishes between “Positive Peace” and “Negative Peace” (Galtung, 1985) perhaps he wasn’t aware that a new stage in world peace theory was taking place, which is now of vital importance to understand conflicts within a neighborhood or within a community, as well as within a Nation.




This THEN means that:

- Not being in war doesn't necessarily mean being in peace
- Peace implies a constant transformation and analysis
- It is often needed to think in violence occurred from different directions at once, and not only in one single form of violence
- The "subjective" part (relationships, perceptions, attitudes) can be as important as the economic part or conflict material
- An imposed peace will rarely be long lasting.

Therefore...

- In spite of not having a declared war, the conflict which is lived in many cities and neighborhoods are so complex that you can't only talk about two "sides" or "parties".
- Peace cannot be set up as the only final goal, because it is a constant process and a trait of daily life relationships.
- Peace programs cannot center themselves in one single line of cause and effect.

Out of these reflections we can think that Local Peace is the quality in social relationships within a local territory, in which people and institutions achieve a mutual value of their needs and interests, and a deeper understanding of their conflicts; and develop an active and constant pursuit of common good, reduction of exclusion levels and reduction of violence resources as a means to face their differences, crisis or needs.

Consequently, it is possible to transform the violence and insecurity issue within a neighborhood or local community in a non-violent way to the degree that:

- Relationships, dialogue and mutual understanding is strengthened among their residents.
- Structural roots are identified and approached (rules, geography, environment, local organizations and institutions, economy and control structures, corruption or terror).
- Cultural aspects (values, attitudes, prejudice, and practices) are reflected upon and resolved in a participative manner through a new social learning.
- Personal changes are shown (personal dignity acknowledgement, personal esteem and value, overcoming traumatic experiences, learning for peace and harmonic coexistence).

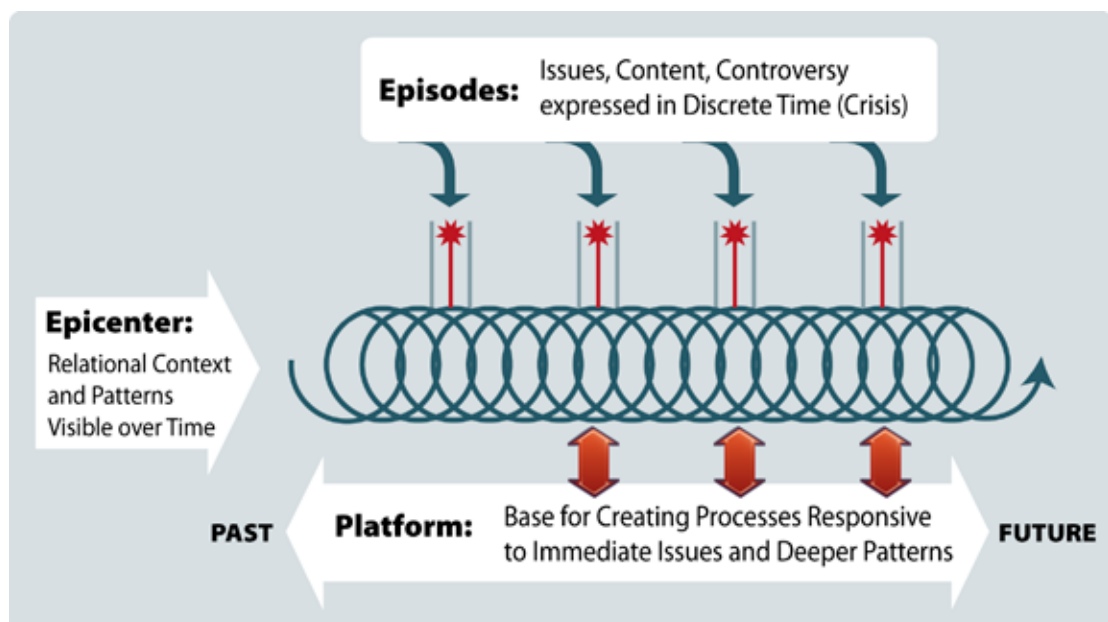
With this we are not saying that actions such as drug trafficking control, human trafficking or kidnap network captures are not an important task. It is, but it is not enough for peace building, at least not if we are talking about “positive peace” in citizen daily life.

What is a Local Peace Network? A strategy to change the ways we interact

Erving Goffman (1961) a sociologist specialist in small group behavior, developed a model to analyze people’s social life through the understanding of the way they interact among themselves. He discovered that people in every culture develop and learn certain patterns, certain traditions and certain “rituals” to interact among themselves (the way they relate and communicate, the way they see each other, etc.). You could say that Local Peace Networks are a space to transform the way in which people interact within a community.

These ideas hold a tight relation with what John Paul Lederach (1997) proposes as a Local Peace Network. For Lederach, a Platform (Network) works with a *group of people who create a reflection and action space to promote changes in those aspects that generate violent conflicts in the community, pursuing a balance between the members of a community’s interests.*

Transformational Platform



As we can see in this image, a transformational platform promotes a better relationship among those involved facing specific problems (Epicenter), which allow these people to improve their response to crisis situations that might appear (Episodes), have a better understanding of what happens in the community and might anticipate new conflict situations (Platform/Network) going from past analysis up until future projections.

Key words:

Epicenter	● ● ● ● ●	Moment where peace actors meet to produce a change.
Episode	▬ ▬ ▬	Stages of community work.

This idea has been applied to a great diversity of social groups, citizen committees and even institutions, however, a local peace network, is not defined only by its structure or its way to organize itself, but also for its objectives and for the way participants manage to work together.

This has also brought to name diverse forms of alliances between institutions, social movements, campaigns and even physical spaces as “Networks”, for they can provide the foundation to interact and launch an initiative.

Therefore, in the work Experience of CEIBA-AFSC group project, the use of “Local Peace Network” concept resulted too general, and as months passed by, it was discovered that many people didn’t feel comfortable talking about insecurity and violence in their neighborhood in large groups, due to neighbors fear to the terror and armed violence environment, considering that they didn’t wanted to be seen as an “opposing party” to the groups that controlled the neighborhood.

This led the project team to set up small scale alternatives that would allow the member’s interaction in a more trusted space, without feeling threatened, where the idea of “Micro Peace Network” came from.

The Grupo Ceiba and AFSC experience, called “Peace in the Neighborhood” (Paz en el Barrio), consisted in 2 pilot years in two Guatemala City neighborhoods. A conflict transformation mobile unit was installed there (with a first aid clinic in the inside, to provide initial care for greater physical violence cases), and two mediation rooms. Around this unit a broader group was being built out of people from the neighborhood, interested in promoting peace, through Micro Peace Networks working in different locations. Finally, they worked together creating a much broader network involving authorities and local institutions.

The inter-mediation principle

Although it is true, that Local Peace Networks operate to transform conflict situations, there are not just spaces to mediate or solve each conflict, case by case. Local Peace Networks instead, promote a reflection of the connections between the different conflicts in the community, their common denominators, and actions that can help transform several conflicts at the same time.

Also, inter-mediation implies that there are “third parties” or people that aren’t necessarily part of the community but interact, not as controllers, but as encouragers of collective reflection, as promoters of dialogue and non-violent action.

In such way that Local Peace Networks are based in the following idea:

If small dialogue and participation spaces are built, where diverse social actors are included, and interconnection among these spaces is achieved, within a local community affected by violence, this will raise bonds of cooperation and solidarity among neighbors and local institutions as well as it will help reduce the insecurity environment within the neighborhood.

How to build a true theory of change based on peace

The only way to have an idea of whether an action for peace will work or not, is defining first which is the idea of the change we want, and why we believe the actions proposed will produce such change.

The building of a change theory in a violent neighborhood is a difficult yet not impossible task. It is necessary to go about without urgency and to base

ourselves in all important information we might have at hand.

GROUP

Is it time for a peace march?

Why should we invite local authorities?

Will we accept people from all ages?

When will we invite those who have incited violence to dialogue?

FACILITATOR

I have no idea of which step we're on!!

Basically, the process to define a change theory has several moments that start with 1) an exploration of the community's daily lived conflicts and their "roots", 2) the analysis of key actors that can promote peace, 3) define the change we are longing for 4) define a strategy to promote change and the reasons why such strategy will succeed, 5) with whom will we initiate actions in the community, 6) Which results are we having as a consequence and 7) how can we "review" our theory.

Carrying this analysis out will help us to think first before deciding for one action or another.

To better understand this cycle, it is better not to see each part as "Steps" because sometimes these moments can take place at the same time, or the order of some might change. But it is necessary to make sure that in group discussions none of these elements remain unattended.

Now we will have a brief description on every aspect, to later, in the next chapter get into how to take the analysis to practice.

In each aspect to explore, we will find a brief description and a key question. These will be explained broadly on chapter 4.

MAIN COMPONENTS OF A PEACE BUILDING CHANGE THEORY

1

Exploration of daily conflicts and local power sources

This initial analysis is made reflecting and gathering information on three main aspects: 1. The neighborhood's tension sources 2. The neighborhood's context 3. Local Peace Network obstacles

Key questions:

- How can we know what they are thinking and how do they relate among each other in the community?
- Which economic, political, social and local culture aspects can hinder or facilitate MPN work?
- Which situations can stop or negatively affect the MPNs?

2

Analysis for key actors who can promote peace

In this part of the analysis, people, institutions or shared experiences that can generate trust within the community are identified, and they can bring people together in a collaborative work in spite of being in conflict.

Key questions:

- Who participates actively in the neighborhood's life that counts with people's trust? Do they have the means to carry out peace actions in the community?

3 *Define the change we want*

In this part of the analysis it is necessary to define which specific situation do we want to transform in the community. And which is that major change we expect to produce in short, medium and long terms.

Key question:

- Which values do we share and how should these be expressed into specific actions?

4 *How to promote change*

During this phase of analysis, different action alternatives that can promote the desired change in the neighborhood or in the community are identified. Advantages, obstacles and necessary resources to carry out the strategy are analyzed, thinking mainly on who are more vulnerable or are at greater risk.

Key question:

- Which strategies can we use to identify the groups that are most affected by violence and exclusion within the community?

5 *Key allies*

Once you have a clear strategy, it is possible to start building alliances with key people and institutions that are interested in contributing.

Key question:

- Which requirements must Micro Peace Network participants fulfill, knowing that the main objective is to generate trust for peace building?

6 *Results evaluation and strategy review*

This part of the analysis is about going back to reflection, after moving a little forward with strategy, whether it is to determine how much has been achieved, or to review the strategy.

Key question:

- How can we guarantee the MPN movement to a space where political decisions can be made?

Normally, this question can be worked on from the first six months of MPN operations.

An example of Change Theory

Theory of Change can be expressed through charts, drawings, images, or words. Normally the making of a change theory can be summarized in a phrase containing:

"If... then"

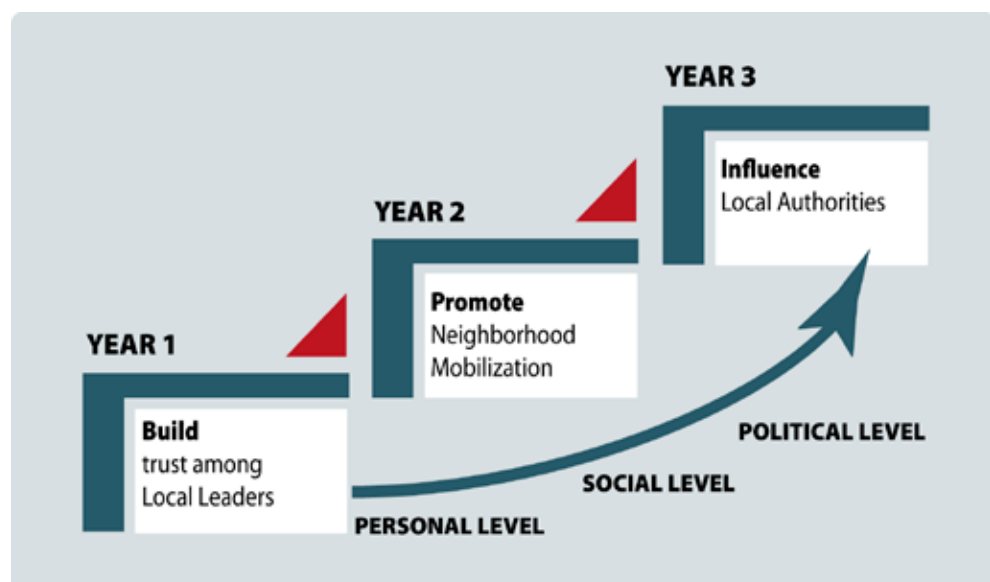
"If we achieve this...then this will happen..."

