

FutureGenerations Graduate School

RESEARCH REPORT. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: ENGAGING CITIZENS AND COMMUNITIES IN BUILDING PEACE PROJECT

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Occasional Papers of the Future Generations Graduate School explore community-based approaches to social development, health, nature conservation, peacebuilding, and governance. Faculty, alumni, and partner organizations present their field studies and applied research.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the generous support from Carnegie Corporation of New York, Future Generations has undertaken a multi-year investigation of the role of communities in building peace in fragile states and conflict-affected environments. This investigation has involved research activities, launch of field trials of a new approach to peacebuilding that emerged from this project, and a means of global extension of this learning through a new M.A. Degree in Applied Community Change with a concentration in Peacebuilding being offered by the Future Generations Graduate School in collaboration with the United States Institute of Peace.

The following five case studies were commissioned to examine instances where citizen or community-centered approaches had impacted the larger dynamics of peace in a country:

- **Afghanistan**

Recognizing Afghan capacities at the village level, a nationwide community-driven development program employing government, community, and NGO partnership has been one of the only large-scale successes in Afghanistan's reconstruction.

- **Burundi**

Government and NGOs mobilized local peace committees in several of the most insecure regions of Burundi, helping to prevent violence and manage tensions during the country's civil war; these committees may now play an active role in the country's transitional justice process.

- **Guyana**

Tapping into latent citizen and community desires for peace, international and local civil society organizations mounted a successful citizen movement that helped to bring about the first elections free of post election violence.

- **Nepal**

In the midst of a civil war, Nepali political and citizen groups organized a massive people's movement that ended the rule of a centuries-old monarchy and brought recalcitrant parties together behind a peace agreement.

- **Somaliland**

Tribal and clan-based conflict resolution processes that have served Somali society for centuries were mobilized to forge peace and create a new nation as the rest of Somalia collapsed into chaos in the early 1990s.

Among the critical insights from these cases were: a) to invest in peace and conflict management capacities ahead of the inevitable crises and opportunities that will arise, b) to activate the latent demand for peace in society rather than focusing exclusively on resolving conflicts, c) to build on existing norms and social institutions that reinforce peace, and d) to look at ways of linking multiple levels and actors in peace processes.

The results of the research pointed to the importance of local rootedness in sustainable peacebuilding efforts. Beyond seeking “locally owned” approaches, the search should be for “locally born” ones. This observation led to the exploration of a concept from outside the peacebuilding literature for this purpose. The concept of “positive deviance” comes from the public health field and originated in behavioral research in malnutrition. It seeks to find those elements of a community that exhibit uncommon behaviors and strategies that enable them to find better solutions to problems than their peers while having access to similar resources.

Future Generations is currently experimenting with positive deviance-based approaches to building peace and security in Afghanistan, Haiti, and Guyana. These trials involve identifying and “mapping” positive deviance in each site and promoting a peer-to-peer learning process between positive deviant communities and actors and non-deviant areas as part of an extension and replication strategy to reach scale. These promising pilots will be complete in the spring and fall of 2013.

To ensure that the learning from this research and continuing field trials reaches practitioners who can apply them, Future Generations launched a new M.A. in Applied Community Change with a concentration in Peacebuilding in 2012. This two-year program involves peace practitioners from around the world who will utilize the project’s case studies and field trials in the curriculum. The majority of students are from countries of conflict, including four of the case study countries: Afghanistan, Burundi, Guyana, and Nepal. The 2012-2013 class will visit Haiti and interact with positive deviant communities identified there.

Carnegie Corporation of New York’s investment in this research has led to important new insights about sustainable community peacebuilding and development. These ideas have leveraged additional private foundation, multilateral, and bilateral investments to put the ideas into practice. Future Generations unique hybrid structure involving both a civil society organization and an accredited graduate school is providing a vehicle for

this learning and testing to be disseminated through teaching the next generation of young peacebuilders around the world.

I. INTRODUCTION

In contexts of instability or post-conflict reconstruction, an urgent need exists for effective approaches of how citizens and communities can engage in building peace. It is the transformation of relations within and between the state and society that secures lasting peace. Peace agreements and international intervention are often necessary stimuli but achieving stable state-society relations requires the partnership of people and government. The role of state-building and international intervention has been extensively addressed by scholarship. While various kinds of unofficial and bottom-up peacebuilding initiatives have recently received greater attention¹—the role of how to effectively stimulate broad-based, community-driven peacebuilding is less understood, yet is widely acknowledged as essential.

With support of three grants² from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Future Generations³ has engaged in a multi-year global study of the role of engaged citizens and communities in building peace. This project joined the collective experience of scholars and practitioners engaged in bottom-up peacebuilding with Future Generations own insights and experience in promoting partnerships between communities, governments, and external actors. The research phase sought to answer the question of *how* citizens and communities have been effectively engaged in building peace.

The research reviewed the theoretical and empirical literature on peacebuilding and undertook a series of its own case studies. These case studies examined instances where

¹ Tongeren, P.V et al. (2005). *People Building Peace II*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. ; Anderson.M & Olsen, L. (2003). *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners*. Collaborative for Development Alternatives, Inc. Retrieved from: http://www.cdainc.com/rpp/archives/2003/01/confronting_war.php.

² B7694, B7694.R01, B7694.R02. The first grant supported research while the second supported the development of a new approach based on positive deviance, while the third supported the launch of field trials of the new approach.

³ Future Generations and the Future Generations Graduate School aim to achieve equitable, sustainable social change through applied research, education, and extension through partnerships with innovative pilot programs worldwide. As registered civil society organization (future.org) founded in 1992, Future Generations has experience in facilitating community-led change in Afghanistan, China, Haiti, India, and Peru. As a nonprofit educational institution (future.edu) founded in 2003, Future Generations Graduate School offers an innovative Master's Degree in Applied Community Change designed for practitioners at the community and government levels. Both organizations teach and enable a process of community change (called SEED-SCALE; see www.seed-scale.org) that emerged out of a collaborative global research effort supported by UNICEF and the Rockefeller Foundation in the early 1990s. The focus was on what had worked in the field of development over the last one-hundred years, specifically on how to take community-based pilot projects to regional scale and how to sustain their momentum.

citizens and communities have worked across divisions and achieved an impact on a country's overall progress toward peace and attempted to draw out the key factors that explain this impact.⁴ This inquiry led to the development of a new theory of change or approach to peacebuilding centered on the concepts of "positive deviance"⁵ and local capacities for peace. The concept of positive deviance (PD) originates from the field of nutritional sciences and has been applied to other domains of social change, including health systems management, food security, and educational reform. According to its proponents, the advantage of the positive deviance approach to complex social problems is that it illuminates contextually and culturally-relevant strategies to social change and thus avoids the pitfalls associated with externally-conceived solutions to local problems.⁶ A positive deviance approach seeks to understand what has worked and why, and to engage other communities to apply this learning. Future Generations is applying an approach based on positive deviance in a series of field applications in Afghanistan, Guyana, and Haiti.

Following this introduction, in Section II the paper proceeds into a summary literature review on communities and civil society in peacebuilding with a special focus on evidence of wider impact. Section III summarizes the five case studies commissioned by Future Generations and the findings therein. The next section (IV) articulates a theory of change or approach to growing the bottom-up element of peacebuilding that is being adapted and tested in several locations. Section V briefly summarizes the field trials, and Section VI offers concluding comments.

⁴ The grant also allowed the principal investigator to participate in several meetings of the Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP)/Cumulative Impacts research project, which examined similar country case studies of the aggregate impacts of disparate peacebuilding efforts. Future Generations case study authors for Nepal and Guyana presented their research at a 2009 RPP meeting.

⁵ The idea of positive deviance comes from nutrition research and refers to households or communities that achieve significantly higher outcomes than the norm for their group, holding other factors constant. The positive deviance movement seeks to study and learn what is behind such successes.

⁶ See www.positivedeviance.org

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Building peace in contexts of rising instability or fragile post-conflict environments needs to be informed by the dynamics of the context and a vision of what peace would mean to contending groups in that society.⁷ Since much violent conflict rests on inter-group relations, a conflict transformation lens looking at how elements come together to build social cohesion – trust, reciprocity, cooperation, active coexistence, and tolerance – in divided societies is an appropriate starting point. While building relationships may be necessary for re-knitting the social fabric in war-torn societies, it is not a sufficient condition for a durable and lasting peace. Larger economic, political, and security forces are key factors as well.

