BUILDING PEACE

SUSTAINABLE RECONCILIATION
IN DIVIDED SOCIETIES

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RESOURCES:
MAKING PEACE POSSIBLE

I

In this chapter we will outline and explore some ideas about resources for peacebuilding. We face an intriguing dilemma in this regard. It is abundantly clear across our globe, both historically and at present, that the expenditures and resources consumed by war far outpace those allocated for building peace. Without adequate resources, explicit preparation, and commitment over time, peace will remain a distant ideal rather than a practical goal. At the same time, throwing money at problems—in this instance, contemporary internal wars—will not alone resolve them. On the contrary, such action may exacerbate conflicts. We need, therefore, to be clear about what is meant by resources for peacebuilding.

The primary goal with regard to resources is to find ways to support, implement, and sustain the building of an infrastructure for peace over the long term. To achieve this goal I propose that we need an expanded understanding of resources. Specifically, I suggest we approach the question of resources for peace under two broad headings: socioeconomic and sociocultural. The former suggests that resources do, indeed, involve a monetary aspect, but that equally critical is the sociological dimension in the disbursement of funds. The latter suggests that people and their various cultural traditions for building peace are also primary resources.

SOCIOECONOMIC RESOURCES

As we look at the question of economic resources for peace, it is not our purpose here to outline specific proposals, numbers, or budgets. It is, however, useful to explore in more detail the need to think sociologically and strategically about the monetary support for peacebuilding in contemporary conflict. This involves a process of creating ways of thinking about *categories* of action, *responsibilities,* and the *strategic commitment* of funds to maximize prospects for the transformation of conflict toward sustainable peace. Each of these items deserves specific attention.

Creating Categories

Among the primary sociological tasks of socioeconomic resourcing is helping people, organizations, and institutions to comprehend, acquire an appreciation for, and create categories of thinking and action related to peacebuilding and to see these categories as legitimate and valid within all levels of the population and during all phases in the progression of a conflict.

To take a parallel example from information technology: The advent of digital information, with modern computers, facsimile machines, and electronic mail, has changed the nature of communication. The fact that the technology became available, however, did not mean that it was immediately understood, used, or maximized. There was a process whereby the public gained a comprehension of and an appreciation for the capacities of the new technology. Subsequently, new categories of thinking emerged, within which action was channeled to maximize the use of technology for communication.

The same is true in the area of what we might call, for the sake of comparison, the growing field of peacebuilding technology. While we have recognized for quite some time the need to find better ways of preventing and resolving wars, we are only in the early stages of comprehending and acquiring an appreciation for the conceptual and practical possibilities and necessities for accomplishing the task. We are still in the early stages of developing the categories in which to think about and carry out action.

During the Ethiopian famine of the mid-1980s, for example, most of the responses by the public and by intergovernmental and nongovernmental agencies working in relief and development were directed at the level of symptoms. Some years later, at the time of the Somali crisis of 1991-92, many of these same agencies and groups were making far more explicit linkages among the perspectives of conflict resolution, peacebuilding, relief, and development. In other words, NGOs and intergovernmental agencies not only saw the increased necessity of dealing with the underlying conflicts in more specific and direct ways, but also began to create categories of thinking about these needs and of funding that reflected that assessment and learning.

One specific suggestion to be made here is for governments and intergovernmental and nongovernmental agencies to create categories of funding related to conflict transformation and peacebuilding. In addition, NGOs and regional organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS) or the Organization of African Unity (OAU) need to develop internal expertise and response mechanisms relevant to situations of protracted conflict alongside the expertise they already possess in the areas of relief and development. This has, in fact, begun to happen in a number of instances. The OAU, for example, has outlined and begun to implement a plan of action for improving its peacebuilding capacity on the continent. A number of NGOs such as the Mennonite Central Committee and Quaker Peace and Service have developed service programs and resource personnel in the areas of conciliation and conflict resolution.

Creating Responsibility

A further step in the development of resources for peacebuilding is to generate a widespread sense of shared responsibility for the larger, systemic dimension of contemporary conflict.

At a global level, we must find mechanisms for establishing responsibility and accountability for the linkage between profiting from the sale of weapons and the recurrence of armed conflict. Perhaps some form of tax could be levied on those who produce and sell weapons; the funds raised could be used to help defray the social and material costs of dealing with the use of weapons. An analogy would

be the taxation of "vice" products such as tobacco and alcohol. At a very rough estimation based on total 1995 arms sales, a 1 percent "peace-added" tax levied on the sales coming from the top ten arms producer-exporter nations would probably yield sufficient money to fund the entire UN peacekeeping operation around the globe.

