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The Value of Culture in Peacebuilding -- Examples from Democratic Republic of Congo, Yemen and Nepal

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The Value of Culture in Peacebuilding – Examples from Democratic Republic of Congo, Yemen and Nepal

Dorota Piotrowska

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Master’s Thesis
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Abstract

Top-down coercive type of liberal peacebuilding has characterized the interventions by international community in many post-conflict societies after the Second World War. Recent studies suggest that in order to build a more lasting peace a bottom-up, non-coercive approach is needed to balance the former and deal with the immediate needs of local communities. In approaching the question of how peace and reconstruction efforts can be made more sustainable, this thesis evaluates whether strategic arts-based programs with local content have the potential to build stronger communities by establishing peaceful resorts to settle daily disputes by participants. It further examines three such programs implemented by Search for Common Ground in Democratic Republic of Congo, Yemen and Nepal. By evaluating the available quantitative and qualitative data, this thesis shows that some arts-based programs are more effective in establishing peaceful ways of conflict resolution than others. Specifically, there is evidence that communities in Democratic Republic of Congo have learned and incorporated the new methods of conflict resolution in their daily lives presented to them during the participatory theater performances. However, the program in Yemen which used episodic drama, showed no effect on changing behaviours on a national level and had a limited impact on a local level. Similarly, the program in Nepal proved to be quite effective in transforming the attitudes of the people directly involved in the creation of the peace songs but showed no effects on the general public exposed to the songs via radio or TV. I conclude that there is reason to be hopeful that strategic arts programs can be useful in peacebuilding, although more research needs to be done to find out how best to tailor such programs to each specific situation and to develop a more comprehensive framework to guide policymakers and peacebuilders around the world.
Chapter 1: Introduction, Research Design and Literature

The level and magnitude of violence that is currently shaking all the corners of the world might come as a surprise to some who believed that the worst is behind and that the efforts made by the world leaders after the Second World War to unite and prevent future conflicts would lead to a change for the better. An entire body of literature related to conflict prevention and peacebuilding has been developed and various programs have been implemented all over the world to address these issues. Unfortunately, many of these attempts to bring peace ended with limited achievements and the cycle of violence is being perpetuated.

For the past sixty years the UN peacekeeping missions have been instrumental in helping countries torn by conflict to create the conditions for lasting peace. However, the presence of troops is not always sufficient. They maintain the status quo without addressing the root causes of conflicts at hand and each election period can sparkle a new crisis and destabilize the country. Although studies show that they do indeed make an important contribution to the stability of peace, a new dimension of soft power approach could deepen these processes. The emerging European Union peacebuilding framework sets a new normative structure reaffirming that a bottom-up, non-coercive approach is needed. Many scholars, such as John P. Lederach, suggest that there are ways to “build creative responses to patterns of self-perpetuating violence in a complex system made up of multiple actors, with activities that are happening at the same time.”¹ Perhaps stopping the shooting and killing is the first step in a very long process of healing among the community members affected by the conflicts.

Although a set of tools has already been developed within the peacebuilding context, such as various reconciliation and truth commissions, training and advocacy programs, peacekeeping, transitional justice, demobilization and disarmament efforts and many others, it seems that they all focus on military and political arrangements. Many scholars have been criticizing the liberal approach to peacebuilding, which rests on promotion of democracy, market-based economic reforms and other processes associated with modern state building but which often overlook the needs and capabilities of local populations. These approaches are widely criticised for being expressions of hegemony or neo-colonialism by authors such as Johan Galtung and Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo. Cycles of violence are perpetuated because externally imposed values and aspirations do not coincide with needs of local populations. Everyday life of communities is overlooked as the upper apparatus of governance is being built. Additionally, the imposition of Western values can further cause political, economic and cultural isolation as societies in question attempt to preserve their fragile ecosystems.

Because of such criticisms, the issue of “local ownership” is emerging in many articles, underlining the fact that local stakeholders are not sufficiently engaged. In recent years, a new wave of study has emerged within the peacebuilding field, which underlines the importance of community-based approaches.

As part of this trend, this research will evaluate the effects of arts-based programmes and cultural work as a tool to contribute to peacebuilding. My hypothesis is that in order to build a lasting peace, adding a cultural component to peacebuilding, is just as important as other efforts at post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction such as establishing democracy, market economics, secular authority, institutions of justice and strengthening the state. Specifically, I hypothesise that introducing
strategic arts-based programs with local content can have a significant impact on raising awareness about peaceful solutions to everyday problems affecting post-conflict societies and therefore strengthening the community. In other words, responses, attitudes and behaviours in relation to the conflict can be transformed through arts.

I base my hypothesis on critical literature developed, in particular, by John P. Richmond, who elaborates on the need for a bottom up approach. Richmond notes that traditional peacebuilding leaves room for interpretation because of the coercive top-down nature of interventions. Richmond suggests that not enough attention is being paid to the underlying causes of conflict and therefore current efforts towards peacebuilding are not entirely inclusive and lack the understanding of local dynamics. That is especially the case in regions such as Afghanistan or Iraq. Richmond criticises the current approach to peacebuilding on other grounds as well:

In many post-violence environments local perceptions of the liberal peace project and its statebuilding focus indicate it to be ethically bankrupt, subject to double standards, coercive and conditional, acultural, unconcerned with the social welfare, and unfeeling and insensitive towards its subjects.2

Richmond and his colleagues describe the current approach to peacebuilding as “peacebuilding consensus” which includes “victor’s peace,” the “institutional peace,” the “constitutional peace” and the “civil peace.”3 These represent four generations of peacebuilding based on Western values such as democratization, liberalization, human rights, development and free trade. Richmond defines the “peacebuilding consensus” as follows:

Peacebuilding consensus is […] a nascent discourse and practice of both means and ends. This includes methods for the amelioration of conflict

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through mediation, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, conflict resolution, prevention, and transformation approaches, and development strategies incorporating multiple actors in a multidimensional process.  

The first three generations have been guiding policy makers for the past three decades. They all focus mainly on security and institutional and constitutional reform. Although they do engage with civil society, their focus is on the development of the liberal state. The basic idea is that order can only be achieved and maintained when security is provided and when basic institutions are functional.

First generation approaches can be termed “conflict management.” The violence is stopped and the peacekeepers are maintaining the status quo. It is a top-down, coercive approach, where external actors such as military forces are engaged to provide security and territorial integrity, combat terrorism and regulate arms trade. Sub-state actors and institutions are largely excluded. Although conflict is seemingly resolved through enforcement of rules and mediation, the roots of violence are not addressed. US-led interventions in Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan are cases of first generation or “victor’s peace” type of liberal peacebuilding.

Second generation, or “institutional peace” aims at mobilizing grassroots movements to build state institutions with the help of international actors. It is still imposed or top-down and coercive type of governance. But it is a step further in peacebuilding efforts as it addresses the economic and political barriers as sources of conflict. Bosnia and Kosovo during the early phases are good examples.

Third generation or “constitutional peace” aims to create a liberal state through a partly top-down, partly bottom-up approach. After security issues are addressed, the liberal statebuilding project is carried through in order to introduce fair

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and free elections, respect for human rights and other democratic principles. Civil society engagement is crucial in facilitating the transition along with consensual negotiations with elites. Conditionality is also a means through which democratic governance is built. East Timor, Sierra Leone, Liberia or Cambodia are some possible case studies.\(^5\)

What is important to my work is the fourth generation or “civil peace.” This new post-liberal framework focuses on civil society and is concerned with the “needs and rights” of populations:

The next graduation represents a more critical form of the liberal peace. This emancipatory model is concerned with needs as well as rights (and a blurring line between these categories), and a much closer relationship of custodians with local ownership. This is a bottom-up approach with a strong concern for social welfare and justice. It equates to civil peace and generally is not state-led but shaped by NGOs, trade unions, advocacy and social movements.\(^6\)

The everyday life of citizens with respect to their local cultural norms and traditions becomes the basis of the fourth generation peacebuilding. Populations who desire liberal peace must in the first place be able to relate to each other on a day-to-day basis. In other words, there needs to be a dialogue or some form of communication between the citizens in order for them to profit from institutional frameworks available to them in a latter stage. Richmond argues that there is also a need to go beyond the notion of local leadership:

From a liberal reformist perspective, what needs to be considered is how to identify the rights, resources, identity, welfare, cultural disposition, and ontological hybridity that would make liberal states, institutionalism, and governance viable in everyday liberal and non-liberal contexts. This requires an engagement with not just the currently fashionable and controversial issues of local ownership or local participation, but the far deeper ‘local-local’ (that is, not merely a veneer of internationally sponsored local actors and NGOs


constituting ‘civil’ as opposed to ‘uncivil’ society), which allows for genuine self-government, self-determination, democracy and human rights.\(^7\)

The European Union, for example, advocates the fourth generation approach and focuses on certain key areas such as sustainable peace, human security, and “responsibility to protect” and also puts an emphasis, among other tasks, on enhancing the civil dialogue through civil society actors. It favours non-military policies in order to promote social justice through “engagement with others, their alterity, cultures and identities.”\(^8\) The European Union’s normative legacy relies on “soft power” and this seems to be true also regarding the peacebuilding efforts. Although the EU’s aspirations head in the direction of a bottom-up approach and could therefore incorporate strategic-based peacebuilding in their programs, it remains a challenge to see them implemented. Building on Richmond, I seek in this thesis to identify appropriate local strategies.

The approach I will use builds on liberal theory as resting on a “bottom-up” approach to world politics, in which the interests of individuals and groups are central and cooperation is possible even though harmony of interests is difficult to achieve and conflict may erupt over irreconcilable beliefs, scarce goods or power among others.\(^9\)

On the other hand, it addresses to some degree the concerns, already discussed, of the critical theorists who focus on the fact that the peacebuilding consensus could in fact disguise the hegemonic aspirations of Western donors. It also conforms to a constructivist view in that constructivism offers a theoretical lens, which emphasizes the role of norms, culture and ideas in shaping the social fabric of a

\(^7\) Ibid.


society. In the context of my thesis, it explains why promoting non-violent ways of conflict-resolution, in other words, promoting new norms and behaviours can lead to a more lasting peace. Helbing et al. identify two processes of establishing norms and argue that in local environments individuals are able to create norms.

When adaptive group pressure is considered, local social norms may spontaneously be created by random variations in individual behaviors, even in settings, where everybody would tend to show the personally preferred behavior. A precondition is that social interactions are focused on a sufficiently small neighborhood. Then, local behavioral majorities will sooner or later occur by coincidence, and group pressure will reinforce them. This gives rise to local conformity, i.e. local norms, which are then spreading into areas where everybody is still showing the personally preferred behavior. Their argument helps to explain why working at the community level could be more effective in establishing the resort to peaceful means of solving disputes as a new norm.

These liberal, critical and constructivist views can be applied to my cultural approach, which is itself endorsed by scholars such as Cynthia Cohen and Olivier Urbain. My approach is based on the idea that “strategic arts” can be effective in building peace. In the next section, I explain in greater detail how arts and culture can be employed to build peace with a local face.

Nexus of Arts, Culture and Peacebuilding

Culture is often mentioned as one of the components that should be taken into consideration during the peacebuilding process. What the term means within this specific context and why it is so crucial is rarely explained. Geertz suggests that culture is “the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their action. … [It is] expressed in symbolic forms by means of

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which people communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.”

Culture can be therefore understood as a collective framework which guides the lives of people on an everyday basis. This framework consists of experiences, symbols, rituals, values, traditions, social structures and rules of interaction. Altogether they shape each individual’s view of the world, help relate to it and relate to others in his or her community. Because it is a shared structure, it also guides the ways people see and engage or disengage in conflict. Lisa Schirch notes that cultural groups develop a common memory of what they interpret as traumatic experience. They choose specific moments in history, which are passed on from generation to generation, becoming symbols worth fighting for. Cultural groups also develop their own ways to handle conflict, including language, to best describe their experiences. Often, complex rituals involving what we would call art performances are in place to address differences. Schirch argues that using the existing cultural frameworks could offer peacebuilders a range of powerful tools in dealing with conflict. Subsequently, Cynthia Cohen poses a very important question: “what are the risks involved in transplanting a cultural form from one culture into another setting?” It is crucial to ask what meaning or connotation Western culture has in African countries, which have suffered so many years of colonisation. Cohen further explains, that certain art forms are embedded in sacred domains (e.g. some traditions of African drumming) while others are secular. Culturally appropriate methodologies are therefore key

13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
16 Ibid., 38.
because without the local knowledge peacebuilding efforts could be very difficult to achieve.

Arts can refer to a very large set of phenomena. For the purpose of this study, Cynthia Cohen’s approach is the most useful.\textsuperscript{17} For her, arts include a spectrum of art forms such as painting, photography, dance, theatre, poetry, music, movies and expressions of local folklore. They can all be very powerful tools in peacebuilding processes. My study focuses on particular programs referred to as strategic arts based programs. By strategic arts-based programs I refer to a concept elaborated by Shank and Schirch:

By \textit{strategic}, the authors mean that arts based methodologies be conceptually grounded, coordinated with other forms of peacebuilding approaches, infused with long term perspective vis-à-vis the nature of social change, and serious about evaluating their effectiveness and impact. … If the arts are going to be useful to the field of peace building, it is necessary to know \textit{what} the arts contribute to peacebuilding, \textit{when} different art forms are appropriate in the cycle of conflict, and \textit{how} the arts are so effective in their contribution to peacebuilding. John Paul Lederach calls this analytical process the ‘strategic what’, the ‘strategic when’ and the ‘strategic how’ of peacebuilding.\textsuperscript{18}

In other words, it is important to understand not only the cycles of conflict, but also the local cultural background and the needs of local populations. The first step is the strategic \textit{what}, or in other words the difficult choice between many existing methods of conflict resolution. Shank and Schirch propose the following methods: 1) waging conflict non-violently, 2) reducing direct violence, 3) transforming relationships and 4) building capacity.\textsuperscript{19}

Rama Mani adds to this by focusing on a specific aspect of peacebuilding, namely transitional justice, and how aesthetic and creative means can help in pursuing

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
justice after violent conflicts. The author sees the arts and culture at large as a means to pursue a more inclusive approach to justice, which would take into account not only direct victims and perpetrators but also bystanders and the population at large. This method would involve in the process all members of the community “based on their shared culture and notwithstanding personal or group differences.” Mani acknowledges the diverse needs of populations emerging from violent conflict, which cannot be addressed by a single mechanism of transitional justice, such as trials or truth commissions. Cultural justice emerges as a response and another dimension of peacebuilding efforts.

Strategic when refers to accurate timing. Each conflict goes through the initial phase of increase in violence, which then progresses and eventually diminishes. Certain above-mentioned approaches, such as “waging conflict non-violently” could have tragic effects when initiated after violence has spiralled out of control. On this note, Lederach makes a very interesting observation, which is crucial to understanding post-conflict environments. He argues that the use of the word “post-conflict” is in many ways misleading as it suggests the conflict has indeed ended. However, signing peace agreements merely signifies that the warring parties found a solution and that if they follow certain procedures, there is a possibility of a peaceful end. Many conflicts continue long after the agreements are signed, specifically because there is a need to redefine relationships. Arts offer creative solutions to breaking the cycles of violence by offering an outside perspective on conflict and

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21 Ibid., 551.
promoting peaceful responses. He also underlines the role of imagination in initiating the positive change within violence-affected communities.