At a program and project level, many organizations apply tools, approaches, and methodologies to build peace in divided and post-conflict societies. Some methods see peacebuilding as simply humanitarian and development work performed in conflict-affected environments, arguing that the root causes of many conflicts lie in social or economic deprivation. Some in this camp apply “conflict sensitive” approaches⁸ to a wide range of traditional sector-based projects (e.g. education, health, economic development, infrastructure, environment, water and sanitation, etc.) or to target groups in society whose needs are deemed critical to a peaceful transition such as vulnerable women and children, male youth who are potential recruits for recalcitrant factions, or demobilized soldiers who need to be reintegrated into civil society. In addition, other activities seek to directly target the relational dynamics of conflict such as psychosocial trauma rehabilitation, ‘culture of peace’ and reconciliation projects,⁹ dialogue clubs, community security projects, peace communication and media, participatory action research, and others.⁹

Given the prominent role of external actors in development and humanitarian situations in addition to the strong tradition of third-party mediation in the conflict resolution field, many of the aforementioned programmatic approaches feature a strong external actor element. This can undermine or even overwhelm the local capacities for peace that exist within societies and are the first line of defense when facing violent conflict.¹⁰ Traditional cultural practices can prove effective and sustainable for

⁷ See Larissa A. Fast and Reina C. Neufeldt. (2005). Envisioning Success: Building Blocks for Strategic and Comprehensive Peacebuilding Impact Evaluation. *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* 2, no. 2.

⁸ See for example: Africa Peace Forum et al. (2004). *Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and Peacebuilding: A Resource Pack*. London: International Alert. Retrieved from: <http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/node/98>

⁹ Tongeren, P.V et al. (2005). *People Building Peace II*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

¹⁰ Anderson, M. (1999). *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – or War*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

communities attempting to prevent, end, or recover from conflict.¹¹ Such local capacities and traditions, and the dynamic cultural contexts in which they are embedded need to be understood.

The extent to which communities experience peace and security also depends upon the ability of communities to influence structural factors that lie beyond direct community control. In some cases local communities and actors are able to impact macro level dynamics through mobilization, partnership, and coordination. Mary Anderson and her colleagues in the *Reflecting for Peace Practice* project have identified some of the dynamics of peacebuilding projects that have had such impact. Another perspective is provided from the study of social movements as the strategic manifestation of civil discontent and action against violent, oppressive, and unjust systems.¹² The role of social movements in creating political opportunity, social frameworks, and mobilization can provide insight into how engaged citizens and communities influence macro level systems and structures as demonstrated in the recent popular mobilizations in Nepal, the “color revolutions” in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, and the Arab Spring.

Through the lens of conflict transformation, this research accepts the following definitions of peacebuilding:

*“Peacebuilding seeks to prevent, reduce, transform and help people recover from violence in all its forms, even structural violence that has not yet led to massive civil unrest. At the same time, it empowers people to foster relationships at all levels that sustain them and their environment.”*¹³

*“Actions taken to prevent violent conflict from erupting and to end violent conflict and subsequently transform relationships, interactions, and structures after violence subsides. Peacebuilding activities can be undertaken on many “tracks” and in many sectors whether by development agencies, community-based organizations, the media, business, or political leaders. The goal is to create, support, or enhance healthy and sustainable interactions, relationships, and structures that are tolerant, respectful, and constructively respond to root causes and symptoms of conflict over the long term.”*¹⁴

¹¹ See Honwana, A. (1998). Sealing the Past, Facing the Future: Trauma Healing in Rural Mozambique. In Armon, J., Hendrickson, D., & Vines, A. (Eds). *The Mozambique Peace Process in Perspective*. London: Conciliation Resources.; Tongeren, P.V et al. (2005). *People Building Peace II*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. Chapter 18

¹² Scott, A. Ideology and the New Social Movements. (1990). London: Unwin Hyman. p. 26.

¹³ Schirch, Lisa. (2004). *The Little Book of Strategic Peacebuilding*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books. p. 9.

¹⁴ Fast & Neufeldt: p. 24., op. cit.

Several aspects of these definitions are pertinent. First, they do not conceptualize peacebuilding as strictly a post-conflict intervention as the term is traditionally used by some international organizations and the United Nations.¹⁵ The term is therefore equally applicable to other situations, from societies that are susceptible to violent conflict but where armed violence is still latent to those that find themselves in the midst of war. This distinction is important because at a practical level many contemporary conflicts are complex, multi-dimensional, and often “low-intensity,” rendering the idea of beginning and end quite tricky. Furthermore, many so-called post-conflict situations are almost as likely to be simultaneously latent or pre-conflict as reflected in the high incidence of failure of peace agreements.

Second, they recognize that the type of conflict that preoccupies us most is violent conflict, while accepting that conflict more generally (as contradictions, contention) is a natural element of social change. Thus, conflict itself is not to be denied or squelched, but to be utilized as a force to transform the underlying problematic relations that threaten violence if not effectively engaged.

Third, these definitions recognize conflict’s expression in the form of direct violence as well as structural and cultural violence. Structural violence describes institutions that cause or perpetuate welfare disparities for specific groups based on an attribute such as ethnicity or economic status. Cultural violence refers to the social norms and beliefs that allow structural violence to exist. However, this study accepts Lund’s caution not to reduce peacebuilding to a “grab-bag of unfulfilled human wants” or to equate all forms of structural oppression with “root causes” of conflict.¹⁶ Interventions that impinge on the factors and dynamics that directly threaten violent conflict must be differentiated from those that simply address one of the myriad deficiencies that exist in conflict-affected environments but do not threaten the breakdown of social peace and security. Put another way, while there is overlap between peacebuilding and development, they are not the same. What contributes to building peace and security is context-dependent and must place primary value on the perspectives expressed by the domestic stakeholders at various levels in a given society.

A common theme in these definitions is that peacebuilding ultimately concerns relationships. These relationships manifest across societies, horizontally and vertically. The most pertinent horizontal relationships are those that cut across the fault lines of

¹⁵ See Boutros-Ghali, B. (1992, January 31). *An Agenda for Peace: Preventative Diplomacy, Peacemaking, and Peacekeeping*. Report of the Secretary General to the United Nations Security Council, UN Doc A/47/277 – S/24111; reprinted as supplement to the *Agenda for Peace* (1995, January 3).

¹⁶ Lund, M. (2003). *What Kind of Peace Is Being Built? Assessing the Record of Post Conflict Peacebuilding, Charting Future Directions*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre. pp. 23-24.

identity (e.g. religion, ethnicity, sect, clan, nation, regional affiliation, etc.) along which societies often fracture, mobilize, and fight wars. Vertical relations are those that exist along the axis of the asymmetrical power between people, their leaders, and institutions of the state. These problematic vertical and horizontal relationships can be codified through constitutional and statutory law and through the policies and actions of states toward their citizens that are exclusionary or discriminatory. An emphasis on relationships is clearly grounded in conflict transformation theory and practice and, from an inquiry focused on the citizen and community level, will naturally tend toward examining encounter-based approaches to peacebuilding.¹⁷

The idea of vertical and horizontal relationships is closely related to social capital, understood as “...the norms and social relations embedded in the social structures of society that enable people to coordinate action and to achieve desired goals.”¹⁸ Social capital is increasingly accepted as a critical factor in the study of why some societies function well and others break down and collapse. Social capital serves three primary functions that are important for peacebuilding. Bonding social capital helps people of a community come together for mutual assistance and a commonly-defined good. Recognizing, however, that bonding can exclude or oppress those outside a group on the basis of some “otherness” and thus potentially threaten social peace, a relational perspective on peacebuilding would emphasize bridging social capital among groups of different identities. The challenge is to discover the interaction of bonding ties and cross-cutting bridging ties that support interdependence and active coexistence among groups that otherwise are separate and prone to conflict. Since it is also understood that state structures affect the generation and distribution of bonding and bridging social capital, horizontal networks must interact effectively with the state to promote both the socioeconomic welfare of individuals and the broader public good. This interaction with state institutions and larger political constructs is embodied in the idea of vertical, or linking, social capital. The interaction of bonding, bridging and linking social capital across all levels of society expresses itself in overall social cohesion.