At the direct-response level, the NGO community should also understand its responsibility from a larger systemic perspective. This is especially pertinent to the way in which the international community responds to major human catastrophes that owe their existence more to wars and protracted conflicts than to natural disasters, such as has been the case in numerous instances in the Horn of Africa. We must seek to understand better the relationship among the elements comprising the NGO community's response to such situations.

For example, while massive emergency food relief is clearly needed to alleviate human suffering, this does not mean that the aid somehow represents an exclusively humanitarian response within the situation. The aid program is, after all, part of a broader system. Our thinking in the NGO humanitarian community has traditionally been dominated by a "natural disaster understanding" of need and outcome. This view tends to restrict the analysis of relief activities to, at worst, the immediate concerns of effective response and, at best, to a measure of effectiveness that includes a transition toward rehabilitation and development. Either approach, however, is very limited in the case of disasters that are created mainly by human hands. The concept of "latent functions" is helpful in understanding what else is needed.[1]

In a crisis caused by a natural disaster, the foremost need is to launch an immediate and effective response to alleviate suffering and stabilize the situation and population, with a subsequent move toward rehabilitation and reconstruction. These are the intended functions of the relief activity. The latent functions of aid in such a disaster might include the reallocation of resources within the system or the benefits certain industries derive from the crisis, as was the case with rising lumber and construction costs in the wake of 1990s Hurricane Andrew in Florida.

In a crisis driven primarily by unresolved and at times unrelenting social conflict, however, whereas the intended functions remain

much the same—immediate alleviation of suffering and stabilization of the situation—the latent functions of relief can develop in complex and unexpected ways. To deliver food effectively, for example, feeding centers might be established, which have the latent functions of centralizing aid and increasing internal migration. But the chain of effects does not stop there. The centralization of resources and migration of vulnerable populations further attracts those who, also living off the scarce resources, seek to benefit from the peoples struggle. Aid programs can thus contribute to the mobilization and strengthening of militias. In settings where outside aid is in fact the only available resource, this effect is greatly intensified. In the case of Somalia in the first half of the 1990s, this process promoted an untenable situation in a conflict that, in large part, is rooted in the centralization of authority. Relief efforts for vulnerable populations were concentrated in certain regions. The relief aid was sought after, fought over, and ultimately sustained militias, creating a situation in which the delivery of the aid had to be protected. This led to further centralization of relief efforts and the creation of safe corridors for delivery, which displaced militias into areas previously more or less stable. And so the story went, becoming increasingly difficult to disentangle, like the snake who ate its tail: To protect the hand that will dress the wound, we end up exacerbating the causes of the original injury. In one of the best pieces of research on this subject, Mary Anderson has argued that, at a minimum, we should operate on the basis of being sufficiently aware of the consequences of our aid on local conflicts that we can avoid doing harm and aggravating the conflicts through our otherwise good intentions.[2]

It is incumbent upon NGOs operating in situations of protracted conflict to think through these broader ramifications of their programs. They must develop the tools to undertake broad systemic analysis of both the short- and the long-term implications of humanitarian action in settings of conflict. Such analysis must explore both the intended and the latent functions of the proposed humanitarian work. NGOs must also develop categories of funding and action that relate directly and deliberately to the constructive transformation of the conflict. It would be possible, for example, for NGOs to create a self-tax, whereby a portion of their overall relief effort,

say 5 percent, would be designated for conflict resolution and peace-building initiatives in settings where their relief activities are needed because of protracted conflicts and wars.

This example is intended not only to clarify the need for increased funding but also to underscore the concomitant need to recognize and promote responsibility. We need to be aware of the larger systemic picture, create accountability of action, and encourage more specific ways to promote the recognition and viability of peacebuilding efforts.

Creating Strategic Commitment

Strategic commitment is connected to an understanding of the complexity and long-term nature of the peacebuilding enterprise. In light of this, efforts must be made to foster a deeper understanding of the broader evolution of conflict, and associated with that, of the multiple peacebuilding functions and activities that are required to constructively transform the conflict over an extended period.

