

Nonviolent Peaceforce

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Nonviolent Peaceforce Feasibility Study

3. Best Practices in Field Relationships

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3. Best Practices in Field Relationships

Donna Howard and Corey Levine

3.1 Introduction

Effectiveness in the field will depend on positive, creative, and efficient relationships - on the team itself, with other governmental and non-governmental organisations, and with components of Nonviolent Peaceforce governance. The following chapter includes examples of how these relationships are handled by others. The attempt will be to draw some conclusions from field relationships of peace teams which share a proximate mission but are too small to transpose directly to the work of NP's large-scale intervention, and to draw others from organisations of equal or greater size but less similar in aims and history.

Team-sending peace organisations included in this study include Balkan Peace Team (BPT), Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), Civil Peace Services in Europe, Osijek Peace Teams, Peace Brigades International (PBI), Servicio Internacional para la Paz (SIPAZ), and Witness for Peace (WfP).¹ Other examples are drawn from the Cyprus Resettlement Project, the Gulf Peace Team and Mir Sada.

Larger scale organisations were also looked at. These included international humanitarian NGOs such as CARE, International Rescue Committee etc.; International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); and transnational governmental organisations such as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).

At this point it is important to point out that the difference between the organisations addressed in the two categories of large and small scale organisations is not only the size of the operation, but also on the way the organisation is structured and their mandate. Many of the small scale organisations are mostly grassroots, often volunteer run, with small budgets and non-traditional methods of decision-making. The larger-scale organisations are generally top down, hierarchical organisations with requirements for staff more focused on education and experience rather than the value-based recruitment of the small-scale organisations. It is the assumption of the writers that NP will hybridise these examples for greatest efficiency, unity, and participatory governance.

¹Please see Appendix to 2.2: Volunteer sending organisations for information about these organisations and section 2.2.2.2 for an overview of their character and goals.

3.2 Peace teams

Donna Howard

3.2.1 Working and living on a team

3.2.1.1 Composition of teams

Team size

The team-sending organisations have for the most part been limited to small teams by resources and the number of qualified volunteers available. In some cases, however, it was decided that a smaller number of volunteers was advantageous to the work (e.g. BPT, WfP). At its largest, Witness for Peace had 40 long-term team members in the field at one time; now there are four per country. The dramatic change is due to both limited funding and a change of focus. At first the goal was to have as many people as possible see what was going on in Chiapas. Now long-term teams do more research, analysis and writing.² SIPAZ at one time had 10 team members in Chiapas, but shrinking resources allow for only a two-person team at present.³

Organisations differ in how many persons they place on a single team, ranging from two to eight. Austrian Peace Services sometimes sends people out alone;⁴ SIPAZ and Pax Christi have teams of two or three;⁵ Osijek Peace Teams, three to five;⁶ BPT from one to four. CPT currently has teams in the field of four, eight, seven and three,⁷ and PBI's teams have ranged from two to 25.

The total number of volunteers sustained in the field currently ranges from two to 50: SIPAZ has two, CPS Forum six, Austrian Peace Services 11, CPT 21, PBI more than 50.

PBI has four on-going projects (Columbia, Haiti, Chiapas, East Timor/Indonesia) as does CPT (Chiapas, Hebron, New Brunswick and Colombia). Osijek has five teams in one project.

Age of team members

PBI has an absolute lower age limit of 25 and SIPAZ one of 23. Most other teams will consider a person 21 years old.⁸ BPT's lower limit was "people who were not mature enough without giving an age limit; team members were either in their 20's or in their

²Taylor, Phyllis 4/01 interview with author

³Poen, Robert - 6/01 interview with author

⁴Some alone, some together in teams (e.g. as international members of the Osijek Peace Teams (Hämmerle, Pete - interview with Christine Schweitzer)

⁵Weber - 4/01 interview with Christine Schweitzer; Willmutz - 3/01 interview with Christine Schweitzer

⁶Osijek Peace Teams placed 22 locals and seven internationals on teams in the beginning. Their large size proved problematic, however; now there are three to five members per team and five teams in the field. (Hämmerle, Pete - interview with Christine Schweitzer)