It is also necessary to speak about the understandings of community as it relates to community-centered or citizen-centered approaches to peacebuilding. The first and most obvious is the spatial/geographic notion of the “community” or “grassroots” level of society. While this is the most obvious conceptualization, it is equally important in the context of peacebuilding to recognize other notions of community that exist at the micro, meso, and macro levels of society in conflict – most notably, communities of

¹⁷ See John Paul Lederach, J.P. (1997). *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington, D.C.: USIP. p. 26.

¹⁸ Narayan, D. (1999). *Bonds and Bridges: Social Capital and Poverty*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank. p. 6.

identity groups. It is along these lines that political leaders often mobilize for war and about which fear, hatred, and insecurity towards other communities is expressed. Identities in this way are not fixed or immutable and interact with the geographic sense of community in dynamic ways, since people at odds in today's intra-state conflicts have a long history of living together peacefully prior to the outbreak of violent conflict. Some case studies have pointed to the flexibility of identity and its creative use as a tool to deny the intrusion of violent conflict into a community.¹⁹

The role of civil society and communities in building peace is not an unstudied field. However, cases in which locally-driven peacebuilding have influenced area-wide or macro-level conflict dynamics have been few, and therefore have received much less attention. Some studies have, however, examined the issue. One wide-ranging study found many well-run programs that engaged in building peace at many levels using diverse strategies.²⁰ Some concentrated on mobilizing large numbers of people while others focused on key leaders and influential actors. Others focused on changing relationships at the local level while others sought to change social and political institutions and policies. The sobering conclusion was that even when many individually successful projects operated in a particular area, these efforts did not “add up” to an impact on “peace writ large” (PWL). The evidence showed that impacts on PWL came when programs that emphasized “more people” were linked with those that focused on “key people.” Approaches that built individual relationships of trust across fault lines affected broader peace only when they were linked to the socio-political level.

Another study reviewed several programs designed to prevent conflict through community development projects.²¹ It concluded the programs did not reduce the structural drivers of conflict or build trust among communities. Most projects were “marriages of convenience around funded benefits” that had few demonstrable impacts on bridge building between communities, the promotion of healing, or the reduction of cultural separation and the underlying sources of inter-group conflict. Among these projects, the seeds of potential success existed in settings where two to three current or formerly antagonistic identity groups lived in close proximity, engaged in everyday interactions, and had open channels of communication and political space that could be built upon.

¹⁹ See the case studies on the role of identity in the Tuzla community during the Bosnian war and of Muslim Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda. For these and other cases, see: Anderson, M. B. & Wallace, M. (2013). *Opting Out of War: Strategies to Prevent Violent Conflict*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

²⁰ Collaborative for Development Action, Inc. (2004). *Reflecting on Peace Practice Project*.

²¹ Lund, M. & Wanchek, N. (2004). *Effectiveness of Participatory Community Development in Managing Conflicts: Local Democracy, Social Capital, and Peace: Lessons from a Literature Review and Three-Country Study: Draft Report*. Washington D.C.: MSI.

Catherine Barnes and her colleagues note that very often the primacy of stopping violence through cease fires leads to peace agreements among combatants that are little more than a division of the spoils of war. These accords neglect the crucial structural and cultural causes of violence and can sow the seeds for renewed conflict. While the vast majority of peace agreements do not create the space for citizen engagement, she examined emerging evidence of alternatives to “elite pact-making” where citizens assert their right for a role in peacemaking processes. Examples include Mali where local traditions of community decision-making allowed thousands of people to directly engage in inter-community peacemaking that opened the door to national peace. In South Africa, a strong tradition of mass movement politics provided the vehicle for people’s participation. In Guatemala, the Philippines, and Columbia the role of church leaders and other moral authorities was critical. These processes used direct involvement, consultative mechanisms, and representative participation to engage people and in some cases used democratic referenda to ensure broad acceptance of the result.²² With the growing recognition of the need to indigenize peace processes and create space for diverse stakeholders and multiple tracks of peacebuilding, there is growing acknowledgement of the need for dense and dynamic local “peace infrastructures” rather than simple peace processes.²³

²² Barnes, C. (Ed.). (2002). *Owning the Process: Public Participation in Peacemaking* London: Conciliation Resources.

²³ Ulrich, H-N. (2012). Giving Peace an Address? Reflections on the Potential and Challenges of of Creating Peace Infrastructures. In Unger, B., Lunstrom, S., & Planta, K. (Eds.). *Peace Infrastructures - Assessing Concept and Practice: Handbook Dialogue Series No. 10* .Berlin: Berghof Foundation.

III. FUTURE GENERATIONS CASE STUDIES: SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

As part of its research, Future Generations sought to examine in greater detail select national peacebuilding experiences where popular participation, citizen engagement, and bottom-up approaches were argued to have had a consequential impact on PWL. In all cases, evidence shows that the initiatives may have contributed to the wider dynamics of peace through one or more of the following:

- Influencing the behavior and actions of elites on choices to pursue violence as a strategy to attain objectives;
- Bringing about key moments or critical events that represent actual or potential turning points in the course of a conflict;
- Going to scale in terms of numbers and geography to be material to the conflict; or
- Linking bottom-up action and top-down engagement in ways that contributed to peace.

These cases represent instances of positive deviance from the norm of traditional top-down peacemaking. The five case studies undertaken were drawn from the principal investigator's experience and suggestions by others in the peacebuilding community that were presented with the research question. In all cases, researchers from the countries in question with deep local knowledge affirmed the fit of the cases to the typology and led the research.

While the findings are discussed after the following brief case summaries, it is preemptively acknowledged here that no case offers a perfect example of citizen-driven conflict transformation affecting PWL. In all cases, citizen and community initiatives interacted with other factors in context and over time. Disentangling attribution and causation from such complexity is always contested. Nor does large-scale change happen quickly and or on a linear trajectory. It often takes the passage of considerable time to appreciate the lasting significance of events and their durability. Nevertheless, an in-depth case study approach that acknowledges contending views can shed light on the interactions among several contending factors and point to the factors and actions that were decisive.

The following brief case summaries describe what happened in each case, the significance of the peace impact in context, how scale-level impact was achieved, and in what ways it has fallen short.

A. AFGHANISTAN: CONTRADICTIONS OF COMMUNITY-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT IN THE ABSENCE OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION²⁴

Early statebuilding in Afghanistan is credited to Amir Abdu al-Rahman Khan in the late 1800s; he consolidated centralized control over the Afghan people and territory to an extent not accomplished by previous rulers. Large subsidies from the British Empire, interested in stabilizing the borderlands of its empire, kept the “Iron Amir” in power by allowing him to put down internal rebellions or bribe or co-opt more accommodating opponents. This history of trying to construct a stable state within Afghan society has been an elusive one of finding social cohesion despite fissiparous tendencies fueled by transnational tribal relationships and meddlesome foreign powers. Successive rulers in the 20th century attempted to create a modern nation state, but their legacy was a series of authoritarian states that relied upon coercion and violence against their own people. Many also invariably were seen as privileging the country’s largest ethnic group (the Pashtuns), fanning the flames of divisionism, and undermining the development of any shared national ideology.

President Mohammed Daud Khan’s regime (1973-1978) was eventually brought down by his erstwhile communist allies who were eager to mount a radical campaign to transform Afghan society from a backward to a modern society. The backlash against the regime was ferocious, and the ensuing instability and fracturing of the communist regime invited the Soviet invasion of 1979. These events plunged the country into almost three decades of civil war that continues to this day. The opposition to the overwhelming firepower of the Soviet Union took the form of mujahideen fighters heavily backed by the United States, Pakistan, and Iran. The ensuing war destroyed much of the countryside and displaced millions into neighboring Iran, Pakistan, and beyond. The Soviet Union withdrew in 1979, and Afghanistan plunged into a brutal civil war for capture of the state fought between the territorially and ethnically-based mujahideen factions and what remained of the communist government. Factional fighting, the abuse of power, corruption, depredation, theft, murder, kidnapping, and sexual violence totally discredited the factions and prepared the ground for the invasion of the Taliban who captured Kabul in 1996 on the strength of communal support amongst the country’s Pashtuns and significant support from Pakistan. The Taliban ruled for five years with a strict interpretation of Islam before being ousted by the U.S. led invasion in late 2001 in response to the September 11 attacks.