Sustaining peaceful transformation in settings of deep-rooted violence requires a long-term view that focuses as much on the people in the setting of conflict building durable and flexible processes as it does on specific solutions. We move away from an image of a single rising bell curve, the line in time with an agreement as its product. We move toward the image of a transformative platform: ongoing social and relational spaces, in other words people in relationship who generate responsive initiatives for constructive change.24

Finally, the strategic how reflects the concerns presented here in previous paragraphs, namely, how to built responses which are culturally appropriate and effective. Within this discourse, the individuals participating in arts programs are resources instead of recipients. Local knowledge of art forms and rituals used to resolve conflicts become a basis of peacebuilding work. The discussion of how touches upon other subjects and disciplines where various scholars come up with best practices regarding specific issues related to post-conflict recovery. Escuata and Butterwick point out that visual arts can “contribute to collective recovery from and reconstruction after trauma.”25 Survivors of violent conflicts witnessed horrific atrocities and unfortunately, in most developing nations, counselling or psychological support is unavailable and they are left on their own to deal with the consequences. The effects of trauma are well documented and can result in “significantly disempowering distress and physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual impairment.”26 Additionally, people are constantly reliving the traumatic events in their minds, which changes their way of seeing the reality and dealing with others in their communities. Failure to address this issue can result in a never-ending spiral of violence, as most individual members of affected communities are not

24 Ibid.
26 Ibid., 325.
psychologically stable. The article by Escuate and Butterwick and works of other scholars such as art therapist Marian Liebman, are significant in that they underline the importance of looking into other fields of the social sciences in order to better understand the human factor in the peacebuilding effort.27

It seems important to answer one more question: why arts-based programs supposedly transform relationships. Cynthia Cohen suggests that based on studies in cognitive psychology, the author suggests, that “rational deliberations alone are unlikely to be sufficient to rebuild inter-communal relations in the aftermath of ethnic conflict.”28 Processes such as art and ritual can address some of the challenges related to coexistence and reconciliation. Arts can involve people in sensory experiences, though non-verbal communications such as visual arts and symbols, hearing sounds and observing bodily expressions. All of these, if rooted in native culture, have the power to transform the individuals involved in the process of instant creation. Therefore Cohen proposes an approach which takes into account the existing cultural framework and uses ritual as a means to overcome the limitations of verbal expression.29 She further explains, that arts offer an outside perspective on conflict and the “Other.”

Finally, cultural diplomacy emerges as yet another way to incorporate culture to the peacebuilding efforts on an international level. The ideal of cultural exchange can be seen as a non-coercive strategy used by states to advance their interests and built relationships with the ‘Other.’ For example Memis explores the role of the British Council in advancing cultural relations and public diplomacy. According to the author, cooperation though cultural relations can enhance international trust and

29 Ibid., 73.
“contribute towards a stable world.” On the other hand, it should be noted that many scholars, such as D.Y. Jin, Kalyani Chadha and Anandam Kavoori, are critical of cultural diplomacy because from the perspective of instrumentalism it can in fact be a propaganda tool. Once again a local approach would be helpful here.

Research Design

In proceeding to analyze the relationship between culture (that is strategic arts-based programs) and peacebuilding, I will use a case study approach. In order to support my hypothesis, I first identify four cases of civil wars, which ended and subsequently entered a post-conflict stage of reconstruction. These cases were chosen from the Middle East, Africa and Asia in order to give a broad global context. They are post-conflict: Yemen, Democratic Republic of Congo and Nepal. In each case, the United Nations and various NGOs have been playing an active role in state building through development of state institutions, promotion of democracy, disarmament efforts and other peacebuilding tools. I then identify arts-based programs at the community level, which have emerged during this post-conflict stage to see if any of them have the potential to contribute to more lasting peace, which I define in terms of strong and united communities, able to transform conflicts and establish resorts to peaceful means by participants in settling daily disputes. For the purpose of this study I have located three such programs, one in each country, implemented by Search for Common Ground (SCG) in cooperation with local actors.

The first program, Strengthening repatriation and reintegration through information and conflict transformation, targeted the communities in Democratic Republic of Congo. One of its objectives was the enhancement of conflict resolution capacities of local actors, including returnees and residents as well as local authorities,

through participatory theatre. This art form was used to offer a platform where communities can observe their own conflicts played out by actors and subsequently are invited themselves to perform and engage in peaceful conflict resolution.

The second program, *The Team*, incorporated a television drama as a way to promote positive messages among the Yemenis in order to shift attitudes towards greater tolerance among the country’s sectarian, ethnic, political, and socio-economic groups. The TV series was also played at the “viewing sessions” open to public. Following the screening of episodes debate was encouraged to gather all differing opinions on a specific topic to reach a common understanding or conclusion.

The third program, *Peace Process Communication Campaign*, was implemented in Nepal and involved the creation of peace songs by people of different ethnic backgrounds in order to promote national unity, reconciliation and tolerance. The peace songs respected various cultural practices and incorporated musical instruments of different ethnic groups. They were eventually played during a live concert, which attracted hundreds of people, and was broadcast by the most popular TV channel and the radio stations across the country. The songs’ creation process involved dialogue and various exercises with the goal to strengthen the community bonds between artists from different ethnic backgrounds.

My next step is to describe the programs in detail in order to make the case that they can significantly strengthen the communities by raising awareness and promoting positive responses to conflict where there had been none before. If I find that these programs have worked well in terms of participants’ resort to peaceful methods, I will conclude that they are effective in building a more lasting peace than traditional peacebuilding programs. However, these programs may also have their
limitations and if so, I will present these problems in detail. In Chapter 2 I will present my first case study: the Democratic Republic of Congo.
Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) gained its independence from Belgium in 1960. That same year the country fell into a civil war after Katanga province declared its secession. One of the first UN peacekeeping missions, the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC) was established to stabilize the country with little to no effect. From 1966 until the First Congolese War, DRC experienced many years of severe mismanagement under the presidency of Joseph Desire Mobutu. For the purpose of this study, I will focus on the most recent developments, namely the First and Second Congolese Wars, which have claimed the lives of an estimated 3.9 million people.¹

The First Congolese War began in 1996 in the aftermath of the genocide, which took place in Rwanda from April to July 1994. When a Tutsi-led patriotic front seized power in Kigali, 2 million ethnic Hutu refugees crossed the border from Rwanda to DRC in order to avoid prosecution. Among the refugees there were around 50,000 Hutu militia soldiers who were responsible for the massacres and who sought refuge in the camps, looting and killing local Tutsi population.² The weak Congolese government was not able to control the militia. The new regime in Kigali was not only feeling threatened by the remaining armed groups across the border, but also grew deeply dissatisfied with Mobutu’s regime. In order to legitimize an invasion, Rwanda organized a coalition supported by Angola, Burundi, Eritrea, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, which all contributed troops and political support to fight the militias and

the Mobutu regime. Additionally, a new ethnic Tutsi leader Laurent Kabila, supported by Rwanda and other states, was found to be a prefect candidate to lead a rebellion within the DRC. Kabila formed an anti-Mobutu rebel group: Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo-Zaire (AFDL). A full-scale national and regional war was triggered, which led to Mobutu’s ouster after a series of clear victories by the AFDL. In May 1997, Laurent-Désiré Kabila became a new president.

Shortly after, new tensions arose when his backers, Rwanda and Uganda, accused Kabila of supporting Rwandan rebel groups. This led to a new invasion of DRC by these two states in August 1998, which sparked the Second Congolese War. A new rebel group was also formed with the support of Rwanda and Uganda: the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD). This time Kabila sought support from neighboring countries and with the help of Angola, Zimbabwe and to a lesser degree Namibia and Sudan, he was able to defend Kinshasa and stay in power. As the fighting continued, the state became weaker leaving the vacuum filled by quickly multiplying rebel groups. In addition to already established militias, former supporters of Mobutu organized themselves around Jean-Pierre Bemba to form the Congo Liberation Movement (MLC). That same year, international actors entered the scene and intensive mediation eventually led to a cease-fire signed in Lusaka in 1999. It was never really observed and the fighting continued.

In 2001, Laurent Kabila was assassinated by his bodyguard. His son, Joseph Kabila came to power. The new president was trusted by Western powers and slow progress was made, which culminated in a series of agreements signed in 2002 and

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2003, notably the Pretoria and Luanda agreements. Officially, the foreign troops were supposed to withdraw from DRC by the end of 2002. The representatives of warring rebel groups were incorporated to the Transitional Government. However, when elections were held in 2006, many were not able to stay in power: the RCD controlled roughly a third of DRC territory and secured only a few seats representation in the new legislature. This was a spark which incited a new rebellion led by General Laurent Nkunda heading the National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP). \(^5\) Rwanda once again sided with the new rebel group to maintain its influence in the resource rich DRC. It was only in 2009, that the two countries signed an agreement, which incorporated the CNDP into the Congolese army. However, in 2012 the 2009 peace deal collapsed, when CNDP leader Bosco Ntaganda launched a mutiny and took half of CNDP officers with him. Again, the group called Movement of March 23 (M23) received support from Rwanda.

Finally, in 2013 two important peace agreements were signed which ended the M23 rebellion. Some experts argue, that although fighting in DRC continues, there are signs of a serious peace process. \(^6\) I will now proceed to describe in detail how the international and regional actors have responded to the conflict and how that has shaped the current approach to peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts in DRC. I will then evaluate the efficacy of these approaches.

**Conflict Resolution and Reconstruction Efforts in DRC**

It is important to note that from 2002, international actors labeled the DRC as a “post conflict” environment and set up their response accordingly. That is because various diplomats saw the 2002-2003 peace agreements as the end of war. Between 2003 and 2006 the international involvement in the DRC reached unprecedented

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\(^6\) Ibid.
levels. It was oriented towards post-conflict reconstruction efforts such as disbursement of development aid by the European Union (EU) and establishment of peacekeeping operations by the UN.

Following the Lusaka cease-fire agreement signed in 1999, the United Nations Security Council established the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) with the purpose of overseeing the disarmament process and supervising the withdrawal of foreign troops. It took several months before the mission was operational and since then it has been expanding both in mandate and in size. The Lusaka agreement did not produce intended outcomes and the international community, including the United States, UN, EU, the Organization of African Unity and a few African countries (notably South Africa, Zambia and Libya), brought the warring parties to a negotiating table once more in 2002. The Inter-Congolese Dialogue ended with the signing of a Final Act in 2003. One of the most important frameworks developed during this period was the Global and All-Inclusive Agreement on the Transition in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It became the basis for the creation of the Transitional Government and the official beginning of a path towards lasting peace and democracy in DRC. The approach taken was a top-down solution, which dealt mostly with political issues of governance:

As mandated in the Global and All-Inclusive Agreement ‘the 1+4 model’ (‘le schéma 1+4’) structured the transitional government. The administration included one president (Joseph Kabila) and four vice presidents drawn from the RCD-G (Azarias Ruberwa), the MLC (Jean-Pierre Bemba), Kabila’s former government (Abdoulaye Yerodia Ndombasi), and a coalition of unarmed parties gathered under the name the Political Opposition (Arthur Z’ahidi Ngoma). In the lower echelons, such as the ministries, the parliament, and other administrative capacities (like the governorship of a province), representation was supposedly equally divided among the eight ‘components of the transition,’ corresponding to the eight most powerful political or military groups turned political parties at the outset of the civil war...

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8 Ibid.
Additionally, a strategy was developed to integrate the rebels from various groups into the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo and police units, which were to be dispatched in all provinces to maintain order until the elections period in 2006. Although the peace process seemed promising, violence continued in the eastern provinces, notably Maniema and North Katanga. Respectively, in 2005 and 2006, the referendum on a new constitution and general legislative and presidential elections were held. The National Assembly was installed and Joseph Kabila became president.9

The newly elected leader was cautious about the outside involvement and eventually pushed the Western capitals to disengage politically, while the peace process was still very fragile. Eventually, the UN-led International Committee in Support of the Transition sharply reduced its assistance, while the peacekeepers were focusing on protecting the civilians and could only engage in reactive firefight without tackling the root causes of conflict. However, financial aid flowed into the country and a policy of stabilization was adopted. In 2009, the Congolese government declared that the conflict was over and introduced the Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan for Eastern Congo (STAREC). With the help of Western donors, the program focused on reconstruction: building infrastructure, deploying state agents to rural areas and adjusting the economy. However, the administrative buildings and roads lacked maintenance, while the officials were often abusive. According to UN officials, these various efforts were “disconnected from the wishes of the local population [and] perceived as predatory.”10 The international efforts towards reconstruction also included training of the Congolese army units. Issues emerged when the foreign officers would receive reports claiming the soldiers they trained

9 Ibid.
were not fed or paid. The ultimate blow came with a 2012 investigation indicating that US-trained army units participated in a mass rape in the town of Minova (Eastern DRC).

When the political instability in DRC was aggravated by 2011 flawed general elections and the following mutiny of CNDP officers, the M23 rebel movement pushed the international community to act more robustly. The UN deployed the first-ever combat brigade to intervene militarily in DRC. Former President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, was appointed a special envoy for the Great Lakes region in order to instill peace in the region. The expanded UN peacekeeping mission changed its name to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in Congo (MONUSCO) and is now the largest police force and peacekeeping mission worldwide.\(^{11}\) The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Region was signed by regional powers in February 2013. A few months later, M23 rebel group finally came to the negotiating table and on 12 December 2013 signed the Nairobi Declaration. A 2015 report of the UN Secretary-General on the implementation of these regional agreements indicates that progress has been made and that the Great Lakes region has enjoyed a relative stability. However, the effort to neutralize armed groups in Eastern DRC and the slow disarmament process have been mentioned as some of the challenges. The report further indicates that 2,7 million people are internally displaced and around “5,2 million people are affected by conflict, malnutrition, epidemics and natural disasters.”\(^{12}\)

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The DRC conflict remains one of the largest ongoing humanitarian crises in the world and many scholars are attempting to investigate why after so many years of intense peacebuilding efforts, the violence continues. Autesserre suggests that the issue of ethnic tensions between the Congolese of Rwandan descent and the indigenous communities had been present before the war began.\textsuperscript{13} The micro-level antagonisms have continued to incite violence, and local leaders have used disputing groups to achieve their own political goals.