⁷There are three full-time corps members and one reservist in Chiapas, six full-time and two reserve in Hebron, four full-time and three reserve in New Brunswick and two full-time and one reserve in Colombia. Full-time CPT Corps members alternate service in the field with assignments at home. (Claire Evans - 4/01)

⁸Those Civil Peace Service volunteers in Germany that are sent out under the budget scheme of the Ministry of Development have to have a minimum age of 25 years, as must those working for Development services

40's and 50's."⁹ The average age of WfP team members is 27. Currently, seven full-time CPT Corps members are in their 20's, two are in their 30's, four are in their 40's, three in their 50's, two in their 60's, and one in her 70's. Minimum age is 21.

Culture/ Nation/ Gender

A look at national diversity of peace teams shows WfP and CPT at one end of the spectrum with only members from U.S. and Canada (by choice) and PBI at the other end with its 17 country groups recruiting from all over the world. On the CPT Corps of 19 full-timers, six are from Canada and 13 are from US. Each CPT team is selected and balanced carefully by the Director. Potential members are evaluated for personality type (e.g. leadership), age, gender, etc. It has happened that a team ended up being one female and four males because of the need to balance other factors and having a small field from which to choose.¹⁰

BPT teams were mostly from western Europe and the US, one person was Australian, and residents of countries where the project worked were excluded. Slightly more women than men volunteered for BPT.¹¹ Each Osijek Peace Team includes at least one Serbian, one Croatian, and one international. Members have come from Austria, Germany, Britain, Yugoslavia, Rumania and US.

SIPAZ team members in Chiapas come from France, the Netherlands, Peru, Uruguay, US, Canada, Germany, Italy, and Ecuador as well as Mexico.¹² A few of the projects under the German CPS are carried out by nationals from the conflict region (project of Living Without Armament in Vojvodina and of Forum CPS in Belgrade).¹³

Diversity

Team diversity may at times seem unwieldy and complex, but all agree that it contributes to the betterment of the team. CPT holds the record for greatest age diversity by far, with one volunteer who had not turned 21 and one in her 70's. All teams strive for gender balance.

The matter of mixed ethnicity on teams is a more complicated one, having to do with justice, language, safety, and effectiveness.¹⁴ CPT team-mate Rey Lopez, originally from the Philippines, was adept and effective in Haitian culture¹⁵ and a PBI team-mate from Japan was effective in Sri Lanka. However, a PBI team in Sri Lanka recommended against having Indian team members because of the colonial relationship between countries.¹⁶

Recall the story told in chapter 2.2.2 about the arrest of Karen Ridd and Marcella

9van den Bosse - interview with author

10Evans - interview with author

11van den Bosse - interview with author

12SIPAZ, "Five Years of Peacebuilding in Chiapas"

13Schweitzer, oral information

14See chapter 2, regarding the unequal value given a team member in some regions based on the colour of his/her skin.

15Schirch 1996: 49

16Ibid - 50

Rodriguez in El Salvador. The two women (Ridd is Canadian, Rodriguez is Colombian) represent an ideal pairing within a team - one for familiarity with proximate language and culture, and one whose white skin provided enough immunity that she might afford some protection to her team partner as well. On that occasion in El Salvador, 37 Europeans and North Americans detained. 75% of them were held less than 24 hours, nearly all handed over to their embassies. However, of the 17 South American and Central American foreigners detained, 60% were held for over four days and then summarily deported. Due to Ridd's accompaniment, Rodriguez was only Latin American freed the same day.¹⁷

Though diversification and undoing racism have been PBI goals from the onset, fulfilment has proven elusive. There is no mechanism for recruitment in countries other than those which have a PBI group, PBI-USA set aside board seats for people of colour but has difficulty filling them; there has been no successful outreach in Africa.

