

Committed to Peace



forumZFD

Key Areas of Engagement

A Conceptualization of our Practical Approaches to Conflict Transformation

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Introduction

Since its foundation in 1996, the Forum Civil Peace Service e. V. (forumZFD) has been working on conflict transformation in Serbia, Macedonia, Kosovo, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, which are part of forumZFD's Western Balkans programme (1999); Israel and Palestine (1999); Lebanon (2009); Jordan (2017); North Iraq (2018); Ukraine (2017); Cambodia (2015); and the Philippines (2007). In each of its country and regional programmes, forumZFD works with civil society on the non-violent transformation of conflicts.

Over the years, the forumZFD teams have encountered and overcome challenges; collected lessons learned; incorporated in new knowledge, methods, and tools; written numerous handbooks and manuals; and continuously refined their practical approaches to conflict transformation in various areas of engagement.

The concept papers represent an attempt to consolidate the extensive body of expertise that has grown across the various regional and country programmes over the years and to conceptualize forumZFD's practical approaches to conflict transformation in its key areas of engagement: Dealing with the Past, Peace Education, Communities for Peace, and Local Conflict Counselling.

By describing the scope of practical approaches applied across programmes and streamlining terminology, the concept papers establish a common basis of understanding of the approaches and methods applied in each key area of engagement across the entire organisation. They moreover facilitate a knowledge transfer and communication between the programmes themselves as well as between programmes and the Head Office; and provide a basis for reflection and further development of forumZFD's expertise in each of its key areas of engagement. In addition, the papers allow the organisations to share forumZFD's practical approaches with other practitioners in the field, partner organisations, and donors.

The concept papers certainly cannot – nor do they aim to – capture the entirety of methods and approaches that have been applied by forumZFD teams over the past 25 years. Instead, they are intended to serve as orientation and to highlight the most established practices, without curbing the creativity and innovation of the forumZFD teams and their partners in the future.

Methodology

To write the concept papers, a participatory process was designed. Cross-regional working groups were formed for Dealing with the Past, Peace Education, and Communities for Peace consisting of forumZFD national and international peace workers from different country and regional programmes, who are working on the respective key area of engagement. Over the course of one year, the working groups came together regularly via video conferences to discuss and conceptualize their practical work and prepare the concept papers.

Since Local Conflict Counselling as an approach was developed and is only practiced in Germany, the Germany programme followed a different process. The concept paper on Local Conflict Counselling was written in coordination with the team from the Local Conflict Counselling Unit.

Outline

To set the scene for the concept papers, the second chapter here entitled 'How we Work' describes forumZFD's approach to conflict transformation in general. It explores the history, theoretical background, principles, and organisational structures and processes that provide the guidelines and the framework on which the practical work in each area of engagement is built. The paper then continues with the concept papers on Peace Education (chapter 3), Communities for Peace (chapter 4), Dealing with the Past (chapter 5) and Local Conflict Counselling (chapter 6). The concept papers all follow the same basic structure. In the section entitled 'Why we engage', the concept papers explain why working in this particular area of engagement presents a crucial contribution to conflict transformation. The section thereafter entitled 'How we engage' elaborates on the main aspects of forumZFD's practical approach in each area of engagement. Finally, each concept paper portrays the actual work in the field. For Peace Education, this entails a description of how interventions in formal and non-formal peace education are designed. Communities for Peace illustrates how engagement with different types of communities is implemented. The Dealing with the Past paper expands on four focus areas of activity: truth and accountability, collective memory and identity, education and pedagogy, and network and coalition building. Each concept paper provides concrete examples of projects in the purple, yellow, and green text boxes. At the end of each concept paper, a collection of links and publications related to the area of engagement provides an overview of relevant further literature.

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How we work

Theoretical background and principles

The Civil Peace Service

forumZFD is one of nine implementing agencies of the Civil Peace Service, a programme established in 1999. The Civil Peace Service is financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The nine implementing agencies (CPS Consortium) developed a common overall approach for professional peace work, building on the insights of civil conflict management and conflict transformation.

The Civil Peace Service came into being in a time where it became evident that the classic instruments of conflict management and conflict resolution failed to deal with the challenges of contemporary conflicts. After the end of the Cold War, there was a visible shift in conflict dynamics across the globe. Many of the conflicts that unfolded in the 1990 were intra-national conflicts, i.e. civil wars that were often characterised by high power asymmetries between the conflict parties. In addition, Post-Cold War conflicts showed an increased level of complexity, linking local, national, and international conflict dynamics resulting in lengthy protracted conflict situations.¹ In light of the changing nature of conflicts and the insufficient intervention efforts by the international community in the wars in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, the German peace movements advocated the development of a government-financed civil peace service. Attempting to create an alternative to military intervention, the Civil Peace Service was designed to be operated by civil society organisations that would send experts trained in methods of civil conflict management to conflict zones.

Civil conflict management

Civil conflict management (also known as civilian conflict management) is the English translation of the German term *Zivile Konfliktbearbeitung*, which literally means ‘using civil means to work on conflict’. The term was coined and is widely used by the German peace movement and stands for a wide range of methods and instruments used to work on and transform social and political conflicts without violence. Civil conflict management aims to prevent and mitigate violence and prevent its recurrence in post-conflict contexts by working on the root causes as well as the long-term consequences of war and conflicts reflected in attitudes, behaviours, and structures.² ‘Civil’ in this context refers to the principle of non-violence as well as the involvement of actors from civil society in approaching conflicts on all levels.

Conflict transformation

forumZFD’s practical approach to peace work builds on the insights and practices of civil conflict management as well as on the (internationally better-known) theoretical framework of conflict transformation as defined by scholars like John Paul Lederach³, Johan Galtung⁴, Adam Curle⁵, Diana Francis⁶ and many more.

In the field of conflict transformation, conflicts are seen as a catalyst for change. If dealt with constructively, conflicts can form the beginning of sustainable and inclusive transformation processes towards positive peace.⁷ forumZFD has a systemic understanding of conflict transformation. Hence, conflicts are understood as complex and multidimensional systems in which the conflict dynamics are determined by the interplay of a multitude of interdependent elements. Systemic conflict transformation provides a framework that acknowledges this complexity. It shifts the focus to the mutual dependencies between the elements and allows strategic entry points for constructive intervention to be identified.⁸

This non-linear understanding of conflict acknowledges that to achieve a successful and sustainable transformation of conflicts, interventions are needed on multiple levels of society by multiple actors. John Paul Lederach⁹ defined three levels of action. 1) The top level consisting of political, military, or religious leaders with high visibility and decision-making powers. 2) The mid-range level, which includes key actors from civil society such as religious leaders and organisations, representatives of ethnic groups, academic institutions and intellectuals, and artists and cultural institutions. Actors on the mid-range level are respected among society and well connected to the grassroots level as well as to the top level. 3) The grassroots level, which represents the base of society, i.e. community activists, representatives of local minority groups, or local relief and social workers. Actors on the grassroots level know the realities “on the ground” and are often directly exposed to the negative consequences of protracted conflicts. By working with and supporting partners

1 Ramsbotham O., Woodhouse T. & Miall H. (2016). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: Fourth Edition*. Cambridge, Malden, MA: Polity Press, p. 6

2 Heinemann-Grüder, A. & Bauer, I. (2012). *Zivile Konfliktbearbeitung: vom Anspruch zur Wirklichkeit*. Opladen, Berlin & Toronto: Verlag Barbara Budrich, p. 19–21

3 E.g. Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press.

4 E.g. Galtung, J. (1996). *Peace by Peaceful Means*. London: Sage.

5 Curle, A. (1971). *Making Peace*. London: Tavistock.

6 E.g. Francis, D. (2003). *People, Peace and Power: Conflict Transformation in Action*. London: Pluto Press.

7 Miall, H. (2004). Conflict Transformation: a multi-dimensional task. In Austin A., Fischer, M. & Ropers, N., (Eds.), *Transforming Ethnopolitical Conflict: the Berghof Handbook*. p. 67–90.

Berlin: VS Verlag.

8 Wils, O. / Hopp, U./ Ropers, N. et al. (2006). *The Systemic Approach to Conflict Transformation Concept and Fields of Application*. Berlin: Berghof Foundation for Peace Support. p. iii

9 Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press. pp. 37–61.

(individuals and organisations) on the mid-range and grassroots levels, forumZFD aims to unleash and foster the existing resources for constructive conflict transformation that exist within the society itself and to encourage change from the bottom up.

Local ownership and partner orientation

As an international organisation and external party to the conflict, forumZFD recognizes that to achieve sustainable and locally rooted conflict transformation, the ownership of transformation processes always needs to remain with the local civil society. Therefore, forumZFD takes a partner-oriented approach, focusing on supporting local civil society and grassroots organisations and actors. Or as defined in the mission statement: *“Sustainable peace structures must be developed and supported by the social actors in conflict areas themselves. A basic pillar of our work is therefore the cooperation with local partners who stand for minimising violence and promoting dialogue. We view this cooperation as an equal and reciprocal partnership of learning which also helps to develop local expertise.”*¹⁰

forumZFD works with direct partners, with whom the local teams develop and implement projects jointly. If needed, forumZFD also provides support in the form of capacity building and organisational development with the aim of strengthening the partner organisation itself to become a stronger actor for peace in its respective context. While partners are usually from civil society, forumZFD also engages in partnerships with government institutions. For example, forumZFD has long-standing partnerships with state schools and the respective ministries of education. In addition, forumZFD works in various strategic partnerships with international as well as national organisations and networks to achieve common goals, strengthen networks, and build powerful constituencies for peace.¹¹

All-partisan approach

The participation of all groups involved in and affected by conflicts is elementary to finding sustainable solutions and paving the way for positive peace. Participation enables all parties to the conflict to express their needs and interests, based on which a common vision for the future can be developed. Consequently, forumZFD works with an impartial (or third-party) approach, meaning that it reaches out to all conflict parties that are willing to explore non-violent ways to deal with conflicts. However, particularly in the context of civil war, power asymmetries between the various groups are often extensive. Special attention is therefore given to supporting weaker, marginalized, or excluded groups to ensure their needs and interests are heard and included in decision-making processes.

The full list of values and principles of conduct that guide every aspect of forumZFD’s work can be reviewed in the mission statement.¹²

Processes and structures

Over 25 years of practice, forumZFD’s organisational structures and processes have adapted to reflect the realities faced by the teams in the programmes and to help them to overcome challenges, establish best practices, grow professionally, and increase their impact. For the purpose of this paper, it is worth taking a closer look at the planning, monitoring, and evaluation (PM&E) system and the internal structure for knowledge management and knowledge transfer. Both are essential for organisational learning and set the stage for the ongoing improvement of forumZFD’s approaches, methods, and tools in all areas of engagement.

Planning, monitoring, and evaluation

Working in regions affected by conflicts means working in volatile settings that are prone to abrupt changes. In order to effectively work in such unstable environments, the work in forumZFD’s country programmes is supported by a tailored planning, monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) system.¹³ forumZFD’s PM&E system builds on outcome mapping¹⁴ and has been designed to accommodate a process-oriented approach while at the same time providing guidance for the design and implementation of conflict transformation projects.

At the start of each new country or regional programme, a systemic conflict analysis is conducted to gain insights into the local conflict dynamics and actors involved. Based on this analysis, forumZFD then identifies local partners and possible entry points, and determines its strategies and goals. Depending on the context, these strategies can include activities and projects in various areas of engagement such as mediation and dialogue, gender equality, human rights, dealing with the past, peace education, communities for peace, journalism and media, migration and refugees, or local conflict counselling. Projects often touch on more than one of these areas of engagement simultaneously.

10 forumZFD. (2017). Committed to Peace: Mission Statement – Forum Civil Peace Service (2nd ed.). Retrieved from www.forumZFD.de/en/publikation/mission-statement-forumzfd.

11 forumZFD. (2020). Guidelines on working with partners within forumZFD. Unpublished internal document.