[...] many local conflicts became autonomous from the national and regional developments, most notably in South Kivu, North Katanga, and Ituri. There, local disputes over political power, economic resources (especially land and mining sites), and social status led to clashes that no national or regional actors could stop. The humanitarian cost was staggering.\textsuperscript{14}

Autesserre further argues that the international community failed to address the causes of micro-level violence. The top-down approach was instead advocated and prescribed procedures were applied with a complete abandonment of grassroots peacebuilding. Additionally, peacekeepers themselves lacked cohesion, were sometimes unresponsive and eventually became unpopular with the local populations who called them “tourists in the war zone.”\textsuperscript{15}

Based on interviews with interveners, Autesserre was able to identify two main reasons why the international community saw grassroots peacebuilding as ineffective. First of all, the UN officials she was able to interview, claimed that the conflict was provoked by politicians and leaders of groups who were seeking power over the territories rich in natural resources and therefore, a top-down approach was the only effective solution. Secondly, addressing very complex local conflicts would involve a coherent strategy as well as financial, logistic and political resources, which

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 178.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 114.
were unavailable to most organizations. In 2002, following the publication of the Brahimi Report, the UN adopted a new approach to peacebuilding, which would include the bottom-up work in the mandate of MONUC. Unfortunately, it never materialized and humanitarian staff members remained neutral and apolitical. Similarly in 2005, renewed efforts were made, however, they merely focused on emergency relief such as “primary care and food distribution, water and sanitation projects, and medical and psychological assistance to the victims of sexual violence.”\(^\text{16}\) In sum, the international interventions included three major elements: 1) political - focusing on the regional and national elite, 2) military – aiming at deployment of peacekeepers, and 3) humanitarian – addressing the consequences of violence, which also represented one of a few isolated cases of involvement with the local populations. Other limited attempts at local peacebuilding were implemented by NGOs such as Life and Peace Institute or Search for Common ground, which were the main international agencies working on a local level to maintain peace in the DRC. I will now proceed to evaluate their efforts.

**Participatory Theater in DRC – Search for Common Ground**

Participatory theater for conflict transformation has been used by Search for Common Ground (SCG) in different corners of the world to enable people in conflict to find peaceful ways of addressing the daily disputes in their lives. It tackles conflicts linked to resources, refugees, land rights, corruption, sexual violence and prejudice.\(^\text{17}\) It involves techniques which allow the actors to interact with the public based on a real problem. Eventually, the audience engages and participates in a performance to adapt, change or correct a situation or a behavior that is being developed during the

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\(^{16}\) Ibid., 205-206.

\(^{17}\) Progress Report 2012 (Washington, DC: Search for Common Ground,[2012a]).
show. Participatory theater gives people the space to transform their conflicts without violence.

Since 2005, Search for Common Ground (SCG) has performed more than 10,000 participatory theater shows in DRC and has reached hundreds of thousands of people across the country. I will now explain in more detail what participatory theater is and why it is used as a tool to transform conflict. I will then present the quantitative and qualitative data to assess the efficacy of the program *Strengthening repatriation and reintegration through information and conflict transformation*. The data was published by SCG in the final evaluation report.

![Participatory Theatre Performance](image)

*Figure 2.1. Participatory Theatre Performance. From: Participatory Theatre for Conflict Transformation: Training Manual (Washington, DC: Search for Common Ground)*

The participatory theater can take different forms including Forum Theater, Debate Theater, Image Theater, Playback Theater or Invisible Theater. All the styles incorporate the audience’s participation as the main feature of the show. There are a few important steps that have to be taken in a specific sequence in order to produce a
successful performance. They are: 1) information collection, 2) compiling information, 3) scene development, 4) character development, 5) preparation of the performance location, 6) interaction with spectators, 7) role of the director. First, actors approach the community members and collect information about the way people live, including the cultural aspects and customs, conflicts they experience and who are the participants, religious norms and the community structure. After identifying the disputes, which most often create violence, the actors proceed to develop a story based on a chosen conflict. The performance location is then selected in a visible, secure and accessible place. The show is promoted in collaboration with local authorities through radio, posters, and public announcements in schools and churches. An effort is made to invite all community members, including security forces, police and elders.\textsuperscript{18}

The actors are Congolese and go through training in the participatory theater techniques. They sometimes were victims or perpetrators of violence and had direct experience of conflict. The performance begins by welcoming the audience and incorporates various elements of local culture, including singing, drumming and dance to attract attention and build trust. Music is also used during the show to transition between different scenes and the show uses “contemporary popular music that is rooted in the local context” or songs created by actors that express emotions such as sadness or joy.\textsuperscript{19} After the introduction, the conductor explains what is the goal of the show and encourages the audience to participate in the final stage of the play. At this moment, the public is invited to enter the stage and play out the roles previously assigned to actors. This time instead of violent responses they must come up with an alternative peaceful ending to the conflict they just witnessed. That way

\textsuperscript{18} Participatory Theater for Conflict Transformation: Training Manual (Washington, DC: Search for Common Ground, [b]).

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
the audience members become engaged in establishing and promoting the non-violent means of resolving daily disputes. Some performances end with a debate where dialogue between community members is encouraged to address specific problems.²⁰

There are multiple reasons why participatory theater can help build a lasting peace among local communities. First of all, it offers a forum where the marginalized populations can raise their voice and speak about the issues they face in daily life in a neutral environment. Because it is performed in public, the audience can be anyone who arrives, making theater accessible and inclusive to random populations. By witnessing the conflicts as spectators the community members become detached and are able to perceive the problems from a different viewpoint. On the other hand, the performer seeks to offer the public alternative ways to understand the conflict narrative.

Through performance art interventions, the past can be reexamined, reinvented and retold in a public venue. Through a process agreed upon by the performer and the audience, storytelling can explore multiple perceptions of an event despite obstacles that would deter such an exchange under a different process.²¹

Artists can be seen as “moral instructors who can offer moral guidance through creative expression.”²² Although the performance presents attitudes and behaviors, which might be difficult to imagine for war-torn societies, they could nevertheless be adopted in the long run. Additionally, art offers the potential to see the “Other” from a different perspective. It allows the spectator to observe both sides to a dispute and understand how underlying causes and claims by both parties are rooted in shared humanity and anchored in the same cultural environment. This new perception is possible because of an alternative reality, which is created during the performance.

²⁰ Ibid.
²² Ibid., 42.
The term alternative reality refers to a conscious psychological altering of place, in which the individual accepts that the events and situations he or she sees have a creative or make-believe reality. By observing imaginary scenarios, the viewer can take in multiple perspectives of a conflict. Storytelling used in performance art interventions utilizes dialogical communication within an imaginary environment between performer and listener. It is important not to discount this make-believe place as a useful fantasy. On the contrary, performance art can take us outside ourselves and bring us back to our real lives transformed.23

Participatory theater for conflict transformation has been used and evaluated by Search for Common Ground since 2005. The results have been shown to be promising and based on previous experiences SCG has organized transformational festivals bringing actors from the Great Lake Region to train them in participatory theater techniques. In 2007 a short video and a training manual were released in English and French to better assist artist peacebuilders in their work. In 2007 the SCG participatory theater won the Ashoka-Changemaker “Entrepreneuring Peace” Award for “On-the-Ground Innovations for Managing Conflict,” selected from 158 entries from 42 countries.24 I will now evaluate one of their programs, which took place in DRC in 2011/2012 and used participatory theater to promote non-violent ways of conflict resolution.

**Strengthening Repatriation and Reintegration through Information and Conflict Transformation**

Program *Strengthening Repatriation and Reintegration through Information and Conflict Transformation* was implemented in 2011/2012 by Search for Common Ground with support from the US Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration. It targeted the communities in Burundi and DRC with the aim of successful repatriation and reintegration of refugees. One of the program’s main objectives was to “strengthen the conflict resolution capacities of local actors,

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23 Ibid., 31.

including returnees, residents, local authorities, and local administration” through participatory theater.\textsuperscript{25} The data for this analysis was drawn from a Final Evaluation Report of the program, which was based on a quantitative questionnaire as well as interviews with participants and staff members. The questionnaire was conducted with 401 people in DRC. Additionally, two focus groups were managed with 12 and 16 participants respectively. In total 429 people were surveyed. I will only present the data concerning specifically DRC.

The program targeted two territories in South Kivu province of DRC: Uvira and Fizi. It was designed to address community issues, which amounted to the largest number of disputes among local populations. The highest priority was assigned to land and property conflicts. Additionally, about 30\% of survey participants mentioned family, ethnic and political disputes, particularly between the Bembe and the Banyamulenge, witchcraft and conflict because of unemployment. The region was chosen because of the significant numbers of returnees from Tanzania (82\%), Burundi (12\%), Rwanda (2\%) and Kenya (2\%). Figure 2.2 represents the respective ratio of residents to returnees among the survey participants.\textsuperscript{26}

\begin{figure}[h]
    
    \includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chart2.png}
    \caption{DRC sample - residents and returnees. From: Strengthening Repatriation and Reintegration through Information and Conflict Transformation: Final Evaluation Report (Washington: Search for Common Ground, [2012b])}
    \end{figure}

\textsuperscript{25} Strengthening Repatriation and Reintegration through Information and Conflict Transformation: Final Evaluation Report (Washington, DC: Search for Common Ground,[2012b]).

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
In DRC 40% of the respondents had personal experience of land disputes. They often arise when the returnees come back to their land or their property after they had been forced to flee to neighboring countries because of the war. Upon returning they sometimes find that their home was demolished and the land taken over or sold in their absence. Issues such as jealousy, mistrust, rumors and stereotypes can aggravate the situation making the reintegration process more difficult. In addition, the resources and opportunities are scarce and the climate of mistrust can quickly escalate into violence. The state-sponsored mechanisms to address the conflicts are nearly absent, which leaves the perpetrators unpunished. In this environment the incentives to resort to violence are high.  

Figure 2.3: Most Common Types of Conflict. From: Strengthening Repatriation and Reintegration through Information and Conflict Transformation: Final Evaluation Report (Washington: Search for Common Ground, [2012b])

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To address land disputes and other conflicts common in DRC, and promote the peaceful methods of conflict resolution among the communities SCG organized 60 participatory theater performances. Additionally, 12 follow-up dialogue sessions were held, which “took the form of conflict resolution trainings as well as feedback and discussions around the theater performances.”

There was a strong emphasis on dialogue as a means of finding sustainable solutions to problems.

The survey conducted among the study participants revealed that 86% of them felt that they were able to resolve the conflicts peacefully. In DRC the most common methods included negotiation, mediation and conflict resolution offered by local chiefs or traditional leaders. Among the study participants 54% were aware and took part in a participatory theater sessions. Theater was also mentioned among the most common sources of information about dispute resolution strategies. 94% of participants who attended the participatory theater session found them “excellent” or “good quality” and 95% found them inclusive of a diverse group of people including “ages genders and ethnic identities.” In DRC 92% found the session useful and 82% admitted that they have learned new mechanisms in which people can deal with disputes through peaceful means. Two main lessons-learned were: “who I can approach to resolve my problems” (58%) and “various manners of handling the conflict non-violently” (53%).


29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.
There is also evidence that the communities have incorporated the new methods in their daily lives. 51% of the theater session’s participants said they had concretely put into practice what they had learned during the performances. Additionally, 95% felt that SCG has provided them with a “forum for open collaborative dialogue about conflict.” Some testimonies provide an interesting overview of what has been achieved, For example, some residents explained that after participating in theater performances they were willing to share the land with returnees.

I knew that the land didn’t belong to me even though I had bought it legally. When I saw the theater performance, I felt really guilty. I remember it took place right after the mess on a Sunday. I saw the life that returnees live when they return home and I understood that I had to give up my land. So I gave it up to the returnee that owned it and I was surprised to see that he behaved in a good way the actors behaved in a theater.  

In another testimony a participant tackles another common issue of family disputes.

My father had two wives and many children. Before we were almost ready to kill each other because I refused to share the land. After the participatory theater session I went home and immediately called the other children to give them an equal share of the land.

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31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
The sessions have improved the knowledge about resorts to peaceful methods to resolve daily disputes. The quality of conflict mediation was enhanced and a higher level of understanding between the residents and returnees was reported.

With the theatre we learned that we can help solve land conflicts between returnees and residents as a community.33

The above evaluation leads to a conclusion that the participatory theater has the potential to help communities learn about peaceful methods of conflict resolution and helps to create meaningful bonds between community members. This kind of local peacebuilding empowers the people and gives them knowledge, which they can use and profit from. Combined with other methods of local peacebuilding such as radio and media, it can make a positive change in post-conflict societies.

33 Ibid.
Chapter 3: Yemen

Conflict in Yemen

Yemen is located in the southwestern corner of the Arabian Peninsula. As of 2012 oil, which was discovered in Yemen in the 1960s, accounts for roughly 25% of GDP and 70% of government revenue.\(^1\) The country has been ethnically and politically divided for many years and subsequent wars and rebellions caused instability. The World Bank places Yemen among the poorest countries in the Arab world, with 55.4% of the population living in poverty in 2012. It is also one of the most food insecure countries globally.\(^2\) During the twentieth century Yemen transitioned from being a traditional society to a “melting pot of revolutions accompanied by foreign intervention.”\(^3\) Although Yemen has been a battlefront between three major groups, namely, al Qaeda, the southern movement and the Houthis, for the purpose of this study I will focus on the conflict between the Houthis and the government, which best represents the underlying divisions along ethnic and religious lines. To understand the Houthi rebellion, which I will describe in detail, it is important to introduce a brief historical background, which places the conflict in a wider context.

In the past, Yemen served as a crossroad for the civilizations in Egypt, Mesopotamia, East Africa and India. It was traditionally ruled by imams, sultans, kings and queens. The tribe has been the central socio-political unit and the cornerstone of the individual and shared identity. The number of tribes in Yemen is estimated between 74 and 100.\(^4\) Their leaders called “shaykhs” were traditionally

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\(^1\) Micheal Quentin Morton, "Oil Exploration in Yemen," *Geo ExPro* 10, no. 2 (2013) 70.  
\(^4\) Ibid., 7.
loyal to imams, who were both the political and the religious figures. Uzi Rabi explains, that “the Yemeni tribes, primarily the mountainous Zaydis, had always been the nucleus of the governing system and their loyalty was integral to the stability of every government.”

In the mid-nineteenth century Yemen was divided between the Ottoman Empire in the north and the British in the south. With the demise of the Ottoman Empire the Zaydi Imamate began to exert its control over the north of the country. Throughout this period, Yemen enjoyed relative stability and was administered according to tribal patterns. In 1962 the imamate did not withstand the pressures from outside and eventually collapsed due to revolutionary movements supported by Egypt. A new President, Sallal was appointed as a leader of Yemen Arab Republic, while Egyptian officials occupied prominent posts in the administration and military, effectively placing Yemen under Egyptian rule. A new republican order was introduced and many tribes grew dissatisfied with it. A long civil war erupted between “republicans” backed by Egypt and “royalists” backed by Saudi Arabia.