For example:

"If we increase trust relationships and mutual support within the community (through Micro Peace Networks) then people will feel less lonely and the insecurity environment will be reduced."

Graphically, we could use a flowchart like the one that follows, to show the expected change process. In this case we show how we think on moving from local leaders, to the people in the community, and then to local authorities.

Expected Change Process



But we can also use other outlines to show other types of change paths (it depends on our theory), for example:

- a. From repairing physical damage to community attention and then to public policies.
- b. From children to adults and then to leaders.
- c. From a political agreement, to a community project.

To define “how we see this change” and how are we planning to accomplish it, is what’s important.

To summarize, we present this general flowchart of the different elements that make part of a reflection process in Local Peace Networks. The rest of this handbook is a guide to continue to develop this process.



CHAPTER SUMMARY

Peace building in a neighborhood or community is a task that can only be achieved through participation. The first step is to “draw” the type of changes that we long for before putting them to practice. This is what we call a Change Theory: What type of peace do we want? What does this mean within the life in our community?

In this chapter, some important elements are suggested that might help to initial reflection in the neighborhood. Non like other methods, this is not a set of steps to follow, it is rather a set of guideline questions for those who have the initiative to create a Local Peace Network, so they can ask themselves these questions, and have them discussed in their own communities.

TRAINING ACTIVITIES

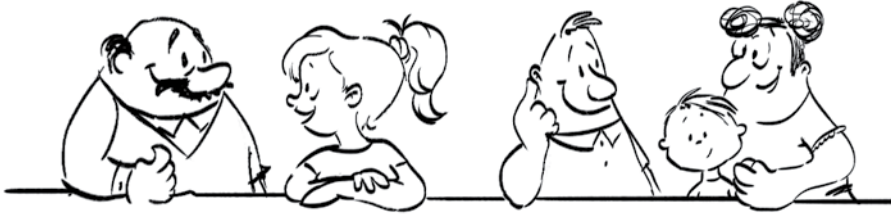
- *Discuss with your group what the word Peace means for each one. You can use some art techniques so that each one might express it in their own way, and take out conclusions from the group.*
- *Present the group with the positive concept of peace.*
- *Analyze which of the concepts presented before were “positive” and which were “negative” peace concepts.*
- *Discuss the community’s described case.*
- *Present in your own words, what a Local Peace Network is.*

TO DISCUSS AND REFLECT

1. *What would be the difference in efforts for community peace based on the negative peace concept compared to positive peace?*
2. *What does it mean to define a “change theory” in a community?*

2. Change Strategy in the Community

Micro Peace Networks








During the experience called “Peace in my Neighborhood” implemented by Asociación Grupo Ceiba de Guatemala, the concept of Local Peace Network was transformed into a much more specific system based on smaller groups of 6 to 12 members that was called a “Micro Peace Network” where it was easier to build trust among the youth and community neighbors, and it was possible to promote a more active and local (at a family and street level) participation.

This system, at the same time, helped the group not to be seen as a direct opposition to armed groups, gangs or drug dealers, but rather as a strengthening and improvement initiative in the neighborhood.

As these small groups became stronger, then actions along with other small groups began to happen, in a broader space called Local Peace Network.

MPNs are an oriented strategy to build new local power relationships based on cooperation. It is expected for a MPN to produce sustainable changes within the roots of local conflict.

We could say that even though MPNs might have different beginnings, or work strategies, generally speaking, there are certain minimum requirements to know when a local group has truly become a Micro Peace Network and when it has not:

-  Their starting point is **small groups**.
-  They build **peace oriented objectives**.
-  They pursuit to **emerge from small groups to more “public” spaces**.
-  They maintain a **reflection cycle and constant practice**.
-  They promote **horizontal relationships**.

Next we will develop these characteristics along with some practical examples that will illustrate how this is put into action within a MPN.



Their starting point is small groups

When in Guatemala, Ceiba facilitators tried to build a Local Peace Network for the first time, they discovered up to what extent, fear had invaded the neighborhood's population. They just didn't feel comfortable participating in a broad space and talk about their conflicts with other people, not to mention talking about violence and insecurity. "At my place there have been gunshots at night, and violence in my community is pretty heavy", declared one of the project volunteers.

A 13 year old little girl living in the "Flower Cross" nearby Port-Au-Prince shared her personal experience working with small groups: *"In my neighborhood we have a lot of insecurity problems against young people, and nobody would say anything to each other because they're scared. I was also very shy when I started to join the peace networks. Now I feel safer when using my voice to fix things talking to people and sharing with others about my neighborhood's different conflicts through dialogues in my Micro Peace Network"*.

MPNs seek to generate trust building from the beginning, where people gather periodically in houses or other spaces that are not publically exposed. A key when starting Micro Peace Networks is certain spirit of "informality", in the sense that they are not chosen spaces by a predefined institutional structure, or by a leading role in the community, although its target is to promote institutional and political changes, and some might even be related to some institutions. This has many advantages:

- In a small group, those who don't feel comfortable speaking in public, feel more confident when talking.
- There is more affective reinforcement among members.
- There is more spontaneity.
- They can gather in non- sophisticated spaces (a living room, a kitchen, a backyard, a church or a classroom.
- Stronger friendship bonds are built among those who live close to each other.



WHAT ARE LOCAL PEACE NETWORKS FOR...

These are some of the “uses” for local peace networks, besides its main purpose: local conflict transformation.

Although we know the methodology can help for different situations in each neighborhood or zone, for it is the people who set the usage according to desire or need, for example:

a. Recover the neighborhood, the street, the district, the zone, the area, etc.

Many times we have found that, we don't even know the people who live in our same street or neighborhood, it sometimes seems like when you get home and walk on the same streets as always, that we're in an unknown place, for it is not as ours as it used to be.

We have seen that, wherever we have Micro Peace Networks, people recover the neighborhood, they recover their street, and no longer do they feel a strange relationship with the people whom which they coexist the most, and they feel safe, with no fear. You are not only recovering the neighborhood and its people, but besides, you are retaking a space that will allow you to relate to other people.

b. Strengthen community relationships:

Societies and communities are like a fabric out of which we can make clothes, made out of many threads that together make a strong and resistant fabric, on the contrary separated threads make a weak fabric, through which air and water can go through easily. There are many reasons for which a social cloth or this fabric is divided, broken, worn off.

Our society presents this same situation, divided, easy to break, damaged; the following text, as well as the actions that are here proposed serve to create a new social fabric, one that will help us make ourselves a more righteous and balanced society.

c. Get to know your neighbors:

To get to know who are the people that live near us so they can help us or we can help them in times of need, or to celebrate and to be together when times are good; but in either case, to know each other.

d. Acting in the neighborhood's transformation:

It is not a few times where we complaint about the situation we live in, or about the status of things, of how life is being lived, but when we see that something wrong is happening we leave as it has nothing to do with us, therefore, if we want things to change, it is necessary to get involved, to commit ourselves. Micro Peace Networks allow working on the neighborhood's conflicts to generate and promote a better coexistence.

e. Basic community organization:

Considering, the different ways of participating and generating community change actions, organization strengthens a lot, it allows, among other things:

- Work together for a common good.
- To know and support each other more.
- Recognize emerging new leaders that for many reasons were hidden.
- Identify elements that unite or divide within the organization and neighborhood.
- People that, with unity and organization, assume responsibility and carry out the activities.

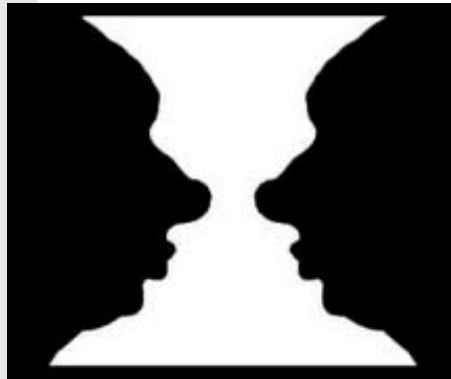
f. Lead desired community change actions in a direct way.

AFSC, 2012

As MPN members learn dialogue techniques, they will develop certain courtesy rules like listen to one another, not to interrupt, value others opinions, address the problem and not the person, or asking questions that will help to clarify the information, etc. What's interesting is that little by little these groups do not only apply these rules at the MPN, but they also make it part of their daily lives, to their family communication and to their relationship with their neighbors.

At the same time, these groups learn to share what they have with others, generating more collaborative attitudes.

Sometimes people look at each other with certain rejection, but they don't reflect on what's really happening to them. A Micro Peace Network is a way to reconnect themselves with their neighbors and reflect upon what's happening around their daily conflicts and problems, and not to only judge on whom the aggressor is and who is receiving such aggressions.]



What produces trust within the group?

In practical terms, trust in the group is like oil in a machine: It makes everything work more fluently. But it also reduces stress and the need to have “everything under control”, but when trust isn't mutual, or isn't “tuned” evenly, there is a risk of manipulating people in greater disadvantage.

A trust relationship is produced with some of the following principles:

1. Reciprocity.

It's received and given in a reciprocate manner, help is mutually offered, empathy and understanding is shown. For example, if in today's meeting, the facilitator offered coffee for everyone, then to show reciprocity would be for other volunteer to wash the coffee mugs. If we receive a request through a letter, it would be reciprocal to provide a written answer as well.

2. Genuine interest.

That is, a non-fake interest in the group problems and experiences. From the tradition of greeting each other or introducing themselves at the beginning of the meeting to taking care or expressing solidarity in adverse situations form part of building interest in others. For example, if there is an afternoon meeting, and one of the participants informs that his son has just had a motorcycle accident. This is an opportunity to show solidarity and interest, and nothing shall be more important in that instant.

3. Listen.

Time is dedicated to listen and understand other points of view. Conflict transformation experts have developed several techniques to promote what is called “active listening”; this means that someone who listens is not a passive receptor that does not react, but rather is someone who makes sure he/she understands, paying all his/her attention to the person. Some techniques to actively listen are:

Three ways of active listening

Summarize or paraphrase.	<p>To say the same thing the other person said to check our understanding.</p> <p>By doing this, it doesn't necessarily mean that we agree with the other person, but it does mean that we understand their point.</p>	<p>If I understood you well, you do not agree with the idea of having a march for peace, because by opposing to local band violence this could place some community leaders at risk. Is this what you're really worried about?</p>
Reflect.	<p>To repeat certain key words the person has mentioned.</p>	<p>Perhaps it is not the moment to invite the local committee to the Micro Peace Network. I couldn't sleep last night thinking about that.</p> <p>I see this worries you a lot, am I right?</p>
Ask opened ended questions.	<p>Not to force the person to answer “yes or no”, but rather invite them to give us more about their opinion.</p>	<p>What do you think of Maria's proposal? Instead of asking ¿Who of you agree?</p>

Active listening goes further than words themselves. It's even said that we can “listen” with our face. We can feel listened by others when we see the other person who's listening opening their eyes a bit, frowning their brows with a painful or sad expression, or bite their lips a little more when we say something unpleasant or draw a little smile when we say something funny. All these attitudes generate a trust environment.