12 forumZFD. (2017). Committed to Peace: Mission Statement – Forum Civil Peace Service (2nd ed.). Retrieved from www.forumZFD.de/en/publikation/mission-statement-forumzfd.

13 forumZFD. (2019). forumZFD Minimal Guidelines on Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation. Unpublished internal document.

14 For more on outcome mapping, see: Earl, S. et al. (2001). Outcome mapping: building learning and reflection into development programs. International Development Research Centre. Ottawa. Retrieved from www.outcomemapping.ca/download/OM_English_final.pdf.

A process-oriented approach enables the design of change processes with the potential to encourage behavioural changes and alter destructive patterns of interaction that fuel conflict. It moreover means that working approaches and strategies are planned, monitored, and regularly adapted to changes in the context. In other words, they need to react flexibly to changes in the local context and conflict dynamics that immediately affect the project and programme work.

In addition, forumZFD's process-oriented PM&E system promotes sustainability and ownership. Local partners are included in the development of the programme strategies and project designs, are a crucial partner in the project implementation, continuously provide feedback, build bridges to other local partners and institutions, and provide essential local expertise. Together, clearly communicated steps are defined at the beginning of a project, which can be adapted throughout the implementation process should reflection and monitoring show that other strategies can or have to be applied as the context has changed.

Knowledge transfer and management

The PM&E system supports the documentation and exchange of lessons learned and good practices within programmes. In addition, several exchange mechanisms have been developed to facilitate the transfer of knowledge across programmes. The exchange across programmes allows the programme teams to benefit from the vast experience and knowledge that has accumulated within forumZFD over the years and to reflect upon their approaches, methods and tools applied in different contexts. The main exchange formats are the Programme Exchange (ProX), shadowing visits, the Horizontal Exchange, and cross-regional working groups on specific subjects.

Through the participatory writing process and the concept papers themselves, forumZFD aims to improve its knowledge management and transfer in terms of the work performed in the key areas of engagement in which forumZFD operates.

3

Concept Paper: Peace Education

Introduction

forumZFD's work is guided by a vision of *“a world community which does not resort to violence when dealing with disparities”*.¹⁵ Peace Education represents a major contribution to the achievement of this vision. It aims to mainstream non-violent conflict transformation and resolution skills, principles, and theories, providing teachers and learners with the tools and skills needed to discuss and understand conflict and enable them to take an active role in resolving and transforming conflicts in their direct environment, their communities, and society as a whole.

In the past 20 years, forumZFD has implemented countless Peace Education projects in various contexts, making it one of the organisation's biggest areas of engagement in terms of the total number of projects implemented. Over the years, a myriad of materials, training sessions, and initiatives have been developed by forumZFD and our partners to facilitate the mainstreaming of Peace Education in formal and non-formal education settings. This paper seeks to take a closer look at forumZFD's work in the field of Peace Education and describe forumZFD's practical approach to Peace Education that has been shaped by the experience of the national and international peace workers and their partners within the programmes and projects.

Why we engage

forumZFD recognizes Peace Education as an inclusive and transformative form of intervention to conflicts that endeavours to change attitudes and behaviours that lead to conflicts. As defined by UNICEF in 1999, Peace Education is understood as *“the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, young people and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level”*.¹⁶

Peace Education begins by improving people's understanding of conflict theories and the conflicts in their respective context. It aims to provide a critical mass of people with the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions and resolve conflicts non-violently. In societies where discrimination prevails between different social, ethnic, or religious groups, Peace Education aims to include marginalized perspectives and narratives and provide a more nuanced understanding of the different perceptions of the conflict. Peace Education therefore facilitates the gradual overcoming of stereotypes and prejudices among individuals and groups.

Working with the formal education sector provides the unparalleled opportunity to introduce the principles of non-violence and conflict transformation to an entire generation of students. Teachers are by definition natural multipliers of knowledge. Working with the education sector offers the opportunity to make use of this multiplier effect. forumZFD works with teachers, education institutions, and ministries to integrate Peace Education principles and subjects into their curricula.

By working with the formal education sector forumZFD aims to make schools a space for learning non-violent conflict resolution skills and insights. The students benefiting from Peace Education take their knowledge about peace, conflict, and non-violent alternatives to conflict resolution to their friends, families and into their future careers and might even become tomorrow's leaders and peace activists in their respective fields. In addition, forumZFD works outside of the formal education sector, offering Peace Education in non-formal settings and formats to those who cannot be reached through the education system.

How we engage

forumZFD runs programmes and projects in Germany and in eleven countries all the way from Bosnia-Herzegovina to the Philippines. The content of each programme and project is determined by the peace needs identified in each country, the needs of local partner organisations, and the resources available. As a result, each country programme and Peace Education project can look quite different at first glance.

15 forumZFD. (2017). Committed to Peace: Mission Statement – Forum Civil Peace Service (2nd ed.), p. 4. Retrieved from www.forumZFD.de/en/publikation/mission-statement-forumzfd.

16 Fountain, S. (1999). Peace Education in UNICEF - Working Paper. p. i. Education Section, Programme Division, UNICEF. New York. Retrieved from www.unicef.org/spanish/education/files/PeaceEducation.pdf.

Nevertheless, after working on Peace Education for over 20 years, the organisation has gathered considerable experience and collected lessons learned that define forumZFD's approach to Peace Education today. This chapter will look at the common characteristics and best practices of the forumZFD approach to Peace Education, which is systemic, contextualized, inclusive, multifaceted, and follows a teaching methodology that is rooted in Peace Education principles and values.

Systemic

forumZFD aims to provide impetus with the potential to integrate Peace Education into the entire education system. In a complex system like the education sector, various interdependent actors need to be involved in change processes.

A central group of actors in the education system are the teachers. In most Peace Education projects run by forumZFD and its partners, teachers take a central role. As mentioned above, teachers are multipliers with the ability and position to transfer knowledge to a wide audience of learners. At the same time, teachers influence and implement change processes in education institutions. Projects that work with primary, secondary, and higher education therefore often choose to take a teacher-centred approach, while remaining sensitive to the roles and needs of other actors in and around the schools. Experience has also shown the importance of involving the school administration in the process design and in providing training on Peace Education, as it plays a crucial role in ensuring the success and sustainability of change processes. The same applies for representatives of the government education institutions.

Projects taking place in higher education such as in universities or teacher education institutions often also involve the students directly in addition to the teachers. In Peace Education projects outside of the education sector, forumZFD works directly with trainers, learners, and partners from civil society and academia.

Beside building the capacities of various actors, forumZFD aims to strengthen relationships among key actors to enable cooperation and common action to promote Peace Education on all levels of the education sector. This is achieved by connecting different actors to existing networks or forming new networks and coalitions that can promote changes on the regional or even national level (also see the section on 'Networks and Coalitions' below).

Box 1:

Working with school administration and the government educational institutions – examples from the Philippines and Ukraine

The team in the Philippines is currently developing a project with two higher education institutions in Mindanao to engage in a "total school approach" to Peace Education. The project aims to address the challenge of sustainability of the integration of Peace Education into formal education institutions by working with the school administration in addition to the teachers. After several years of offering Peace Education, it became apparent to the team that involving key decision-makers in the institutions early on and more regularly than in previous Peace Education projects is essential to help build the foundations for the institutionalization of peace education. The involvement of the school administration also allows for a deeper understanding of the different contexts, needs, and resources of each school.

In the "Peaceful School" project in Ukraine, the forumZFD team develops and pilots a Peace Education curriculum in schools in close cooperation with the Ukrainian state education institutions. As a result, the Ukrainian ministry of education granted the status of an all-Ukrainian educational experiment to the project. This sends a powerful message to the project participants that such a partnership and systemic approach will lead to positive changes throughout the entire formal educational system and strengthen the project's sustainability and advocacy activities.¹⁷

Contextualized

Together with the local partner organisations and the teachers or trainers, forumZFD assesses the main needs and conflict issues that they themselves and the learners are facing in their region and in their everyday lives. The theories and tools of conflict transformation discussed in teaching manuals, teaching materials, and Peace Education curricula are applied to the local conflicts, using examples from the direct experience of teachers, trainers, and learners. This process also includes gaining a deep understanding of the different education systems in each of the countries that forumZFD works in. Each education system has its own strengths and weaknesses regarding Peace Education that need to be taken into account in order to develop successful Peace Education strategies. Based on the assessment, the forumZFD teams and their partners develop tailored approaches to Peace Education that tackle these needs and build on the existing resources, experiences, and knowledge of teachers and learners in each context.

¹⁷ forumZFD. (2019). "Peaceful school" model, Ukraine. Retrieved from www.forumZFD.de/en/peaceful-school-model-ukraine.

Inclusive

Conflict contexts are often marred by internal division and the exclusion of various groups. Peace Education aims to actively overcome these divides. To avoid exacerbating existing power asymmetries, discrimination, and division, Peace Education processes and projects need to be inclusive. This means 1) bringing people together across conflict lines, 2) paying special attention to the inclusion of marginalized groups (e.g. refugees, minorities, or young people who do not attend school who might be excluded from formal education altogether), and 3) promoting multi-perspectivity, ensuring room in the materials and modules on Peace Education for the discussion of different narratives and perspectives.

Multifaceted

There are different forms and schools of Peace Education, each with its own focus. These for example include human rights education, democracy education, sustainability or environmental education, and conflict resolution training. Conflict resolution and conflict transformation theories and skills are always a central element of Peace Education at forumZFD, aiming to change attitudes and behaviours by offering non-violent, constructive ways of dealing with conflicts. In addition, each Peace Education programme integrates a multitude of cross-cutting topics into the Peace Education framework depending on the specific context and needs.

In contexts where gender dynamics are considered to be a leading cause of conflicts, gender also plays a central role in Peace Education. In a post-conflict context like the Western Balkans or Lebanon, elements of dealing with the past are emphasized. In the Philippines, where students in some regions face recruitment by violent extremist groups and media reporting that is often polarizing, the countering and prevention of violent extremism and conflict-sensitive journalism form part of Peace Education projects. In Cambodia, where pollution and deforestation are drivers of conflict, environmental protection is stressed in the Peace Education programme. At a time when students obtain most of their news and information from the internet and social media where they are exposed to hate speech and fake news, social media literacy has become a component of various Peace Education programmes.

Facilitating Peace Education

Traditionally, education is understood as the act of transferring skills, knowledge, and attitudes to children, young people, and adults. Accordingly, Peace Education could be described as the act of transferring skills, knowledge, and attitudes relating to the promotion of peace, conflict transformation and conflict prevention. This view is limited, however, in that it regards teaching as a “one-way street” on which those who are “in the know” pass the content on to those who are “not yet in the know”. forumZFD instead takes a learner-oriented approach adapted to fit the context in which the Peace Education modules, training, materials, projects, and programmes are developed and implemented. Learner-oriented means that concepts build on the needs and resources of the learners themselves, value the knowledge, skills, and experience they bring with them, and create a space where these can be shared. The learners may be trainers, teachers, students, school pupils, or members of groups that are especially affected by conflict.

Peace Education as practiced by forumZFD is very much concerned not only with the content, but also with how the content is facilitated. Using the term “facilitating” rather than “teaching” implies that learners not only learn from the facilitator but also to a significant extent from each other. This involves creating an intensive dynamic in which learning takes place in a myriad of directions simultaneously and is constantly changing. The learning dynamic no longer focuses on the teacher facing the class, but rather opens up the learning environment and widens its focus to become multi-dimensional.

One important consequence for modules and training is working in a circular setting, which encourages equal communication within the group rather than the group facing the facilitator. Peace Education employs interactive and experiential methods which actively involve the learners and recognize their experience as social and political beings. A core aspect is employing the element of self-reflection – depending on the learners’ age and their ability to broaden their perspective beyond their own standpoint. Self-reflection is the first step towards opening up to understanding one’s own role in a conflict situation and is as important for adults as it is for children and young people.