In the meantime, the British controlled South Yemen with its capital in Aden. Starting in 1962, the tribes felt that British rule was oppressive and demanded more freedoms and concessions that would allow the tribal leaders to exert more control. Years of struggle led to the end of British rule in 1967, and the creation of People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, the only declared Marxist regime in the Arab world. The year 1967 also marked the end of Egyptian rule in the Yemen Arab Republic. Sallal was deposed in a military coup, while the fighting between the royalists and the republicans continued. At this point, the region became a battlefront in the Cold War. The tensions between North and South Yemen never vanished; however some

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5 Ibid., 49.
6 Ibid., 41-45.
attempts were made at reunification. They met with constant resistance from the Saudis and the tribal leaders of the north. Finally, the opportunity presented itself after the shifts in the international system, notably the fall of the Berlin wall, could no longer be ignored. In 1990, the “Sanaa Agreement” was signed by both states, which allowed for new a democratic government to be elected. The united Republic of Yemen was created and the leader of North Yemen, Ali Abdullah Saleh, was appointed president.\footnote{Ibid., 118.}

After the reunification Yemen went through yet another difficult period during the Gulf War in 1990-91. When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, Yemenis were presented with a dilemma. Their long-standing relations with Iraq were at stake if they supported the West. As a member of the UN Security Council at the time Yemen twice abstained from a vote which would impose sanctions on Iraq and ultimately voted against the use of force to recapture Kuwait, instead advocating an Arab solution to the conflict.\footnote{Al-bab: An open door to the arab world, 2015, http://www.al-bab.com/blog/2015/march/yemen-saudi-relations.htm#sthash.LzEV9QQC.w11xBABn.dpbs.} Western powers and Saudi Arabia interpreted the vote as a betrayal. The US cut off its aid to Yemen, while Saudi Arabia deployed troops along the border. Additionally, Saudis expelled all Yemeni workers. 750,000 people returned home leaving everything behind. A long period of hostility was marked by border disputes and Saudi meddling in Yemeni politics. In 1994 a civil war erupted between the north and south. Eventually, the north imposed unity but tensions exacerbated as the Saudis continuously supported southern separatists.

The beginning of twentieth century, still under the presidency of Ali Abdullah Saleh, Yemen was marked by a declining economy, and the strengthening of Islamist and secessionist movements in the South. The difficult relationship between society
and the government reflected years of ethnic, geographic and political divides. Saleh used the tribal divisions as an “alternative to a party system.”

This was seen especially during the years 1990-1994. The regime did not confiscate the tribes’ weapons and used the tribal heads as mediators between the regime and rival groups. But when the civil war was over, it became clear that armed tribes and their leaders posed a real threat to the state in certain areas. [...] The tribes did not offer an alternative to Salih’s rule but created an additional power center that had to bargained with, the very existence of armed tribal enclaves was a persistent source of instability.

Tribal tensions became one of the major problems Yemen was facing. The Houthi rebellion, although being motivated by diverging religious beliefs and tribal ancestries, emerged in the province of Sa’da as a manifestation of discontent of local populations with government policies.

From 2004 on the Yemeni government was presented with a threat of a civil war, which still looms over the country today. The Zayidi rebels – popularly known as the Houthis became active in the far north of the country, adjacent to the Saudi border. In 2004, the Zayidi cleric Husayn Badr al’Din al’Huthi started to openly criticize the government of Yemen. The conflict had its roots in the marginalization of the northern province of Sa’da in terms of infrastructure, social welfare, education and security. The Zayidi tribes began to identify these issues and saw their shared interest. Additionally, they were able to reach common ground based on their shared religious affiliation Shiites. The development of the Young Believers movement under the leadership of al-Huthi marked a step forward towards this unification. Over the years al-Huthi established schools and preached theories seen by some as intolerant and against the Zayidi tradition of moderate Islam. However, Al-Huthi was eventually able to gather around him a large group of supporters among the Zayidi tribal groups,

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10 Ibid., 137.
who endorsed his criticism of the government and its policies of siding with the West, in particular with the United States. In return, the Yemeni government saw a great danger in the growing movement and decided to send soldiers to the northern provinces, which were traditionally quite autonomous.

The conflict erupted in September 2004, when the “young believers” captured the mosques and acted violently. The government decided to suppress the revolt. 800 were killed, including 400 soldiers and Husayn al-Huthi, who became the martyr of the new rebellion.\textsuperscript{12}

The fighting resumed in 2005, when the Houthis conducted a series of attacks against the state institutions, this time spreading also to the Sanaa province. The violence triggered a regional response with Iran accusing the government of Yemen of trying to eliminate the Shiite community. In 2006, both parties reached a ceasefire agreement. Efforts by the government to appease the Houthis included overall pardon and release of prisoners and compensation. Additionally, the security forces were willing to cooperate with any actors that would join the fight against the Shiite rebels, including the Sunni. In the latter stage, this step deepened the religious divides between groups, leading Yemen towards Sunni-Shiite conflict, which at the time of writing, seems to be escalating into a regional proxy war.\textsuperscript{13}

In 2007 the Houthis started to target the Jewish communities. The government tried to appease both parties and offered alternative housing to the Jews who felt threatened by the “young believers.” The issue was never resolved and the communities remained fragile throughout the conflict. That same year Iran became more vocal about the developments in Yemen. Protests erupted in the streets of Tehran calling for the expulsion of the Yemeni ambassador. Since then Iran has been accused of


providing weapons to the rebels. Meanwhile, on the ground the government intensified its activities against the Houthis in the Sa’da province in order to regain control over the territories. Yemeni forces shelled villages where the rebels were believed to be hiding. Finally, mediation efforts by Qatar ended the fighting for a few months and a ceasefire agreement was signed.

Year 2008 was marked by a series of clashes between the Houthis and the Yemeni army. An attempted ceasefire did not last and the agreements, including disarmament, withdrawal of the army and expulsion of rebel leaders, were not respected. Additionally, the Houthis banned 3,200 students and 91 teachers from attending schools in Sa’da province. That same year, the rebels assassinated a member of the Presidential Committee, Al-Hindi, and exploded a bomb in Bin Salman Mosque, which further worsened the fragile situation. The Houthis became more extreme in their messages: “death to America, death to Israel, victory for Islam.”
In 2009 they were able to take over a few buildings, institutions and the central market in the province of Ghamar. The assassinations of government officials and shayks from pro-government tribes continued. Efforts at mediation appeared difficult and Saleh’s government was facing two other threats: the resurgence of al Qaeda and the southern movement. Ending the Houthi issue became one of the priorities and in August 2009 the army began another offensive in Sa’da region. In an unprecedented way, Saudi Arabia also launched strikes on the Houthis, including air assets, artillery and ground forces. In response, the rebels crossed the border killing two guards, which gave the Saudis an incentive to continue, citing the excuse that Houthis infiltrated their territory. This phase of fighting ended in 2010 when both sides signed a ceasefire agreement, which stipulated the withdrawal of rebels from Saudi Arabia and the end of hostilities by all parties.

Various groups within the country, including the Houthis, al Qaeda and the southern movement, have been fighting each other and the government for a long time. In January 2011 the Arab Spring swept through the country, making the state even more fragile. Thousands of people took to the streets of Sanaa and demanded that President Ali Abdullah Saleh steps down. The protesters were met with riot police using tear gas and batons. In the latter stage, violent means of appeasement followed and on March 18, 2011 the army fired at 100,000 people gathered in Sanaa. 52 protesters were killed and many more wounded. The government denied responsibility. Some officials used the opportunity to show their hostility towards Saleh and defected to the opposition. Among them was Ali Mushin al-Ahmar, who dispatched forces in the capital to protect the protesters in response to government’s actions. The region of Sa’da was previously controlled by the tribal militias of al-

14 Ibid.
Ahmar, which now directed their efforts elsewhere. The Houthis seized this opportunity to take control of the province of Sa’da by installing their own governor. Since then they have been growing in power and advancing to the south.\textsuperscript{16}

Although various international efforts followed to establish a rule of law, rebuild institutions and unify the country, at the time of writing the Houthis had taken over the capital and the port of Aden, forcing president Hadi into hiding. They also took actions to dissolve parliament and take over Yemen’s government institutions. I will now analyze the international efforts aimed at conflict resolution and reconstruction in Yemen, which focus mainly on the period following the 2010 ceasefire agreement between the Houthis and the government.

**Conflict Resolution and Reconstruction Efforts in Yemen**

The response of the international community to the crisis in Yemen does not seem to follow any coordinated strategy. Instead, various actors, including states, coalitions of states, IOs and NGOs work on many fronts and tackle different issues. Efforts have been centered around few a major problems, including: countering global terrorism networks such as al Qaeda, suppressing national insurgencies, designing and implementing a comprehensive security sector reform and alleviating poverty. Although some programs were directed at the local population, most of them took the top-down coercive approach.

First, I will analyze the regional response to the Yemeni conflict between the government and the Houthi rebels. Saudi Arabia played the most important role here, as it was the only state which intervened military to support the Yemeni security forces. Already during the Cold War, Saudi Arabia was constantly meddling in the politics of North Yemen. Keeping the tribal conflicts alive and preventing the

unification of North and South Yemen was one of the main goals of this neighboring power. Saudis not only saw a danger in having a strong oil producing country next door. The issue revolved also around ideology. It was problematic to have a republican state which espoused democratization right across the border. The stability of the monarchy could be upset if similar pressure towards a multi-party system would arise among the Saudis. During the last phase of fighting between the Houthis and the government the Saudis launched strikes by air and land to fight the rebels who they saw as a threat to their territorial integrity. It is important to note that the Houthis have not been the only target of Yemen’s northern neighbor. Saudi Arabia in coalition with the United States has been actively fighting al Qaeda in the region since its Yemeni counterpart joined forces with the Saudi branch in 2009. Constant drone attacks by the coalition have sparked protests among the local population, who often suffered as a result of this war on terror.

Further efforts to establish peace in Yemen were made in 2011 when the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) consisting of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, initiated the negotiations towards a peaceful transition of power in Yemen. The government and all opposition parties participated. The solutions proposed by the Gulf Initiative included: 1) the transfer of power to the Vice-President of Yemen, Abd Rabbu Mansur Hadi, 2) the creation of a governmental coalition, 3) the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections within two months after the signing of a deal and 4) granting immunity from prosecution to the president and his relatives. Finally in November 2011 Saleh signed the deal and four months later Abd Rabbu Mansur Hadi was elected President. A National Dialogue

Conference followed as an attempt to bring the warring parties to the negotiating table.

The recent opaque political transposition has left Yemen’s new president Abd Rabbu Mansur Hadi – also Saleh’s former deputy since 1994 – grappling with military restructuring, in an attempt to at least weaken if not break old embedded allegiances and, through the National Dialogue Conference (NDC), confronting the long-standing issues of southern discontent and calls for secession, as well as the increasingly prolific northern-rebel movement of the Shia-Muslim Houthis calling for autonomy.  

The European Union became the major contributor to efforts towards Security Sector Reform (SSR). Following the needs assessment mission in 2012, the EU took steps to facilitate progress in developing the security sector. In July 2012 the EU deployed an SSR expert team, financed by the Instrument for Stability. The experts worked closely with the Yemeni government to elaborate a comprehensive SSR plan. Additionally, the EU was planning to support the Yemeni maritime sector through training.

Finally, some efforts by international IO’s and NGO’s focused on alleviating poverty. These were sometimes coordinated and implemented with the help of the Yemeni government. The World Bank’s support included efforts to “create visible improvements that are meaningful in the daily life of Yemenis, such as providing funds for schools and health clinics and expanding support for public works, basic education, health and water supply.” Additionally the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been at the forefront of the post-crisis agenda in Yemen. In 2012, with the financial support of international donors, the UNDP set up a program aimed at improving democratic governance, alleviating poverty and facilitating crisis prevention and recovery. Some of the efforts included strengthening civil society

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institutions, such as NGOs and grassroots organizations, which could be used as partners in humanitarian assistance and as providers of basic needs to the population. Security sector reform and fighting corruption were some of the strategies used to prevent future conflict. Additionally, a voter education campaign was launched and “240 tons of fertilizer and 120 tons of seeds” were disbursed among the poorest in the Sa’sa province in line with the “early recovery” project in the region.\textsuperscript{22}

In sum, the international community’s approach to conflict resolution and reconstruction in Yemen was mainly based on a top-down approach. Direct military interventions and negotiations with elites were advocated with a few initiatives directed at the local populations. The efforts by UNDP and the World Bank mainly focused on humanitarian assistance and poverty alleviation. Their contribution to helping the communities was significant because it tackled some of the issues which in a long term could lead to more conflict over scarce resources. A few NGO’s focused their efforts on national reconciliation. In the following chapter I will evaluate one such program implemented by Search for Common Ground.

\textbf{Episodic Drama in Yemen – Search for Common Ground}

\textit{The Team} is a multi-nation episodic drama, which has used the global fascination with football/soccer to attempt to change behaviors and ultimately responses to conflict in countries torn by violence. The series addresses the disputes revolving around existing cultural, ethnic, religious, tribal, racial or socio-economic differences and uses sport as a means to unify communities. To better appeal to the public and make sure that the content is authentic, Search for Common Ground (SCG) draws actors and scriptwriters from the local communities who often experienced conflict first hand. By collaborating with local production companies it uses local

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{UNDP Results Yemen} (New York: United Nations Development Programme,[2013]).
knowledge and expertise to better reflect the realities on the ground. The series has now been reproduced in 15 countries and includes different geographical regions including Africa, Middle East and Asia.

Production of *The Team* in Yemen was funded by the European Commission and the Dutch Embassy in Sana’a. SCG partnered with six local contractors including a TV and some radio production companies. Actors and scriptwriters were drawn from the local population.

The show consisted of 25 TV episodes and was launched together with 120 radio episodes aimed at communicating “positive social messages through fictionalized stories of a diverse group of Yemeni youth playing football, although less than 10% of the show contained actual football-related imagery and story line.”

For the purpose of this study I will only focus on the episodic drama, which was broadcast on the national TV channel accompanied by an outreach and dialogue campaign implemented in 10 governorates where 600 viewing/listening sessions were held followed by debates among youth, universities, local councils and NGOs, for a total 30,000 participants. Additionally, 60 mobile cinema screenings were held in public spaces to attract a larger and more diverse public. One of the goals was to work on both national and local levels. Specifically, the viewing/listening sessions and mobile cinema aimed at encouraging debates following the screenings to build capacity among participants to interact in more tolerant and informed way. Addressing ethnic, religious and political issues was at the core of the discussions as well as promotion of peaceful methods to resolve daily disputes.

As an art form drama is in a way similar to participatory theater. Although it does not involve a direct contact between the actors and the public, it retains its ability

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23 Rani Khoury, *Final Evaluation of "the Team"* (Washington, DC: Search for Common Ground,[2013]).

24 Ibid.
to tell stories, which reflect the daily problems facing post-conflict societies. The rationale behind why it could possibly help people change their responses to daily disputes functions similarly to participatory theater. To avoid repetition, I will provide a theoretical background provided by SCG in order to better explain why drama could add to peacebuilding efforts.

Among the theories of social change for peacebuilding, the Public Attitude Theory is the basis of SCG approach.

[...] peace can be promoted through changing public attitudes and building greater tolerance in society. The method of doing so involves the use of TV and radio programs which promote tolerance, dialogue and mutual understanding. “The Team” is firmly founded in this change theory [...] Individual Change Theory also adds to this discourse. It states that if a critical mass of individuals achieves a change of consciousness manifesting in a change of attitudes and behaviors, peace can come about as a result of this transformation. By promoting the messages of positive behavior there is a potential that drama could influence people’s perception and attitude towards conflict. Finally, Healthy Relations and Connections Theory states that peace can be achieved “through a continuous process of breaking down isolation, polarization, division, prejudice and stereotypes between or among groups.” The Team not only promotes tolerance, but also builds healthy relations on a local level by encouraging peaceful dialogue as a solution to daily disputes.