Early in WfP development it was decided that teams should be from the US in order to contend US policy, which was a primary goal. But Phyllis Taylor believes that peace teams most certainly should be multi-cultural in Israel/Palestine, for example, to establish non-partisanship.¹⁸ The same was said of Osijek teams by IFOR secretary Pete Hammerle: the presence of both Serbs and Croats on each team is essential.¹⁹

Mohammed Abu-Nimer, assistant professor of International Peace and Conflict Resolution at American University, advises that NP's teams absolutely *must* be multicultural as a manifestation of our goals. He does not feel language should present a problem for communication within the team - that we should require proficiency in English or French, e.g., and interpersonal communication skills. Training must include cultural diversity as well as interpersonal conflict resolution for use within the team.²⁰

3.2.1.2 Decision-making, communication, specialisation

"Consensus process does not aim for unanimity, nor even for each group member to be totally satisfied with a particular decision. It does aim for complete support."²¹

All teams studied rely on consensus to make decisions within the team. Not all have a specific plan for how to handle an urgent situation when consensus could not be reached in a reasonable amount of time.

SIPAZ works with a consensus model at all levels of the organisation. SIPAZ works with a consensus model at all levels of the organisation. The team itself has a coordinator whose leadership is respected in a crisis. All are subject to decisions by the Board of Directors..²² WfP teams and delegations make decisions by consensus, but in danger a leader may make a decision. The field staff member in Managua may say to the

¹⁷Mahony/Eguren 197: 179

¹⁸Taylor interview with author

¹⁹Hämmerle Interview with Christine Schweitzer

²⁰Abu-Nimer - 6/01 interview with NP volunteer, Polly Edmunds

²¹Coy 1997: 191

²²Poen interview with author

delegation or team, "You need to come back."²³

Consensus is a core value of PBI. It is mandated and used on every level of the organisation: "Within PBI, consensus decision making is not simply instrumental; it is not just one among many possible ways to accomplish organisational tasks and goals. It is understood, rather, as concretely expressive, even prefigurative of the sort of social world the organisation and its members are working to bring about."²⁴ Policy also provides for a democratic vote when time-restraints necessitate. The highest decision-making body is the General Assembly which convenes once every three years; the International Council has authority in the interim.

The two offices of the Croatian Team of BPT got together for what they called an "Otvorene Summit" every 2 or 3 months. They met at a third place to evaluate that period of work, update strategy for next period, and assess the personal performance of each team member. They then prepared a report for the Co-ordinating Committee.²⁵ All BPT teams had similar meetings.

Each Christian Peacemaker team has a co-ordinator, a writer, and other specialisations. Teams make decisions together; the team co-ordinator would only make a unilateral decision if the situation demands a quick response without time to process it with the entire team.²⁶ During CPT training, a potential team member is required to take a work style assessment called "Style Profile for Communication at Work"²⁷ This instrument is a measurement of "style" which it defines as "your characteristic way of perceiving and thinking about yourself, others, and things,"²⁸ and it offers a descriptive categorisation of how one works under both stress and calm conditions. Gene Stoltzfus, CPT Director, uses this information to create a balanced team with someone on it who can take leadership even in stressful times. "We have found it almost essential that at least one person on the team be "Achieving/directing."²⁹

Specialisations often occur within a team based on the unique skills volunteers bring with them rather than a dividing up of responsibility. Austrian Peace Services reports that ability in editing or drama, for example, might be needed and nurtured within the team.³⁰

Precedents for NP team structure and decision-making cannot be relied upon from within the study of small teams which are quite homogenous. Therefore, examples follow of what has not worked: how extreme stress and dysfunctional participants can undermine the consensus process within larger and multi-ethnic groups.

Gulf Peace Team camp members successfully used consensus when the group was small. But as numbers grew, fewer people took part, perhaps because some spoke little

²³Taylor interview with author

²⁴Coy 1997: 194

²⁵Bekker in Moser-Puangsuwan/Weber, 2000: 204

²⁶Evans - interview with author

²⁷Gilmore/Fraleigh 1992

²⁸Gilmore/Fraleigh 1992: 7

²⁹Evans - interview with author

³⁰ "Report Austrian Peace Services (ÖFD)", December 2000

or no English or because meetings were poorly facilitated.³¹ The camp of approximately 70 people then formed into affinity groups with a Steering Committee. It was never resolved how to make decisions when this process failed.³²