Working on formal and non-formal Peace Education

forumZFD works within the framework of the formal education system – and beyond it through non-formal education. In the formal education system, forumZFD and its partners contribute to the integration and implementation of Peace Education in primary, secondary, and higher education. Non-formal Peace Education refers to Peace Education programmes that occur outside of the formal education sector.

Formal Peace Education

Most of forumZFD’s projects concentrate on working with the formal education sector. For teachers and education institutions interested in Peace Education, forumZFD offers:

Capacity building

Training is needed to be able to teach Peace Education or integrate Peace Education tools and content into teaching. During such training, teachers learn relevant theories of Peace Education and conflict transformation. As detailed above, all training is contextualized to meet the reality of the teachers and learners. In addition, teachers reflect on their own attitudes and behaviours to dealing with conflicts and overcome prejudice and stereotypes they have developed through the experience of conflict. In various projects, the administration of education institutions as well as representatives of relevant government institutions receive training in capacity building, too, and consider their key roles in the implementation and promotion of Peace Education.

Development of materials

The teachers, supported by forumZFD and its partners, develop teaching guides and modules that provide practical guidance for themselves and other teachers to apply what they learned during the training. In conflict and post-conflict countries, official learning materials for students often reflect biases, stereotypes, and antagonizing language. There are often only scant or no materials that reflect Peace Education values and principles. Therefore, forumZFD engages in and supports the development of new learning materials together with teachers and other partner organisations.

Box 2:

Bosnia-Herzegovina education on the Holocaust and peace – a practical guide for educators

In cooperation with the Educator's Institute for Human Rights (EIHR) and the Post-Conflict Research Center (PCRC), forumZFD is co-editing and publishing a manual with lesson plans on Peace Education for teachers and educators. The teaching material is introduced to teachers during training. The work was presented at the international conference on "Education on Holocaust & Peace" held in Sarajevo in July 2021, which was co-organised by forumZFD.

Integration, institutionalization and accompaniment

How deeply Peace Education can be embedded into the education system depends on the status quo of the education system in place, the available resources, and the political will for transforming the education system. forumZFD's engagement can therefore aim to integrate a single module on Peace Education into a gap in the existing curriculum or to adjust several subjects and ultimately a school's entire curriculum to conform with Peace Education values and principles. Independent of the scale of Peace Education integration processes, forumZFD supports and accompanies its partner teachers and institutions throughout the process. This includes identifying gaps where Peace Education modules can be integrated in and accompanying these integration and curriculum change processes. In addition, forumZFD supports the education institutions in the development of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and indicators to measure impacts and allow for the continuous improvement of processes and content.

Box 3:

Integrating Peace Education on a national scale in Kosovo

Since 2018, forumZFD has contributed to the establishment and work of the Consortium for Peace Education led by the Ministry of Education of Kosovo, which includes representatives of pilot schools and NGOs. The consortium aims to institutionalize Peace Education by providing teachers with the necessary knowledge and tools to integrate topics of peace and resilience into teaching as cross-cutting subjects. As a first outcome, two curricula manuals on "Teaching Peace and Building Resilience" have been developed and published (2020) that link existing teaching materials proposed by NGOs to the official curriculum framework of Kosovo. The process is set to continue in the coming years, with training for teachers and school personnel and the potential incorporation of additional modules.¹⁸

18 UNDP. (2020). Teaching Peace and Building Resilience Curricula Manuals. Retrieved from www.ks.undp.org/content/kosovo/en/home/library/democratic_governance/teaching-peace-and-building-resilience-curricula-manuals.

Networking and advocacy

To gain support for the integration of Peace Education, forumZFD seeks partnerships with local, regional, and national education authorities. In addition, forumZFD supports, joins, or builds Peace Education networks and coalitions on all levels – from national or international networks promoting Peace Education to smaller local and regional networks of practitioners to create spaces for them to share experiences, discuss challenges, organise events and training, or engage in advocacy. In the Western Balkans, for example, the regional forumZFD project “Alliance for Peace Education” engages with forumZFD colleagues and partners in North Macedonia, Kosovo, and Bosnia-Herzegovina and provides a platform for exchange, cooperation, and synergies among Peace Education actors in the region.¹⁹ In the Philippines, various training on conflict sensitive journalism (CSJ) for teachers over the past four years has resulted in the establishment of the Media Educators of Mindanao, Inc. (MEM). This network is composed of secondary and higher education teachers of media and communication subjects who are actively integrating and promoting CSJ in their curricula. Together with this network, forumZFD developed a teaching guide on CSJ and a video explaining the concept. In collaboration with other partners, MEM also helped co-organise the international academic research conference to promote CSJ held in February 2020.²⁰ In addition, forumZFD engages in a multitude of events and activities that aim to increase the visibility of Peace Education initiatives. These can range from Peace Education contests among schools, to exhibitions, talks, conferences, media engagements, etc.

Box 4:

Peace Education in higher education institutions

On the university level, Peace Education projects can follow the same method as in primary and secondary education. This is the case at the Buddhist University in **Battambang, Cambodia**. Here, forumZFD supports the university in the integration of insights drawn from conflict analysis and non-violent communication into its curriculum, development of textbooks, and provision of training on Peace Education for lecturers.²¹ Beside conflict transformation education, Peace Education in Cambodia also includes subjects like environmental protection, understanding history, stereotypes and discrimination, gender-based violence, and social responsibility.

Working on the university level also provides room for other innovative initiatives. In **Bosnia-Herzegovina**, for example, forumZFD supports the development and implementation of the Peace Hub within the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Sarajevo. In addition, forumZFD collaborates with the Peace Education Hub Sarajevo within the Alliance for Peace Education. The project supports a learning and teaching environment in which academics, community organisations, practitioners, and other key actors of the civil society can collaborate for a critical exchange and mutual learning in order to explore the possibilities of collaborative projects, advocacy, and work on institutionalizing peace building, peace pedagogy and thus promoting the culture of peace. forumZFD advises on pedagogical materials and research, co-develops teaching materials, supports advocacy processes for the integration of Peace Education into schools, co-implements training, co-organises public events, and supports strategic networking between academic and non-academic key actors while fostering the Western Balkan regional cooperation.²²

In the **Philippines**, forumZFD worked with several teacher education institutions (TEI) in Mindanao to integrate Peace Education into their curricula and develop a teaching guide ensuring that future generation of teachers receive the skills and training needed to teach Peace Education.²³

19 Peace Education Hub. (2020). About Us. Retrieved from <https://peacehub.ba/about-us>.

20 For examples, see: forumZFD. (2019). CSJ Conference: About the Organizers. Retrieved from www.forumZFD.de/en/csj-conference-about-organizers, forumZFD. (2019). Teachers Are Ready to Change the Media Field Through CSJ. Retrieved from www.forumZFD.de/en/teachers-are-ready-change-media-field-through-csj.

21 forumZFD. (2020). Building peace through education. Retrieved from www.forumZFD.de/en/building-peace-through-education.

22 Peace Education Hub. (2020). About Us. Retrieved from <https://peacehub.ba/about-us>.

23 forumZFD & Commission on Higher Education Regional Office 11. (2013). Integrating Peace Education in Teacher Education: A Teaching Guide. Retrieved from www.forumZFD.de/en/publikation/integrating-peace-education-teacher-education-teaching-guide.

Box 5:

Peace Education in Germany

forumZFD also works with the formal education sector in Germany. Through a variety of workshops and learning materials (e.g. ready-made lesson plans for teachers to implement), forumZFD aims to familiarise students in primary and secondary education with non-violence and conflict transformation. That being said, forumZFD's work in the field of Peace Education is also meant to be a counterweight to the ever growing impact of the German Federal Armed Forces in schools. While the German Federal Armed Forces takes questions of security as a starting point for teaching how conflicts can be "resolved", forumZFD's Peace Education points out – with varying degrees of complexity depending on the students' age– that peace can only be achieved as a joint effort between all involved parties.

The formats used include, but are not limited to, theatre workshops, simulation games, and Q&A sessions with refugees that enable students to view current social events or topics (e.g. migration) from a peace perspective. Furthermore, students learn about projects of forumZFD and its partners abroad through Q&A sessions with (former) peace workers, short films, and written materials as well as through interactive workshops. Students are encouraged to use the insights into international peace projects gained to determine how they themselves can contribute to a peaceful environment in their own daily (school) lives. forumZFD offers didactic and methodical training as well as training on its peace work for all trainers implementing workshops in schools.²⁴

Non-formal Peace Education

Non-formal education is especially important in contexts where the possibilities for working with the formal education sector are limited either due to a lack of political will or bureaucratic hurdles. Non-formal Peace Education creates spaces for learners to gain a better understanding of the conflict context they live in, learn about non-violent ways of overcoming conflict, and meet other young people across conflict lines.

Box 6:

The Future We Want

This regional project is implemented by forumZFD in Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina and North Macedonia in partnership with local organisations. It aims to promote intercultural exchange so as to challenge stereotypes, ethnocentric narratives and division, and build a better future through youth capacity building and local advocacy actions. The young people participating in the project analyse the problems and conflicts surrounding them and develop creative ideas and activities to face these challenges without violence. Outcomes of the project have been short films, podium discussions, street art, exchange trips, and theatre plays.²⁵

For example, in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, the formal education system remains mostly divided along ethnic lines. In Kosovo, schools in Serbian majority areas form parallel structures aligned to the Serbian Ministry of Education and therefore adopt different curricula, textbooks, and regulations. Moreover, even within the Kosovan system, children from different ethnic groups usually attend different shifts or go to different schools. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the "two schools under one roof" system has been in place since the war ended in 1995. Pupils of different ethnic groups use separate parts of the same school building or attend school in shifts.²⁶ Within this framework, non-formal education allows these divisions to be overcome, providing a safe space to meet, exchange, share, and challenge stereotypes and ethno-centric narratives and become actors of positive change.

²⁴ forumZFD. (n.d.). Friedensbildung in der Schule. Retrieved from www.forumZFD.de/de/friedensbildung-in-der-schule.

²⁵ forumZFD. (2020). The future we want 2. Retrieved from www.forumZFD.de/en/future-we-want-2, forumZFD. (2020). THE FUTURE WE WANT 2. Retrieved from www.forumZFD.de/en/future-we-want-2-1.

²⁶ OSCE. (2018). Two Schools Under One Roof - The Most Visible Example of Discrimination in Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Retrieved from www.osce.org/files/f/documents/3/8/404990.pdf.

Box 7:

Philippines

In the Philippines, forumZFD works with secondary school students on the inclusion of young people in the peace process and the issue of recruitment of young people by violent extremist groups. forumZFD provides platforms where young people, particularly senior secondary school students, can come together and collectively identify non-violent means to counter conflict situations, structural violence and marginalization, inter-cultural prejudice and antipathy, and discrimination-based violence. The young people are empowered to assert their roles as active working partners in nation-building on the one hand and as active stakeholders, leaders, and role models for their communities on the other.²⁷

Another important reason to create spaces for non-formal Peace Education is that not all groups benefit from formal education, including some of the most vulnerable i.e. young people not attending school, internally displaced persons, refugees, indigenous peoples without access to formal education, and of course (young) adults who already completed their school education. Non-formal Peace Education includes all kinds of formats including training, summer schools, and creative projects that engage young people across social divides.

The boundary between non-formal Peace Education and other capacity building activities of forumZFD is fluid. forumZFD offers capacity building and training to its partners in all areas of engagement and is not limited to Peace Education. Capacity building is for example offered to representatives from various kinds of local civil society organisations, traditional leaders, peace activist, journalists and media practitioners, former combatants, representatives of government institutions, etc. Training can concern conflict transformation and resolution skills like mediation and negotiation, but also other cross-cutting topics such as conflict sensitive journalism, digital storytelling, human rights or organisational development.