The Team - quantitative and qualitative evidence

I will now present the findings of the Final Evaluation Report of “The Team” to see if this particular program was effective in promoting the resort to non-violent means of resolving conflicts. The program was launched in 2010, however it was not implemented until 2012 because of technical issues as well as political instability in Yemen. The evaluation relied on mixed methodology employing both quantitative

25 Ibid.
and qualitative research. It was conducted in 5 governorates: Sana’a, Taiz, Aden, Hajjah and Al Bayda which were chosen to achieve balance between rural and urban location in both north and south Yemen. Data regarding the exact number of participants in the survey was not provided.

According to a quantitative survey, *The Team* was fairly effective at promoting the intended messages. However, no impact was found on attitudes and behaviours (Figure 3.2).

Although the general findings showed that the program had a limited effect, the results varied across the governorates. It was also evident that the participants who did attend the viewing sessions and the discussions that followed understood the message behind the show better than those who only watched the show on TV. Moreover, they were able to put what they have learned into practice in their daily lives. Statements by those survey participants indicated that they were better equipped to respond in non-violent ways during disputes and were able to control themselves choosing

![Table 3.1.](image-url)
dialogue instead of violence. For example, a participant in Sana’a stated that after
being exposed to the show, he would think twice before resorting to violence,
indicating that his approach to conflict resolution had changed. He was however one
of the few who mentioned that their behaviors changed under the influence of the
show. 80.3% responded that they have not done anything differently in their lives
after watching *The Team.*

![Pie chart showing TV - Clarity of Storyline & Characters](image)

**Figure 3.3. TV - Clarity of Storyline and Characters. From: Rani Khoury, Final Evaluation of "The Team" (Washington DC: Search for Common Ground, [2013])**

The diagrams (Figure 3.3 and 3.4) indicate that the messages behind the show
were understood. Among different choices provided to them during the survey (Figure
3.4), the majority of the participants answered that “violence versus dialogue” was the
main massage of the show. The second most commonly chosen topic was “women’s
roles in Yemen” followed by “tension between different tribal groups.” Again, the
answers varied across the governorates. Additionally, although the messages behind
the show were comprehended, no major impact was found on the social views.
According to quantitative surveys those participants who were not exposed to the
program did not seem to have significantly different social views than those who
followed the show on TV or at the viewing/listening sessions (Annex I). The

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26 Ibid.
difference between those two groups was only in the degree of tolerance with the latter group having a more tolerant social view.  

The results of the focus group discussions and interviews conducted in Sana’a province indicated that participants there got the most out of the show, best understood the messages and showed their applicability. Some stated that the messages were familiar to them and therefore the show was too simple. Participants in Haji also had a good understanding of the content but they were able to cite fewer examples. In Taiz and Al Bayda only a few respondents could fully remember what they have seen during the show. In Aden, participants were neither able to recall the content of the episodes nor cite any examples of behaviours they were exposed to. Additionally, they refused to participate in the debate following one of the listening sessions, stating that the accent of the radio episodes was from Sana’a. This shows that the divisions between north (Sana’a) and south (Aden) are still present in the minds of people, who felt that they had been rejected because of an accent presented in the radio episodes.

Figure 3.4. Main Message of the TV Show. From: Rani Khoury, Final Evaluation of “The Team” (Washington, DC: Search for Common Ground, [2013])

The results of the focus group discussions and interviews conducted in Sana’a province indicated that participants there got the most out of the show, best understood the messages and showed their applicability. Some stated that the messages were familiar to them and therefore the show was too simple. Participants in Haji also had a good understanding of the content but they were able to cite fewer examples. In Taiz and Al Bayda only a few respondents could fully remember what they have seen during the show. In Aden, participants were neither able to recall the content of the episodes nor cite any examples of behaviours they were exposed to. Additionally, they refused to participate in the debate following one of the listening sessions, stating that the accent of the radio episodes was from Sana’a. This shows that the divisions between north (Sana’a) and south (Aden) are still present in the minds of people, who felt that they had been rejected because of an accent presented in the radio episodes.

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27 Ibid.
The report indicated that the viewing sessions followed by a debate had the biggest impact on the participants and were “very effective at promoting dialogue and discussion among youth on issues of tolerance and understanding.”28 People who attended the screenings explained that the discussion that followed helped them to gather different opinions and ultimately find a common understanding or conclusion.

Most participants in all governorates except Taiz were able to provide examples of discussions that have led to a common understanding; such as a discussion on the role of the character “Arwa” as the team coach. While they had persistently diverging opinions on the role of women in such positions, they reached an understanding that regardless of her suitability as a coach, the decision came from the team members themselves and that by itself it should be respected and accepted.29

Another observation was that the group that participated in discussions, especially in Sana’a, displayed better debating skills and held more civil discussions. They would not interrupt each other and work together to find a common understanding of issues at hand. Additionally, some participants indicated that the show and the debate gave them the tools to transfer into their own initiatives. For example, a person from Sana’a said that she used the story of “Arwa” to communicate the message of women empowerment to members of the organization she was part of. Other participants showed a willingness to share materials distributed during debates (DVDs and discussion guide) within their workplace, civil society organizations or at home.30

In sum, the program The Team had a limited impact on the population who watched it on TV or participated in the screenings. However, the results varied and the overall results show that local efforts in showcasing the drama combined with dialogue sessions were more effective in not only spreading the message behind the show but also in encouraging the participants to address their differences through discussion. The weaknesses of the current approach included limited outreach via TV

28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
channels, inexperience of staff in media and insufficient marketing and advertising activities. Many participants reported that they were not aware that the show was broadcast on TV and via which channels.\textsuperscript{31} Given, that it was a first attempt to spread these messages across the Yemenis and little time passed between the program’s end and the conduct of the evaluation, there is a chance that with time, the show will reach a wider population and have more impact on behaviours and attitudes.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
## Annex 3.1.1. – Quantitative Data (Social Views)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Governorate</th>
<th>Exposed to Radio &amp; TV Shows</th>
<th>Exposed to TV Shows Only</th>
<th>Not Exposed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%Disagree</td>
<td>% Agree</td>
<td>%Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth should stand up for their own needs and beliefs within their families and communities</td>
<td>Aden</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Al Bayda</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hajjah</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sana’a City</td>
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<td>77%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taiz</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All governorates</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes violence is the best way to solve a problem or a dispute. [Preference of dialogue over violence]</td>
<td>Aden</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Al Bayda</td>
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<td>13%</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Hajjah</td>
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<td>88%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All governorates</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women can be just as good as leaders as men can be [gender issues]</td>
<td>Aden</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Al Bayda</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>63%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hajjah</td>
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<td>64%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taiz</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All governorates</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can find things in common even with people who are from a different group than me. [identity, unity]</td>
<td>Aden</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Al Bayda</td>
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<td>17%</td>
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<td>82%</td>
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<td>16%</td>
</tr>
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<td>When solving a problem, it is better to try to work with people who come from the same background.</td>
<td>Aden</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>57%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Al Bayda</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<td>Taiz</td>
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<td>53%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>All governorates</td>
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<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No matter</td>
<td>Aden</td>
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<tr>
<td>how severe the problem it can be solved through dialogue.</td>
<td>Al Bayda</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<td>17%</td>
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<td>All governorates</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Yemen, the only people who are like me are those who are from my family, area, or tribe.</th>
<th>Aden</th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>0%</th>
<th>86%</th>
<th>14%</th>
<th>81%</th>
<th>19%</th>
<th>83%</th>
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<td>Al Bayda</td>
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<td>All governorates</td>
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<td>75%</td>
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<td>79%</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>People of different tribes would get along better if they made more of an effort to understand each other.</th>
<th>Aden</th>
<th>0%</th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>0%</th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>10%</th>
<th>90%</th>
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<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
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<td>Hajjah</td>
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<td>6%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
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<td>7%</td>
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<td>8%</td>
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<td>12%</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Women are not capable of handling important responsibilities in a group.</th>
<th>Aden</th>
<th>50%</th>
<th>50%</th>
<th>43%</th>
<th>57%</th>
<th>63%</th>
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<td>76%</td>
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<td>Taiz</td>
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<td>63%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>24%</td>
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<tr>
<td>All governorates</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>36%</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Some differences between groups are just too difficult to overcome.</th>
<th>Aden</th>
<th>50%</th>
<th>50%</th>
<th>57%</th>
<th>43%</th>
<th>61%</th>
<th>39%</th>
<th>63%</th>
<th>37%</th>
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<tr>
<td>Al Bayda</td>
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<td>38%</td>
<td>83%</td>
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<td>81%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hajjah</td>
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<td>92%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<td>12%</td>
<td>88%</td>
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<td>26%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiz</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>32%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>All governorates</td>
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<td>38%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>29%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Young people should obey their parents and families on all things, even if they have a different opinion.</th>
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<th>50%</th>
<th>50%</th>
<th>14%</th>
<th>86%</th>
<th>32%</th>
<th>68%</th>
<th>37%</th>
<th>63%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Al Bayda</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>84%</td>
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<td>Taiz</td>
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<td>All governorates</td>
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<td>Final Evaluation of &quot;The Team&quot; – Rani Khoury</td>
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<td>Question</td>
<td>Governorate</td>
<td>TV Shows</td>
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<td>Have you ever invited someone from a different social or religious group into your house for lunch?</td>
<td>Aden</td>
<td>50% 50%</td>
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<td>25% 75%</td>
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<td>All governorates</td>
<td>44% 56%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Aden</td>
<td>0% 100%</td>
<td>43% 57%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Al Bayda</td>
<td>13% 88%</td>
<td>8% 92%</td>
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<td>Sana'a City</td>
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<td>18% 82%</td>
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<td>All governorates</td>
<td>22% 78%</td>
<td>26% 74%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you ever exchanged gifts with someone who is from different social or religious group?</td>
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<td>0% 100%</td>
<td>71% 29%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Al Bayda</td>
<td>25% 75%</td>
<td>33% 67%</td>
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<td>Hajjah</td>
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<td>Sana'a City</td>
<td>83% 17%</td>
<td>76% 24%</td>
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<td>Taiz</td>
<td>53% 47%</td>
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<td>All governorates</td>
<td>47% 53%</td>
<td>57% 43%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you ever chewed, visited or spent time with anyone who is from a different social, religious group?</td>
<td>Aden</td>
<td>50% 50%</td>
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<td>Al Bayda</td>
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<td>70% 30%</td>
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Chapter 4: Nepal

Conflict in Nepal

The Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal is a landlocked country, situated in South Asia and bordering India and China. It is listed among the poorest countries in the world and for the past two decades it has been characterized by political instability. Since the introduction of democracy in 1990 Nepal has had over 20 governments and following the demands of Maoist rebels, it has abolished the monarchy and declared itself a federal republic. 1 From 1996 till 2006 it was torn by a civil war, which took the lives of an estimated 13,000 people and left 200,000 displaced. 2 I will now introduce the history of Nepal’s civil war and see how it was resolved and what reconstruction measures were undertaken.

The conflict, which so fiercely divided the Nepalese society, had its roots deep in the past. Nepal was a monarchy throughout most of its history. It was ruled by two major dynasties: the Shahs and the Ranas. In 1768 the Shahs conquered and united the small territories of the Kathmandu Valley. They introduced a new government, which “institutionalized two divisive social systems: feudal bureaucracy and the Hindu caste system.” 3 For over two hundred years this ancient way based on “divide and rule” deepened the inequalities between the ethnic groups and the castes. In fact, land, power and wealth were concentrated in the hands of a few high castes, who had ties to royal family. Mansoob Murshed and Scott Gates made a through study of the legacy of this system and how it contributed to the insurgency of the Maoist movement in 1990s. For example, the upper castes: Bahun, Chetri and Newar constituted 37.1% of

the population in 1991, however their human development indicators were about 50% higher than other groups, such as the hill ethnic or Tharai ethnic groups. This same principle was evident when looking at per capita income: hill ethnic groups were making around 55% of an average Newari’s salary. Additionally, the upper castes occupied the majority of senior positions in the government and represented 87% of all graduates in the year 1992. Lack of employment, marginalization and landlessness were some of the most urgent issues for the majority of the Nepalese people. The bonded labor system presented yet another relic, which forced many into compulsory unpaid labor services in order to pay their debt stemming from the fact that they did not own any land. The cycle of poverty was perpetuated and there was plenty of space for abuses of power among the higher and literate castes.

In 1990, the political liberalization opened a new chapter in the history of Nepal. Following a long period of demonstrations in all major cities organized by the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy, and amid the mounting pressure by the ruling elites, the king capitulated. The organization of political parties was allowed and elections were held a year later. Although the country was shifting towards democracy, very little was done to address the systemic inequalities. The creation of the Maoist party was a direct response and reflected the demands of the marginalized ethnic and religious minorities. The new constitution proclaimed Nepal a Hindu state and recognized only Nepalese as the official language. However, there were around 100 different castes and ethnic groups in Nepal, speaking over 90 languages. Their rights and claims were overlooked by the new constitution. Most political parties were satisfied with the new arrangement as it put an end to autocratic rule. However, the

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5 Ibid.
Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) did not follow suit seeing the constitution as a “betrayal of public demand for a people’s constitution.”\(^7\) The Maoists had a political and revolutionary wing. The former, United People’s Front of Nepal, ran for elections in 1991 but was able to secure only nine seats out of 205, still making it the third largest party in the government. The revolutionary wing (Unity Center) started to organize to bring about a revolution.\(^8\)

The Maoist strategy was simple and quite successful. They started to recruit among the most vulnerable: those affected by caste, ethnic and economic exclusion. They attracted the interest of the people by developing a “list of demands,” which resonated with grievances of the disadvantaged populations.

The CPN (M) developed a list of demands that appealed explicitly to the experience of marginalized caste and ethnic groups and the impoverished, including the demands such as the abolition of caste-, religion- and gender-based discrimination, the elimination of socio-economic inequalities and redistribution of land. [...] Appealing specifically to these marginalized groups, the CPN (M) demanded that Nepal be declared a secular state, that the system of “untouchability” be declared nullified, that equal status be accorded to all languages spoken in the country and that education in one’s mother tongue be accommodated through the secondary level of education.\(^9\)

The Maoists also advocated the abolishment of the monarchy and the establishment of the federal states. In their view this would grant some autonomy to regions with large ethnic concentrations based on the principle of self-determination. The economic inequalities between the various districts were stark. Specifically the western regions of the country were historically underdeveloped and were inhabited by over 20 different ethnic groups. Based on this knowledge the Maoists chose the western districts as “the key region for the People’s War.”\(^10\) During the electoral


\(^10\) Ibid.
campaign they laid the ground for insurgency by educating people about their goals and advocating the armed struggle as the only way to freedom from oppression.