Judging from my own experience on the ground in many situations of protracted conflict, significant economic support for peacemaking seems to emerge when efforts to defuse a crisis or restore peace become highly visible. More often than not, this occurs when "prenegotiations" attract public attention and appear to be progressing toward formal peace talks and agreements. Funds are much harder to secure when they are intended to finance preventive action taken before the emergence of the crisis or to support the implementation of an agreement once it has been signed. Paradoxically, these two activities—conflict prevention and sustaining reconciliation—are probably the most "cost effective" in terms of keeping down the price of destructive, protracted conflict.

It also seems much easier to generate funds for formal initiatives, especially ones involving top-level actors. Middle-range initiatives, infrastructure building, and grassroots projects do not typically attract significant funding, even though the middle range may hold the most potential for building a long-term process and developing a broader peace constituency able to sustain conflict transformation.

Finally, it would seem that far more money is available for supporting the preparation and logistics of military peacekeeping options,

despite the fact that such operations have no inherent capacity for building peace. Though still difficult to design, implement, and evaluate, the approaches that are likely to have the most enduring positive impact are those oriented toward relationship building and reconciliation. Yet, these seem to be the least understood, developed, and funded.

The guiding principle for the allocation of funds should be that resources are applied in a strategic manner to effect the maximum constructive change in protracted conflicts. Acceptance of this principle would entail acceptance of a long-term frame of reference; would foster an awareness of how funds can be employed as a proactive investment, and not just for reactive crisis management; and would promote an appreciation for those components of peacebuilding that have the capacity to create understanding and reconcile antagonists.

In sum, the provision of resources for transforming protracted conflict is not just a matter of giving money. It involves creating new ways of thinking about the categories of activity and how they relate to the overall situation. It is about creating a sense of responsibility and accountability for the full implications of actions. And it is about strategic commitment to maximize the proactive elements of peacebuilding.

SOCIOCULTURAL RESOURCES

Our focus now turns to another kind of resource: people and culture. Given the images, dynamics, and consequences of contemporary conflict, it is too often assumed that these desperate situations are devoid of resources for building peace. This assumption is perhaps encouraged by the limited points of contact most of us have with these settings. The media provide us with stories focused almost exclusively on hatred, warmaking, and devastation. We see images of emaciated, vulnerable populations that need food and basic health services. Our only direct contact may be through an influx to our shores of refugees who have lost their homes and livelihoods. The general tendency is to think of peacebuilding as being initiated with outside resources, whether money or personnel. But the inverse is

probably true. The greatest resource for sustaining peace in the long term is always rooted in the local people and their culture.

Building a Peace Constituency

An important task in the development of a framework for sustaining reconciliation is to build a peace constituency within the setting. Conceptually, at a very basic level this means that the international community must see people in the setting as *resources,* not *recipients.* In other words, citizen-based peacemaking must be seen as instrumental and integral, not peripheral, to sustaining change.

This point both underscores and is underscored by our suggestion that, strategically, the key to a sustainable peacebuilding framework in contemporary conflicts is the middle range, Middle-range actors are positioned such that they are connected to, and often have the trust of, both top-level and grassroots actors. They have more flexibility of thought and movement than top-level leaders, and are far less vulnerable in terms of daily survival than those at the grassroots. For middle-range actors to develop as the core of a peace constituency, however, three things have to happen

First, it is critical to identify and work with people who envision themselves as playing the role of peacemakers within the conflict setting. I have not experienced any situation of conflict, no matter how protracted or severe, from Central America to the Philippines to the Horn of Africa, where there have not been people who had a vision for peace, emerging often from their own experience of pain. Far too often, however, these same people are overlooked and disempowered either because they do not represent "official" power, whether on the side of government or the various militias, or because they are written off as biased and too personally affected by the conflict.

Second, it must be recognized that the capacity of middle-range actors to find a voice often depends on building bridges to like-minded individuals across the lines of conflict This is no easy task, but it can be facilitated by external support and initiative. Still, it should be remembered that middle-range actors, not external players, are best equipped to sustain conflict transformation.

Third, the recognition by the international community of these persons as valid and pivotal actors for peace is necessary to legitimate the space they need to develop their potential.

To the degree that middle-range actors capture a vision for their role as peacemakers, to the degree they are able to build bridges to their counterparts across the lines of the conflict, and to the degree they are empowered as legitimate actors by the international community, they and their networks, their understandings of the sensibilities and nuances of the setting, and their immediate and ongoing accessibility to key players and processes become ever more valuable resources for sustaining change toward reconciliation. It is through them that an effective peace constituency can emerge.