While Peace Education, whether formal or non-formal, aims to prevent conflict and mitigate violence by mainstreaming conflict resolution skills and empowering young people to become actors for peace, capacity building activities aim to support civil society actors in their respective roles and responsibilities and to help them to reach concrete peace-related goals. This involves helping them to deal directly with specific conflicts in their communities or to enable their participation in peace talks and dialogues. While Peace Education and capacity building therefore often target different participants and pursue different objectives, both follow the same teaching methodology, foster an exchange on an equal footing, are contextualized, and build on the learners' existing experience, needs and resources.

Box 8:

'Hawli w Hawalaye' ('About and Around Me')

'Hawli w Hawalaye' is an interactive toolkit for staff working with children in summer camps in Lebanon. The staff are prepared during a five-day workshop where they learn how to use the toolkit. The toolkit is value-based in that it portrays (both directly and indirectly) different values of humanity such as respect, cooperation, acceptance, non-violence, appreciation, empathy, and love. It reflects a journey that the children will get to experience during the summer camp, leading them first on the path of self-discovery, then encouraging them to know the 'other' in their community and teaching them how to deal with difference and diversity before they learn practical conflict transformation skills.²⁸

Additional information

This concept paper on forumZFD's practical approach to Peace Education has been developed by the Peace Education Working Group. The working group consists of forumZFD staff from different programmes who work on Peace Education. The working group members came together over the course of one year to discuss different aspects of their work on Peace Education and define the core of their approach to Peace Education. They continue to exchange on their experiences and lessons learned, and consult one another on challenges experienced in their everyday work. The working group contributes in this way to institutional learning and the knowledge transfer from one programme to the other.

The selected publications and links compiled below provide more information about forumZFD's work in the field of Peace Education

27 forumZFD. (2018). Engagement with Senior High Schools. Retrieved from www.forumZFD.de/en/engagement-senior-high-schools.

28 forumZFD. (2019). 'Hawli w Hawalaye' Toolkit for Children Summer Camps (Arabic). Retrieved from www.forumZFD.de/en/HwH.

within the different country programmes. For further information, please contact the respective country programme or write an email to kontakt@forumZFD.de.

Box 9:

Additional information on Peace Education projects and publications by forumZFD

Programme: Publications and links:

Western Balkans

Bosnia-Herzegovina

- *Peace Pedagogy in Higher Education* – a cooperation project involving Peace Hub Sarajevo/University of Sarajevo and forumZFD: <https://peacehub.ba/about-us>.
- *MemorInmotion* – a pedagogical tool on Peace Education and culture of remembrance: www.dwp-balkan.org/en/library.php?cat_id=5&text_id=27
- *A Mapping of Educational Initiatives for Intercultural Dialogue, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation among Young People in the Western Balkans* (UNICEF and RYCO, 2019 with contributions by forumZFD). Contact: parente@forumZFD.de for the materials
- *Toolkit for Teachers: Educating for Intercultural dialogue, peacebuilding, constructive remembrance and reconciliation* (UNICEF, RYCO, 2019, with contributions by forumZFD). Contact: parente@forumZFD.de for the materials
- *Peace Education in/for schools in Bosnia-Herzegovina*: www.forumZFD.de/en/peace-education-infor-schools-bosnia-and-herzegovina
- *“Holocaust & Peace” pedagogical manual – Lessons from the Past for the Future: A Practical Guide for Educators*. By PCRC, EIHR and forumZFD, Sarajevo 2021. See: www.forumZFD.de/en/publikation/holocaust-and-peace-lessons-past-future

Kosovo

- *Manual on the Summary of Best Practices for Peaceful Conflict Resolution between Peers at Schools*: http://kec-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/02_-_manual_on_the_summary_of_best_practices_-_eng_-_web.pdf
- *Curricula manuals on teaching peace and building resilience*: www.ks.undp.org/content/kosovo/en/home/library/democratic_governance/teaching-peace-and-building-resilience-curricula-manuals

Lebanon

- *‘Hawli w Hawalaye’* (‘About and Around Me’ toolkit in Arabic): www.forumZFD.de/en/hawli-w-hawalaye-about-and-around-me-toolkit-arabic-2017-ongoing
- *An Eye not for an Eye*: www.forumZFD.de/en/eye-not-eye-2014-ongoing
- *Non-Violent Action (NOVA) training for teachers*: www.forumZFD.de/en/non-violent-action-nova-training-teachers-2010-2016

Ukraine

- *“Peaceful School” model*: www.forumZFD.de/en/peaceful-school-model-ukraine, <http://safeschools.com.ua>

Cambodia

- *Building peace through education*: www.forumZFD.de/en/building-peace-through-education

Philippines

- *Conflict sensitive journalism*: www.forumZFD.de/en/conflict-sensitive-journalism
- *Integrating Peace Education in Teacher Education*: A Teaching Guide: www.forumZFD.de/en/publikation/integrating-peace-education-teacher-education-teaching-guide
- *Peace and conflict in political science*: www.forumZFD.de/en/peace-and-conflict-political-science
- *Engagement with senior high school students*: www.forumZFD.de/en/engagement-senior-high-schools
- *Sustaining hubs for peace in academic institutions*: www.forumZFD.de/en/sustaining-hubs-peace-academic-institutions

Germany

- *Peace Runs* (information in German): www.forumZFD.de/de/die-friedenslaeuft-des-forumzfd
- *Peace Education in schools* (information in German): www.forumZFD.de/de/friedensbildung-in-der-schule

4

Concept Paper: Communities for Peace

Introduction

forumZFD works with communities towards a common vision for positive peace.²⁹ This means not just preventing physical violence and transforming existing conflicts but working towards social, economic, environmental, and structural peace that enables inclusion, accountability, transparency, diversity, and freedom. To achieve this vision, Communities for Peace aims to encourage and help communities to recognize and tap into their potential to develop and work towards a common vision for peace on the local, regional, and national levels.

Communities for Peace is the newest of forumZFD's four key areas of engagement. It came into being through 1) observing the need among communities to take action and organise themselves in the midst of violent conflict and polarization and 2) experiencing the potential of communities to become powerful practitioners, partners, advocates, and role models for conflict transformation.

Over the past few years, forumZFD has intensified its work within different communities in the Middle Eastern programmes in Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel/Palestine. In light of the interest in community-based conflict transformation work, the Lebanon programme organised a regional conference in 2018 to discuss the challenges and lessons learned. At the end of the conference, a working group was formed that has met regularly ever since to exchange on various issues relating to community work. In 2019, the Philippines programme joined the working group to exchange with the other programmes and contribute their experience from working with Indigenous and Muslim communities in Mindanao.

In the course of writing this paper, the Communities for Peace Working Group convened for regular online meetings to discuss their approaches and practical experiences in the field. The regions they work in differ in terms of their culture, history, and social and political systems. Hence each country programme has its own individual approach to working with communities that is sensitive to the needs, culture, and context of each community. This paper shows the range of approaches and methods used across programmes to work on conflict transformation with various kind of communities.

Why we engage

For the most part, the role of communities garnered little attention in the history of international conflict resolution and peace research. Questions of peace and war were generally perceived to be matters that were decided on the level of the political or religious elites. As already discussed in the section above on 'How we work', forumZFD instead advocates conflict transformation through civil society and grassroots organisations and initiatives.

Top-level diplomatic peacebuilding efforts can only succeed in the long run when they are accompanied by the transformation of attitudes, behaviours, and structures throughout society and local communities. Even more importantly – in cases where (inter)national peace negotiations or diplomatic efforts are lacking, stagnating, or failing – community responses play an important role in 1) finding local solutions and securing peace at the community level and 2) advocating peace from the bottom up to achieve changes on the regional or national level. Therefore, forumZFD considers local communities as well as grassroots movements a crucial partner for working on conflict transformation.

The situation of local communities in conflict and post-conflict contexts can be challenging. Local communities are often affected by the consequences of top-level decision-making (or the lack thereof) more severely than the decision-makers themselves. At the same time, people in such communities feel that they themselves have extremely limited influence on these decisions.³⁰ This experience reinforces the feeling of powerlessness and frustration, which often leads to apathy and reluctance to get involved in political discussions or activities. In some cases, the lack of opportunities to shape and influence one's own environment and future prepares the ground for radicalization, violence, and destructive behaviour. In addition, when local conflicts in and between different communities escalate into violence, they run the risk of spiralling out to other areas involving additional actors and issues, and causing violent outbreaks on a larger scale.³¹

29 Johan Galtung conceived "[...] negative peace [as] the absence of violence, absence of war - and positive peace [as] the integration of human society". In relation to that, he also introduced typologies of violence: direct, structural and cultural violence. According to him, negative peace is the absence of organised direct violence whereas positive peace is the absence of structural and cultural violence and prevalence of justice, harmony and equality. See Galtung, J. (1964). An Editorial. *Journal for Peace Research*, 1 (1), 1-4

30 Maiese, M. (2003). Levels of Action (Lederach's Pyramid). Retrieved from www.beyondintractability.org/essay/hierarchical_intervention_levels.

31 Miall, H. (2004). Conflict Transformation: a multi-dimensional task. In Austin A., Fischer, M. & Ropers, N., (Eds.), *Transforming Ethnopolitical Conflict: the Berghof Handbook*. p. 67-90. Berlin: VS Verlag.

At the same time, there are examples of communities that act as drivers of change by developing, practicing, and advocating non-violent ways of dealing with conflicts in their own communities and beyond. Based on lessons learned from successful community organising and conflict transformation experiences all over the world, forumZFD supports local organisations, communities, and individuals by developing tools and skills with them to constructively deal with conflicts on the community level.

Through Communities for Peace, forumZFD helps communities to empower themselves, collaborate with others, and channel the desire for change in constructive and impactful ways. By taking responsibility, community members counter the feelings of frustration and apathy, and mitigate and prevent violence. They take ownership of their lives and future; develop can-do attitudes and self-responsibility; foster compassion, connection, and trust; and initiate collaborations across divides to work constructively on alleviating tension and resolving conflicts. forumZFD's local conflict transformation initiatives always build on the existing resources, knowledge, and skills within a community and respect traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.

Finally, these transformations enable the communities to influence wider structural change. The communities can for instance lead by example and support other communities or connect with other networks and organisations, building a constituency for peace that strives for peace on the regional or national level.

How we engage

Depending on the context and the communities' needs and goals, forumZFD works with various methods to support communities on their way to becoming drivers of conflict transformation. Three of the main methods used across all programmes are: community building, community organising, and coalition and network building. These methods all work towards developing and strengthening the agency of communities to transform the conflicts affecting them.

While there is a logical progression in the three methods from community building via organising to coalition and network building, the methods reinforce one another and can be applied in all combinations and sequences. The definitions of these methods overlap at times and specific tools can be employed in more than one method. The methods differ in what they aim to achieve however:

Community building

When community members are not connected, only loosely connected, or divided, community building can strengthen the relationship and trust between community members. This can be achieved by developing capacities jointly or starting small initiatives together. The activities implemented may thus be similar to community organising with the difference that the primary objective of these activities is to bridge conflict lines within the communities and build trust and constructive relations. Community building thus creates the conditions necessary for the co-creation of spaces for dialogue and community-led peacebuilding efforts.

Community organising

While community building focuses on intra-community relationships, community organising empowers the community to realize the change(s) they envision and transform the conflicts affecting them. Aiming at systemic change, community organising develops the community's agency as a strategic base for action. This may include leadership development, the joint development of visions and strategies, and the transformation of individual members of the community. The specifics of community organising depend on the conflicts the community is facing and the change(s) it envisions. It can include creating spaces for dialogue, strengthening existing conflict transformation mechanisms, working on local conflict issues, campaigning and advocacy, or engaging with state actors. At the heart of this method is the reinvention of individual community members as agents of social change. By creating an understanding of community members' potential to effect change and promoting self-efficacy, community organising counters apathy and enables the community to influence change processes that go beyond their community.