The revolution started as a small insurgency in 1996 in the western districts of Nepal. In February the Maoists attacked a branch of a national bank and stormed the police posts. The government responded by launching three subsequent operations by the police forces. They gradually became more violent and used tactics such as arbitrary arrests, torture and rape to intimidate local villagers. Operation Kilo Sierra II “was conducted with such blunt force and disregard for human rights that it only strengthened the rebels’ recruitment base.”11 In 2001 the insurgency took a more violent stance and spread across the entire country, effectively limiting the government’s presence to the districts’ headquarters. The Maoists also started establishing their own “People’s Governments” as an alternative form of administration. The peace talks conducted in 2001 between the rebels and the government proved futile and King Gyanendra declared a state of emergency. The decision was followed by increased efforts by the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) to crack down on the insurgents. State-led violence terrorized local populations and became widespread while more people with different ethnic, caste and economic backgrounds were joining the Maoist movement.12

The second phase of the civil war started in 2001 and lasted until 2006. It was characterized by increased levels of violence by the state actors. King Gyanendra additionally suspended freedom of speech and peaceful assembly. The media was no longer able to publish uncensored information. In 2002 the king dissolved the Parliament and appointed the cabinet members. The elections were postponed

indefinitely providing an incentive to fight for those who believed in a shift towards democracy. The CPN (Maoist) was declared a “terrorist organization” and the army was granted extensive powers to fight the terrorists. In 2003 the second cease-fire was negotiated between the rebels and the king’s appointees. The leaders of the insurgency did not trust the negotiators and vice versa. Finally, the talks collapsed due to lack of progress on the issue of a Constituent Assembly. The Maoists also demanded a new constitution, where the role of the king would be redefined, something the government did not approve of.

The fighting resumed and both the Maoists and the RNA committed human rights abuses. Widespread use of torture, cases of long-term incommunicado detention, disappearances and use of approximately 4,500 child soldiers were some of the consequences of the war. As the atrocities continued, more people grew dissatisfied with the oppressive regime and in 2005 strikes and protests against the royal family increased. Finally in 2006 the People’s Movement (Jan Andolan) was created, comprising various political parties and civil organizations. The Maoists participated in the movement but did not officially align with it. In April 2006 the King stepped down and one month later the Maoists signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement with the government. The agreement marked an official end to the insurgency by meeting some of the demands such as “plans for election of the Constituent Assembly and monitoring and soldiers of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) by the United Nations.”

After the war ended the Maoists secured the largest number of seats in the new Parliament and in 2008 they voted to end the monarchy. The country became the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal and Ram Baran Yadav was elected the first

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13 Ibid.
President. Since then Nepal has been politically unstable, going through a number of
deadlocks due to disagreements between the ruling parties. At the time of writing the
new constitution is still being drafted and disagreements loom over the carving of
provinces. The Maoists, who secured only a small faction of seats in the Parliament
during the 2013 elections, asked that the provinces be shaped along the ethnic lines, a
solution which the governing majority opposes.\textsuperscript{15}

Conflict Resolution and Reconstruction Efforts in Nepal

Nepal is an interesting case study when it comes to international involvement
during the post-conflict period. A combination of national pride, regional politics and
internal opposition to the international presence, forced the country to deal with the
peace process mostly on its own and with quite successful results, despite a few
failures.

The United Nations’ involvement in Nepal started in 2003, when it offered its
good offices to conduct the peace talks. It was only invited to participate in the
process in 2004. From early on Nepalese insisted that their fate was in their own
hands and tried to keep the international actors out of their business. This was evident
during the 2006 demonstrations organized by political parties and civil society. After
the Comprehensive Peace agreement was signed, the country emerged from a conflict
which deeply divided the society along the ethnic, religious and political lines. There
was a high level of mistrust between the Maoists and the government, who both had
substantial armies under their command. The peace agreement did not include the
disarmament of any faction until the elections, which were to be held in 2008. This
arrangement could easily lead to an escalation of violence during this fragile period.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{15} Bhadra Sharma, "Brawl Disrupt Drafting of Constitution in Nepal," \textit{The New York Times}
\textsuperscript{16} Astri Suhrke, "Virtues of a Narrow Mission: The UN Peace Operation in Nepal," \textit{Global
Governance} 17, no. 1 (Jan, 2011), p. 38-89.
At the United Nations debates were held to create a full-scale peacekeeping operation to monitor the ceasefire. India initially opposed the idea based on its own experiences in Kashmir and also because it considered Nepal its backyard and did not want foreign intervention. However, as it became clear that the Maoists would not give up weapons before the election period, India pushed for the UN monitoring presence. On the other hand, the forces within Nepal were clearly against international peacekeepers on their soil. An element of national pride and a sense of national ownership of the peace process were the main reasons behind this approach. After intense negotiations, the Nepalese parties to the peace agreement consented to a small monitoring UN presence, which would be comprised only of civilian personnel. Finally, the unprecedented United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMID) was deployed comprised of 250 civilians along with UN Human Rights Field Mission in Nepal.

The rationale behind such a small mission came from the fact that unlike most states where the UN had a peacekeeping presence, Nepal was not a failed state. The police and army forces were still functional and could be relied upon. Although there was no guarantee that the violence would not return, there was a political will among the warring factions to end the conflict. The mission’s mandate was limited compared to previous experiences with peacebuilding.

As mandated by the Security Council (Resolution 1740/2007) with reference to the CPA, UNMIN had three main functions: (1) to monitor the cantonment of the Maoist People’s Liberation Army (PLA) and the Nepal Army and their arms; (2) to monitor the cease-fire; and (3) to assist with the election to the Constituent Assembly. This was a far cry from the typical multidimensional mission being deployed for peacebuilding…

Arms monitoring was conducted in all major PLA and NPA army camps. Weapon depots were under electronic surveillance. The Joint Monitoring and Coordination Committee was set up to deter cheating and to resolve disputes. An

17 Ibid.
Arms Monitoring Office deployed patrolling units, where soldiers from both armies and international observers were involved in field monitoring. Although limited, the presence of a third party kept the casualties at a low level. Reports that followed were generally positive about the peace processes.

The UNMIN’s electoral support was confined to technical assistance and monitoring. An Independent Electoral Assistance Office was also set up but it was very small. Again, the UN presence was mainly as a third party observer. The special Representative of the Secretary–General (SRSG) additionally served as a “watchdog” and provided reports about the implementation of the peace agreements.\(^\text{18}\)

Although limited in scope, the UN’s performance during the post-conflict peacebuilding in Nepal could be described as a success story. Whether the minimal involvement of international actors actually contributed to this favorable outcome remains to be seen. It seems clear however, that the sense of national ownership created a sense of responsibility among the Nepalese and in that sense maybe sped up the process of conflict resolution.

The reconstruction efforts were also mainly performed by the local actors. The international donors had a long experience with Nepalese institutions and a sense of confidence developed in the state’s capacity to handle funds. Not all regions were equally affected by war and on a larger scale, the conflict in Nepal was seen by the UN as a “small war” compared to other zones in the world.\(^\text{19}\) The financial assistance for reconstruction was mainly distributed through the United Nations Development Programme, which focused on a few major themes: 1) reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development, 2) strengthening democratic governance, 3) building resilience, 4) supporting Nepal’s democratic transition, and 5) promoting

\(^{18}\) Ibid.
\(^{19}\) Ibid.
gender equality and social inclusion. Approximately 13 billion US$ were spent on post-war reconstruction and rehabilitation up until year 2013.\textsuperscript{20}

To prevent future conflicts, the UNDP founded a few initiatives and supported local organizations in their work with affected communities. A Conflict Prevention Programme was set up and focused on “building collaborative leadership and dialogue skills” among politicians and youth leaders.\textsuperscript{21} Through a series of conferences and dialogue fora, and with a media presence encouraged, the programme facilitated national discussion among the elites about the future of Nepal and current issues regarding the constitution process. Grassroots peacebuilding was addressed on a very low level and mainly through support of already existing civil society organizations such as Women’s Security Pressure Group, Electoral Commission of Nepal’s Gender and Social Inclusion or Being LGBT in Asia initiative.\textsuperscript{22} Although women occupy 37\% of posts in the government, as civil society and political leaders, this success can be mainly attributed to the fact that women already constituted one third of armed forces during the war. On the other hand, there is little effort to address the ethnic and religious divides on a local level. To evaluate the existing programs dealing with grassroots peacebuilding I will now proceed to analyze the program initiated by Search for Common Ground in Nepal.

**Peace Songs in Nepal – Search for Common Ground**

Program *Peace Process Communication Campaign* was carried out in Nepal in 2008 by Search for Common Ground – Nepal (SCG-N) and with the financial support from the Rockwool Foundation. The main goal was to raise mass awareness about the peace process through the creation and dissemination of national peace songs. The songs were performed during a live concert broadcast on Kantipur.

\textsuperscript{20} Annual Report 2014: UNDP in Nepal, United Nations Development Programme,[2014]).
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
Television. The program also included a series of workshops to influence journalists and strengthen civil society relationships as well as creation of Radio Public Service Announcements (PSA). The process of song writing was filmed and a documentary entitled “Journey for Peace” was produced and disseminated. 23

First, I will present the results of a quantitative survey conducted following the implementation of the program. Annex 4.1.1 which can be found at the end of this chapter, contains the data analysis of the quantitative survey and was taken from the Final Evaluation Report of the Peace Process Communication Campaign. It is important to note, that the participants in the quantitative survey had access to all strategies including the peace songs, the series of workshops to influence journalists and strengthen civil society relationships as well as the PSAs. However, only 26% of the survey respondents admitted to have heard the peace songs and therefore their contribution to the survey outcome is limited. For that reason I focused on the peace songs and more specifically on the experience of the participants in the process of song creation, to see if it has the potential to strengthen the community and promote peaceful means of conflict resolution among the participants. Prior to analysing the quantitative and qualitative outcomes of the Peace Process Communication Campaign, I will explain why music could be a peacebuilding tool.

Music is widely recognized as a powerful tool that allows people to communicate non-verbally. Thus, it could be understood as a universal language that enables people to unite through an external experience of sound. Music was used to heal veterans during WWII and since then, music therapy has become a field of study. Its potential as a peacebuilding tool has been a subject of analysis and a growing

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A number of researchers show evidence of its effectiveness in the process of conflict transformation.24

Christopher Small points out that music is not only the observable sound effect, which we perceive with our senses but a process called “musicking.” This process involves the act of listening, performing, rehearsing, practicing, composing or dancing. Consequently, it relies on cooperation between the composer and the performers as well as the public.

The act of musicking establishes in the place where it is happening a set of relationships, and it is in those relationships that the meaning of the act lies. They are to be found not only between those organized sounds which are conventionally thought of as being the stuff of musical meaning but also between the people who are taking part, in whatever capacity, in the performance; and they model, or stand as metaphor for, ideal relationships as the participants in the performance imagine them to be: relationships between person and person, between individual and society, between humanity and the natural world and even perhaps the supernatural world.25

It is also through relationships and through interaction with the Other that human beings develop empathy, which has been identified as one of a key elements of peace. Johan Galtung defined peace as “the capacity to transform conflicts with empathy, creativity and non-violence.”26 Music relies on cooperation between individuals who gather in order to achieve a common goal. As such it is a democratic participation in a process which involves emotional and non-verbal means of communication and is based on non-manipulative, cooperative relationships. In order

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to create music the participants need to engender personal harmony and personal knowing of the other, which fosters tolerance and acceptance.\textsuperscript{27}

Perhaps establishing relationships could be, from the peacebuilders’ point of view, music’s most significant contribution to peacebuilding. However, throughout history songs that came out of these creative processes were often powerful tools which incited masses of people to continue their struggle for good or evil. Mary Travers, a civil rights activist who participated in the US Civil Rights Movement, said that “music has always been the accompaniment of social change.”\textsuperscript{28} Such interpretation opens avenues for further investigation into how music can be used in promoting peace in the post-war societies. I will now evaluate the quantitative data derived from the Final Evaluation Report of the \textit{Peace Process Communication Campaign}.

\textit{Peace Process Communication Campaign} – quantitative and qualitative evidence

The results of the quantitative survey contain responses from 400 participants who were exposed to either of the three communication strategies (peace songs, workshops and public service announcements). They represented four districts: Kathmandu, Morang, Kailali and Banke. 75 respondents were interviewed in the baseline study coming from the districts of Kailali, Rukum and Sankhuwasabha. The survey participants represented different age groups, professions and educational levels. They were drawn from across section of civil society including journalists, political leaders and social workers. The survey verified to what degree the following five main objectives were understood: 1) local community constituencies know that


peace is a process, 2) local community constituencies believe that they have a part to play in implementing the peace process at a local level, 3) local community constituencies implement programmes to take action in support of the peace process, 4) local community constituencies bring people together from across the dividing line and 5) local community constituencies open a channel of communication that aims to hold leaders accountable.29

The findings varied depending on age, profession and educational level (see detailed results in Annex 4.1.1). However, the survey revealed that on average 70% of people believed that peace in an on-going process, as against 40% in the baseline. Differences could be observed among districts with participants in Morang having a better understanding than those in Kailali. Additionally, 63% of the respondents understood that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in 2006 was a document, while 20% thought it was a cease-fire. The responses obtained to evaluate the second objective revealed that 44% of respondents believed that they had an important role to play in the local peacebuilding process, as against 40% in the baseline. The majority of those who thought they could contribute to peace concluded that they could do so by stopping the war. When asked who were the most influential actors in the peace process, 39% of the respondents identified the national political leaders, followed by civil society, youth and neighbouring countries. It was further recognized that leaders’ ability to design and implement policies was the reason why this option was the choice for the majority of the survey participants.30

To assess whether there was a perception that local actors could take action towards peace the respondents were asked where the peace process taking place. 61% identified the province of Kathmandu, while 24% thought that peace process was only

30 Ibid.
taking place in the newspapers. Roughly one third of the respondents expressed their interest in participating in peace initiatives. 24% would do so by raising voices through different means and 15% would organize a group.

Only 15% of the respondents believed that peace promotion at all levels could bring people together across the dividing lines of gender, caste, economic status, social status, language, geographical locations, culture and political background. They also thought that it was easiest to bring people together from different gender and educational backgrounds. On the other hand, political ideology, economic status and religious background were identified as the most difficult barriers in uniting people.

When it comes to individual initiatives to solve local problems, 39% found that organizing a common forum would be the most effective strategy. 21% thought that the media would allow them to raise issues and attract other actors to solve local disputes. When it comes to solving national problems, the media was seen as the most efficient tool by 55% of respondents. Similarly, 70% thought it was the most effective tool in holding the leaders accountable for their actions. Among media outputs which could best contribute to the peace process 21.4% of respondents indicated radio drama as the most helpful, followed by radio interaction programmes/talk shows (18.6%) and radio public service announcements (11.3%).