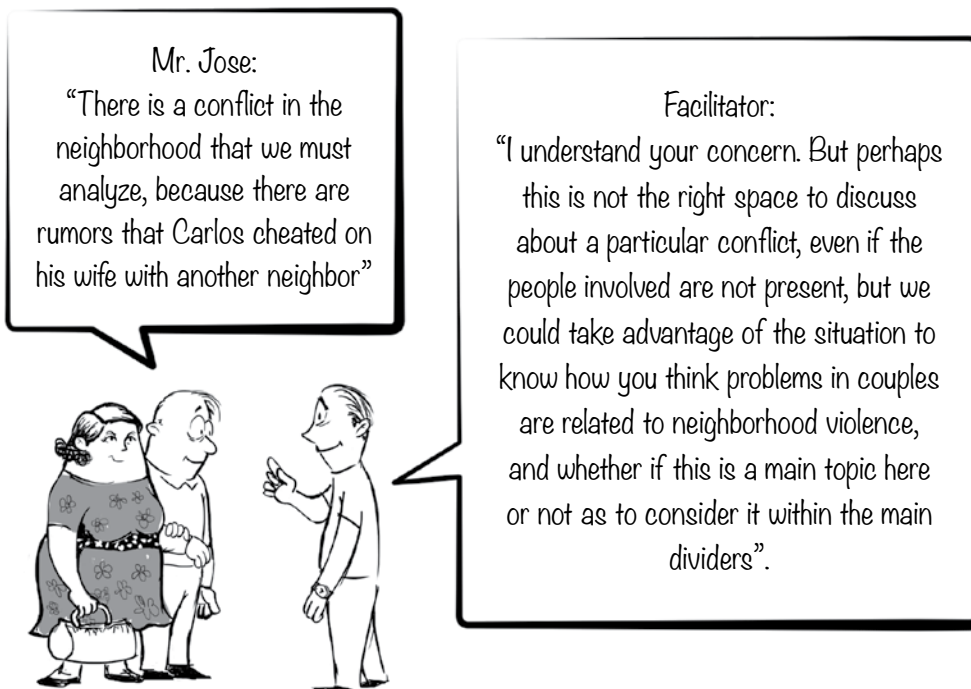
Transparency.

What you say is what you do, no secrets, no hidden agendas, etc.

In a transparency environment, the group objectives and intentions are placed “over the table”. Accountability is set straight and accessible for everyone, even though transparency must go hand in hand with confidentiality.

Some elements that might help having a transparency environment in the group are:

- Each one expresses to the group what they expect from the MPN.
- The facilitator sets clear which are their roles and which are not from the beginning.
- The members express when there is something that, for moral reasons, they are not willing to accept.
- There is no lying.
- Disagreements are expressed with freedom and respect.
- Each property and opinion is respected. If I need something, I ask for it, if something is bothering me, I say something, if I clearly offended someone then I admit it and express my intention to make up for it.



However, in some cultures transparency can easily be mistaken with being indiscreet. There are people that with the excuse of being transparent can reveal information in an indiscreet or malicious way.

4. **Easy to predict.**

It is acted on a logical way within the group, and little by little, people already know what to expect from everybody else. It is interesting how sometimes a person who we all know won't agree with us, generates more trust because we know that person, than a person who we don't know how they are going to react.

5. **Communication.**

What needs to be transmitted is transmitted, understanding is achieved and the way to use words and attitudes to communicate is improved.

Communicating is an art. It is required to have clear objectives and the right words to better express it. Very frequently there are forms to express oneself that do not help a relationship improve, for example:

Common mistakes in interpersonal communication	Example
To refer to the person instead of the problem.	"Daniela is disrespectful", instead of "what Daniela said was very offensive to many people"
Sarcasm	Me, scared? Not at all, on the contrary, I feel so happy I got mugged.
Disqualify an opinion	This is not a good idea, Someone has a better idea?
Generalize	"You always come late" or "You never pay attention"
To "beat around the bushes" (not cutting to the chase)	I would like it a lot, if it was possible, considering that maybe it is possible, but I don't know if it's possible that you might help me with this.
Express closed positions	I say no, because I say so. And that's my reason.

6. **Reliability.**

Finally, another key factor is that the group might learn to move forward with their commitments, it allows the group to have results and to organize properly to achieve the tasks that were proposed.



Peace oriented, and conflict transformation objectives

Within a local peace network (and its derivative micro-network system), the main problem to analyze is always related in one way or another to violence and its derivatives: fear, trauma, insecurity, lack of trust, hopelessness, etc., and its purpose is to build a shared peace vision that might be built together from within the community.

Many local groups can be formed and work together, but this doesn't make them local peace networks or peace spaces. For example, in the city of Leogane, Haiti, after the earthquake, a group of leaders were trained in citizen participation, trauma recovery, conflict transformation, and participative planning in the city.

This group later on formed a first Local Peace Network and Micro Peace Network generation that up until this day has continued working, in spite of financial support being ceased. This group is not formed automatically into a Local Peace Network just because of the fact that they are still meeting, but rather because they have as a priority, the strengthening of cooperation and solidarity bonds among the communities and neighborhoods that form them, and answers to conflict and risk situation in the communities.

A Local Peace Network objective definition cannot be created capriciously. It is a shared decision, an agreement among different interests within the community as a product of a conflict analysis, the elements that aggravate them, and real transformation and group influence capabilities.

This task is what later the main role for groups that promote LPN becomes. To the extent that the LPN promoting group has a clearer focus and objectives, this will allow them to better evaluate their impact and to better define their strategy.

This community "peace vision" can be compared to a handcrafted fabric, where different colored threads form a design allows each one to be included, in a coherent way yet still leaving space for imagination and creativity. The difference is that the final design can end up pretty far away from the initial design, but yet telling a beautiful story of how this idea changed through time.

However, Local Peace Networks are not local clinics to solve isolated conflicts, as mediation programs are so. For example, where a facilitator or a mediator helps two or more people (or groups) solve a conflict or a dispute. In Mediation, the mediating person cannot judge or decide the conflict solution, but rather helps the parties involved to find acceptable solutions, promoting communication among themselves.

On the other hand a Local Peace Network is a space where community conflicts are reflected as a "whole" with common roots, and actions involve more than one person or more than two different parties.

In spite of this, a mediation program, just as happened in Guatemala and in “Escuela San Carlos Borromeo” in Haiti, can help doors to be opened for Local Peace Networks, because “observing a tree, you can better understand a forest”.



Transcend from small groups to more “public” processes

“During the initial trainings, I have been able to solve the problems that I have with my neighbors”

“I have a better communication with my parents and friends”

“I have learned different ways to prevent violence issues in my neighborhood”

These are some of the testimonies we normally hear during the first months of MPN implementations, all of them are related with a change level that we might call “personal”. I.e.: Values, reactions, communication capabilities, etc. However, MPNs have not been design as therapy groups that pursue nothing but individual changes.

It is intended that through MPNs there might be change that transcends collectively. This means, that individual change in personal life, neighbors, and family doesn’t necessarily mean that unfair structures, crooked systems, and discrimination will be left behind in local spaces.

“I think the Project looks good, it is a good thing in the community, because we don’t have enough here to stand against this disaster” – said Leogane Major, when Help Haiti organization presented the idea of building small local planning and conflict transformation networks within the district. Having said this, the team that formed the MPN made sure to involve some district officials, who have opened a communication and negotiation bridge between the “grass-roots” communities and some district decisions.

But this could still not be enough. Formal official staff participation will not guarantee change in local public policies, or that there will be sensitive institutional answers against conflict. And even if some answers to conflict might be defined, in many societies, not even a public policy statement (like a document that states how to proceed in case of certain issues might happen) is a guarantee of commitment follow through in how to proceed with conflicts on behalf of the State or a set of institutions.

To think on this step of: from “individual to collective”, and from “private to public”, it is necessary to remember:

1. **The broad context** where this conflict happens, for example: if conflict over water, happens in the middle of a political scandal over the new law over water. Or if local violence and insecurity is in the context of a new military strategy to fight drugs. This will completely change the conflict level we are facing.
2. **The way Government institutions have acted upon** with local conflict (denying conflict, repressing public expression, blackmailing leaders, building effective channels of communication, etc.). This includes failed answers to conflict in past times and the consequences of those particular failures.
3. **The way local community organizations communicate** (neighbors, committee, parent association, and others).
4. **Conflict global cost**, for example: How much is this problem costing and who is paying for that cost? How much investment has happened or needs to happen so it can seriously be fought against?
5. **Who are the true available “key contacts”** (people who can be talked to) in the State, private sector, and the country’s civil society organizations.

Little by little, local committees, neighbor boards, churches, health centers, district office members, local police, schools and other relevant community institutions can get involved with the idea of promoting agreements and ways to approach medium and long term problems.



They maintain a constant reflection and practice cycle

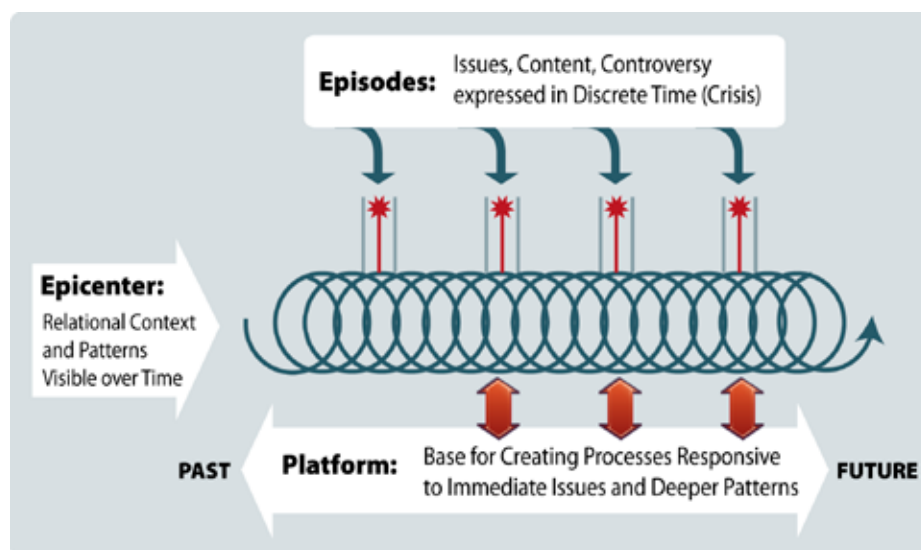
MPNs are not only spaces to have conversations or to vent out their feelings with one another, or simple social clubs to make new friends. They are oriented to produce specific changes in neighborhood daily life, and to promote a self-critique reflection on violence.

This requires a balance between reflection and practice:

A reflection that is not enriched in practice is a way of resisting change. A practice that is not based in reflection is blindly directed by anxiety and enthusiasm.

In both cases, things won't change as desired. But it is important for reflection to be systematic. In the next chapter, we will be developing a complete and detailed guide on how to carry out this reflection that leads to practice.

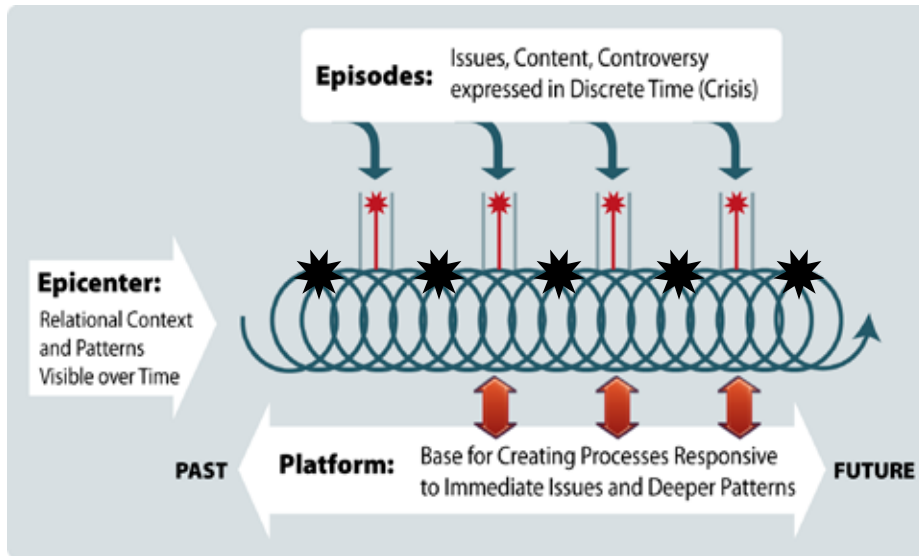
If we return to Lederach's original drawing, that represents what a Local Peace Network is, we will find this symbolized "dance" between reflection and action in a spiral form:



However, now that we want to make out of this type of reflection a constant and organized process, we will place certain moments where participants are explicitly gathered to reflect, evaluate, "sow", count the harvest and analyze what worked, what didn't work and why.