Coalition and network building

In comparison to community building and organising, coalition and network building does not focus on the community itself. Instead, it builds relationships with other communities and actors in order to amplify the efforts of communities. Collaboration or cooperation with other communities or organisations can function as support communities, enable collective peaceful action, and allow mutual learning and solidarity.

forumZFD's involvement in these processes ranges from the close long-term accompaniment of communities and organisations to offering one-off contributions or training on specific peace and conflict-related issues. forumZFD offers facilitation, capacity building, mentoring, coaching, short and/or long-term accompaniment, and technical and organisational support where needed.

The concrete tools used when working with partner organisations and communities depend on their needs. Common tools include conflict analysis tools; conflict resolution tools like non-violent communication (NVC), mediation, dialogue and negotiation skills, conflict counselling, or Do No Harm; trauma healing, including collective and trans-generational trauma; measures to help build relationships, confidence, and trust; and strategy and organisational development. In addition, forumZFD actively shares success stories and lessons learned through their networks to inspire and motivate other interested communities affected by conflict.

All of forumZFD's work with communities is based on the understanding that communities need to be the drivers of their own change processes and that conflict transformation is a continuous process. In line with forumZFD's partner approach, the teams work in equal (horizontal) partnerships and collaborate with local organisations to ensure local ownership and sustainability. To ensure sustainability, forumZFD for example helps its partners to mobilize the resources available, brings them together with other potential partners, supports organisational development processes, and assists in the development of planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation routines where needed.

Working with communities

forumZFD is currently working with various kinds of communities in the Middle East and the Philippines. In Lebanon, for example, forumZFD is currently working with neighbourhoods comprising Lebanese and refugees. In the Philippines, forumZFD works with Indigenous and Muslim communities in Mindanao on transforming intra- and inter-community conflicts. In Israel and Palestine, forumZFD cooperates with peace movements that support conflict transformation on both the grassroots and national levels. The communities forumZFD has been working with can be divided into three at times overlapping types of communities: neighbourhood-based communities, identity-based communities, and interest-based communities as grassroots and peace movements for example.

Neighbourhood-based and identity-based communities

As the name suggests, neighbourhood-based communities are communities bound by their geographic proximity, so villages or neighbourhoods in an urban area for example. forumZFD works with communities that experience intra- and inter-community conflicts and divisions or tensions along ethnic, religious, or ideological lines. It moreover works with identity-based communities that experience marginalization and/or are affected by intra- and inter-community conflicts. The specific conflict dynamics differ in each community. Common key factors for conflict are a lack of trust, previous experience of violence among the different groups in the community or by government forces and militias, the experience of displacement, marginalization, recruitment by armed groups, a lack of basic infrastructure for conflict resolution, a lack of basic social services, and competition for land and income opportunities.

Box 10:

Working with Indigenous peoples in Caraga, Philippines

Indigenous communities in Mindanao are discriminated against and marginalized. Their ancestral lands are bought or grabbed by mining and palm oil companies and/or used as battlegrounds for combats between the Philippine armed forces, New People's Army, and numerous other militias. This leads to conflicts within and between Indigenous communities on how to cope with the situation. Moreover, the interests and needs of Indigenous communities are often not heard or considered by local authorities. forumZFD is working with an Indigenous community in the Caraga region. To build trust, the forumZFD team engaged in long-term accompaniment and gained in-depth knowledge of the context through immersion in the community. forumZFD provides capacity building according to the community's specific needs. This has included non-violent conflict transformation skills like mediation and negotiation, and indigenous leadership and self-governance. The training builds on the existing traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. Through a bottom-up networking approach, the community connects with other indigenous leaders. Long-term accompaniment allows forumZFD to support the community in the development of strategies to handle the conflicts that surround them without violence and advocate their rights and interests vis-à-vis government authorities.

forumZFD's approach to conflict transformation at the community level aims to 1) create awareness for alternative, non-violent ways of dealing with conflicts on the community level and beyond; 2) help local actors (from the community) to obtain the skills needed to transform the conflicts affecting their communities, e.g. through training in conflict transformation and resolution or community organising; 3) encourage the strengthening or building of local conflict resolution mechanisms; 4) build networks among community activists; 5) enable communities to address their issues themselves and advocate their rights and interests vis-à-vis authorities. forumZFD's direct partners are local organisations (e.g. NGOs, CSOs or Indigenous organisations) and traditional leaders that are connected to the communities.

Box 11:

Lebanon: Future Together Now! I and II (2017–2020)

In Lebanon, forumZFD cooperates with four NGOs in Tripoli and one in the Bekaa Valley. Lebanon hosts more refugees per capita than any other country in the world. This has put additional pressure on the already fragile economy and social stability leading to conflicts in and between neighbourhoods. The project Future Together Now! aims to empower local actors and establish processes that foster social cohesion, allow for joint decision-making, and encourage common activities for non-violent conflict transformation leading to a participatory community development within communities. Together with its local partners, forumZFD trained and accompanied local community activists, for example in conflict transformation, dialogue and mediation, project management, and personal and community development. Accompanied by forumZFD and its partners, the community activists established local working groups with whom they planned and implemented activities addressing local conflicts and needs in their respective communities.³²

Grassroots movements

forumZFD also works with grassroots movements and organisations (i.e. CSOs, NGOs) that promote peace and non-violence. Grassroots movements are interest-based communities that connect people through a common interest (e.g. overcoming violent conflict, building bridges in divided societies, or aspiring for social change), but whose members do not necessarily live in close proximity to each other or share a common identity. They can be organised through formal or informal networks or in organisations.

Grassroots movements striving for social change and non-violent conflict transformation frequently experience internal conflicts themselves. Their membership is often diverse, including people from various groups and backgrounds. In addition, organisational and strategic questions may lead to internal conflicts. These internal conflicts hinder grassroots movements from achieving their full potential and becoming a strong force for conflict transformation on both the community and national levels.

forumZFD therefore supports grassroots movements at various stages of their development to build and strengthen their expertise, for example in non-violent conflict transformation and resolution, non-violent action, and organisational skills that will allow them to overcome internal conflicts and become actors for local conflict transformation on the community, regional, or national level.

Box 12:

Working with grassroots movements in Israel/Palestine – Combatants for Peace

In Israel/Palestine, forumZFD works with Combatants for Peace, which is a joint movement founded by former Israeli and Palestinian fighters who are committed to ending the occupation and all forms of violence and building a viable future for all. The movement, founded in 2006, experienced challenges in cohesion, long-term strategizing, group building, and the integration and recruitment of new members. Together with forumZFD, Combatants for Peace aims to broaden and diversify their membership base and their leadership, and become a more effective coalition for social and political change. Through training and consultations on non-violent communication, non-violent action, models for effective group building, strategic facilitation, dialogue facilitation, and movement DNA building, forumZFD supports the movement in achievement of their goals and the continued implementation of common activities of Israelis and Palestinians for conflict transformation on the community, regional, and national levels.³³

Additional information

This concept paper on forumZFD's practical approach to Communities for Peace has been developed by the Communities for Peace Working Group. The working group consists of forumZFD staff from different programmes, who work on various community-related projects. The working group members came together over the course of one year to discuss different aspects of their work on Communities for Peace and define the core of their approach to Communities for Peace. They continue to exchange on experiences and lessons learned, and consult one another on challenges experienced in their everyday work. The working group contributes in this way to institutional learning and the knowledge transfer from one programme to the other.

32 forumZFD. (2017). Future Together Now! II (2017–2020). Retrieved from www.forumZFD.de/en/future-together-now-ii-2017-2020-0.

33 forumZFD. (2020). Sharing Sorrow, Bringing Hope. Retrieved from www.forumZFD.de/en/sharing-sorrow-bringing-hope.

The selected publications and links compiled below provide more information about forumZFD's work in the field of Communities for Peace within the different country programmes. For further information, please contact the respective country programme or write an email to kontakt@forumZFD.de.

Box 13:

Additional information on Community for Peace projects and publications by forumZFD

Programme:

Publications and links:

Lebanon

- *Community mobilizing:* www.forumZFD.de/en/community-mobilizing
- *Future Together Now! I:* www.forumZFD.de/en/future-together-now-i-2014-2019
- *Future Together Now! II:* www.forumZFD.de/en/future-together-now-ii-2017-2020

Israel and Palestine

- *Coalition building:* www.forumZFD.de/en/coalition-building
- *Building a movement together:* www.forumZFD.de/en/building-movement-together
- *Community organising in times of the coronavirus pandemic:*
www.forumZFD.de/en/community-organizing-times-corona

Jordan

- *Blog on local conflict transformation practices:* www.forumZFD.de/en/1-local-conflict-transformation-practices-conflict-resolution-and-coffee-jordanian-way
- www.forumZFD.de/en/2-local-conflict-transformation-practices-law-your-ally

Philippines

- *Capacity building in non-violent conflict transformation in Cotabato:*
www.forumZFD.de/en/capacity-building-non-violent-conflict-transformation
- *Community of practitioners in Butuan:* www.forumZFD.de/en/community-practitioners-cop

5

Concept Paper: Dealing with the Past

Introduction

The involvement of a German organisation in conflict transformation is necessarily connected to Germany's violent past and the experience of coming to terms with this. The multifaceted, fractured, and at times controversial experience of confronting the National Socialist dictatorship, the Shoah, the SED regime in East Germany, and colonial misconduct are key points of reference for any international engagement.³⁴ Serving as a starting point and with the awareness of the German weaknesses and strengths, Dealing with the Past is an important framework and approach to conflict transformation. While Dealing with the Past is particularly strongly rooted in forumZFD's work in the Western Balkans and Lebanon, different aspects of Dealing with the Past are included across forumZFD programmes. This concept paper compiles and conceptualizes the lessons learned from the Western Balkans, Lebanon, Ukraine, and Cambodia.

Why we engage

Influenced by the German experience, forumZFD's Dealing with the Past approach is based on an acute awareness of the role of societal processes and collective responsibility in either fuelling or preventing violence. Documenting and analysing the complex and often devastating events of the past allows for deeper societal and political mechanisms that have enabled past violence and often still sustain present conflict to be unveiled. Dealing with the past thus does not concern itself with the occurrence of violence in the past and its effects alone, but also turns the past into a resource for decision-making in the present that will support the transformation towards just peace and a common future. It is this process of societal transformation that is central to conflict transformation processes and guides forumZFD's work in all areas, including Dealing with the Past.

Conflict transformation provides an adequate framework for enabling such societal change processes. Mindful of its own role as an external actor and being conscious of the European origins of the Dealing with the Past framework, forumZFD is invested in ensuring the local ownership of Dealing with the Past mechanisms and supports homegrown, local initiatives. After all, concerning oneself with the past, dealing with it, and drawing lessons from it is work based on clear ethical standpoints, values, and principles. It provides a clear framework and reference to highlight and address continuing, protracted, and structural violence. As such, Dealing with the Past is always a political endeavour. Such processes need to be rooted in society itself in order to be sustainable. To this end, forumZFD's approach to Dealing with the Past is process- and impact-oriented and does not prescribe tools or results. Instead, forumZFD provides spaces where the mechanisms and legacies of past violence and their impact on the present and the future can be reflected upon and understood. In addition, forumZFD offers to accompany local actors in the development of their own strategies for dealing with the past.

How we engage

There is no universal definition of Dealing with the Past and the term has referred to different processes over time. Tracing the history of the term offers a deeper understanding of the approach. Originating from the efforts in the wake of the Second World War to come to terms with the past and solidify peaceful democracies in Europe, Dealing with the Past is often associated and used interchangeably with transitional justice. For both, a major building block are what are known as the Joinet-Orentlicher principles, which also influence the understanding of the process of many other international institutions, such as the UN³⁵ and the EU³⁶: the right to know, the right to justice, the right to reparations, the guarantee of non-recurrence.