It is worth noting that among various programmes aiming to promote peace implemented in Nepal (the choice included news, articles, drama, PSAs, UNMIN radio program), 11% of respondents indicated that peace songs/poems would be effective in raising popular awareness of the peace process. Interaction programmes and interviews were mentioned by 18%, peace accords and negotiations between political parties by 13%, and TV and radio drama by 12%. Peace songs were therefore judged as the fourth most efficient means to raise awareness about the peace process.
in Nepal (for details see Annex 4.1.1). Among the survey participants an average of 26% admitted to have heard one of the two peace songs broadcast on national TV and on various radio stations. The results varied across the districts with 36% of respondents having heard the songs in Morang, 34% in Kailali, 19% in Kathmandu and 14% in Banke (Figure 4.1). These differences might stem from the unequal distribution efforts among the districts or could be an indication that the compositions resonated better with certain groups based on their melodies or instruments used during the performance. The survey also revealed that the songs were more popular among the younger generation of Nepalese, specifically 67% of respondents who heard the songs were between the age of 24 to 45, and 28% between the age of 18 and 24.\textsuperscript{31}

Although there were differences in how many people have heard the songs among districts, this fact does not seem to influence the overall findings of the report when questions unrelated to peace songs are asked. For example, in two districts where over 30% of the respondents admitted being familiar with the songs, Kailali and Morang, the results varied considerably when it comes to understanding that peace is a process as opposed to an event. In Kailali on average 57% of political leaders saw peace as a process while in Morang 100% had the same view. Consequently, the peace songs did not seem to have any impact on how people understood the peace process at the time when the survey was conducted. It would be helpful to analyse whether similar conclusions on the district level could be observed in regard to other questions asked during the survey. Unfortunately, the data is not available.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
Finally, the report indicated that 23% of survey participants had listened to the Sunau, Bolou (Let’s Listen, Let’s Speak) radio program. Among those who listened, 18% admitted that they had learned how to take the peace process forward and that their awareness of the peace process had increased. 27% of the respondents listened to the Naya Bato, Naya Paila (New Path, New Footsteps) radio program. 24% of listeners thought that the program was promoting peace while 16% admitted that it had raised their awareness about human rights and women’s rights. Although the peace songs were part of radio programming it is not clear to what extent they have contributed to the above results.

I will now focus on the qualitative data, specifically the interviews with the participants of the peace song retreats, where people from various backgrounds were brought together to write the lyrics and compose the melodies. It is important to note, that in order to assess the effectiveness of the national peace songs in a long run there should be an effort to play them regularly for an extended period of time so that the
messages of peace and positive transformation can be disseminated and internalized by the general public.

According to the report, one of the most successful outcomes of the *Peace Process Communication Campaign* was the creation of two national peace songs: “Beautiful and Peaceful Our Country Nepal” and “In Your Eyes I See My Mother’s Smile.” The songs were presented in a musical show that was telecast by Kantipur TV and broadcast on 16 FM radio stations. Later on they were further distributed to 129 FM stations nationwide. The process of the songs’ creation took place in two stages and brought together leaders of political organizations, musicians, poets and peace builders. They represented different social, political and cultural groups such as Madheshi (ethnic group based in the flatlands), Maoists, ex-Nepal Army personnel, Tharu (ethnic group based in Western Terai), Dalit (lower caste) and others. This representation was captured through the use of various ethnic instruments, which originated from different regions of the country. They incorporated musical traditions from diverse regions of Nepal and were also found to respect different cultural practices. The songs were expected to promote the messages of unity, tolerance and reconciliation.  

The first stage, a peace song retreat, was organized on the bank of Trisuli River where for three days the participants were involved in various activities that aimed at team building, facilitating dialogue and discussion to foster a better understanding. Trust building exercises included soccer and other outdoor activities to bring people together and interact in a peaceful environment. Aggressive debates held in the beginning were followed by stories of shared experiences of violence and grief.

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32 Ibid.
The documentary captured the process and served as an additional tool in promoting the positive transformation among the Nepalis.

A Madheshi participant and a Tharu participant in the peace song retreat engage in a hot debate on their regional agendas at the beginning of the documentary whereas their aggressive debate and disturbing facial expressions disappear when the retreat process progresses towards the end. They initially argue on words ‘Terai’ and ‘Madhesh’ but later they agree on the word ‘Terai.’ The film captures the gradual improvement in relationships between these two participants culminating in a true example of friendship.\(^{33}\)

On the last day, the participants were divided into three groups and each group was involved in the process of writing a peace song. The groups would then offer each other feedback based on what they heard. The second stage, a musical retreat, took place in a Hattiban Resort in the hilly area near Kathmandu. For two more days the songs were arranged and perfected in terms of their musical content.\(^{34}\)

This unique opportunity of musical retreats could potentially offer people a new perspective on their lives and how they can contribute to the peacebuilding effort in Nepal. The message of unity and harmony among the Nepalese dominated the lyrics: “the Terai is carrying the mountains on its shoulders, if we share love, it will spread like love, we are the colorful flowers, we are called Nepali” or ”beautiful, peaceful our country Nepal, the huge oceans are but drops of dew, Maruni (Hilly dance), Jhijhiya (Maithali dance from Madhesh), Selo (Himalayan dance), Tappa (Magar dance from the highlands), let’s dance singing peace songs.” By expressing their thoughts, feelings and experiences the participants were able to write the songs that could appeal to various castes, and ethnic and religious groups.\(^{35}\)

Based on interviews, most participants “went through a process of dramatic attitudinal change in term of dealing with differences in their lives both at personal

\(^{33}\) Ibid.
\(^{34}\) Ibid.
\(^{35}\) Ibid.
and professional levels.” Because some of the contributors were active figures in the society, the impact of their positive transformation could have an effect on the communities they were involved with. For example, one of the participants gave up a post of General Secretary of the Madheshi Janaadhikar Forum (forum for the rights of Madheshi people) and began working with SCG – Nepal.

In the beginning I was totally against the people from other ethnic groups such as Tharus. But as I started participating in different outdoors activities, discussions and dialogues, I realized that I should respect the coexistence, harmony and unity which are the most essential factors for the development of any country. […] My own Madheshi friends from my student life could be the main obstacle in my new path as we fought violently against the Pahadi together. But I am sure with what I have learned from the retreat I will be able to transform not only my friends but many others. 36

The report further indicated that one participant would probably join the agitating armed groups had he not changed his mind during the retreat. Similarly, there were testimonies by people involved in the documenting process who observed a genuine transformation among the people.

As a general participant of the peace song retreat, I found the programme to be truly inclusive; an honestly carried out effort in which people shared their experiences emotionally with tears in their eyes and in which people dreamt of their effort to be substantially useful in the peace process of Nepal. 37

The diverse instruments introduced during the process of music creation had a positive effect on the participants. One musician mentioned he was not aware that instruments from Terai were also played in Nepali music. Another participant changed his attitude towards Nepali songs after the retreat.

We studied the participants during the first half of the retreat – a participant said he would not listen to Nepali songs at all! As the process moved ahead the relationship among the participants grew intimate, helping to break down the stereotype. We learnt why he would not listen to Nepali music and we came to understand the reasons behind his feelings. He opened up his feelings and cooperated with us. We did the same. 38

36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
Although generally people were very satisfied with the retreat, some expressed the view that they would prefer to engage in in-depth dialogues rather than having to participate in mandatory outdoor activities. Additionally, voices were raised among the musicians who observed that although the lyrics were written collectively, only one name would be later highlighted in the program. The same would be true for the music composing process where only one band would get credit despite the fact that the music was composed collectively.

In sum, the Peace Process Communication Campaign and specifically the creation of the peace songs have shown mixed results. Because only the average of 26% of the respondents have heard the songs, it is also difficult to assess to which extent the results of the quantitative survey were influenced by the dissemination of the peace songs. Additionally, the comparison of data on the district level revealed that the familiarity of the participants with the peace songs had no influence on how they understood the peace process. Other available data, specifically regarding the radio programs is too broad to provide meaningful assessment of the peace songs effectiveness in raising awareness about peace.

However, the efforts on a local level, specifically the process of bringing people together to write lyrics and compose music was quite effective in providing a setting for behavioural transformation. The emotional opening and sharing of traumatic experiences helped the participants to find their common humanity in the conflict which divided them along ethnic, political and social lines. Transforming these painful memories to create a song for peace had a powerful effect on the contributors who were able to better understand that peace was a process and that their participation in that process was necessary. Although it was difficult to judge the
long-term effects of the peace songs, the general perception was that they had the potential “of becoming powerful messengers of peace in Nepal.”\textsuperscript{39} That was mainly because the music was inclusive of most cultures and appealed to the general public through its poignant lyrics.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
Annex 4.1.1. Results of Quantitative Survey

SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND
Peace Process Communication Campaign

Results of Quantitative Survey

Frequencies:

A total of 400 respondents were interviewed with 100 respondents in each of the four districts (Kathmandu, Morang, Kailali and Banke). The respondents were journalists, political leaders, civil society leaders and members of radio listeners’ clubs. Only 75 respondents were interviewed in the baseline study in three districts (Kailali, Rukum and Sankhuwasabha). The following are the details of in terms of age, gender, caste, educational qualification and profession.

Age:
The highest percent of respondents was from age group of 24-45 years, with 67.5 %, and the lowest percentage was from above 45 years with only 8.8%.

Gender:
55.5 % were female and 44.5 % were male.

Caste:
The highest percent of the respondents were Brahmin, Chettri and Thakuri (Others) with 55% (male 57%, female 43%), whereas Janajatis were 31% (male 46%, female 54%), Dalits were 10% (male 70%, female 30%) and Muslims were 3% (male 75% and female 25%).

Educational Qualification: 29.2% were Bachelor Degree holder; those with Intermediate level schooling numbered 24.8%, Master Degree holders numbered 22.5%, and the remaining 21.5% of the respondents had education of between Grade 5 and 10.

Profession:
In terms of profession, 28.75% were social workers and rights activists, 22.5% journalists and 20.8% leaders of various political parties.
Table below illustrates details of frequencies of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>18-24 (%)</th>
<th>24-45 (%)</th>
<th>Above (%)</th>
<th>Employee (%)</th>
<th>Student (%)</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Social worker (%)</th>
<th>Leader community right activist (%)</th>
<th>Journalist (%)</th>
<th>5 to 10 (%)</th>
<th>Intermediate (%)</th>
<th>Bachelor (%)</th>
<th>Masters (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>14.75</td>
<td>12.75</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.75</td>
<td>19.25</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>5.35</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses:

Objective 1: Local/community constituencies will know that the peace is a process

People's understanding of peace

Respondents were given options to answer this question. They were asked "do you think peace is a process or an event?" Peace to most respondents was a situation that can be achieved through a series of activities as a process. More than 70% of the respondents reported peace as a process that culminates in a situation that is free from violence, frequent strikes, abduction and internal displacement etc. Only 8.50% of respondents still believe that peace is merely an event, and another set of almost 20% of respondents know that peace is a situation alone and nothing more than that.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Peace as Process</th>
<th>Peace as Event</th>
<th>Peace as Situation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Journalist (%)</td>
<td>Political leader (%)</td>
<td>Social worker (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kailali</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banke</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathmandu</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morang</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows the percentage of respondents in terms of profession, age group and educational qualification who believe peace is a process, event or situation. Among the respondents, 64% of journalists, 57% of political leaders and 58% of social workers interviewed in Kailali reported that they believe peace is a process. Whereas, 38% of journalists, 28% of political leaders and 34% of social workers interviewed in Banke reported that they believe peace is a process.
Among the respondents, 90% of Bachelor Degree holders, 100% of Master Degree holders and 94% of those with Intermediate level education believe that peace is a process in Morang. Whereas in Kailali the figures are 64%, 45% and 62%, respectively.

The survey result clearly shows that an additional 26% of people have understood that peace is process compared to the baseline survey which was conducted nearly one and a half years ago. Similarly, the percentage of people who used to understand ‘peace as an event’ had been sharply reduced by nearly 21%. However, 20% still believe that peace is situation. The survey result clearly indicates a significant increase in the number of people that consider peace as a process. Within the period of one and a half year, along with those of SFCG, many other activities were also conducted to raise awareness. At the same time, many situations such as successful completion of the constitution assembly election and the declaration of Nepal as a republic had also influenced people significantly. Many respondents in the FGD and SSI reported that the SFCG outputs such as PSAs and peace songs had distinctively contributed to some extent in raising awareness of people, but they found it difficult to measure in terms of percent.
63.32 % of respondents were aware that the CPA was a signed document between the government and rebel Maoists. 20.35% thought that the CPA was a ceasefire, and 7.79% thought it was a political leaders saying.

It is interesting to note that only 64.4% of journalists, 59.6 % of social workers and rights activists and 64.7% of political leaders knew that the CPA is a signed document.

**Comparative assessment of peace situation in Nepal before and after the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA)**

69% of respondents reported that Nepal was in a very violent situation, with 0.5% of people reporting that it was in a peaceful situation, before the Peace Accord. 2.25% of respondents reported the country was in a violent situation, after the signing of the Peace Accord. 21.5% of respondents reported the country was in a peaceful situation after Peace Accord. A district wise analysis of this information revealed that only 54% respondents from Kathmandu felt that it was at its most violent, whereas 66% in Kailali, 85% in Morang and 71% Banke reported it was at its most violent before peace accord. But interestingly, 52% in Morang 14% in Kailali and 2% in Banke believe that the situation is violent even after the Peace Accord. This indicates that the peace situation has improved significantly but the peace process has still not been fully achieved.

**Highest level of peace**

34% of the respondents think the highest level of peace could be achieved by a consensus among political parties, conflicting groups and among all Nepalese. 17% think an end to conflict through dialogue is the best solution to achieve the highest level of peace. 9.25% think honest endeavours toward an honest Peace Accord would bring the highest level of peace. 5.5% think a new constitution would do it. 9% believe political stability is the route to the highest level of peace.
The survey results suggest that people from districts such as Kathmandu and probably other centres have experienced less violence before the peace accord; whereas, the people from districts such as Kailali, Morang and Banke are experiencing violence even after the Peace has been signed.

Objective 2: Local community constituencies believe that they have a part to play in implementing the peace process at a local level

Importance of promoting peace

Significantly higher percentages of respondents (99.75%) reported that promotion of peace is essential at all time. In a multiple choice, the respondents reported that there are a number of reasons to promote peace at all time. The following table illustrates the reasons, chosen by the particular continuous promotion of peace in the country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting human rights</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political stability</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal distribution of resources</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More economic activity</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High confidence</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More security</td>
<td>28.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those educated abroad will come back</td>
<td>6.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less migration</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educated people stay in Nepal</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Peace is most essentially linked with overall development of the country. The respondents held the belief that development is not possible without peace. Development was the choice of the highest percentage of respondents, indicating clearly that peace is most essential for the overall development of the country. All the peace promotion initiatives should essentially address this aspect so that there is a sense that peace should be promoted and protected for national development.

Role of individuals in promoting peace in their respective constituencies

In response to this question, 55% responded that they can contribute to promoting peace by war, 42.6% said they can contribute in stopping conflict in their area and 24.5% indicated that they can contribute by following law and order rules. One person (0.25%) refused to respond and the respondents (0.75%) did not know how they can contribute.

Interestingly, among the 42.6% who indicated their willingness to contribute to peace promotion, stopping conflict in their area, 41.5% were journalists, 50.4% social workers and rights activists, and 47% were political leaders.

Surprisingly, the majority of people indicated that they can contribute to peace promotion by war and by stopping conflict at the local level. It seems that the respondents were not very

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their potential role in stopping war. However, people in the community could be mobilized to create credible pressure on conflicting parties to stop war. Hence, peace promotion activities could be designed to mobilize people in creating pressure on conflicting partners.

Identification of the most prominent group of people who can influence the peace process

The respondents were first asked to identify four most influential actors in contributing to the peace process of Nepal. Then they were further asked to identify the most influential of all. The majority of respondents (39%) suggested that the most influential role in the current peace process can be played by national political leaders. Whereas, the media is perceived to be the second largest group of actors for this purpose. Civil society, youth and neighbouring countries are also perceived to be contributing players by 10%, 8% and 8% of the respondents respectively. The community level actors such as political activists and social workers are identified as the most influential by a further 8% of the respondents.