²⁴ Hakimi, A. & Calder, J. (2009). *Statebuilding and Community Engagement without Reconciliation: A Case Study of Afghanistan’s National Solidarity Program*. Future Generations Graduate School Occasional Paper: Peace Building Series No. 2. Retrieved from: <http://www.future.org/publications/Afghanistan-case-study>

The Bonn Agreement of December 2001 brought anti-Taliban factions together under a power-sharing interim administration led by Hamid Karzai. The transition process relied upon an indigenous forum of traditional leaders (the Loya Jirga) to hammer out the outlines of a new Afghan state. A centralized presidential form of government with a bi-cameral parliament was adopted after weeks of debate during the second Loya Jirga in 2004. Federalism and decentralization of power were rejected in favor of centralism. Refugees returned, armed groups were disarmed and demobilized, a national army created, massive externally-financed reconstruction projects commenced, elections were held, and national government stood up. But against this progress there were underlying flaws in this latest episode of Afghan statebuilding. These included the absence of an inclusive national reconciliation process on which to base statebuilding, adoption of a centralized governance model in the face of a tradition of decentralized power and authority, inattention to the regional security dynamics of the conflict, and chronic underinvestment in establishing the basics of security nationwide.

The pressure on the new state to deliver tangible results to a society eager to turn the page on the past was considerable. In response, Government of Afghanistan and its international partners launched the National Solidarity Program (NSP), a massive community-driven development program dubbed the “largest people’s project in the history of Afghanistan.” The NSP supported community-level social reconstruction in the form of elected Community Development Councils (CDCs) that received block grants from the government to implement priority local projects. Nongovernmental organizations were contracted by the NSP to facilitate local awareness of the program, conduct the elections, assist the CDC in the participatory formation of a community development plan, and supervise implementation of block grant projects. The program sought to enhance the legitimacy of the state by recasting the relationship with communities to one of consensus and cooperation, not coercion. The program emphasized Afghan traditions and principles including voluntary community labor (Ashar), local councils (Jirga), and the Islamic values of unity, equity, and justice.

By most accounts, the NSP has been a success. By 2009, the NSP had mobilized over 22,000 communities (out of an estimated 28,000 nationwide) to elect local CDCs. These communities were spread across 359 of 398 districts in all 34 of Afghanistan’s provinces, disbursing grants for projects that benefitted approximately 13 million Afghans. Local elections have been flexibly implemented in ways to include women’s participation and to marginalize the monopoly of warlords and commanders. In many places where there are few positive, tangible expressions of the state, the community knows the NSP/CDC and regards it favorably. The achievements of scale alone make this one of the most successful post-conflict development programs in the post-Taliban era.

The NSP has not been without challenges. In the absence of a national reconciliation process that included the Taliban, a low level insurgency gained strength in 2006 and now seriously challenges the Afghan state and its international allies. The centralized governments that have emerged out of the Bonn transition are dominated by a coalition of non-Pashtun ethnic groups (Tajiks, Hazara, Uzbek) that preside over an unprecedented level of state corruption. The Pashtun majority's response includes feelings of ambivalence or exclusion that manifests itself in sympathy or outright support for the Taliban. The Afghan state is challenged by the insurgency in many parts of the south, southeast, and eastern provinces, making it extremely difficult for government programs such as the NSP to make headway. The insurgents target any symbol of state presence and make it impossible in highly insecure areas for the NSP to establish a presence or continue its programs. While there is some evidence that CDCs can manipulate their identity and present themselves as community institutions independent from the state, and thus achieve some tolerance and space from amenable insurgent commanders, by and large this is not enough. Furthermore, the militarization of aid through the close association of development projects and military "hearts and minds" campaigns have put communities at risk.

While the NSP represents a positive change in the Afghan people's historic relationship with the state, expectations must be tempered in the current context. Tragically, the Afghan state is today looking increasingly like some of its predecessors: a weak, but centralized, state lacking consensus; prone to abuse of authority; maintained by military coercion; and propped up by foreign financing. The state is likely to need some type of fundamental reform to survive and thrive. The contradictions of the post-Bonn era can only be resolved through a peace process and national dialogue about a more flexible state model that reconciles all of Afghanistan's factions and balances local and regional power. Within such a re-calibrated state, the NSP would find a much more conducive context to deliver the benefits of local governance and community-driven development.

B. BURUNDI: BUILDING PEACE ARCHITECTURE FROM THE BOTTOM-UP THROUGH LOCAL PEACE COMMITTEES.²⁵

Burundi is one of Africa's poorest countries where over 80 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line. It is also one of the continent's most densely populated and land-constrained countries. Systematic divide-and-rule strategies under colonial administrations helped to dissolve the unity between Hutu and Tutsi that existed under Burundi's ancient monarchy. Following independence in 1962, Hutu-

²⁵ Niyonkuru, R.C. (2012). *Building the Peace Architecture from the Bottom-up: A Case Study of Local Peace Committees in Burundi*. Future Generations Graduate School Occasional Paper: Peace Building Series No. 5. Retrieved from: <http://www.future.org/publications/Burundi-case-study>

Tutsi power struggles degenerated into spasms of ethnic violence, a series of coups d'état, authoritarian rule, and the fracturing of the country's politics and institutions, claiming the lives of more than 200,000 Burundians. A brief return to elected rule in 1993 was followed by civil war that pitted the Tutsi-dominated military against Hutu rebel groups and claimed another 200,000 to 300,000 lives over the next decade.

A peace process was launched in 1998 with external mediation that led to the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in August 2000. The peace agreement and subsequent accords established power-sharing mechanisms between the two main ethnic groups for a transitional period. Ongoing talks eventually brought the remaining recalcitrant rebel groups off the battlefield, and democratic elections in August 2005 finally restored political stability and the rule of law.

Notwithstanding its success over time, Arusha was an elite-driven peace process that offered very few avenues for civil society participation. It focused on bringing warring groups off the battlefield, ethnically balancing and integrating power structures and institutions, demobilizing rebel groups, and seeing a transition to a democratically elected government. While civil society organizations played familiar roles as human right defenders and were instrumental in the rehabilitation of communities and delivery of services, they did not do this through any formal or official roles or structures for NGOs and people's organizations in the peace process. Traditional institutions of conflict management, namely the *bashingantahe*, also played a role despite efforts by political elites to politicize, manipulate, and marginalize them. All of these non-state actors played a critical role in restoring trust and confidence among community members and encouraging the peaceful resolution of conflict and the search for reconciliation, justice, and social rehabilitation despite their outsider status in the peace process.

One of the most widespread strategies for engaging communities in Burundi's peacebuilding process was the local peace committee. These peace committees were formed around the country as a mechanism for dialogue, conflict management, reconciliation, and social rehabilitation by various Burundian and international NGOs. Between 500 to 600 local peace committees were established at commune, zone, and colline (hilltop village) levels in 40 of 129 communes across 14 of Burundi's 17 provinces. Of these, approximately 350-450 of the peace committees are believed to be active today. The peace committees are concentrated in the centre of the country and parts of the south, where some of the most intense fighting of the war took place. They also have flourished in areas of the north where there was less fighting but where refugee and IDP return issues caused tensions. They continue to play important roles in resolving land conflicts that are the most prevalent form of social conflict today. These

unofficial, civil society peace committees lacked an official mandate²⁶ but nevertheless were effective and relevant during the conflict itself (1993-1999), the transition to peace (2000-2005), and the post-conflict phase (2006-Present). They acted as a powerful force for normalizing social relations across large areas of the country in the absence of a functioning Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Members of peace committees became social change agents, investing in the restoration of dialogue, trust, and confidence between Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. Many are being elected into local councils on the strength of their leadership of the local peace committee. They continue to show a strong commitment to advocacy for peace and human rights promotion within their communities today. The impact of the peace committees has gone beyond the local level and has contributed to national deliberations on how to consolidate the peace, although the impact is visible to a lesser extent. The government has recognized the contribution of peace committees around the country and is examining the potential of utilizing peace committees as the bottom-up architecture to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which is being established.