Building on these principles, the leading peace research institute Swisspeace developed a more holistic understanding of Dealing with the Past, which "attempts to illustrate the transformative dimension of Dealing with the Past as part of a political and societal process of democratization in post-conflict societies"³⁷. This comprehensive framework has become a recognized standard and reference point in Dealing with the Past theory and practice – also at forumZFD. This framework still mainly focuses on a victim-perpetrator dichotomy and a judicial and rights-based approach to Dealing with the Past however. Victims' suffering must be acknowledged, their rights re-established, and perpetrators brought to justice. While this is not only important but necessary, it narrows the field to an individualistic

34 German Federal Government: Interministerial Strategy to Support "Dealing with the Past and Reconciliation (Transitional Justice)" in the Context of Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts and Building Peace; 2010, pp. 4–22; www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/2298392/633d49372b71cb6f4d36c1f064c102c/transitional-justice-data.pdf

35 The rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies; Report of the Secretary-General; UN SC S/2004/616; www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/PCS%205%202004%20616.pdf

36 The EU's Policy Framework on support to transitional justice, <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13576-2015-INIT/en/pdf>

37 See: Politorbis No 50 "Dealing with the Past", 2010, www.ihrb.org/pdf/Politorbis_50_Dealing_with_the_Past.pdf; swisspeace: A conceptual framework for Dealing with the Past. Holism in Principle and Practice, 2012. http://archivesproject.swisspeace.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/archivesproject/Publications/DwP_Conceptual_Framework_October2012.pdf

approach addressing criminal guilt and accountability as an individual responsibility, disregarding collective dynamics. In practice, the framework falls short of taking societal and collective mechanisms into account that often prevail after physical violence ends.

A victim-perpetrator focused approach also risks reconfirming or establishing a culture of victimhood and releasing victims and associated groups of any responsibility, as it is the perpetrator who bears all (legal) responsibility. “The implications for political culture where victimhood becomes a socially institutionalised way of escaping guilt, shame or responsibility are far-reaching. A political culture, based on competing claims to victimhood will support and legitimise violence, and fail to foster political responsibility and maturity.”³⁸ This approach leaves out large sections of society: bystanders, opponents, supporters, those those considered both victims and perpetrators. It also leaves out those, who will become main actors of any present and future political transformations: people who may have contributed directly or been affected by the violence but live in a society deeply affected by it.

As expressed in the Interministerial Strategy of the German federal government on supporting Dealing with the Past processes, there are three levels of engagement³⁹: the individual level that focuses on restoring interpersonal relations mainly between victims and perpetrators; the societal and socio-political level that works with various groups towards a shared future; and the institutional level that restores legitimate and effective processes and the trust between government institutions and the population. Although forumZFD works on all levels, it predominantly focuses on the societal level by working on personal and collective transformation processes, namely changes in how people relate to and act towards themselves, others, and the society they operate in.

forumZFD builds its approach to Dealing with the Past on the insights of conflict transformation. Swisspeace⁴⁰ and also the Berghof Foundation⁴¹, which is a leading organisation for consolidating learning from practitioners of conflict transformation, have captured how the two concepts interlink in practices in the field. Dealing with the Past is understood as measures “aimed at re-connecting the social fabric after mass violence [...] to enable society to relate peacefully, and to enable political and social institutions to function effectively”⁴². The benefit of practising a more transformative approach to Dealing with the Past is that it transcends its initial limitations and supports long-term processes aimed at providing sustainable sociopolitical conditions for societies and individuals to live peacefully and in dignity.⁴³ It is then not an end in and of itself and it is not about “writing history”, but rather about understanding the legacies of the past and using this understanding to set the parameters for a peaceful future.

Focus areas

Each country and regional context that forumZFD operates in is unique and requires tailored approaches to Dealing with the Past. forumZFD has succeeded in developing its approaches in response to a diversity of circumstances, which has allowed for multi-directional learning and exchange. While each country and regional programme has developed its own focus areas, four areas of activity stand out across all programmes: truth and accountability, collective memory and identity, education and pedagogy, and network and coalition building. The majority of forumZFD’s activities and projects relating to Dealing with the Past can be attributed to one or more of these focus areas. Of course, these areas often intersect, overlap, and interact in multifarious and sometimes astonishing ways. A brief introduction to each focus area is provided in the following.

Truth and accountability

forumZFD supports the documentation, investigation, and public discussion of past violence. This work contributes to ensuring the right to know of victims and their families, and can provide symbolic reparation through memorialization. In practice, forumZFD is not involved in legal proceedings per se, but works with different survivor groups, supporting their efforts in seeking truth, offering emotional relief, and creating the opportunities to heal wounds. Oral history is often employed to compile witness accounts and document past violence and the events leading up to this.

The histories documented are then not only archived, but also shared and displayed through publications, exhibitions, or artistic interpretations. Overall, the truth and accountability work enables a more inclusive and enriched public discourse about the past and the various existing historical narratives. The public discussion forms an important basis for advocating greater accountability for past crimes and injustice on a societal level. The work completed in the area of truth and accountability moreover provides an essential contribution to the work on collective memory and identity.

38 Smyth 2007, 80 – cited in B. Austin: Dealing with the Past – Supporting people-centred “working-through” the legacies of violence, Berghof Foundation, 2017; p. 10, www.berghof-foundation.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Publications/Policy_Briefs/PolicyBrief06.pdf

39 German Federal Government: Interministerial Strategy to Support “Dealing with the Past and Reconciliation (Transitional Justice)” in the Context of Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts and Building Peace; 2010, p10f; www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/2298392/633d49372b71cb6fafd36c1f064c102c/transitional-justice-data.pdf

40 Jones, B., Baumgarten, E., Gabriel, S. “A Transformative Approach to Dealing with the Past” Swisspeace Essential, 2015, www.swisspeace.ch/assets/publications/downloads/Essentials/d17582dc5c/A-Transformative-Approach-to-Dealing-with-the-Past-Essential-15-swisspeace.pdf

41 B. Austin: Dealing with the Past – Supporting people-centred “working-through” the legacies of violence, Berghof Foundation, 2017; www.berghof-foundation.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Publications/Policy_Briefs/PolicyBrief06.pdf

42 B. Austin, p. 5

43 This also relates to the pursuit of UN SDG 16: “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.”

Box 14:

The Narrative Project in Cambodia

Sharing and reflecting on narratives regarding stereotypes and different perspectives is sometimes difficult for people in Cambodia, especially the young generation. For example, the memory of the civil war is still a very sensitive issue for young people's parents and grandparents. However, the memories of the elders are important for the young people to know and understand their own past and build a peaceful future for their country. During various activities, the Narrative Project brings together people across social divides to critically reflect on individual and collective narratives. For example, forumZFD is cooperating with the Battambang branch of the Preah Sihanouk Raja Buddhist University in the construction of a "Human Library" in which the untold stories of people and their past experiences of conflict are researched and documented in videos and text. The narratives documented are then used to facilitate a public discussion on the past.

Collective memory and identity

forumZFD's work on collective memory and identity is multifaceted and complex. Collective memory refers to a shared idea about the past, which informs our understanding of who we are as an individual and members of a group – our identity. Collective memory and identity moreover informs people's interpretation of the present, their attitudes, and their behaviour. Projects related to collective memory and identity are closely linked to the other focus areas: truth and accountability, education and pedagogy, and network and coalition building. This focus area constitutes the central element of forumZFD's work on Dealing with the Past.

forumZFD and their partners aim to challenge exclusive narratives of the past and promote marginalized perspectives. The concept of multi-perspectivity is key here. Multi-perspectivity refers to the understanding that a deeper comprehension of the past is accomplished by giving space to the perspectives and experiences of different social groups instead of advocating only a one-sided perspective of historical accounts. This approach is used in pedagogical settings such as peace and history education as well as in conflict sensitive journalism, academia, and discourses about historical events and cultural heritage. forumZFD aims to create spaces for reflection on how memory shapes us. Multi-perspectivity offers a way to relate to the realities of others and counteract divisive and one-sided narratives.

Being aware that memory and identity work relates closely to individual and collective trauma caused by the experience of violent conflict, forumZFD is committed to trauma sensitivity. In addition, many research projects, publications and oral history projects supported by forumZFD integrate and explicitly explore how gender dynamics have influenced past conflicts and what impact historical events have had and continue to have on gender perspectives.

Box 15:

Memory of War (2012–ongoing)

Developed in collaboration with a number of partners, the Memory of War training is based on the techniques of constructive memory management and complemented by elements of non-violent communication, individual and collective identity and acceptance of self and other. In Lebanon, there is no unified approach to teaching about the recent history of the civil war. As a result, the civil war from 1975 to 1990 and the post-war period are rarely discussed in schools and, if they are, they are often presented from a one-sided point of view. The training and train the trainer programme has been running since 2012 and aims to enable young people (aged 14+) to engage with the painful past, raise awareness for the adverse impact of using violence in conflicts, and understand the role of memory in the process of reconciliation.

Using personal stories and experiences of people who lived through the war, the training renders sensitive issues accessible through the lens of multi-perspectivity. It aims to provide participants with the skills to facilitate conversations about contested historical events without deepening divides but by creating deeper understanding. The handbook is designed for teachers as well as for NGO staff and can be used in a classroom context or for extracurricular activities and workshops.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ www.forumZFD.de/en/memory-war-2012-ongoing

Two powerful tools in this focus area are oral history and arts and culture. Oral history, both as a methodology and as a tool to approach history, allows young generations to gain insights into past violence and engage in an intergenerational conversation about the past. It moreover enables the documentation and dissemination of the stories of marginalized groups and supports a multi-perspective understanding of the past. forumZFD often forms partnerships with artists for this. Art has the ability to evoke emotions and address sensitive issues differently than words. It enables our minds to understand and express sensitive topics more easily. Hence artistic expression opens the space for discussion and is thus often employed as a first step to engage with issues of conflict or facilitate conversations about taboos.

Box 16:

Past / Future / Art project in Ukraine

The twentieth century history of Ukraine is marred by several waves of violence and trauma, including the Russian revolution, Holodomor, Holocaust by Bullets and other violence during the Second World War, which have not yet been processed properly. History has been manipulated to fuel the conflict in the east of the country and exacerbate social polarization and divides across the country. To address these issues and create a space for discussions about the difficult past, forumZFD's Ukraine Programme launched the Past / Future / Art project in collaboration with local academics and art curators. This cultural memory platform hosts discussions and produces texts and other educational materials with the aim of finding and promoting inclusive and non-confrontational ways of understanding the past traumas in Ukraine. Artistic practices that deal with history and identity are at the centre of this project, as art allows past traumas to be processed indirectly and provides space for a reinterpretation of past events. forumZFD brings together artists, historians, and other professionals within this project to search for a new language for discussing collective memory and influences the overall public discourse so that the past traumas can serve as a moral compass in the search for a common future.

Education and pedagogy

forumZFD aims to help local actors to shape the way history is engaged with, both in a public and an educational context. Working with a range of professionals, forumZFD supports the development of learning methods and lesson plans to engage with historical narratives in an inclusive and transformative rather than a divisive way. forumZFD moreover empowers educators to be able to explore such difficult topics in a conflict-sensitive manner, challenging exclusive narratives. Using formal educational settings as well as informal systems such as workshops and training series, the work is highly interlinked with forumZFD's work on Peace Education (see chapter 3, Concept Paper: Peace Education). forumZFD also supports research projects that complement the knowledge about the past and contribute to the academic debate by organising round table discussions and conferences linking civil society, educators, and academia. It is forumZFD's understanding that enhancing knowledge is not an end in and of itself. Working with the education sector allows it to reach out to the next generation and offer tools for coping with the violent past, present new perspectives, and derive valuable lessons for an inclusive and peaceful future.