Building on Cultural Resources

Consistent with the need to develop and support a peace constituency is the need to build on the cultural and contextual resources for peace and conflict resolution present within the setting. To accomplish this requires, among other things, that we in the international community adopt a new mind-set—that we move beyond a simple prescription of answers and modalities for dealing with conflict that come from outside the setting and focus at least as much attention on discovering and empowering the resources, modalities, and mechanisms for building peace that exist within the context.[3]

Many examples of these resources could be cited. From Somalia we have the extraordinary example of women functioning as forerunners in rebuilding interclan communication, which prepared the way for clan conferences—guided by elders and massaged by poets—that led to local and regional peace agreements.[4] From Mozambique is the aforementioned example of the UNICEF-funded "Circus of Peace," built on traditional arts, music, and drama, which targeted and incorporated children at the village level in conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities.[5]

As a way of exploring in greater depth the use of culture as a resource, we can consider the models and learning about peacemaking that emerge from a Central American context. Over an extended period of involvement in the region, I have discovered that many

Central Americans think about conflict resolution in everyday settings according to three key concepts: *confianza, cuello*, and *coyuntura.*[6]

In brief, *confianza* is "trust" or "confidence." It refers to people whom I know and rely on, who "inspire my confidence" and in whom "I can deposit my trust." *Confianza* is based on firsthand knowledge of the person and increases over time. It assures sincerity, reliability, and support. The keys to *confianza* are relationship and time.

Cuello literally means neck, the connection of head and heart, but is one of many vernacular metaphors in Spanish for "connections" that help get things done. In other words, *cuello* is the strategic use of my network. When faced with everyday problems and conflicts, Central Americans are more likely to think first of "who" than of "what" in order to "get out of the problem."

Coyuntura is often translated as "juncture" and/or "timing," but it really represents a metaphor for placing oneself in the stream of time and space and determining at any given moment what things mean and therefore what should be done. *Coyuntura* is "timing" to the degree that timing contemplates the fluidity and art of the possible. In practical conflict resolution terms, it means being present and available on an ongoing basis.

Conflict resolution hinges on these concepts. When experiencing a conflict, Central Americans conceptualize solutions in terms of network resources. They seek help from someone they trust who has the *confianza* of the other side. This is *confianza-cuello*, or what I have referred to as an "insider-partial" as opposed to an "outsider-neutral" modality of third-party assistance.[7] We can note several important characteristics about these cultural concepts and modalities.

First, these natural helpers, or mediators, emerge from within the setting. Their knowledge of the context and their relationships with people are seen as a resource, not an obstacle. Second, they are connected on a long-term basis, and are not "in and out" of the setting. Third, they are chosen not for their expertise or profession, but for who they are in the network. Their value lies not in a service to be performed but rather in a relationship in which they are involved. Finally, in Nicaragua, as well as in more recent experiments in Ethiopia and Somalia, a variant on this formulation of partiality as a

resource is a situation in which peacemakers as individuals are close to and trusted by one group or side, but as a team provide balance and credibility

Translated as "Trust," "Networking," and "Timing," *confianza, cuello, and coyuntura* are the "TNT" of Central American peacemaking. Trust suggests a relationally based, holistic approach to mediation that develops over time. Networking suggests that peacebuilding is dependent on knowing people and being connected. Timing is the sensitivity to events and the perception of possibilities. Most importantly, all three argue that long-term commitment, relationship building, and consistency are crucial. Together the three concepts understand peace as a process of transformation based on resources from within the conflictive setting that provide connection before and during the conflict, and ultimately help to sustain the peace.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have proposed a broad, integrative framework for understanding resources. It is assumed, of course, that resources are necessary to help initiate and sustain a peacebuilding process. However, resources are understood not solely in terms of financial and material support. It was argued, in fact, that the most critical factor in making resources available is the socioeconomic and sociocultural configuration of the approach.

From this perspective, developing appropriate categories for providing funds and establishing mechanisms for responsibility and accountability at a systemic level and on the ground are as important as the funds themselves. This approach is further enhanced when a strategy is developed that helps orient and target funding toward the points of greatest proactive potential for the transformation of conflict toward constructive outcomes.

Finally, resources must be seen as including people and cultural modalities in the setting. A key element in this process is the building of a peace constituency, particularly among middle-range actors in the affected population. In addition, considerable attention must be given to discovering and building on the cultural resources for conflict resolution that exist within the context.