In the beginning, it will be necessary for a facilitator to help generate the questions that will guide to reflection, but as time goes by, the group will also learn to ask their own questions.

At the same time, the work on the field "with the community", are not spontaneous activism moments, they are rather moments to jointly work in the community change.



They promote horizontal relationships

Even though there are people from different social-economic strata, or different authority ranks, in MPNs, all people have the same right to give their opinion, to differ in opinion or to contribute.



To have an informal relationship allows people to participate without having “fixed positions”, without having to vote or approve motions as if they were on a parliament. Consensus is rather promoted before “voting”. For in a decision making structure based on vote, there is always a minority that is unhappy and frustrated because their opinion was not counted for.

One of the challenges found in this methodology is the connection between small groups and the neighborhood or city local context. When context isn't properly analyzed, groups can easily develop a reduced realistic vision of change, or can give in by fear.

Another challenge that has been observed is that people who have lived in a neighborhood with much violence can be very frightful of speaking of violence roots.

When participants have finally identified conflicts, it is also challenging for them to focus their sight on peace scenarios alongside with conflict analysis. This double vision is necessary because precisely when they listen to themselves talk about conflict is how they'll find the key to build peace.

What is needed to implement this local peace strategy?

Even though the strategy might work in diverse contexts, to be able to implement it, there are some minimal conditions required from the community:

- **Some neighbors expressed willingness**, to work together or to search for alternatives for community violence. This means to count with formal and informal leadership that are interested or are willing to participate and gather other people.
- **For violence not to coopt action capabilities** of the organization that will support the initiative, i.e., there must be certain freedom to gather with people without this representing a risk for such people. A symbolic control through terror, blackmail, intimidation or extortion can fragment groups and make them inactive. A Micro Peace Network cannot be started if public meetings are being censured.
- **There needs to be a minimal communication level** among groups in conflict within the community, otherwise when trying to force dialogue, conflict will be polarized even more. This implies that several trainings before starting implementation need to be developed.
- Participants need to have a **clear knowledge of the basic model**, its purpose and the steps that will take place.

The Micro Peace Network Methodology can be duplicated to a diversity of disputed local spaces but ***needs to be constantly re-adapted depending on: a) cultural characteristics and b) local context. It is important for when the methodology is started at a new context, to start with few experiences to reflect and improve the techniques.*** Some of these cultural or context aspects that need to be evaluated before implementing the methodology are:

- How is the Government and its presence perceived within the community?
- What do people understand by a third party intervention or mediation?
- What activities can be accepted as “initial points” to activate networks (e.g. a Mediation Mobile Center, Forum Theatre, a Library, etc.)?
- Is it possible to start with a diverse group, or is it more convenient to work with an affected specific group (youth, women, etc.)?
- How do people understand the difference between public and private?
- Who are the “underground” leaders recognized as informal leaders or people who influence within the community?
- Which public institutions generate more trust-mistrust?
- Which key words related to conflict and peace have a different meaning in the region?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Not just any type of reflection and action group is a Micro Peace Network. There are certain basic criteria that define what a Micro Peace Network is: the way how small groups are formed, their peace oriented purposes, the fact that there are no hierarchies (horizontality), their action upon conflict, their constant transition from action to reflection and then to action again, and its impact at a policy level and local institutions to produce long-lasting change.

TRAINING ACTIVITIES

- *Have 2 or 3 group activities to “break the ice” and promote trust in a respectful manner.*
- *Have people form pairs and in 2 minutes let them discuss and apply the communication tools in diverse situations: Active Listening (in general), paraphrasing, summarizing, etc.*
- *Identify and discuss in groups, situations in which it wouldn't be convenient to start a Local Peace Network and why?*

TO DISCUSS AND REFLECT

In which situations would it not be convenient to start a Local Peace Network and why?

Which disadvantages do you see for a Local Peace Network to have a director?

Up to which extent should Local Peace Networks mediate particular conflicts within the community?

3. The Reflection-Action Work with the community

LET'S SPEAK CLEARLY:

- 1. WHO carries out this reflection-action process?**
All the Micro Peace Network members with the "facilitator" team guide.
- 2. WHEN does this happen?**
Before the Local Peace Network is formed, the "Facilitator Group" implements the strategy from the start, prepares the field and analyzes the actors. When the Micro Peace Network is already formed, the rest of the actions are carried out together.
- 3. WHERE are they held?**
The first meetings will be held at the institution's facilities. The next meetings in houses, schools, churches or wherever the group feels comfortable.
- 4. HOW much does it cost?**
It can be as affordable as a cup of coffee per person.



Micro Peace Networks don't work as isolated strategies or small groups to help only those who participate in them, but it is rather necessary to articulate different actions at the same time at a small group, community and local institution level. Among these actions we have:

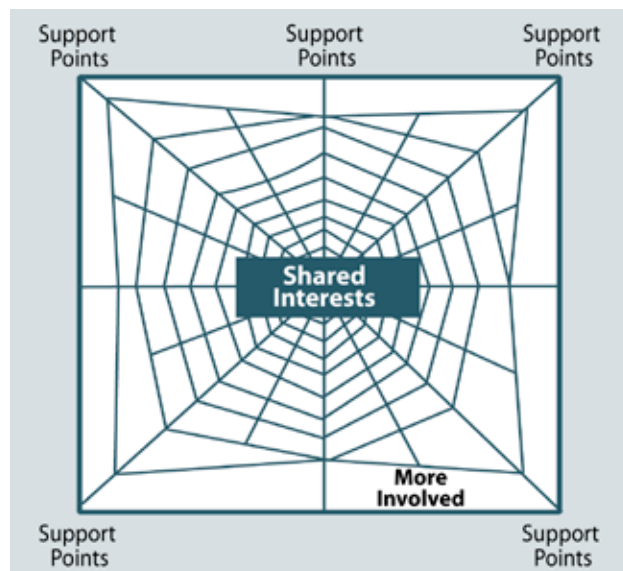
- 1) Strategies to oversee conflicts and **violence deactivation** within the conflict.
- 2) A **participative analysis** process, from behalf of the community which is constantly being updated.
- 3) MPNs as **small groups working** and reflecting upon peace subjects.
- 4) **Community work strategies**: neighborhood marches, theme fairs on peace (ludic activities, visual materials, and filmography), cultural activities and other activities that can help citizens to reuse public spaces as a space for peaceful coexistence.
- 5) The Local Peace Network **political influence and institutional** actions in decision making from and with the community (conflict subject negotiation, conflict attention system creation, policy building, local or-

ganization and institution articulation, public management support, neighborhood improvement management, risk management systems, etc.).

These actions have worked in three different work levels:



John Paul Lederach (2008) suggests in his book “The Moral Imagination” that a Peace Network can be “thought of” in a similar way as a spider knits/spins its web. Nevertheless, this “web” called Local Peace Network, isn’t something rigid, it is rather a structure that is being constantly modified and where actors come and go, communicating from institutions up to the foundations, from the great shared objectives up to daily life.



Entry strategy: Nonviolent conflict attentions

Although they are called “entry” strategies, they can remain for a long time in the community as a good addition that allows more and more people to get involved. In the Guatemala experience, before forming the MPNs, Grupo Ceiba installed a truck in the communities they were working on, which was operating as a mobile conflict mediation unit. However, this unit had in its interior an infirmary office to provide first aid to all cases that were necessary.

In the Guatemala case, the mobile unit was located in different neighborhood spots on different days. In this case, this unit received the name of “Little Peace Bus”, although they literally call it “Little Peace Donkey”, for “donkey” is a local expression young people use to call public transportation. Right next to the infirmary office, two more cubicles were installed that served as mediation rooms; and the nurse as the truck mediators, learned mediation and conflict transformation techniques to carry out dialogues in specific cases.



This strategy responds to what in this document we call “Entry Strategy”. An entry strategy is a way to arrive to the community with a different ethical message against conflict. An effective entry strategy, isn’t necessarily a truck or a bus, but needs to comply with the following functions:

- It is an attractive way to stir curiosity in the neighborhood.
- It contains a peace message, caring for others, coexistence and learning.
- It promotes interaction between neighbors and the program.
- It helps to identify local conflicts and provides a space to work on them with the community.
- It promotes informal communication with local leadership.



In the Guatemala case, “Little Peace Buses” served as conflict transformation centers. However, this “transformation” was visualized as part of a much broader community transformation.



Thinking backwards: The Little Peace Bus practical challenges

To install a conflict resolution mobile center at a local neighborhood isn't something simple, but it is even harder if you're talking about a neighborhood where there has been fear for decades and a high level of insecurity due to high rates of homicides, extortions, drug dealing, and tension between the police and diverse groups and local gangs.

Mediation seems somewhat passive compared to the rough ways many conflicts are solved. However, in many cases, nothing requires more courage than the determination to speak up, and the determination to listen, when it would be easier to fist fight.

The mediation team had to deal with this during the “Little Peace Bus” experience.

Security for the team and for the little bus is a matter of trust and it totally depends on the respect earned in the community. It is true that for an organization such as CEIBA that has more than two decades working in the zone, building this type of trust can be somewhat easier than for an initiative that is just starting.

On the other hand, we have the fact that people accept the project and the physical presence of the truck. This doesn't mean

that they understand what mediation is or that they will start attending automatically. The team developed a community awareness work with schools, churches, local committees, and public authorities for two months even before they began to offer mediation.

The presence of the nurse could be seen as the “entry strategy of the entry strategy”. The nurse’s services reduced the gap for people to come near the “Little Bus” and from there, they might learn about mediation.

In the Learning Virtual Community promoted by AFSC, participants from Latin America have experimented with different alternatives as other possible entry strategies in the community, such as theater (used in Haiti), soccer (it was used for a while in Colombia), music (it was used in Peru), and street art (used in Mexico) However, none of these have proven to have the same level of connection so directly involved with conflict transformation as mobile mediation units.

In spite of this potential, the fact that a mediation unit is working, does not assure Local Peace Network success, but it is a good way to activate a new local dynamic for non-violent coexistence.

Preparing the field

Before starting with the MPNs and all the work with a broader network, it is necessary to prepare certain elements in the community that will make it possible for people to participate. The first thing needed is to identify who are the key people in the community that can be part of the promoting group for the Local Peace Network.

It is very important to draw a community map in which the following can be identified:

- Who are the formal (and informal) leaders that exert a greater influence in the community?
- What is the social-economic, cultural and social situation of the neighborhood population?
- What are the main roots of local conflict?
- What role or presence does the government have in the neighborhood?

- Who are more affected by the violence situation?
- Which types of violence are being manifested?
- Which programs and institutions work to help the community?
- What are these programs focusing on?
- What other peace initiatives have been attempted? What happened to these initiatives?

The Community Mapping can be planned upon very specific techniques: Short Surveys (Citizen Score Cards), neighborhood home interviews, focus groups, police report analysis or existing documents, and a great diversity of participation techniques.

On some occasions it can be very useful to make a geographical map of the community and identify some reference points, areas of greater conflict, etc. But in any case this map should show the community dynamics more than landmarks and terrain.

It is also helpful to identify a list of potential leaders or local actors that are seen as connectors who could host the MPNs. However, it is important to know if this leadership is strongly linked with a political party, with a group that strives for oppression, or with some other type of commitment that might generate resistance within the community.

Nevertheless, it isn't advisable to blindly follow this principle because in some instances there are people who are strongly politically committed to their group(s) or organization(s) but have the capability to become good communicators, even with other groups.

Defining “support points” in the community: The managing group

In the beginning, Local Peace Networks can be a local institution initiative, for example, a district office, an NGO, a church, or a committee. When they decide to start a Local Peace Network, it is necessary for them to form a team of volunteers, professionals, local leaders, etc., that can make the idea come to life. These can be called a managing group. And they need to have basic training on Local Peace, their implications, conflict analysis tools (Connectors and Dividers), community planning tools, and small group dialogue facilitation techniques.