Box 17:

Lebanon – From Local History to a Better Understanding of the Past (2018–2021)

Local history has been developed and implemented by the partnership of forumZFD Lebanon and the Lebanese Association for History (LAH). The initial aim of the project was for young people in the Mount Lebanon region to learn about the civil war in an innovative, accessible, and critical manner, and to link their understanding of the Lebanese Civil War to the present. Over the course of two school years, the project employed oral history techniques mixed with artistic practices to address contested histories. The project involved 175 students from eight state secondary schools, 15 history teachers and five artists. In the first project phase (2018–2019), the students were engaged in collecting oral history testimonies based on the question of "How did the war change people's lives?". The second phase (2019–2021) aimed to engage students in an intergenerational dialogue based on the oral histories collected and explore artistic and creative processes of representation to gain a deeper understanding of the past and link it to the present.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ www.forumZFD.de/en/local-history-wider-understanding-past-2018-2020

Network and coalition building

Dealing with the Past processes are complex and need to be comprehensive in order to be fruitful. Each actor can often only accomplish limited progress alone. Thus forging alliances with the aim of creating a sum greater than its parts is key. forumZFD contributes by bringing different actors and stakeholders together to improve both horizontal and vertical communication and working relations. It moreover offers an open platform for communication and connects different actors working in the field of Dealing with the Past within respective countries and regions. The relationships are built and maintained with great care over time through various professional exchange formats, including periodicals, newsletters, forums and roundtables, or mapping of local initiatives and resources. The goals of these exchanges vary between sharing knowledge and information, coordinating joint activities, enhancing relations between different stakeholders, and intensifying advocacy efforts. This includes civil society actors and grassroots groups and movements, but also local authorities and government to integrate Dealing with the Past efforts into a broader framework and thus contribute through its impact to institutional and structural change.

Additional information

This concept paper on Dealing with the Past was developed by forumZFD' internal cross-regional Dealing with the Past Working Group. The working group members came together over the course of one year to discuss different aspects of their work in the field of Dealing with the Past in addition to similarities and differences within their work in order to define their practical approach to Dealing with the Past. They continue to exchange on their experiences and lessons learned, and consult one another on challenges experiences in their everyday work. The working group contributes in this way to institutional learning and the knowledge transfer from one programme to the other.

The selected publications and links compiled below provide more information about forumZFD's work in the field of Dealing with the Past within the different country programmes. For further information, please contact the respective country programme or write an email to kontakt@forumZFD.de.

Box 18:

Additional information on Dealing with the Past projects and publications by forumZFD

Programme:

Publications and links:

Western Balkans

- *Balkan.Perspectives (Kosovo)*: www.dwp-balkan.org/en/blog.php?cat_id=8&type=2
- *Beyond Pain, Towards Courage! Stories about the trauma of wartime sexual violence (Kosovo)* kosovomemory.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/PERTEJ-DHIMBJES-DREJTE-GUXIMIT-ENG-web-version.pdf
- *Missing persons days (Kosovo)*
www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8-Hnlf_tgM
www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxRE4eD_Nzo
- *Advocacy on Transitional Justice issues (BiH)*:
www.dwp-balkan.org/en/library.php?cat_id=5&text_id=35
eu-monitoring.ba/en/alternative-report-on-the-application-of-bosnia-and-herzegovina-for-the-europe-an-union-membership-political-criteria
- *Peace with Women's face (BiH)*:
www.dwp-balkan.org/cms_dwp/userfiles/file/20190307_KATALOG_MSZL_web.pdf
- *In Youth Eyes Dealing with the Past Program Sarajevo Film Festival (BiH)*:
www.sff.ba/en/page/dealing-with-the-past
www.rycowb.org/?tag=in-youth-eyes
- *Website and regional resource platform developed by forumZFD with the focus on topics related to Dealing with the Past in the Western Balkans*
www.dwp-balkan.org
www.forumZFD.de/en/dealing-past-western-balkans

Western Balkans

- *The Memory of War (2012–ongoing)*: www.forumZFD.de/en/memory-war-2012-ongoing

Western Balkans

- *Past / Future / Art*:
www.pastfutureart.org/en
www.forumZFD.de/en/past-future-art-dealing-past-through-art-odesa

6

Concept Paper: Local Conflict Counselling

Introduction

In Germany, forumZFD offers local conflict counselling to municipalities that experience social tension and conflicts. Through local conflict counselling, forumZFD helps municipalities to shape social change processes and transform social conflicts in a sustainable and non-violent manner.

The intention of tapping into the expertise of the Civil Peace Service in civil conflict management and conflict transformation to address conflicts within Germany existed from the outset. After all, conflict is part of any society and Germany, similar to any other established democracy, is not immune to social conflict – as recent events have demonstrated. The arrival of refugees in 2015/16 was followed by polarizing discussions on immigration and asylum and accompanied by – at times violent – resistance to the arrival of refugees, especially in rural areas. The political response to the coronavirus pandemic has continued this display of polarization and fragmentation of society with regard to core political issues and a continuing radicalization on all political fronts, especially in the right-wing extremist spectrum.

Local conflict counselling focuses on social conflicts on the municipal level of society. For it is on this level that various interest groups live side by side, depend on the same infrastructures, and need to negotiate their various interests to achieve their goals. When conflicts reach a point of escalation and complexity where negotiation seems difficult or impossible, the conflicts can block decision-making processes and thus inhibit change and development processes in a municipality, with direct consequences for its inhabitants. Local conflict counselling helps actors on the municipal level to identify and approach local conflict dynamics, overcome such blockages, enhance inclusion, and foster social cohesion.

The first local conflict counselling process in Germany was conducted by forumZFD in 2006 in Oranienburg. Since this time, forumZFD has been involved in a multitude of local counselling processes in various parts of Germany. The approach builds on the insights of peace and conflict studies and the experiences deriving from civil conflict management abroad as well as on insights from other systemic approaches i.e. systemic organisational development or systemic therapy.⁴⁶ In cooperation with various German state governments, universities, and other civil society organisations involved in local conflict counselling, the approach is continuously enhanced and refined based on practical experiences, research, and scientific insights from other fields.

This concept paper summarizes the concept of local conflict counselling, which has been described in numerous articles and handbooks to date. It aims to introduce the concept of local conflict counselling to an English-speaking audience and promote further reflection and a knowledge exchange among practitioners of civil conflict management and conflict transformation.

Why we engage

From a systemic conflict transformation point of view, conflicts are an inevitable part of human relations. Social conflicts often occur when a social system (such as a society or a community) is confronted with external or internal changes. Different groups within the social system may develop contrary ideas on how to interpret the change (i.e. whether it is “good” or “bad”) and how to react to these changes. This can lead to a polarization of positions and ultimately to escalation of the conflict.

Whether a social system will collapse or transform depends on how “resilient” the system is. A report by the US Institute of Peace defines a resilient system as “... one that is able to absorb, adapt, or transform itself through self-organization and learning to maintain its basic function (peace) in response to violent shocks and long-term stressors buffeting the system”⁴⁷.

By increasing the participation and inclusion of various social groups, strengthening or adjusting institutions, creating new conflict resolution mechanisms, and building capacities for civil conflict management, societies can increase their resilience to external and internal stressors. This is as much true for communities in Germany as it is for those in any other country in the world.

Local conflict counselling helps actors on the municipal level to gain a deeper understanding of the conflict dynamics, recognize existing resources for conflict transformation, and identify courses of action to transform the conflict and strengthen resilience and social cohesion in the long run.

46 Lustig, S. (2018). *Principles of Local Conflict Counselling: A Handbook for Teaching and Further Information*. Cologne, Germany: Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst e. V. p. 64

47 Van Metre, L. and Calder, J. (2016). *Peacebuilding and Resilience: How Society Responds to Violence*. Washington, USA: United States Institute of Peace. p. 6

Conflicts in Germany

Germany has been confronted with a multitude of social change processes over the last two decades that pose new challenges to politics, administration, and civil society organisations on the municipal level. forumZFD and its partners identified the following main conflict topics in German communities⁴⁸: immigration and integration, demographic and structural change, infrastructure and environmental protection.

Immigration and integration: While the acceptance of diversity is high in Germany overall and increased slightly between 2017 and 2020⁴⁹, immigration and integration remain polarizing issues. There are, for example, political parties and initiatives that interpret the increasing diversity in Germany as a threat to their social system, social status, and identity. The experience of the arrival of refugees from Syria and other fragile and conflict-ridden states in 2015 and 2016 triggered conflicts in many municipalities on how to interpret this phenomenon and how to react to it. Existing frustrations with the (local) government, misinformation, and prejudice on the one hand and a lack of resources, administrative capacities, and structures to process the arrival of refugees on the other led to mass protests and violent escalations of conflicts in various communities.

As a result, a multitude of initiatives have been formed that either celebrate diversity, welcome refugees and support integration processes, or mobilize against immigration, demand a cap on immigration or even deportations to “protect” the social system from change. In addition, the task of integrating new citizens into the community, cultural differences and misunderstandings, and competing needs cause conflicts between newcomers and the autochthonous population.

The polarization makes dialogue between these hardened fronts often seem impossible. This leads to conflicts within local governments, between the various initiatives for and against immigration, and between civil society and local governments. In addition, conflicts erupt within initiatives themselves and among refugees, who live in communal housing for many months and at times even spend years in poorly equipped temporary refugee facilities.

Demographic and structural changes: Both cities and rural areas in Germany are experiencing profound changes to the demographic structure of society. Especially young people are leaving rural areas to obtain an education or find better work in towns and cities. These demographic shifts lead to structural changes and challenges. In rural areas, the demographic shift has resulted in reduced public and private service offers in areas such as educational, cultural, and social institutions, medical care and public transport. In turn, urban areas struggle with the challenges of gentrification. Another outcome is the centralization of administrative structures in rural areas. Smaller villages are merging into larger administrative entities and moving access to government services further away for citizens, which leads to conflicts over the distribution of power and responsibilities and, at times, issues of representation and identification.

Infrastructure and environmental protection programmes: Another source of conflict on the municipal level are large-scale infrastructure and environmental protection programmes in the following sectors: transport, energy supply (e.g. the construction of wind farms), disaster protection, communication and digitalization (e.g. the roll-out of broadband internet), waste management (i.e. the storage of nuclear waste), environmental protection and reservations as well as tourism and leisure. The planning and implementation of such large-scale endeavours often give rise to complex conflicts of interest among the local population.

How we engage

Local conflict counselling is designed to transform local conflicts on the municipal level and can be applied both in urban and rural areas. A local conflict counselling process is typically facilitated by two impartial conflict counsellors, who accompany the local actors every step of the way. Throughout the consultation process, ownership of the conflict remains with the local conflict parties or “conflict owners”⁵⁰. The latter are all local actors who are part of the conflict system, have power to influence its dynamics, and therefore carry the responsibility for transforming the conflict.

Partners and actors

Important local actors are for example the municipal authorities (such as the mayor) and employees of the local administration and local government institutions, existing multi-agency committees (e.g. for violence prevention or integration committees), local representatives of political parties, local civil society organisations and associations including religious communities, trade associations, social institutions, cultural associations, and actively involved citizens.⁵¹ All of these conflict owners can be involved throughout the local conflict counselling process to varying degrees.

48 forumZFD (2014). Kommunale Konfliktberatung Konzeption zur Beratung von Kommunen im Wandel. Cologne, Germany: Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst e.V. p. 9

49 Follmer, R., Brand, T., Unzicker, K. (2020). Gesellschaftlicher Zusammenhalt in Deutschland 2020, Eine Herausforderung für uns alle. Ergebnisse einer repräsentativen Bevölkerungsstudie. Bertelsmann Stiftung, p. 9

50 Lustig, S. (2018) Principles of Local Conflict Counselling: A Handbook for Teaching and Further Information. Cologne, Germany: Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst e.V. pp. 115

51 Lustig, S. (2018). Principles of Local Conflict Counselling: A Handbook for Teaching and Further Information. Cologne, Germany: Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst e.V. pp. 20, 56

In most cases, the mandate for a local conflict counselling process is given by the municipal authorities who also acts as a close partner throughout the process. The local partners drive the process and regularly consult with the conflict counsellors on strategic matters. They are ultimately the main actors responsible for the implementation of the resulting recommendations for action.⁵² In light of their central role in the municipality and their decision-making power, the support or acceptance of the municipal authorities is considered a facilitating factor for a successful local conflict counselling process.⁵³ Additional local partners are other influential actors who are considered vital for the transformation process. This may include the municipal administration, local politicians, representatives of other important state institutions (i.e the police, schools) or representatives from influential local associations and networks. The choice of partners ultimately depends on the local context and circumstances.