The reason for their choice of national leaders (39%) is due to the fact that national leaders are at policy level and are responsible to drive the nation. The media is perceived to have a large impact (11%) because of the information they disseminate, and civil society (7%) is viewed for having fought for peace.

This result indicates that the role of local communities is still viewed as less influential in promoting peace. One suggested activities for the peace campaign could be raising awareness and a sense of responsibilities at the community level of their important role in the peace making process.

Objective 3: Local/community constituencies implement programmes to take action in support of the peace process at community level

Identification of the place where peace process is undergoing

61% of the respondents feel that the peace process is taking place in Kathmandu. An equally large percentage of respondents (nearly 24%) indicated the peace process is taking place only in the newspapers. A few, 6%, believe that peace is taking place at the community level.

This is an interesting as well as alarming result - that the vast majority of respondents do not feel that the peace process at the local level is equally important to strengthen the national level peace process. This could be one of the important points of departure to design future peace promotion programmes. It is equally important to raise the awareness of nearly 24% of respondents who think that the peace process is taking place only in newspapers. They should be informed that there are number of peace promotion activities at national, regional and local levels that are contributing to the overall national level peace building process.
Ways of participating in peace process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
<th>Below class 5 (%)</th>
<th>Class 5-10 (%)</th>
<th>Intermediate (%)</th>
<th>Bachelors (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in peace initiatives</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise voices through different means</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involve in the conflict resolution process</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organise a group</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convince people not to strike</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convince people to undertake strikes</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of respondents (34.3%) expressed their interest to participate in peace initiatives at all levels to promote peace. 24% of respondents were willing to participate in the peace process by raising their voice through different means and another 15.8% suggested that they are interested to organise a group to contribute to the peace process.

Comparing educational qualifications, it is interesting to note that out of 34% who were interested to participate in the peace initiatives, 55% were educated below grade 5, whereas only 30% of the graduate respondents were willing to participate in the peace process. It clearly shows that local, uneducated people are very interested to work for peace initiatives. Attempts should be made to engage them in the peace initiatives with proper capacity building and through facilitation.

*Bringing people together from across the dividing line (on the basis of gender, political belief, economic status, educational qualification, social status, religious faith, caste, geographical area.)*

**Easy**

More than half of the respondents (51.3%) said it is easy to bring people together on the basis of gender. But for a little less than one third of the (31.8%) respondents it is difficult to bring people together on the basis of gender. But for some respondents it was difficult to bring women together because men and women do not share equal rights.

It was found that it is easy to bring people together with different educational qualification as indicated by 53.75% of respondents. But for nearly 29% of people it is difficult to bring people with different educational qualification together. Since educated people take the initiative to come together, it was easy for the respondents, but at the same time some respondents stated that the level of understanding between educated and non-educated is different so it would be difficult to bring them together.

Similarly, more than 47% of respondents found that it is easy for them to bring people together from different religious background. Whereas for 35% of respondents it difficult to bring them together. As religious conflict and violence is not common in Nepal, it is easy for the respondents to bring the people of different religion together but for some respondents it is difficult to bring people of different religion together due to prevailing traditional believes and practices.
In terms of different cultural groups, 54% of respondents felt that it is easy to bring people together, whereas only 27% indicated difficulties.

Difficult

51.5% of respondents perceived difficulties in bringing people together from across different political ideology whereas 24.75% indicated that it is easy to bring them together.

Many respondents felt it easy to bring people together with similar objectives of building peace even with different ideology. But it was found that the people who are focused on fulfilment of their own interest are difficult to bring together.

Almost similar result were seen in terms of economic status. 51.5% of respondents indicated that it was difficult to bring people together from different economic status, and 23.75% respondents said that it is easy to bring them together. It was easy for the respondents to bring people from different economic status as both groups people needs peace. But some respondents indicated that the difference in economic class make it difficult for them to bring together.

In terms of social status also it is difficult to bring people together as indicated by 43.8% of respondents. But for 33% of respondents it is easy to bring these people together. It is difficult for people with lower social status to raise their voices that make it difficult to bring them together.

People with different castes are also difficult to bring closer as mentioned by 44% of respondents. However, for 39.6% of respondents it was easy to bring people together from different caste. Prevailing customary practices of caste based discrimination is the main cause of difficulties to bring people.

Madhesis and Pahadis are also difficult to bring together for almost 49% of respondents, whereas for almost 29% of respondents it is easy to bring Madhesis and Pahadis together. The respondents who indicated that it is easy the reason they give is that they are all Nepali so it makes easy to bring them together. But at times it make difficult to bring them together due to communal feeling between Madhesis and Pahadis.

At the same time it is also difficult to bring people with different languages together as expressed by 44% of the respondents. But for 42% of the respondents it is easy to bring them together. Due to state recognition of all language it makes it easy to bring together people with different languages. But for some respondents, it is not so easy to bring them together as they do not understand each others language.

The table below illustrates the percentage of respondents with frequency of their involvement in bringing people together from across different dividing lines.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always (%)</th>
<th>Often (%)</th>
<th>Sometimes (%)</th>
<th>Rarely (%)</th>
<th>Very Rarely (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
<th>Average (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Different gender</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different political ideology</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different economic status</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different education</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different social status</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different religious</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different caste</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhesi and Pahadi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different cultural practices</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different languages</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In conclusion, larger numbers of respondents indicated that it is easy to bring together people from different gender, educational status and religious backgrounds. But it is difficult to bring people together with different political ideology, economic status, social status, caste, geographical location (Madhesi and Pahadi) and languages. It shows that serious attention needs to be given to bringing people from different backgrounds together.

Only 1.2% of respondents reported that it is neither very easy nor very difficult to bring people together. It indicates two very important aspects, firstly nothing very difficult means that nothing is impossible but one may have to work hard or face many challenges and needs strong motivation. Secondly, nothing is so easy that no effort is required.

The very fact that only 9.5% of respondents said it was neither easy nor difficult indicate that only very few people are undecided.

**Objective 5: Open a channel of communication that aims to hold leaders to account**

*Individual initiatives in solving local problems*

Nearly 38% of respondents recommended forming a common forum as an attempt to solve local problems, whereas 21% of respondents believe in using the media to raise the issue and attract other actors in solving the local problems. Similarly, nearly equal percentages (20.8%) of people go to local leaders of political parties and 18.75% go to other people or agency to solve problems. 46.81% prefer to discuss problems within the community itself and 29% think the police administration is the right place to go for help and 10% believe the VDC or DDC would solve their problems.

Nearly one fifth of people faith in using the media in solving local problems, indicating that the media still can be an effective means in bringing local concerns to the attention of the larger mass for solidarity etc.
Individual initiatives in solving national problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nothing/Stay Quietly</td>
<td>0.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to the local leaders</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use media to share the problem</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a Forum</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to the place</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As part of people's initiatives in contributing to solve national problem, 56.6% of respondents indicated that they use the media, 21% expressed that they would create a forum of a wider range of people in creating pressure and 13.5% believe in going to the leaders to solve the problems. Only three respondents (0.76%) indicating that they do not initiate anything to solve local problems, indicates that the majority of people are motivated to act if there are some problems at local level. It could be concluded that people are dynamic and are eager in solving problems.

More than half of the respondents would use media in raising awareness and bringing national issue to the attention of people and other stakeholders nationally. This indicates the importance of media in solving national problem.

Indicators of political leaders being accountable

As indicators of political leaders being accountable towards people in general and peace process in particular, 22% of respondents consider political leaders being accountable on the basis of their initiative to solve the problem. 28% measure the accountability of leaders on the basis their track records/performance.

Means of holding political leaders accountable

70% of respondents indicated that the media can be the most powerful means of holding political leaders accountable towards the peace process. The other means being civil society, common forum and protests.

Media activities that considerably influence the peace process

The highest numbers of respondents 85 (21.4%) indicated radio drama as the most effective means of media activities/pieces that contribute in promoting peace in general, followed by radio interaction.
programmes/talk shows (18.6%), radio public service announcement (PSAs) (11.3%), television drama (11.59%) and programmes from Radio Nepal (the national TV station) (10.33%)

The following table illustrates the numbers and percentages of respondents along with their choice of media activities/pieces in promoting peace.

**Awareness of media outputs on peace process**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programmes</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interaction programmes, interviews</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA, different negotiations among political parties</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama – T.V, radio</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace songs/ poems</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSA</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles/books</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMIN ko Boli</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About Constitution Assembly</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The highest percentage (18%) of respondents indicated that interaction programmes, interviews and talk shows would be most effective means of raising popular awareness of the peace process, whereas only 8% indicated that PSAs would be effective. Hence, the media pieces such as radio talk shows, interviews and interactions programmes should be prioritized as the most effective media pieces.

**Sunau, Bolou (Let’s Listen, Let’s Speak)**

23% of respondents had reported that have heard the radio program Sunau, Bolou. Out of 23% who had heard the programme, 15% indicated that they listen to the programme regularly, 5% sometimes and 80% indicated they rarely listen to the programme. In terms of the districts, 38% of respondents in Banke; 21% in Kailali; 20% in Kathmandu, and 13% in Morang District have listened to the programme.

Among the listeners, 18% reported that they have learned how to take the peace process forward. Another 16% indicated that their level of awareness on peace process has increased. 10% of the listeners have realised the importance of listening to others and also saying something to others.

**Naya Bato, Naya Paila (New Path, New Footsteps)**

27% of the respondents reported that they have listened to the radio programme Naya Bato, Naya Paila. Among the listeners 14% reported that they listen regularly, 2% listen sometimes and 84% listen rarely. In terms of districts, Banke rank the position of having highest percentage of listeners with 32%. Kathmandu and Kailali stands second with 27% listeners each and Morang has a 24% listener of radio program Naya Bato Naya Paila. For 24% of listeners the programme is promoting the peace process effectively, for 16% of the listeners the programme is effective in raising awareness on human rights and women rights and 14% of the listeners have recognized the role of youth in peace process.
Some tables in the following pages illustrate detail information on various issues.
### Difficulty in bringing different groups together

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Janajati (%)</th>
<th>Dalit (%)</th>
<th>Other (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Different Genders</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
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<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Difficult</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>32</td>
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<td><strong>Different Political Ideology</strong></td>
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<td>Easy</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neither easy nor difficult</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult</td>
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<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Different Economic Status</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Different Educational Background</strong></td>
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</tr>
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<td>Easy</td>
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<td>66</td>
<td>48</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Difficult</td>
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<td>38</td>
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<td><strong>Different Religious Background</strong></td>
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<td>Difficult</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<td><strong>Different Caste</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Different Languages</strong></td>
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<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neither easy nor difficult</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>42</td>
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</table>
### District wise analysis of peace situation before the Peace Accord

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kathmandu (%)</th>
<th>Banke (%)</th>
<th>Kailali (%)</th>
<th>Morang (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violent</td>
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<td>71</td>
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<td>85</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### District wise analysis of peace situation after the Peace Accord

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kathmandu (%)</th>
<th>Banke (%)</th>
<th>Kailali (%)</th>
<th>Morang (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Fourth</td>
<td>52</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 5: Conclusions

This study has examined whether strategic arts-based programs with local content can potentially contribute to more lasting peace by raising awareness about peaceful solutions to everyday problems affecting post-conflict societies and therefore strengthening the community. To some degree all three programs implemented by SCG succeeded in initiating discussions about peaceful resorts to daily disputes and in many cases participants went through a positive behavioural transformation. However, in the case of Yemen and Nepal, there were indications that the programs had limited results in achieving their goals, especially on a national as compared to local level.

The Team in Yemen was the least promising of all three programs and it offers a few interesting insights on strategic arts-based programs and the conditions under which they are most effective. Although the findings of the final evaluation report showed that the program had little impact on changing the attitudes of the survey participants, the results varied across the governorates. Additionally, the report revealed that efforts at disseminating the art project, that is the episodic drama, on a local level when combined with discussions, had a much greater impact on the participants. This attests again to the fact that local input has a better chance of achieving the desired outcomes than similar efforts on a national level.

Another reason why the program was not able to perform at its best capacity might have been the timing of its implementation. Year 2011, when it was launched, was marked by a violent uprising: the Arab Spring. As mentioned before, in order for strategic arts programs to be successful the right strategy has to be implemented at the right time. Although it was difficult to predict the emergence of Arab Spring uprisings, they could have potentially undermined the program’s overall performance.
Similarly, in Nepal, the *Peace Process Communication Campaign* program seems to have had the biggest impact on the participants of the peace song and musical retreats judging by the qualitative assessments as opposed to its effect on the larger population of Nepal which was small, based on the quantitative survey. In the case of Nepal it was clear that music served as a tool or a focal point which brought together very diverse groups of people who normally would not have interacted with each other in a peaceful environment. The musical processes combined with trust building exercises created an atmosphere of confidence and reconciliation, where people opened up to speak about their traumatic experiences and connected emotionally. The testimonies indicated that strong bonds were established between participants who previously fought with each other. Additionally, there was a better understanding among contributors of what the peace process was and how they could contribute to it by resorting to non-violent means of resolving daily disputes.

The program *Strengthening repatriation and reintegration through information and conflict transformation* implemented in DRC was the most successful in achieving desired goals, namely strengthening the conflict resolution capacities of local actors. It could serve as an example of a strategic arts based program, which was implemented at the right time, using appropriate strategies and addressing the most urgent issues of the population at hand.

Participatory theater was accessible to all people and there was no need to have electricity or a TV set in order to participate. In DRC, where access to such basic needs is limited, this strategy was crucial. Additionally, the interviews conducted with villagers before the performances provided the best possible content for the theater piece and the discussion. Through the interviews the actors identified the sources of disputes among the community members, therefore using the arts to address the issues
which were the most important at a given moment. They used the right techniques at
the right time, for example, by playing out scenes of land conflicts in regions and at a
time when the refugees would come back to their properties. The testimonies and
results of quantitative surveys show the increased levels of awareness about peaceful
methods of conflict resolution such as dialogue and mediation.

In all three cases, there was an effort to use art as an external platform and a
creative space for people where they could see their problems from an outside
perspective. Through its universal appeal, disconnected from any political or ethnic
affiliation, art became a safe space where people of all diverse backgrounds could
meet, participate in the creative act and then through discussions find common
ground.

The testimonies of the participants proved that these processes were
instrumental in initiating a behavioural change. This might seem insignificant taking
into consideration the limited scope of these programs and the relatively small number
of participants. Nevertheless, their potential for spreading norms of non-violent means
of conflict resolution is remarkable. This is because, unlike other programs aiming at
poverty alleviation or economic empowerment, these programs promote new ways of
thinking and interacting with the Other, whether he or she represents a different caste,
ethnic group or political party. The issues which lie at the core of the conflicts in most
developing countries cannot be resolved any time soon. Poverty, economic inequality,
access to resources, land conflicts and other issues worth fighting for will remain the
characteristics of these societies for many years to come. Although addressing these
problems is equally important, arts-based programs with local content could help
foster a more peaceful environment where financial aid and economic empowerment
programs could reach their full potential.