C. GUYANA: TOWARD ETHNIC CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION²⁷

Despite a democratic political transition in the early 1990s, Guyana has made halting progress addressing the underlying ethnic conflict between its East Indian and African communities. In addition to divisions along occupational and geographic lines that developed under British colonialism, the two communities predominantly back different political parties. Social and political upheavals in the early 1960s resulted in hundreds killed in spasms of ethnic violence that pitted neighbor against neighbor and village against village. This societal trauma never really healed and has left an indelible scar on the body politic.

Historical ethnic identity tensions have been kept alive by politicians and fueled by subsequent political contestation at the national and regional levels. Disagreement exists about the basic nature of the conflict. Some argue that the conflict is political and that ethnic groups live side by side in harmony until the time of elections when their political views, loyalties, and sympathies result in separation between friends, neighbors, groups, and communities. Others point to the confluence of demography, ethnic voting, and a winner-take-all political system that appears to condemn the

²⁶ For a description of the international experience with such official local peace committees, see Odendaal (2010).

²⁷ Myers, R. & Calder, J. (2011). *Toward Ethnic Conflict Transformation: The Case of Guyana*. Future Generations Graduate School Occasional Paper: Peace Building Series No. 4. Retrieved from: <http://www.future.org/publications/Guyana-case-study>

African Guyanese to a permanent political minority status that is inherently destabilizing and incompatible with a healthy democratic system. While the nature of the conflict is contested, a general consensus understand the conflict to be multifaceted and the cause of stymied development, compromised human security, fueled outward migration, and ineffective participation of all groups in the political process.

The elections of 1992, 1997, and 2001 were each followed by significant public unrest, loss of property to arson, and ethnic violence. The proximate triggers of the violence were election disputes, although deeper traumas were never far below the surface. On the one hand, the East Indian community saw in the unrest echoes of the 1960s in which the opposition was intent on destabilizing the government and undermining democratic rule. The African community saw electoral malfeasance and attempts to permanently exclude it from a share of power. Regional and international mediation in this period produced several political accords that led to constitutional reforms and extensive “menus of measures” to address disputes and grievances, but failed to establish a culture of political dialogue or involve the wider society in cooperation and reconciliation. While elections were indeed the traditional flashpoint for violent episodes of the conflict, the first decade of the new millennium brought forth new, destabilizing dynamics.

Following an extended period of post-election disturbances in 2001, the political and security situation deteriorated markedly in 2002-2003 with the outbreak of what was termed a “crime wave” but which had both unmistakable political and ethnic dimensions. Anywhere from 200-400 civilians were killed during this period in brutal ethnic and criminal attacks.²⁸ Countless more were traumatized, violated, and brutalized. Eventually the military had to be mobilized to reassert the state’s authority over a section of the country where the main perpetrators of the violence were concentrated. In the meantime, questions of the state’s involvement in extra-judicial killings and its relationship with narco-traffickers drove fears that the violence had fundamentally compromised the democratic state.

Multiple crises of governance and shortcomings of elite-level conflict management efforts catalyzed a search for alternative approaches within civil society and international development partners. A primary motivating concern was the prospect that the 2006 elections could be a trigger for explosive violence that could push Guyana over the precipice to becoming a failed state. These approaches began with the singular efforts of prominent individuals, the University of Guyana, and organized sections of Guyanese civil society, from the private sector to trade unions to religious bodies, and

²⁸ Some context is required to appreciate these figures. Guyana has a population of 750,000 so this number of violent deaths is equivalent to approximately 120,000 deaths in a country the size of the United States.

various rights organizations. In 2003 the United Nations launched the Social Cohesion Program (SCP), which began to frontally address the relational dynamics that could contribute to election-related violence through various peacebuilding activities. These efforts were diverse, widespread, and sustained for more than three years leading up to the elections. They involved a wide range of actors including politicians, youth activists, local government officials, police officers, non-governmental organizations, and ordinary citizens.

The theory of change behind the SCP was to support political dialogue at the top, promote the better functioning of public security institutions, and to stimulate the latent capacities for peace within Guyanese society ahead of the 2006 elections. While there was little progress closing the political divide, and institutional interventions bore some fruit, the program stimulated a strong response from ordinary citizens to take their place in the public square and promote peace. The program emphasized capacity building and an elicitive approach to support local generation of ideas and initiatives. It provided training for a wide range of societal groups, including politicians, businessmen, regional and local government officials, trade unionists, police officers, civil society activists, and religious leaders that transmitted frameworks, strategies and skills from the conflict transformation paradigm that these individuals could utilize in their home, workplace, neighborhood, and in the wider public space. Those trained were encouraged to identify and initiate their own further actions, some of which attracted further support from the SCP. The SCP also invested in helping the newly created Ethnic Relations Commission (ERC) to play its intended role in promoting multicultural understanding and trust ahead of the election. The ERC and SCP supported a multi-level, multi-stakeholder dialogue process that went throughout the country in advance of the elections, bringing Guyanese into an open public dialogue about how to improve ethnic relations and inclusive development. Finally, in collaboration with regional governments, the SCP engaged vulnerable youth in anticipated hot zones in community-based training and development projects.

As the elections approached, a palpably different atmosphere was taking shape. While there were several shocking incidents of violence (with ethnic and political overtones), a peace campaign of sorts had coalesced with nightly peace vigils; peace walks, marathons, and races; peace pledges targeting politicians and public figures; cultural events; and public, television, and radio forums on the need for coexistence. An estimated 30 percent of the population of Guyana was personally involved in some activity of the SCP while many others heard its message through personal contacts, interactions with representatives of state institutions, and heavy media coverage of the events. On August 28, 2006, the ruling party was re-elected at polls conducted in an environment of tense apprehension, but without violence, without the loss of property

or life, and without dispute of the results by opposition parties. Most Guyanese surveyed say that the SCP catalyzed and supported Guyanese civil society in an unprecedented way. Critics of the SCP acknowledge its success in a different way, saying that it represented a pacification campaign that sidelined issues of good governance and justice. Both views acknowledge that it made a consequential contribution to breaking the cycle of election-related violence that had been escalating with each successive election since 1992. While Guyana remains a deeply divided society in many ways, the experience validated the potential of Guyanese civil society to help bridge those divides.

D. NEPAL: PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION²⁹

Nepal endured a decade long “people’s war” led by Maoist insurgents against the government/monarchy. The conflict had its roots in the long-standing socio-economic and political order that emerged from centuries of monarchy and the oligarchic Rana prime ministers who ruled for 104 years from 1846 to 1960. The Ranas pursued a program of Hinduization that systematically codified the diverse ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups of Nepal into the Hindu caste order. This suppressed the cultural expression of countless ethnic minorities and religious groups and created a rigid social hierarchy that denied social mobility for many. The Rana regime was overthrown in 1951, and a democratically elected government emerged in 1959, but was dismissed a year later by King Mahendra under emergency powers. The King replaced parliamentary democracy with his own concept of grassroots democracy called the Panchayat system. Political parties were outlawed and the monarchy retained absolute powers. The Panchayat regime embarked on a nation-building project that sought to homogenize the population and develop a new Nepali nationalism based on the culture and traditions of the hill elite. Political parties operated underground and eventually emerged in the first people’s movement (Jana Andolan I) in April 1990 and successfully overthrew the Panchayat regime and reinstated parliamentary democracy under a monarchy bound by constitutional limits. High expectations of the democratic era were dashed by the corruption, nepotism, and constant political infighting among the party elite and the inattention to the expectation from marginalized and minority groups that their languages, religions, and cultures would receive equal recognition and treatment.