The trainings can be planned in workshops that last one to two days a week while the team deepens its work in the community during the first month with activities that are not too complex.

While this is taking place, the managing group is also organizing itself, as are other possible groups, and potential local leaders for those groups. It is not recommended that a facilitator (working full-time) oversee more than five MPNs at a time because one of the MPN's keys to success lays in having a lot of personal contact with the members.

How many people can I count on?

There are several commitment levels within a Micro Peace Network.

Sympathizer

We understand this person as someone who is interested by the subject, they like it, it attracts them, but is someone who is not yet capable of cancelling their Sunday movie to go to the meeting. To put it another way, they can buy a raffle ticket, but they won't go to see who won the raffle. They can go out to the street and have a talk, but they won't offer their house for a meeting. They are observers.

Collaborator

This person is more willing to collaborate, will stop doing things he or she likes, that gives them rest, like sleeping on Sunday or waking up late. They will give up these things to collaborate, but won't take on further responsibilities. These people will lend the space in front of their porch, but won't offer coffee, just a little space. They are above sympathizers in terms of their level of commitment.

Responsible

These people are always as necessary as those who are needed the most. They come early, they get more people, they discuss a lot, and contribute from their point of view, they are willing to provide some coffee if needed, they pull the collaborators group and know many sympathizers, their actions allow them to be trusted with important matters like logistics and managing the discussion in an orderly and respectful fashion. They are conscious of what needs to be done, and act upon it; they're more on the action side, not observers like sympathizers or collaborators.

Involved

They form a vital part of the organization, they move more than a simple collaborator, they bring new topics to the table, they lead actions for change, they provide their house to meet, they do the dishes which they gave for coffee, they arrive earlier, and if there is something missing, they quickly go and get whatever that might be, they will not drink nor eat so that there will be enough for the rest. They are willing to sacrifice, to wake up early, to bring and take people and things to different places, they are like oxygen to the organization, but they won't be in charge of making the organization grow even more.

Committed

They invest their lives for the Micro Peace Network. They lead the actions together with those who proposed such actions; they will negotiate and manage resources; they will acquire community responsibility so that reality might change in search of the common good; and they know that the future will always be better.

Human groups always start participating as sympathizers. The fact that your Micro Peace Network has many people at that level shouldn't worry you, it should make you busy, so that little by little, they might move to the next level. Next you will see an illustration that represents the different levels. Review this closely so that through this chart you might also have a situation diagnostic.

Committed: leads actions, highly responsible, organized, coherent, changes realities, and acts. ***Is like you.***

Involved: leads actions of change, presses on without any doubt, will give their house; will do the dishes, strong collaborator, willing to sacrifice for others.

Responsible: is aware of the schedule and is punctual, gets more people involved, promotes discussion and contributes, manages the agenda, cooperates with goods and supplies. ***Great trust***

Collaborator: they like special talks, activities where they feel important; their strength lies in logistics, doing things for the group's comfort.

Sympathizer: They like things such as musicians, theater, jugglers, collective painting, presentations, and everything that doesn't involve touching them or them having to do something. ***Shows.***

*For reflection:
What involvement level prevails in the group that the MPN
is promoting in your community?*

**Chart No.1
Dialogue between Micro Peace Networks and the Police
in Guatemala City, 2011**



*Guatemala City - Neighbor's Peace Platform
Source: Grupo Ceiba*

It is important for the managing group not to overshadow the local leadership, especially when it is a group that is perceived as “outsiders”. You can’t overcome authoritarian management styles in the community through the imposition of new outside structures. Possibly a good starting point to achieve this is for the network to not be formed through an institutional structure that is hierarchical with a board of directors, a president, etc., but is rather organized in such a way that there is a spirit of reciprocity and participation in equal parts.

Analysis of key actors who can promote peace

In this part of the analysis, we identify people, institutions or shared experiences that might generate trust within the community and might unite people in a collaborative endeavor in spite of being in conflict.

Social connectors: Are the elements that make people join in spite of conflict or differences within a neighborhood or community. They can be shared experiences, people or leaders, values, institutions or programs, places or symbols.

Key questions:

Who actively participates in neighborhood life and whose position is not questioned? Do they rely on material and non-material resources to carry out peace actions in the community?

What requirements should Micro Peace Network participants comply with when their main objective is to generate trust for peace building?

Suggested activities for analysis:

- Assign a color for every group of problems that was identified during the last session, and cut several colored circles, for example, domestic violence (red), street improvement problems (yellow), and so on.
- Separately, make a list of: a) institutions, b) leaders, c) places, d) experiences, e) values and f) activities or programs which normally unite people in the neighborhood or community.
- Place the list of names in a frame, and next to them, place color circles to indicate on which problems these aspects can influence positively.
- Select a smaller group of “connectors” and in a third column place the capabilities or influence resources this element possesses.
- When finishing the exercise, you might identify some people whose participation would be important in future Local Peace Networks.
- Finally, think together on how to strengthen those elements that generate “connections” in the neighborhood.

Analyzing conflict

It isn't recommended that you start an MPN initiative if there is no knowledge of the environment, an analysis of the elements that really have the potential to unite the community, and those who can deeply divide it.

Therefore it is important that the initial diagnosis be checked again when the managing group is formed, and from that diagnostic carry out a conflict analysis.

Conflict analysis is a "non-linear" way to understand what happens in a community, i.e., not in terms of $A+B=C$, but rather it allows us to identify "tension sources" as well as "peace building capabilities." The foundation of this analysis is the Connectors and Dividers analysis tools developed by CDA (2009).

When these "sources" have been analyzed and we understand the way they operate within the local map, the time has come to lead the managing group through a period of reflection on the ethical messages of the MPN's activities. What is the role of the MPN with regard to these conflict sources? How can the MPNs strengthen identified capabilities to build peace?

This way, conflict analysis is not centered in the operational part, but in understanding and defining the type of change that is expected through the intervention strategy. This analysis will reveal if there really is a "felt" problem that will make the community really feel like there's a need to work on peace.



Daily conflict exploration and local power sources

This initial analysis is done by meditating and gathering information on three main issues:

1. Tension sources in the neighborhood
2. The neighborhood's current situation
3. The obstacles Micro Peace Networks might face.

Key questions:

- How can we know the role that people and institutions play in a community facing different conflicts?
- Which economic, political, social, and cultural elements are hindering or facilitating the MPNs work?
- Which sources (people or institutions) can stop or put MPNs in danger?

Suggested activities for analysis:

- Carry out interviews with different community members to talk about the community several years ago and how has it changed.
- Identify a list of problems in your neighborhood, and then organize them in groups and identify some of the common roots such problems have. Where do they come from? What is making them worse (in relation to main problems and those that come as a result)?
- Make a list of different "key" people (leaders, local authorities, informal leaders, people and institutions in the community). Identify which ones can play an important role in each group of problems.
- For these exercises, you can use cardboard or paper cards; then, group the cards.
- Finally, go back to the questions, and make your best attempt to draw a conclusion.

For this analysis you can also use a diversity of tools (see appendix).

Defining a shared interest point: The change we desire

Once there is a broader understanding of the conflicts at hand, and its roots, it is necessary to define the specific situation within the community that needs to be transformed. In other words, we need to define which are the changes that we expect to produce in the short, medium, and long term. This definition can be developed by each Micro Peace Network and then shared in a broader meeting in an attempt to build a shared vision.

Defining the desired change

Key questions:

- How do we visualize peace in our community?
- What is it that we realistically want to change in the community?
- What are our ethics, which values do we share, and how can these be expressed into specific changes in the community?

Suggested activities for the analysis:

1. Share in small groups what peace is for you.
2. Read together this definition of local peace: When people living in a local space come to a common understanding of their needs and interests and a deeper understanding of their conflicts, they develop an active and constant search of the common good, they search for the reduction of exclusion levels, and reduce the use of violence as a means to face their differences, crises, and needs.
3. Think for a moment in silence. After that, discuss: How does this idea of peace connect to the idea each one has had? What does peace mean for my neighborhood?
4. Make a list of these peace expressions.

Strategy to work with the community

During this analysis phase, different action alternatives that can promote the desired change in the neighborhood or in the community are identified. We analyze the advantages, difficulties, and necessary resources to carry out the strategy, mainly thinking about who are more vulnerable or are at greater risk.

From this moment, the Micro Peace Network can jointly elaborate a modest “agenda” with the activities, dates, and previous tasks required for such activities.

Planning work with the community

Key questions:

- Within this strategy, how do you involve and identify yourself with groups that are vulnerable to violence?

Suggested activities for the analysis:

1. Go back to the conflict analysis and see which of those previously defined peace expressions relate to main conflict sources.
2. Which could be Micro Peace Network goals to promote the peace we want to build? Make a list of 3-to-5 goals for the current year.
3. In which of the three levels would you place these goals?
4. Are these goals related to the community's main conflicts?
5. Which connectors do we need to strengthen in order to achieve these goals?
6. How can we strengthen those connectors?
7. If the environment allows it, create some “art work” with the youth or the children in the community (drawings, plays, miniature models, logos) that represents what peace in their community means.

It is very important not to plan too many activities at the beginning, to allow enough time to carry out previous tasks, and for the team to meditate on their own interactions.

After initial activities are defined, the group will truly start what will be a permanent action-reflection process in their Micro Peace Networks. This process doesn't have an end. It simply turns into a cycle in which Micro Peace Network members periodically meet to evaluate and reflect on peace (see evaluation) and how to build it through community actions, changing goals, involving other actors, and planning new strategies in the community.

While this is happening, it is expected that the people who participate may not only improve their personal leadership skills, and their ability to overcome conflict and work with the neighborhood, but that they will create trust and support spaces among the members of the community, based on respect and solidarity, and at the same time promote a peace culture that has been "thought" from within.

The Network: Articulation strategies among Micro Peace Networks

After a couple of months of work in Micro Peace Networks, it is possible that the time has arrived for different MPNs operating in the neighborhood to share their experiences. These times to share can start as simple exchanges in which each group presents its own experiences and what they have learned in a creative way. But the objective is that these meetings among MPNs might turn into a larger network in the future, where common community problems might be discussed and broader changes might be promoted such as strengthen the foundations, training, and organizing larger activities throughout the entire community.

They can also serve in the future as a more formal space to invite different local organizations, to open dialogue with them, and to discuss a topic of common interest. Through the Networks, joint actions may be established.

One risk of these broader networks is that someone might try to "formalize" them, giving them an institutional inflexibility such as a board of directors, searching for legal representation, or establishing a new group to compete or weaken the work of an existing local committee. And that is where the horizontal principle gains relevance. In the Guatemala experience, Peace Networks have operated as convergence spaces between Micro Peace Networks and other local actors. But it never has been granted an institutional structure. Rather, they exist as dialogue spaces to strengthen institutional work.

Facilitating a Local Peace Network

Facilitating a Local Peace Network brings work that goes from the initial “call to action”, up to the management of activities and dialogue activities between participants. Normally, during the first meeting, they exchange experiences, where each group has the opportunity to share with others some of their main experiences and lessons learned, and spend informal sharing time getting to know each other better.

In the appendixes you will find some activities and tools to work in small groups as well as in Micro Peace Networks, but creativity have no boundaries.

Key questions:

- Which “connectors” do we have in our community?
- How can these connectors be strengthened?
- How can we promote this change? Or how can we contribute to transform this situation?

Analysis activities:

1. Carry out the “World Café” exercise (see appendix)
2. Organize a forum on a common interest topic
3. Establish a table for open dialogue.

Strategies for political and institutional influence

Besides direct work with the community, the second operational level is work with local institutions through Local Peace Networks. This level is more formal and it requires a more rigorous definition of the changes the community wants to achieve and a deeper analysis of the forms of local power.

At this level, it is more convenient for the Networks to define small commissions or work groups (not permanently, of course) that can get close to institutions, gather local public officials to present problems, elaborate joint proposals, or acquire the necessary support to carry out changes in the community in order to deal with issues that generate violence. This would seem to be a

“management” job, but in reality, what is being done is convincing public officials at different levels about the relevance of local conflicts and the way they are being handled. In this way, the community builds its “peace allies” and promotes changes that strengthen the common good.