The remaining conflict owners initially act as informants, who share their perspectives on the conflict dynamics, are given space to communicate their interests, and may act as partners in specific questions and periods throughout the process.⁵⁴ Regardless of the choice of partners, the conflict counsellors are impartial and do not act in favour of any of the conflict parties. Part of their role involves providing all conflict owners with opportunities to participate throughout the process.

The role of the conflict counsellors

The conflict counsellors are experts trained in methods of civil conflict management and conflict transformation.⁵⁵ Their task is to guide the conflict owners through the process. This style of consultancy is called process counselling or process model, as opposed to the expert model in which consultants provide concrete solutions and recommendations for actions. In the process model, the responsibility for the conflict and the search for solutions remains with the conflict owners and is not passed on to the conflict counsellors.⁵⁶ In consultation with the local partners, the conflict counsellors design the local conflict counselling process according to the local context, resources, and conflict issues. The process is closely monitored and adapted continuously in line with the realities in the field.

The local conflict counselling process is inclusive and provides room for all the different perspectives of the various conflict owners. Using different communication techniques including systemic questions and non-violent communication, the conflict counsellors interact with the conflict owners on an equal footing in an empathetic and non-judgemental manner. Throughout the process, the conflict counsellors use their skills to actively listen and understand the different viewpoints, needs and interests. They soften hardened positions, encourage an openness to listening to other viewpoints, and finally foster a new perspective on the conflict. One objective of the conflict counsellors is thus to repair and strengthen relationships between different local actors and harness mutual understanding to a point where the different actors do not see each other as the problem, but gain a common understanding of the situation that allows them to work together on the conflict issues identified.

At the same time, the conflict counsellors identify the existing resources for conflict transformation. As a result of previous attempts to deal with local conflicts, there may already be institutions, initiatives, processes, or personal skills of specific actors that can help to mitigate, resolve, or transform conflicts within the community. In addition, the conflict counsellors aim to unleash the (hidden) potential of local actors and institutions for effective conflict management and strengthen their conflict transformation capacity. Building upon these existing and potential resources, the conflict counsellors help the local partners and conflict owners to identify recommendations for action, which include concrete opportunities and needs for transformation of the conflict.

The limitations of local conflict counselling

Local conflict counselling can be applied to various conflict issues and in all conflict phases to prevent conflict or de-escalate an escalated conflict situation. However, local conflict counselling is aimed at conflict transformation on the municipal level and therefore cannot alter decision-making processes on the national or international levels. However, many communities are affected by conflicts that are decided on the national or even international level. For example, a conflict may erupt locally regarding new government regulations concerning agriculture or environmental protection regulations or migration policy. In these cases, the social system is affected by changes in the wider social system that they exist within. Here, local conflict counselling might not be able to transform the conflict on the national level, but it can help the various groups in the municipality to accommodate and adapt to these changes on the municipal level.

52 forumZFD (2014). *Kommunale Konfliktberatung Konzeption zur Beratung von Kommunen im Wandel*. Cologne, Germany: Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst e. V. p. 19

53 Ibid p. 23

54 Ibid p. 20

55 For a more detailed account of the skills and experience of a conflict counsellor, see: Lustig, S. (2018). *Principles of Local Conflict Counselling: A Handbook for Teaching and Further Information*. Cologne, Germany: Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst e. V. pp. 115–131

56 Lustig, S. (2018). *Principles of Local Conflict Counselling: A Handbook for Teaching and Further Information*. Cologne, Germany: Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst e. V. pp. 122–123

The local conflict counselling process



The phase model of local conflict counselling⁵⁷

The phase model developed by forumZFD describes the various steps in the local conflict counselling process. It serves as a guideline for conflict counsellors and local actors. This section provides an overview of the different phases and steps involved.

The local conflict counselling process can essentially be divided into three phases: 1) preparation, 2) counselling process, and 3) conclusion or possible extension.

⁵⁷ Lustig, S. (2018). *Principles of Local Conflict Counselling: A Handbook for Teaching and Further Information*. Cologne, Germany: Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst e. V. pp. 25–28

Phase one: preparation

In the preparation phase, the conflict counsellors build trust with the local actors, familiarise them with the working approach of local conflict counselling, and gain a first impression of the local conflict dynamics and conflict owners.

- 1) **Initial contact:** Before a local conflict counselling process can begin, one or more conflict owners must first express the need for conflict transformation in their community⁵⁸ and become aware of the possibility of local conflict counselling.
- 2) **Clarification of expectations:** The consultants clarify expectations of the local conflict counselling process with representatives of the municipality, who will provide the mandate to the conflict counsellors.
- 3) **Preliminary assessment:** The conflict counsellors conduct a preliminary assessment of the situation, identify the necessary local cooperation partners, and determine the scope of the process.
- 4) **Development of service offers and counselling mandate:** Together with the municipality, the conflict counsellors draw up an offer and agree on a mandate to determine the nature of the cooperation.

Phase two: counselling process

- 5) **Analysis of the situation/conflict:** The conflict counsellors conduct interviews with various local actors with the aim of understanding their perspective of the conflict dynamics in the field. Based on the information provided during the interviews, observations, and research, the conflict counsellors start to develop a systemic conflict and situation analysis that reveals the underlying conflict dynamics, the actors involved, and the relations between them. The local actors provide feedback and make corrections until the systemic conflict and situation analysis draws a picture of the local conflict situation that all conflict owners can agree to. The systemic conflict and situation analysis creates a common understanding of the conflict dynamics and hence represents an important milestone for common action.
- 6) **Action plan with recommendations for action:** Together with the local partners, the conflict counsellors discuss and formulate recommendations and develop an action plan. To increase the sustainability and effectiveness, the recommendations need to be realistic and consider the skills and resources that already exist within the community.
- 7) **Counselling during the implementation phase:** At this stage, the conflict counsellors take a step back and only step in again when needed. The responsibility for implementation remains with the local actors.

Phase three: conclusion or possible extension

If the contracting authorities that provided the mandate and the conflict counsellors come to the joint conclusion that the process has fulfilled the objectives initially agreed upon, the process ends here and the local actors can continue their work without any further need for consultation.

In some cases, the contracting authorities may also conclude that there is a need to extend the process. This can for example be the case when the systemic conflict and situation analysis reveal further needs for conflict counselling within the community, which were not part of the original mandate for the local conflict counselling process. In this case, the local conflict counselling process continues and focuses on the sub-conflict identified.

- 8) **Identification of a sub-conflict:** Together with the conflict owners and contracting authorities, the conflict counsellors determine the extent and boundaries of the sub-conflict they want to focus on.
- 9) **Redefinition or clarification of the mandate:** To extend the process, the conflict counsellors and the contracting authorities redefine the mandate and clarify the scope and objectives of the continuing process.
- 10) **Analysis of the sub-conflict:** The conflict counsellors develop a systemic conflict and situation analysis based on additional interviews, research, and observations.
- 11) **Recommendations for action regarding the sub-conflict:** The local partners and conflict counsellors develop new recommendations based on the findings of the new systemic conflict and situation analysis.
- 12) **Counselling during the implementation phase:** The local partners implement the recommendations. Support is only given by the conflict counsellors if needed.

Finally, the conflict counsellors and contracting authorities evaluate the process. If all of the objectives agreed previously are met, the local conflict counselling process is concluded.

At the end of a local conflict counselling process, the various actors in the municipality are well equipped to work on conflict transformation in their community and continue to improve their conflict resilience and strengthen social cohesion in the long-run. To increase sustainability, forumZFD remains in contact with its local partners and organises yearly inter-municipal conferences during which local partners from different municipalities can exchange both with each other and with experts from academia and civil society.

58 forumZFD (2014). *Kommunale Konfliktberatung Konzeption zur Beratung von Kommunen im Wandel*. Cologne, Germany: Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst e.V. p. 22

Box 19:

Local conflict counselling in Osterholz-Scharmbeck

Osterholz-Scharmbeck is a municipality with about 30,000 inhabitants in the north-west of Germany. In the early 2000s, the Drosselstraße neighbourhood became notorious throughout the town for violent incidents and drug-related crimes. Up until 1993, the neighbourhood served to house American soldiers and their families. After the soldiers left, the German government repurposed the area for social housing projects. A high percentage of the flats were allocated to migrants from the Middle East with uncertain residence status and limited working permits. The conflict dynamics in Osterholz-Scharmbeck show a typical pattern that can be observed in several places in Germany. Many people with a migration background experience exclusion, discrimination, and stigmatization in their host society. As a reaction, they seek support and a sense of belonging within their own community. The exclusion from mainstream society and the lack of opportunities for social and economic participation at times leads to the development of semi-criminal parallel societies and communities. This pattern also applies to Drosselstraße. The emergence of semi-criminal migrant communities in turn reconfirms the prejudice that many Germans hold against migrants and serves to legitimize the continuous exclusion and discrimination of migrants, leading to a vicious circle.

Over the years during which the conflict gradually escalated, the various actors involved developed a multitude of measures and policies to regain control and improve the situation in and around Drosselstraße, with limited success however. In 2009, the violence prevention council of the town of Osterholz-Scharmbeck resolved to initiate a local conflict counselling process in collaboration with forumZFD. The aim of this process was to assess the usefulness of the existing measures to deal with the conflict and to develop recommendations for action that would help to transform the integration-related conflicts and strengthen social cohesion in Osterholz-Scharmbeck.

After speaking with various local actors, the conflict counsellors of forumZFD developed a systemic situation and conflict analysis in which the intertwined conflict dynamics became visible.

The analysis revealed that the main conflict in Osterholz-Scharmbeck was between the representatives of the local government institutions, the police, local associations, etc. with the inhabitants of Drosselstraße regarding the question of how they should treat each other in their everyday encounters. This conflict was fuelled by various smaller conflict dynamics:

- Conflicts among various government institutions regarding the lack of a common approach to deal with the situation
- Continuous drug-related crimes causing an escalation of violence between the police and criminal groups in the neighbourhood
- Ethnic and cultural conflicts between the neighbourhood's inhabitants
- Economic and social discrimination against inhabitants of Drosselstraße, i.e. disadvantages in finding employment and competition for participation in the education programmes seen as a “way out” of economic deprivation
- Conflicts between first-generation migrants and their children

Based on the analysis, the conflict counsellors and local partners were able to assess the effectiveness of the various measures taken over the years on conflict transformation. The analysis showed that many measures were not accessible for the key conflict groups. Many of the projects were aimed at women in the neighbourhood, for example, while offers for young men, who were far more likely to be drawn into gang violence, were limited or non-existent. Other measures unintentionally reinforced the conflict dynamics. This was the case when infrastructural development investments and social projects were offered in a neighbouring district as this made the inhabitants of Drosselstraße feel unwelcome and excluded. In addition, the analysis revealed the potential for conflict transformation. A strong willingness and motivation to overcome the conflict existed among the representatives of the government institutions as well as among many of the inhabitants of Drosselstraße. In addition, several social institutions including a youth centre and a local football club as well as the municipality and the police already developed useful skills and networks that could be mobilized for conflict transformation.

Based on these insights, recommendations for action were developed that for example aimed to encourage a public debate on “integration” and reveal the potential of a more inclusive approach for Osterholz-Scharmbeck. Other recommendations aimed to improve the efficiency of existing coordination councils (such as the violence prevention council). The municipal administration was asked to take a leading role in coordination of the conflict transformation efforts. A flowchart showing the interdependency of various departments and institutions in regards to the Drosselstraße aimed to show synergies and clarify responsibilities and contact persons. The police increased their efforts to ensure conflict sensitive interactions and build trust with the inhabitants of Drosselstraße. The conflict counsellors accompanied their local partners throughout the implementation process as required.



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