²⁹ Sijapati, B. (2009). *People’s Participation in Conflict Transformation: A Case Study of Jana Andolan II in Nepal*. Future Generations Graduate School Occasional Paper: Peace Building Series No. 1. Retrieved from: <http://www.future.org/publications/Nepal-case-study>

These historical developments were the backdrop for the rise of the Maoists in the mid-1990s and their “people’s war” against the self-serving monarchy and political oligarchy that had ruled for centuries. Despite their brutal tactics, the Maoists’ call for an end to the discrimination, exploitation, and oppression of Nepal’s disparate religions, languages, and nationalities drew a sympathetic ear from many. Their rhetoric spoke to the experiences of the poor and illiterate scattered across Nepal’s villages, helped to sustain the insurgency for a period of over ten years (1996-2006), and several times challenged the existence of the state itself. Nearly 15,000 were killed in the conflict and 100,000 to 150,000 were internally displaced. Blaming successive governments for failing to contain the Maoist insurgency, King Gyanendra dismissed the elected government in 2002 and took direct power in early 2005, curtailing political freedoms and civil liberties. Later that year, a broad alliance of Nepali political parties, some still in the country and others driven out, formed the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) and signed a 12-point agreement with the Maoists. The agreement committed the Maoists to multiparty democracy and freedom of speech, while the SPA agreed to the Maoist demand for elections for a constituent assembly.

The SPA called a four-day general strike for early April 2006, and the Maoists declared a ceasefire in Kathmandu. The response was a massive people’s movement (Jana Andolan II) that lasted for 19 days and eventually ended King Gyanendra’s rule. Jana Andolan II received support from people from all caste, communal, ethnic, and religious groups. It drew from the Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and janjati (indigenous nationalities) and from rich and poor as well. Civil society organizations of all kinds came out in force. Some estimates had 100,000 to 500,000 people participating in Kathmandu alone, but the movement was reproduced around the country. The protests paralyzed the country economically and politically, forcing the King to return power to the reinstated parliament, and led to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the government and Maoists in November 2006, ending the war.

Jana Andolan II was qualitatively different than past mass protests in Nepali history, including Jana Andolan I. It represented a true cross section of Nepali society and was not composed only of party activists. It also was a countrywide movement, not limited to urban areas as in the past. The broader popular participation in the movement was attributed to the changes in Nepal society in the post-1990 democratic era that had accelerated rural-urban interactions, increased the decentralization and devolution of power from the center, expanded free media, and saw the expansion of education and the rise of interest and identity based civil society organizations. These groups were conscious that if they did not get actively involved in the movement, there was the likelihood from past experience that the SPA would use them and ultimately negotiate with the monarchy. Their active engagement this time came from the acknowledgement

that it was the failure of the political parties themselves that had brought on the royal takeover. This led to the formation of a citizen's movement group, which organized and worked alongside the party activists and leaders. This consciousness of ordinary members of the civil society was apparent down to the community level and was reflected in the way that civil society leaders framed their arguments for mobilizing their members. The organizers also accentuated the issues of class, profession, organizational affiliation, and other identities other than ethnicity or caste. This message to "rise above" in order to remove the monarchy, restore democracy, and check the power of the political parties was effective. The interests of minority and marginalized groups were also incorporated into the organizing platform as the agreement of the SPA and Maoists had called for a constituent assembly, which could ultimately address their rights concerns.

Jana Andolan II is a classic example of how social movements can effectively mobilize in the short term, but their impact on lasting change is questionable. It can be argued that Jana Andolan II helped end a war, kept a peace process on track, aided in dismantling the feudal monarchy, and elected a constituent assembly with heavy minority participation to draft a new constitution. That said, Nepal's political culture remains fractious and corrupt, and some groups too easily resort to violence. These factors and the success of popular demonstrations have legitimized direct action as an all-too-ready alternative to working through representative political institutions. One would not expect the move from feudalism to war to a just peace to be a linear process, but one does expect that Jana Andolan II will be viewed not only as an important turning point for the citizens of Nepal, but also as a reminder to politicians to stay the course no matter how tortuous the path.

E. SOMALILAND: SEIZING THE MOMENT - CONFLICT AND PEACEMAKING IN SOMALILAND³⁰

With the collapse of longtime Somali dictator Mohammed Siad Barre's regime in 1991, the Somali state disintegrated and left in its wake the prototype of a failed state. Since then its people have endured endless factional fighting, foreign invasions and occupations, the rise and fall of transitional governments, drone strikes from the Global War on Terror, and a rising radical Islamic insurgency known as the Shabaab.

³⁰ Omaar, Rakiya. (2010). *Seizing the Moment: A Case Study on Conflict and Peacemaking in Somaliland*. Future Generations Graduate School Occasional Paper: Peace Building Series No. 3. Retrieved from: <http://www.future.org/publications/Somaliland-case-study>

By contrast, Somaliland, the previous northwest region of Somalia, has maintained relative stability for the last two decades and has nurtured a young and fragile democracy without formal international recognition. Its secession from Somalia in 1991, following a decade of resistance and conflict, did not immediately usher in peace. The first two years saw an ineffectual government and bloody factional fighting within the Somali National Movement (SNM) that nearly cost Somaliland its independence. The fact that former allies in the struggle for independence would turn on one another, with some sinking to predatory banditry, shocked the population. It was at this moment that Somalilanders turned to the wisdom and skills of clan elders to make peace.

In 1993-1994, the elders drew upon deeply embedded social norms of dialogue and conciliation, and led dispute mediation meetings across the country. In this effort they received critical support from civil society and especially from women. In less than a year, the peacemaking process would lead to a non-violent change in government, the establishment of nationwide peace, and a national charter. The peace process consisted of systematic and exhaustive negotiations that began with grassroots level issues among clans and worked up to more complicated issues. The pinnacle of the process was the Borama Conference from January to April 1993. It drew together 150 representatives from all groups of Somaliland society to reconcile and develop consensus around the design of a political system and a transition to an elected government and new constitution approved by referendum. Although the agreements at Borama would be challenged by recalcitrant elements aided by foreign elements and more fighting in 1994-1995, they remained intact and represented the turning point and Somaliland's blueprint for change.

The National Charter and subsequent constitution, approved by referendum in 2001, established the elders' council (known as the *Guurti*) as the upper house of parliament. While this represented a creative hybrid of modern and traditional institutions of governance, there would be significant implications for the *Guurti*'s moral standing and authority as a respected institution of conflict management. Over time the *Guurti* became active as politicians and powerbrokers, many of them joining the ruling party and developing a close relationship with the executive branch. The president co-opted many in the *Guurti* with favors and patronage, and with time even the process of elder succession became compromised. A process that used to be based on time honored values and practices of the clan, was now treated as a hereditary right passed within the family, regardless of the recipient's moral and social standing. This erosion of the *Guurti*'s judgment and standing was on display during a constitutional crisis over elections in 2009 when the *Guurti* almost supported the president's request for an extension of his term of office until public backlash caused the elders to reconsider.

While the Guurti's squandering of its place in society is a cautionary tale, it does not erase the seminal role it played in Somaliland's transition from war to peace. The Somaliland experience affirms many well-worn admonitions about how peace from within happens. It is locally owned and builds on indigenous traditions that have their own practices and timeframes. It emphasizes the time consuming process of conciliation before negotiation, and it adopts processes that are inclusive and resonate throughout society.

F. DISCUSSION OF CASE FINDINGS

The case studies were analyzed at a meeting of the authors and a group of peacebuilding and development experts and practitioners in 2009. First, the meeting sought to critically review each of the cases and better understand the ways in which they represented citizen and community-centered approaches that affected PWL. The second aim of the meeting was to draw out common themes from across the case studies that could be instructive to both internal and external actors seeking to achieve similar outcomes in different contexts. The following were the key themes brought out in the discussion:

- *Prepare people with capacities to act on opportunities to build peace* – Opportunities to catalyze peacemaking from within societies rests in part on peace constituencies having the capacity to act when openings are present. An opening may come in the form of a so-called “hurting stalemate” between combatants or when a major event (e.g. opening of peace talks or a particularly shocking event such as a massacre) shakes up the status quo and provides the momentary political space for new initiatives to emerge and take root. Depending on the strength and organization of these constituencies, they can actually have an influence on creating the opportunities. This dynamic seemed to be at work in many of the cases. In Somaliland, the *Guurti* was a deeply-rooted conflict management institution that was called upon by society to intervene when factional fighting among the SNM broke out and threatened to take the country into civil war. In Guyana, during the pre-election period, a deliberate attempt was made to enhance the latent peace constituency within society, which helped present a counterweight to several provocative incidents of violence. The Guyana case also offered an example of how an attempt by civil society to mediate in the political dispute faltered due to the lack of capacity and flaws in the design of the intervention. Investment in the peace committees in Burundi helped to prevent the reproduction of national conflict at the local level in several instances. The essential point here is that investing in conflict management capacities across societies is both an insurance policy and a positive strategy for building peace from within.