From the creation of a domestic violence prevention program to a public road illumination plan—it call all be closely related to violence. Everything depends on the social “connectors and dividers” that have been identified.

From change in relationships to change in the local system

One of a Local Peace Network’s most difficult challenges is to influence the policies of local institutions. To impact local rules, an LPN must develop strategies to approach local conflict situations in the neighborhood such as violence against women, crime group violence, violent fights for public services, fair distribution of the land, common delinquency, creation of conflict attention systems and local participation, private sector inclusion in local development projects, and many other topics.

None of these topics could really be transformed unless there is a serious agreement among and commitment from community leaders, local organizations, local government, public institutions, and the private sector. This cannot be achieved overnight. As a matter of fact, even when all actors subscribe to agreements or local policies, there’s no guarantee that these policies and agreements will be implemented. And even if policies are being implemented, this doesn’t necessarily mean that the local culture and the “interaction rituals” have been transformed. This is why

changes in local systems may take between five and ten years according to the Peace Theory. But in the end, these changes happen if conditions and necessary strategies are promoted.

Key question:

How do you guarantee the movement of the MPN to a political decision space?

Suggested activities for analysis:

Goals at a political and institutional level also need to have a plan and previous tasks for them to be achieved. Meet with the Local Peace Network every now and then to evaluate how they are doing with these types of goals, and identify what is missing and what alliances still need to be built. Is it a goal that is still worth following? Is the goal reachable or realistic?, Will the goal truly contribute to peace building? Which interests within the community might put at risk the completion of the goal? Can those obstacles be worked on?



It is expected that as a result of this constant interaction, the security climate of the neighborhood will improve and the ability of different people and groups to work together will increase as well, so that the elements that generate conflict in the community (dividers) can be approached in a constructive way, and capabilities for peace (connectors) can be strengthened.

CHAPTER SUMMARY 

The starting point for the MPNs is trust building, and whatever the facilitators do to generate this climate of trust is very important. For this reason it has been proposed that MPNs start the same way a spider web is created: Point by point, directed to common objectives, and then pulling in more people.

During the first weeks, a good strategy is to gather information to better analyze local tension sources and aspects that connect the people living there (connectors). Once there is clarity with the analysis, we can propose actions and strategies with a clear objective, according to the available resources we might have to start.

TRAINING ACTIVITIES 

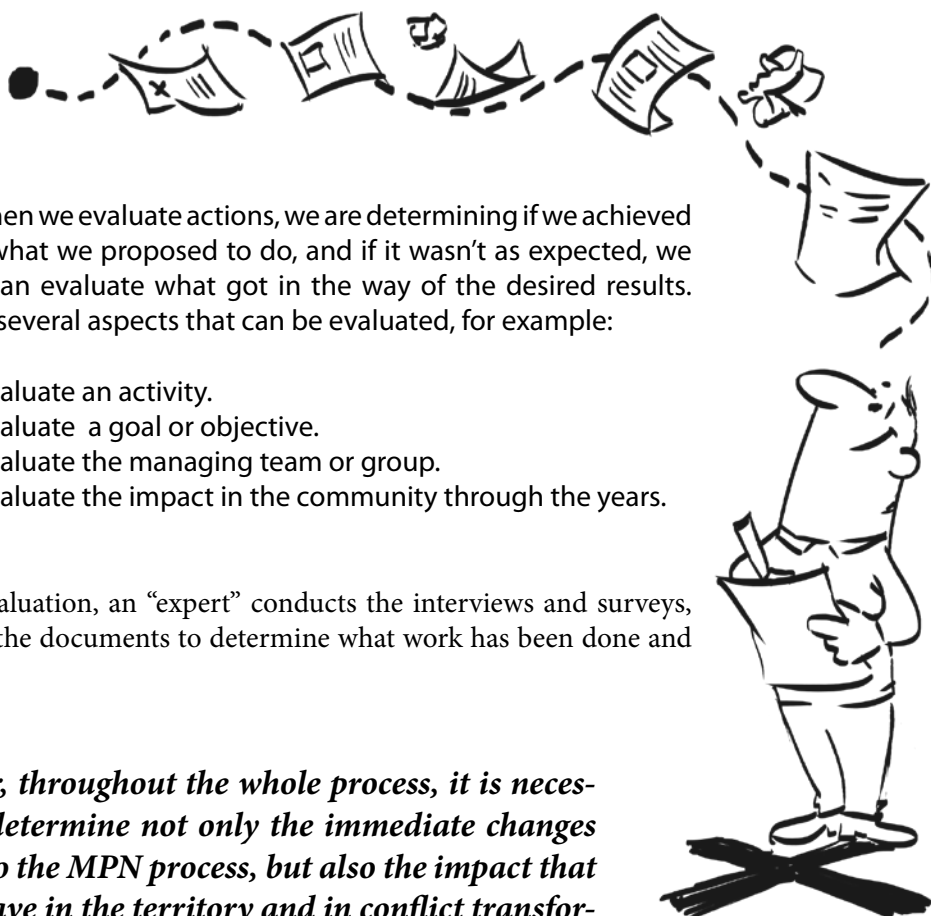
Make a play of a Micro Peace Network meeting using the Forum Theater technique (See Appendix).

Develop groups of three-to-five participants (MPN facilitators) to carry out an analysis “drill” on each one of the boxes after a quick step-by-step walk-through.

Gather one participant from each group so they can share what they found interesting and what they thought was difficult about the exercise.

4. How MPNs have worked

An evaluation of our actions



When we evaluate actions, we are determining if we achieved what we proposed to do, and if it wasn't as expected, we can evaluate what got in the way of the desired results. There are several aspects that can be evaluated, for example:

1. Evaluate an activity.
2. Evaluate a goal or objective.
3. Evaluate the managing team or group.
4. Evaluate the impact in the community through the years.

In a traditional evaluation, an “expert” conducts the interviews and surveys, and goes through the documents to determine what work has been done and its impact.

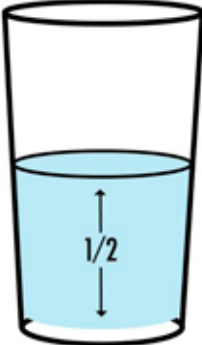
However, throughout the whole process, it is necessary to determine not only the immediate changes related to the MPN process, but also the impact that MPNs have in the territory and in conflict transformation.

In 2010, AFSC published a set of conceptual and theoretical statements that define how, from a peace perspective, changes in the community can be evaluated. This can help determine if Local Peace Networks are fulfilling their objective of improving mutual cooperation and reducing the climate of insecurity in the neighborhood.

These conceptual statements are taken from the book “Local Insecurity and Conflict Transformation: Towards a new paradigm” (AFSC, 2010) and they are also a product of a deep discussion between several professionals from the Latin American Learning Community organized by the AFSC.

This material clarifies the following questions: How do we really know we are building peace? How can we compare our results with those of other communities? How can we know which types of changes are relevant?

Transformation indicators



Optimist perspective: “the glass is half full”.

Pessimist perspective: “the glass is half empty”.

Peace Network perspective:

- Who chose this glass?
- Why are you going to pour water?
- How will the use of that water be decided?
- What happened to the water that is missing?

Sometimes we judge the condition of things using different criteria and this leads to different but equally valid conclusions regarding the same situation.

There are many concepts of peace, as was noted at the beginning of this handbook. The MPN model is based on the idea of “positive” peace, where conflict is also an opportunity to learn and change because conflict is not by itself good or bad. It is simply a situation created by two interests that don’t seem to be compatible, and which in fact may not be at all compatible.

We know the results of an initiative because there are elements, changes in the community, which indicate that peace is being built. We call such evidence “Indicators.”

How are these changes evaluated in a peace program?

The goal of evaluating a peace program is not to determine whether or not we are doing a good job as a project team. The goal is to determine if the peace strategy is really producing the desired results, if the methodology was well adapted to the local culture, and if it was applied in a coherent way according to the theory of change, etc.

In principle, MPNs can actively participate in all types of evaluations, but we have some initial recommendations for each type:

1. Evaluate an activity

Evaluating an activity allows us to determine which things were carried out as planned and its results. Some elements that might be used to analyze an activity are:

ASPECT	Worked as planned	What didn't work	What we didn't expect	What we learned
People participation				
Activity coordination				
Techniques and activities used				
Effects on conflict				

It is very valuable to take some time, not more than a month after having the activity, to meditate upon each aspect of the evaluation, especially during the first months of work in the MPNs. With time, this evaluation process will be incorporated into daily practice, until it becomes part of the community's "daily thinking".

2. Evaluation of a goal or objective

GOAL	What we achieved	How much did we achieve of the goal (%)	Evidence: how do we know what we achieved	Obstacles or difficulties found	How will we overcome the obstacle
Goal 1					
Goal 2					
Goal 3					
Goal 4					

This evaluation exercise requires having organized information of the proposed goal activities and results. Sometimes determining what percent of the goal was achieved isn't the most relevant aspect, for it is only an estimate in terms of what is missing to complete the goal. But the group discussion about the obstacles and how to overcome them can be very helpful.

3. Evaluation of the managing team or group

Some of these elements to be evaluated are inspired by the operative groups' theory (Pichon-Riviere, 1980) of who establishes internal conflict levels within the group for the achievement of a common goal.

The managing group evaluation is a process that requires a greater maturity and "self-critique" on behalf of the group because it acknowledges the main strengths and weaknesses of the group's performance. The process also acknowledges the changes that the group itself is undergoing in how they are bonding with the rest of the activities, and the ways that consciously or unconsciously group members are resisting the change of old mindsets.

Aspect	What's positive	What can be improved	Lessons learned
Clarity in communication			
Group cohesion			
Clarity in each one's roles and responsibilities			
Ability to solve internal conflict			
Main task understanding			

In this exercise, the managing group can use a diversity of techniques such as focus groups, individual interviews, surveys, and socio-dramas that encourage participants' expression upon their own conflicts, the roles performed by the group members, and the different alternatives to transform those interactions and orient them to their main objectives.

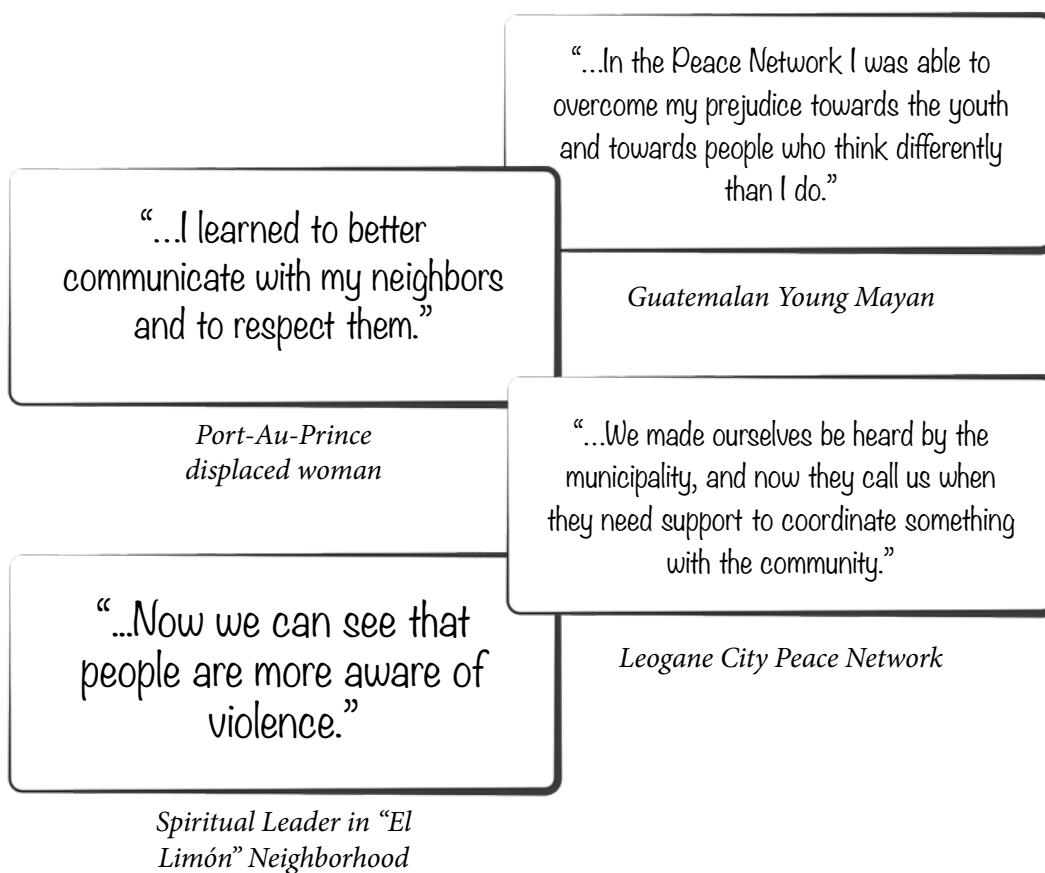
After the activities that stimulate this "self-constructive critique", group members can identify some conclusions on each aspect.