- *Create and nurture safe spaces for dialogue and action* – This idea came through in several different ways across the cases and was suggested as particularly instructive for external actors seeking to support peacebuilding from within. In case of Guyana, this was manifested in the UN SCP’s “elicitive” approach to programming and the government’s arms length distance from the project. Like spreading seeds in a field, the SCP trained large numbers of diverse actors in conflict transformation concepts and skills under the rubric of social cohesion and encouraged them to take action on their own. Some actors engaged in activities received some kind of modest support from the SCP, but many others did not. The government gave these groups the space to pursue their initiatives, which was critical in a highly polarized environment. The peace committees in Burundi and community development councils in Afghanistan both represented structured social spaces with external facilitation. In both cases, the space was used for reconciliation and social reconstruction, although in Afghanistan the focus was much more on community development planning. Somaliland presents the interesting example of how long it can take for these spaces to actually reconcile actors and produce peace and the degree to which micro issues (e.g. land, cattle) must be resolved at the bottom of the pyramid before the larger issues (e.g. inter-clan peace, political reconciliation) can be sorted out. The Borama Conference itself took four months to sort through the myriad issues.
- *Take action in the public sphere* – Conflict, violence, or the fear of violent conflict pervades society at a psycho-social level, and so it is necessary to build peace within this same space. This means fostering dialogue and action within the public sphere, including through the airwaves, in homes and villages, in symbolic public spaces (the proverbial town squares), and in the larger public discourse. Only when action and dialogue for peace is visible can it attract others to action. This does not deny that confidence and back channels are not warranted for certain types of peacemaking discussions among political actors, but simply argues that the public space must be supported. In Nepal, the *Jana Andolan II* movement took over the public sphere by creating a discourse about the necessary ingredients of peace (e.g. removal of the monarchy, inclusion of minority interests in a revised constitution) that clearly drove the outlines of the final outcome. In Burundi, many of the local peace committees recognized the need to express their newfound reconciliation with small public monuments and memorials or cultural events that brought in the wider communities to symbolize their newfound peace. Similar action was seen in Somaliland. In Guyana, citizen groups took a variety of actions that brought the themes of social cohesion and nonviolence into the public sphere. These included multicultural events, peace pledge campaigns, peace walks/marathons/bike races,

peace vigils and talk radio/television programs in a deliberate effort to respond to that which had destabilized the society in recent years. In all cases, the visibility of peace efforts helped build confidence and momentum.

- *Tap into public demand for peace* – This insight emerged from discussions about the preponderant focus of many external actors on resolving conflicts rather than building peace. In all situations, latent demand and capacities for peace exist that too often get ignored with a crisis or conflict focus. This came through especially in those cases where the action of external actors was particularly important (Guyana, Burundi, and Afghanistan) and less so where the peacemaking/peacebuilding was generated mostly internally (Nepal, Somaliland). The Guyana experience pointed directly to a strategy of bringing out those constituencies for peace and interethnic harmony that had been on the sidelines during the political and post-election crises of 2002-2004. In Burundi, the church and community groups that helped start the Kibimba Peace Committee amidst full scale crisis did so with a direct focus on supporting human rights defenders and peace-oriented citizens who were courageous enough to take risks on behalf of others. In the immediate post-conflict (2002-2004) period in Afghanistan, the NSP provided a framework within which local communities could re-establish local governance and reconstruction priorities.
- *Build from shared norms, values, traditions and institutions that support peace* – In all cases, locally born peacebuilding deliberately built on shared norms, values, traditions, and institutions that supported peace. In some cases this arose spontaneously from citizen-inspired action. In Burundi, the linkage between the peace committees and the *bashingantahe* (elders) happened organically and was mutually reinforcing. In Nepal, *Jana Andolan II* structured a discourse down to the community level that used vivid and highly resonant local expressions and imagery to communicate the purposes of the movement in ways that bound people together. In Guyana, the UN's terminology of "social cohesion" was translated into simple statements such as "ala we is one" (all of us are one) that was heard frequently in the multi-stakeholder dialogue process and the public pronouncements of politicians, civic leaders, artists, and other prominent citizens. The Afghanistan NSP deliberately invoked *Ashar* (shared labor) and Islamic principles for its legitimacy, and the Somaliland peace process was completely rooted in the *Guurti*. These examples all suggest that it is important to look within societies for the pre-existing structures and capacities that can be drawn into a peace infrastructure.

- *Nurture multiple and shared identities across fault lines while recognizing and acknowledging differences* - Conflict often breaks down along horizontal fault lines of religion, ethnicity, or some other sectional or communal identity. In several of the experiences (Guyana, Burundi), memories of the anti-colonial independence struggle represented a mythical moment of cross-communal unity that their peoples have since struggled to recapture. These memories and the reality of positive quotidian interaction among Hutu and Tutsi or Indian-Guyanese and African-Guyanese help to anchor peacebuilding efforts in a hope and reality of an alternative future to violence. Peacebuilding discourses in both places build on these notions of shared identity (e.g. Guyanese-ness) or the fact that Hutu and Tutsi share a language, religion, and physical space almost completely. *Jana Andolan II* drew upon a unity in diversity theme as well, although as with the pre-colonial framing of earlier Guyana and Burundi, it was unity defined in opposition to a shared enemy (this time the Nepali monarchy). The Somaliland peace process also relied upon the fact that it was for the most part an intra-clan reconciliation effort. However, these experiences are consistent with other efforts, where unifying identities are reinforced as a peacebuilding mechanism.³¹
- *Link action and actors at multiple levels* – What distinguished these cases by design was that they showed impact beyond a localized level. In most instances this was accomplished by linking action and actors at multiple levels through not only physical contacts but also through social networks and larger discourses purveyed through the media and the “public conversation” of leaders and prominent members of society. The multi-tiered structure of many of the peace committees in Burundi helped to “go to scale” at a sub-regional level where transportation and communication infrastructure was lacking. Various types of civic networks were important in Guyana and Nepal. The *Guurti* utilized the multi-level structures of the clan social system to link into villages and up to political leaders. Afghanistan’s National Solidarity Program itself represented a multi-level structure with the Government of Afghanistan and international donors at the apex, joined to communities at the grassroots level as represented by Community Development Councils. The intervening infrastructure consisted of both government NSP branches at the provincial levels and NGO facilitating partners active at the community level. The diversity of linking mechanisms should be instructive for those seeking to build peace architectures and infrastructures in countries in various states of transition or fragility.

³¹ Again, attention is directed to the case studies on the role of identity in the Tuzla community during the Bosnian war and of Muslim Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda. See: Anderson, M. B. & Wallace, M. (2013). *Opting Out of War: Strategies to Prevent Violent Conflict*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Those who helped to reflect upon and review the cases noted the wide disparity in the context and types of peacebuilding experienced described. This made it particularly difficult to draw tight connections, although the broad, contextualized parallels above were possible. Drawing from these insights into a potentially new theory of change required an additional step.

IV. THEORY OF CHANGE ARGUMENT

The literature review, case studies, and the wider experience of many of those involved in this research pointed to the importance of local rootedness in sustainable peacebuilding efforts. This goes beyond the traditional injunction of peace and development work that posits success must be “locally owned” to the idea, as expressed by one of the case researchers, that what is sought are peace processes that are “locally born”³² and not just owned since ownership can often be manipulated with external incentives. This reorients the external actor in particular to seek the local peace capacities that grow from the local soil. This observation led the research to a concept from outside the peacebuilding literature – positive deviance - that illuminated a lens through which one could seek out and support the “locally born” elements of peace.

The concept of positive deviance comes from the public health field and originated in behavioral research in malnutrition.³³ It sought to find those families within a community who achieved better nutrition outcomes for their children, despite the same social and economic levels as others. These positive outliers were innovators who used knowledge and resources differently than others for a better outcome. The formal definition of the concept was refined and later presented as:

“Positive Deviance is based on the observation that in every community there are certain individuals or groups whose uncommon behaviors and strategies enable them to find better solutions to problems than their peers, while having access to the same resources and facing similar or worse challenges.”³⁴

³² Thanks goes to Bandita Sijapati, author of the Nepal case study, for introducing this phrase.

³³ Richard, P., Sternin, J., & Sternin, M. (2010). *The Power of Positive Deviance: How Unlikely Innovators Solve the World's Toughest Problems*. Cambridge: Harvard Business Review Press.

Jerry Sternin participated in a side meeting organized by the project at the 2007 International Studies Association meeting.

³⁴ See www.positivedeviance.org

Positive deviance was used as an approach to social change in which positive deviant behaviors were identified and subsequently taught to other community members and either adopted or further adapted. The advantage of the positive deviance approach to complex social problems is that it illuminates contextually- and culturally-relevant strategies for social change and thus avoids the pitfalls associated with externally-conceived solutions to local problems. Through further research and applications, positive deviance has been applied in several domains of social change, including health systems management, food security, and educational reform. It has been used in organizational contexts as different as rural villages and major urban hospitals.

Future Generations is applying the concept of positive deviance to peace and security in recognition of its potential to identify contextualized solutions to complex challenges. The methodology involves identifying (mapping) the positive outliers within a given context of conflict or fragility. The unit of analysis for the search will usually be a community (place or group) or individual, but can also focus more loosely on geographic zones of peace. Once the positive deviants are located, their effective strategies and behaviors are identified and documented. These could be anything from negotiating tactics for keeping a local community safe from insurgents to strategies for containing rumors that spark cycles of violence to ways of building cross-community trust or repairing broken relations. A mapping exercise that is done at scale can identify multiple nodes of positive deviance across diverse ecologies of conflict and fragility. During the course of the positive deviance mapping, an examination is also undertaken about what networks exist for communities to communicate or interact with one another. If possible, these networks are utilized for information sharing and cross-community interaction and learning. Regardless of the modality, the positive deviants are brought together to share their experiences and strategies in peer-to-peer learning with each other and with other potential new or recipient communities. Strategies can be formulated for promoting the replication or adaptation of the successful strategies in new locations, for example, radiating out from the existing positive deviant communities to new areas.

The possibilities of taking a positive deviance approach to scale depend on the receptivity of the larger context, influenced by the degree of security and freedom of movement that exists, and the presence of a peace process or architecture into which a positive deviance mapping and networking effort can connect. The growth of international dialogue on peace architectures or infrastructures provides a significant opportunity for embedding a positive deviance mapping into a national system of resilience and peacebuilding. Future Generations also will have to engage this thread of the global peace dialogue as it continues its own experimentation with the positive

deviance approach. The following section describes early field trials of the positive deviance approach as they are currently unfolding.

V. APPLICATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN, HAITI, AND GUYANA

With the support of its most recent grant from the Carnegie Corporation (B7964.R02), Future Generations currently works with partners in Afghanistan, Haiti, and Guyana to apply positive deviance as a lens and approach to peacebuilding. Each of these field trials is organized differently, in response to the particularities of each context and the capacities of local partners. In Afghanistan and Haiti, Future Generations works with its local affiliates. In Guyana, Future Generations works with a local NGO. Each context and type of conflict is different. The work in Afghanistan proceeds in an environment of active insurgency and contested state sovereignty. Haiti is a fragile state within which urban youth gangs have been a recent source of threat to peace and security, although Haiti's fragility is rooted in deeper issues of systemic political corruption and environmental decline. Guyana is a situation of mostly latent ethno-political conflict, prone to violent flare-ups around election disputes and unresolved issues of representation and inclusiveness in governance. A brief description of each case and the status of activities are provided below:

Afghanistan. Future Generations launched the *Engaging Community Resilience for Security, Development and Peace in Afghanistan* in 2010 in partnership with Future Generations Afghanistan (FGA). The project has received more than \$300,000 in independent funding from the United States Institute of Peace, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit. The project is applying the concept of "positive deviance" to the realm of peace, security, and development in order to identify and study Afghan communities that have successfully managed their security and development needs amidst conflict. The project is focusing on two districts in two provinces (Khogyani, Nangarhar and Andar, Ghazni). The project is developing a methodology for identifying positive deviance using a data screen composed of available provincial level statistics on issues such as security incidents, community accessibility, and the functioning of social infrastructure that is sensitive to conflict (e.g. girls schools) to identify areas of potential positive deviance.

This screen has helped to identify several potentially positive deviant communities, which will be visited by research teams that will document community-level strategies and behaviors. FGA will engage the positive deviant communities in site visits and peer-

to-peer learning as a tool for promoting the adaptation of successful peace and security strategies from community to community. A Steering Committee of Afghan research and civil society organizations is helping to advise the project and form the basis of a future Afghan-led learning network on community peace and security strategies. Results of this project will be available in the fall of 2013.

Haiti. In 2010, Future Generations joined several community activists in Cite Soleil, Haiti's largest urban informal settlement, to test a positive deviance approach to rebuilding community in the context of violence and state fragility. A rapid assessment identified a neighborhood within Cite Soleil called *La Difference* where young men had organized to keep their community clean and nonviolent in response to the prevailing situation that surrounded them. They sustained this effort for over six years, through a strategy of community behavior change, communication, and education within their community. To help catalyze the spread of this model, Future Generations helped bring together young leaders of *La Difference* with interested youth from other parts of Cite Soleil. Site visits to *La Difference* led to brainstorming sessions on what actions led to behavior change and how to replicate the results elsewhere. A critical moment came during one session when the rural Haitian institution known as *konbit* (shared community labor) was introduced to the meeting as a means of spreading change throughout Cite Soleil. The young leaders seized the concept and proposed to sponsor *konbits* in which youth from several neighborhoods would support each other in community clean-up and restoration efforts.

These meetings sparked a movement called *Konbit Soley Leve* (Rising Sun Collective), which over the next six months would sponsor dozens of *konbits* throughout Cite Soleil engaging thousands of people. These activities caught the attention of the U.N. Peacebuilding Mission (MINUSTAH, which subsequently solicited a proposal from Future Generations to further refine and test this approach. In 2012, Future Generations received a \$500,000 grant from the MINUSTAH Community Violence Reduction program, and it now expands the success of Soley Leve to four departments of Haiti through a method known as "success mapping." Results from this piloting will be available in the spring of 2013. See www.wozoayiti.org for the online success map.

Guyana. The communities of Buxton and Annandale are contiguous communities on the Atlantic coast of Guyana with a history of both positive cross-community engagement but also tension and violence. The two communities are divided along Guyana's larger ethnopolitical divisions: Buxton is predominantly African-Guyanese while Annandale is (East) Indian-Guyanese. Large-scale post-election criminal and ethnic violence and killings in 2002-2003 polarized these communities anew. The residents of Annandale erected a steel sheet barricade to protect themselves from

incursions from Buxton. The barricade stands today as a symbol of the divisions, physical and psycho-social, that still exist between these once-friendly communities.

In 2012, Future Generations joined with Partners for Peace and Development (P4PD), a Guyanese NGO, to apply the concept of positive deviance to bridge the ethnic divide between these communities. P4PD conducted research into each community's attitude toward the other and the barricade in order to understand the status of community relations. It has launched small-scale confidence-building initiatives with each community and will subsequently deploy a positive deviance survey with each community to mobilize around existing cross-community resources. Results from this project will be available in the spring of 2013.

VI. CONCLUSION

Carnegie Corporation of New York's investment in this research has led to important new insights about sustainable community peacebuilding and development. These ideas have leveraged additional private foundation, multilateral, and bilateral investments to put the ideas into practice. Future Generations unique hybrid structure involving both a civil society organization and an accredited graduate school provides a vehicle for this learning and testing to be disseminated through teaching the next generation of young peacebuilders around the world.