For this you can read all the questions in each aspect, and then allow the group to share their reactions. Participants don't have to answer each question as if it were a closed questionnaire; instead, toss out the idea(s) and make note of the group's reaction. This is not an exhaustive guide in the operative group analysis, yet it can shed light on some group elements that can help daily work be more coherent.

ASPECT	DEFINITION	GROUP QUESTIONS
Clarity in communication	Group ability to express and interpret messages in a clear way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we say what we want to say without offending? • Are we clear on what we expect from each other? • Can I understand the main point of what is being talked about? • Do we get enough and timely information? • Do we understand each other well?
Group cohesion	Ability to work together in a collaborative way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I feel part of the group? • Do I feel accepted by the group? • Do we accept each other in spite of our differences? • All participants contribute? • Is there more than sympathy, commitment?
Clarity in each one's roles and responsibilities	Each one knows what they can do and what others can do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are each other's talents clear within the group? • When there is a task, are we clear on who will coordinate it?
Ability to solve internal conflict		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we sit down to solve relevant conflicts? • Can we separate conflict from personal relationships?
Main task understanding		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we understand the group's vision? • Do we talk about what concerns us as we work to achieve our goal? • Do we have clarity on the previous tasks to achieve the goal? • Do we recognize our obstacles and limitations?

4. Evaluation of the impact in the community through the years

The impact of a strategy in peace building can be evaluated from the four great transformation levels that Paul Lederach (2008) proposed, and which the Learning Community appropriated in Latin America. It is a way to verify that our work is integral (i.e., that it produces changes in different levels at the same time).



These four testimonies, taken from the peace programs in Latin America and the Caribbean, reflect four very different impact levels:

1. Changes at a personal level
2. Changes in relationships
3. Changes in culture
4. Structural changes

Up to this moment, MPNs appear to have an impact that is more oriented to relationships and personal change. However, MPNs can produce a more structural and cultural impact, to the extent that their organization can deal with problems that are “public” in nature.

- People feel more confidence in their neighborhood and in their neighbors.
- More people start to use nonviolent mechanisms to discuss and solve their conflicts.
- There is better communication and understanding with state institutions or government, including local police.

A more systematic evaluation requires listing, discussing, and validating some specific indicators for each one of the levels where MPN impact is assumed.

Expected Changes in a Local Territory

PERSONAL CHANGES

- Fear reduction.
- Inter-personal trust.
- Less stereotypes and prejudice.
- People are able to identify different types of violence that weren't being identified in the past.
- Greater acceptance and sense of belonging (they like to live in the neighborhood).
- People have personal life goals and a sense of hope as a result of these goals.

RELATIONSHIP CHANGES

- A greater reciprocity among neighbors.
- More constructive and respectful communication within the neighborhood.
- Conflict transformation methods are applied.
- More tolerance and less direct violence among the neighbors.

CULTURAL CHANGES

- MPN members influence people outside the MPN.
- New meanings of peace, cooperation, and coexistence.
- Empowerment and dialogue acceptance as a main form of solving conflict.
- Greater leadership legitimacy.
- New rituals or forms of interaction are built, starting from peace, which previously weren't a part of daily life.

STRUCTURAL CHANGES

- New ways of more inclusive and participative organization emerge.
- New power structures and local leadership.
- Public policies are built and implemented, oriented to transformation.

Level	Evidence of changes in the community	Evidence (why we say this change happened)	Techniques we used to gather these evidence
PERSONAL			
RELATIONSHIPS			
LOCAL CULTURE			
STRUCTURAL CHANGES (Political, material, economic and institutional)			

The evaluation process of the impact of the MPN's work has the same "participative" tone as the other aspects of an evaluation, however, due to its complexity, it's recommended that this process be carried out by a professional who manages project evaluation techniques but at the same time knows how

to manage a dialogue with the people surrounding that project. For example, it is not easy to determine if change happened because of the project itself or because of some other factor that casually happened at the same time as the project.

SOME EXAMPLES OF COMMON PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS FOUND IN MICRO PEACE NETWORKS

Problems...	Useful ideas...
People arrive at a mobile unit expecting to be heard, but there isn't a true mediation among parties.	Use dialogues as a strategy to build awareness. Provide advice to one of the parties in conflict to promote transformation.
People want to use the Micro Peace Network space as a social or self-help therapeutic group.	This can be part of the trust and of peace building, and it is part of the needs expressed in the group, but the facilitator can introduce dialogue techniques like World Café to help the dialogue move toward change actions.
People are afraid to participate in a public space.	Use MPNs as a first strategy during several months before the first dialogue meeting in the Network.
The Network can be seen as being in competition with other local committees.	From the beginning, diverse local committees are invited to learn about the Local Peace Network objectives as an informal and open space.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The evaluation of our own actions is decisive to learning. In this chapter we developed several tools, key questions, and aspects that can indicate if we are really having a deep and broad impact in the community, on MPN participants (personal), in neighborhood coexistence (relationships), in the way of living and thinking (culture), and in the conditions that generate conflict (structural).

Several exercises that can be carried out in different moments to evaluate how much progress we have had, what needs to be improved, and how can we improve.

TRAINING ACTIONS

Identify in groups a list of “evidence” that could indicate change in each one of the four peace levels (personal, relational, cultural, and structural).

Apply the “Activity Evaluation” table to evaluate the training workshop. It can be a mural in which everyone can spontaneously express themselves in those slots.

5. A critique perspective

How to improve the strategy and make it sustainable

MPNs are not the panacea of all problems in the community, but they have shown that it is possible to solve many problems that are generated by social tensions, without the use of armed repression, political blackmail, or harm to the integrity of the inhabitants of a local space.

MPNs have been proven to work in poor neighborhoods, where young people are having inter-generational conflicts with adults, women suffer different types of violence, small businesses are being extorted by gangs, there's limited water access, places where there are high risks on natural or weather phenomena, where children are not taken care of properly, etc.

But the diversity of problems means that it isn't possible to think of MPNs as a closed model with unique and exclusive techniques. This would completely throw away the main richness of the method, which is its openness to adapt to problems with different levels of complexity. However, to the extent that discussions move forward with the Learning Community, several techniques have been identified, which we are still working to improve:

- Incorporate other dialogue techniques within the cycle. We are discussing whether it is possible to broaden criteria and tools to be used by dialogue techniques and facilitation, not only in participative diagnostics but in MPNs, in the Local Peace Network, and in any program evaluation exercises.
- A subject that hasn't been deeply examined yet is the building of new entry strategies. We do not have other experiences that have used a strategy other than the conflict solving Mobile Units, that have proven to be as or more effective, but surely there will be different forms of adapting the community entry strategy that have not yet been imagined by peace artisans.
- Another important critical element is the connection between the entry strategy, the MPNs, and the Local Peace Network. The openness of the method has not allowed having enough clarity on how to improve this connection, when to focus on the MPNs, and when to focus on the Local Peace Network as a broader space.
- Some questions yet to be examined or dealt with in depth are:
 - a. What is the role of the police, from a local peace perspective, in the neighborhood?
 - b. To what extent should MPNs be inclusive, for example with actors who have strongly damaged the community?
 - c. How do you guarantee horizontality between people with different

- types of knowledge, different economic status, or different levels of formal education?
- d. Can an MPN work that's exclusively integrated by women, young people, or only adults, and at the same time can it promote inclusion of diversity in the community?
 - e. What are MPNs' abilities to work with a focus on attention of crisis situations and risk reduction?
 - f. Can MPNs dedicate themselves to the anticipation of violent incidents?

Local strategy sustainability

Each MPN field of application presents different challenges, but one shared challenge is for the initiative not to die because of lack of resources or for lack of promotion in other neighborhoods. MPNs are regularly implemented within a project cycle with a beginning and an end, and it is expected that after that period of time, the community will include the elements of dialogue and conflict transformation in their *modus vivendi* on a daily basis. But what is necessary for this to happen? Some elements based on the lessons learned in Latin America and the Caribbean are:

- Sustainability is more feasible to the extent that the members of the community and local leadership make the vision their own, and when there is an institution that can be a partner. For this reason it is better to work with local partners that are part of a permanent program (education centers, schools, community centers, churches, etc.).
- People's motivation to keep working with MPNs does not depend solely on money, but whether they are seeing this system as a truly effective way to solve their problems in the community.
- Although at the beginning, the facilitator role is more active and dynamic, gradually it turns out to be a challenge and an art to make this role into one where local neighbors are leading the way. If this is achieved, it is more feasible for many actions to continue in the community even when the facilitator is no longer there.
- There are many forms of financing that can be explored and which do not depend on international cooperation. In Latin America and the Caribbean, cooperation sources are not easy to find, and they are not necessarily accessible to an organization that operates at a neighborhood level. All in all, the resources needed to implement the method are not too high, maybe with the exception of the mobile unit and salaries.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

It is not the same to make something work, as it is to keep it working when we are no longer there. Without having all the answers, this chapter asks some interesting questions that might help to make this possible.

In this chapter, some valuable learning lessons are gathered. For example, Networks are more sustainable not because they have more money, but because the people that form them are more convinced of how valuable it is to work and meditate on the community.

APPENDIX 1.

This tool was originally promoted by the consultancy company CDA as a part of a broader methodology to determine to what extent humanitarian organizations were contributing to a sustainable peace or aggravating conflict (in the long run). Next you will only find the part that corresponds to the Connector and Divider analysis, prepared as a public tool, for learning purposes, by the Paris Resources for Peace Institute, IRENEES, and the Modus Operandi NGO www.ireenes.net

The complete process of this methodology starts with a context analysis and ends with a period of Peace Initiative impact testing www.cdainc.com. But we also discovered that the Connector and Divider analysis is a valuable tool by itself to understand a conflict situation, even when it is not used to determine an external program impact. We use this tool in order to get a better understanding of local scenarios and possible entry points for peace initiatives.

Table No. 1
Connector and Divider Analysis

	Dividers or tension sources	Connectors or capabilities for peace
Systems and institutions		
Attitudes and actions		
Values and interests (different or shared)		
Different or shared experiences		
Symbols		

Table No.2
Issues Definition

	Definition	Examples
Sistems and institutions	Those formal or political institutional structures, local organizations, NGOs, businesses, and local government programs that might have an important role in conflict solving.	Police station, a daycare program for children, a church, a Committee network, a club or neighbor community, a crisis and emergency plan in the community, a water distribution system.
Attitudes and actions	Predispositions and behavior patterns among the members of the community.	Hostility toward foreigners, traditions and beliefs, leisure patterns in young people, forms of upbringing.
Values and interests (different or shared)	Different points of view on recognition or the importance of some things over others.	The youth factor; fashion, music, authority in the family or conflicts related to a resource that is scarce, struggle for job opportunities.
Different or shared experiences	Important situations that marked or built a “reference guideline”.	People who have lived through an earthquake, people with army experiences, people who have lived outside the country.
Symbols	Artistic representations of identity, history, or different “faces” of a conflict.	Flags, traditional clothing, traditional products (food, crafts, etc.). Sometimes a wall, a street or a river represents conflict or reconciliation.

This analysis will help you to know what can be done (as a starting point) to create a trust environment and use “peace spaces” in a neighborhood as expansion points. The analysis should not be considered as a recipe; the tool provides a set of reference points that also require a creative perspective and innovation to lead from the conceptualization of a peace initiative to practice.

The connector and divider analysis will help to define the starting points to transform a complex (multilateral) conflict in a local scenario. The exercise can work better if it is done in a participative way between a group of actors that participate in peace programs and local development. But it could be used as a research methodology to understand the different conflict factors.

One of these elements (institution, value, experience, etc.) can be a “connector” in some scenarios, but in other cases the same element could play the role of a “divider”. It depends on the conflicts, the culture, or the community’s role. For example, a government program that provides food to people could be a “connector” if the people organize it and share the food in a fair way. But if community members struggle for power and rivalry, the same program could exacerbate violence.

Source:
IRENEES – Modus Operandi (2011). *Dividers and Connectors Analysis*
Understanding the sources of tension and the local capacities for peace. www.irenees.org

APPENDIX 2.

Citizen Café as a dialogue tool

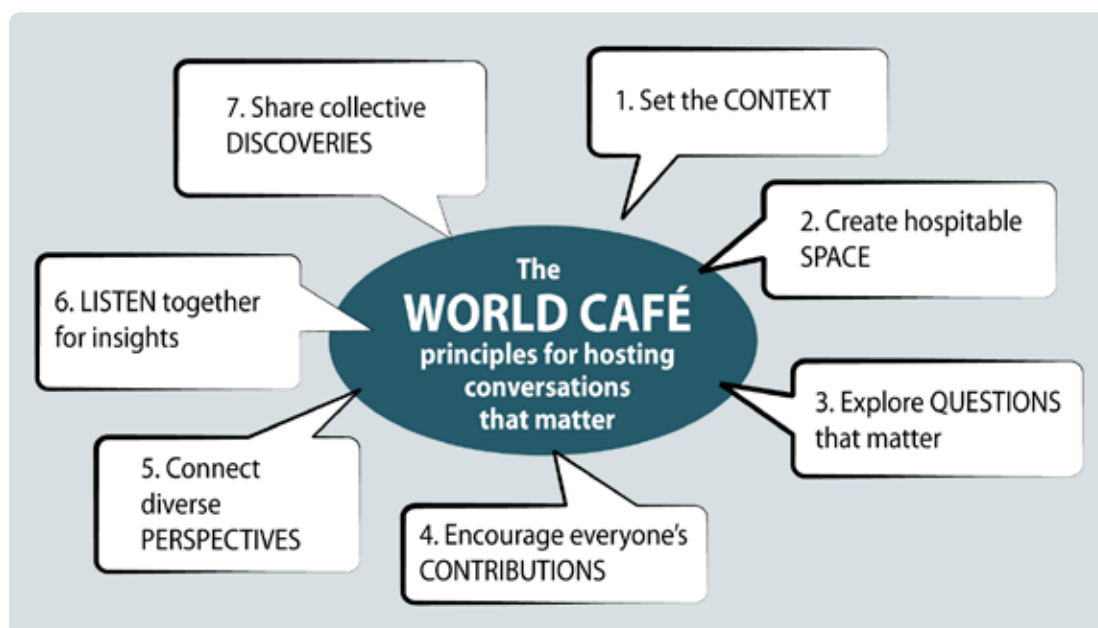
This technique is based in the methodology called World Café. This methodology consists of a set of principles to open, informal dialogue and trust spaces where citizens can analyze a problem then propose solutions and re-discover ways to approach it.

As The World Café Community Foundation www.theworldcafe.com describes it, the technique is based on the fact that when people drink coffee in an informal way, many valuable and spontaneous ideas emerge. In Guatemala, for example, Propaz foundation has called this dialogue method “Citizen Café”.

Every dialogue cycle in World Café was adapted in three stages: The planting, the cultivating, and the harvesting.

- In the “planting” stage, participants voice their different initial concerns on conflicts, violence, or other types of community problems.
- The “cultivating” stage is a moment to analyze the roots of these problems and the alternatives that can contribute to their transformation. In this phase, MPNs can design an activity during the following days to put the ideas they have discovered in the neighborhood to the test.
- Finally, the “harvesting” stage gathers the experiences, lessons learned, and conclusions of the group concerning the conflicts at hand. The cycle is permanently maintained through the World Café principles until the MPN appropriates these principles starting from their reflection and practice.

Chart No. 1
Citizen Café Principles



Starting from the Guatemala experience, MPNs can start with much enthusiasm, but it is very important to see that they don't "burn out" and get into a frustrating and exhaustive dynamic, after which, it will be very difficult to reactivate the group. This can be prevented by making the initial expectations moderate (or realistic), and meetings brief (not more than one hour long).

The World Café can be used as a tool by Micro Peace Networks as well as by the Local Peace Networks or for the peace program evaluation itself.

APPENDIX 3.

Augusto Boal's Forum Theater

Conflicts are natural parts of coexistence, but that doesn't mean we always solve them in a peaceful and constructive way. Putting conflicts under analysis and meditating on the alternative solutions can be a very good way to learn skills to approach these types of situations that frequently happen.

The following activity, based in dramatization, helps students use different conflict transformation techniques, guided by the forum theater technique.

...STEPS TO FOLLOW

1. **Motivation for the activity** (5 minutes).
(At the end of this section they come up with a proposal for the opening of the activity).
2. **Conflict selection**, individual: (5 minutes)
Ask participants to remember a conflict situation. It is important to consider when selecting the conflict:
 - There must be an interaction between two or more people.
 - The conflict can be personal or not. The main idea is to learn to solve conflicts and not for each person to solve their own personal problems.
3. **Conflict feedback sharing session**, group activity: (15 minutes)
Request group formation (no more than six members) and let each one briefly share the chosen conflict. Indicate that the narrative shouldn't include the conflict's background nor its consequences, but the conflictive moment itself.

Specify the time they will have so that the participants may organize themselves according to the time given.

4. Selection and drama preparation: (5 minutes)

Once finish the discussion, conflict episodes has been shared by the members of each group, they may choose just one of them to present. It is suggested that the selection be done based on three criteria:

- Relevance of the conflict for the participants.
- Interest caused by the conflict to be worked on.
- Frequency with which it is experienced (representative of lived situations by the participants).

When the episode has been selected, the members of the group must ask to whom are we narrating the event, as well as the details that are required to better understand it. Then they must search for the main part of the conflict, clearing through what is dispensable, and they must agree upon the beginning, development, and closing of the dramatization.

* It is important for the conflict to be presented without a proper and considered transformation on behalf of the group participants, to favor later reflection.

5. Dramatizations: (25 minutes)

Gather the whole group and invite them to observe the representations without any intervention. The moderator will ask a name to be assigned to each one, and will register them in a visible location for all.

*In case this activity is given in two separate classes, it is suggested to carry out all the previous steps in the first class, and then start dramatizations during the rest of the time.

6. Conflict selection for the forum theater: (5 minutes)

Once the representations are finalized, invite the group to select one of the dramatizations to work with the forum theater technique, using the same criteria they had previously used when selecting in groups (relevance, interest, and frequency). The moderator will register and synthesize all other stories, so that they might be worked upon in other educational instances.

7. Forum Theater: (40 minutes)

The conflictive story or episode that was selected by the whole group is represented again and it is worked upon based on the forum theater technique:

- a. Those who didn't act in it should be asked to participate in its transformation, intervening in the representation. The moderator must specify that the person intervening can do so from the beginning of the story or during its development. The idea is to intervene on stage, introducing a new strategy to solve the conflict.
- b. Whoever wants to stop the story and intervene must clap their hands as a signal. The goal for this moment is: "Don't say it, act it". All interventions must be dramatized.
- c. It will be explained to the actors of the original scene receiving new interventions by the rest of the group that they must try to defend their original position, unless they are forced to modify their conduct, given the changes that were introduced.
- d. One intervention at a time will be tested, allowing the person who is intervening to finish. However, it will be the forum who will decide and consider if the strategy is positive or not, supporting with applause the ones that deserve it. It is not about applaud-

- ing the acting, but applauding the strategy, as far as it is considered as positive for good conflict transformation. If none receive applause, then you continue working with the forum to find a better strategy.
- e. Each time a modification strategy is not applauded, it will be indicated why it wasn't supported or why the resolution found wasn't positive. It could also happen that the conflict may have gotten worse. The same will happen with the strategy that is applauded: it will have to be backed up on why it was considered as a good transformation. It is not about searching for action recipes, but orientation strategies facing a determined type of conflict.
8. **Discussion:** (10 minutes)
The actors will be asked about the changes that were made on the conflict's dramatization, and how they felt about them.
9. The person who intervened will be asked what was his/her idea when doing it the way he/she did it. And those who were forced to modify their behavior will be asked why they did so.
- In this stage of the activity, it is important for the moderator to refer to the forms of conflict transformation that did not show up in the representations and that are important as strategies. For example, if it wasn't explicitly shown to take the other party's perspective, this strategy must be explained and someone should be asked to act it out. This way you guarantee working on the most important strategies related to the objectives of this activity.
10. **Closing:** (5 minutes)
Once the activity has ended, ask what lessons participants learned from this experience. The most relevant ideas will be presented to orient the main conclusions of the exercise.

Source:
Valoras UC Herramientas de Juego
<http://www.educarchile.cl>

GLOSSARY

KEY TERMINOLOGY

1. **Connectors:** Material elements, values, people, or experiences that contribute to the cooperative work within a community, in spite of conflict.
2. **Trust:** It is an attitude that predisposes a person to expect reciprocity and a positive result based on certain indicators, reducing fear, anxiety, and defensive attitudes.
3. **Dividers:** Material elements, values, people, or experiences that generate tension and community fracture.
4. **Network Epicenter:** Main convergence points between citizens from where changes are promoted.
5. **Network Episodes:** Group reflection or interaction moments with the community
6. **Local space:** A geographical space of coexistence and economic and social interaction characterized by a greater demographic concentration, the centralization and sophistication of goods and services, the development of infrastructure and more complex organizational structures, and the development of social dynamics derived from these processes.
7. **Entry Strategy:** Main activity educationally thought to waken the interest and participation of the citizens in the Micro Peace Networks.
8. **Managing Group or Facilitating Group:** MPN's facilitator team.
9. **Inter-Dialogue:** Constructive and reflective communication process between several groups.
10. **Inter-Mediation:** Facilitation of a third party in a social space with the objective of promoting or activating a better relationship and the solution to the roots of conflict. Unlike mediation, intermediation is broader for it covers a social space, more than a specific case, and it relies on a larger set of techniques.
11. **Inner Dialogue:** Constructive and reflexive communication process within a group.
12. **Mediation:** Conflict transformation method in which a third party, foreign to the conflict, promotes negotiation between the parties without directly intervening in the final decision.

13. **Micro Peace Network:** Dialogue and community action methodology based on the peace building and conflict transformation paradigm.
14. **Citizen participation:** Involvement of the citizens of a community or country in public and common interest decisions, upon their civil rights foundation.
15. **Political participation:** Citizen Involvement in political exercises and projects of representation before the state, through the party-political system (in the case of democratic governments).
16. **Social participation:** Involvement of the inhabitants of a community or country in activities that promote relationships with others.
17. **Local Peace:** Social process in which people living in a local space achieve a mutual value of their needs and interests and a deeper understanding of their conflicts; they develop an active and constant search for the common good, they search for the reduction of exclusion levels, and reduce the use of violence as a means to face their differences, crises, and needs.
18. **Theory of change:** Main outline that summarizes the foundation of an initiative or project and why we expect this initiative to produce changes.
19. **Violence:** Strategy to exert physical, psychological, or political force on another person to achieve a goal. Violence implies harm, to a greater or lesser degree, to integrity, and a desire to control the will of other people. Therefore, a type of conflict always generates all violence, yet not all conflict needs to be violent.

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DEP Haiti, 2012