The affinity groups were not very functional in the Gulf Peace Camp. There was no common language, little experience with affinity groups, some without experience of nonviolent action, no shared cultural identity nor ideological cohesion, and a disproportionate number of people with serious psychological needs.³³ In spite of all this Robert Burrowes concludes, "It is clear from the historical record that the preferred organisational unit for effective nonviolent action is the affinity group."³⁴

Similar problems were experienced by the Cyprus Resettlement Project. The transnational nature of the team made it harder to consense over aims, approaches, roles, etc. Team members did not share a common language, and translation did not make up for it.³⁵

Mir Sada was an event rather than an on-going project, so it never had time to discover better practices of communication and decision-making. Nonetheless, its difficulties inform NP in these areas. The dominant language was Italian, and even with consecutive translation in meetings non-Italians were at a disadvantage. Members were formed into affinity groups, but the speakers' council, without a mandate, functioned more like a parliament. The structure ceased to be a democracy when subject to the overriding will of the organisers.³⁶

3.2.1.3 Length of stay, overlap, introduction of new member

At the peak of need for accompaniment in Guatemala, PBI experimented with a two-tiered system of long-term team members and short-term escorts. Hundreds of two-week or one-month escorts were recruited and sent into the field to join long-term team members, who maintained the political contacts, analysed the political situation, and determined the team's work priorities. The long-term team members were responsible for orientation and support of these escort volunteers.³⁷

Formal orientation manuals were created for the short-term escorts. Regular discussions amongst volunteers analysed political situation and risks. Logs were kept noting threats, surveillance, or suspicious coincidences to maintain continuity and organisational memory amidst rapid volunteer turnover.³⁸ PBI discontinued the use of short-term escorts in 1989 because short-termers weren't getting deep enough preparation and it was a tremendous burden on the team which stayed in the field. This discontinuation meant the loss of 100 volunteers per year, "but PBI was more concerned about

31Burrowes in Moser-Puangsuwan/Weber, 2000: 308

32Ibid: 308

33Ibid: 315

34Ibid: 314

35Kemp in Moser-Puangsuwan/Weber 2000: 125

36Schweitzer in Moser-Puangsuwan/Weber 2000: 274

37Mahony/Eguren 1997: 50

38Mahony in Moser-Puangsuwan/Weber 2000:140

maintaining trusting relationships in the field, a high-level of discretion and analysis, and a strong sense of team continuity and affinity, all of which were suffering.”³⁹

Liam Mahony sees risks for short-term volunteers. Lack of time to relax and learn the ropes makes mistakes more likely, with a potential of being dangerous or costly to the reputation of the organisation; cultural ignorance can result in offensive behaviour and perhaps damage to the relationship of trust with the accompanied groups; and natural inquisitiveness can be intensified by the brevity of the visit and go beyond the bounds of the distancing necessary in the accompaniment role.⁴⁰ The combinations of short and long-term volunteers “that work”, Mahony concludes, involve some level of supervision of the short-termers by either staff or longer-term team members who provide continuity of analysis and build long-term relationships with the various groups. This supervision should be combined with explicit behavioural guidelines, clear role definitions, and careful screening of volunteers. “What doesn’t work at all is for an organisation to simply send short-term volunteers without guidelines or rigorous supervision, or for inexperienced volunteers to come without any organisation at all. Although many of these volunteers do excellent accompaniment, the exceptions wreak havoc, damaging the credibility and effectiveness of all other accompaniment groups working in the conflict. The risk can be reduced through supervision or training but never entirely eliminated.”⁴¹

Pat Coy’s analysis is that frequent turnover can “work against and have a largely negative impact on the team’s ability to actualise the consensus principle of full participation. [It] contributes to repetition and inefficiency in discussion and decision making and increases frustration with the consensus process. It also disrupts personal relationships on the teams and changes team power dynamics in ways that frequently--although not always--have deleterious effects on the consensus process.”⁴²

SIPAZ team members commit to one year of service; WfP team members to two years; CPT corps members to three years. All three organisations have a high rate of extension beyond this initial commitment: SIPAZ has one volunteer who has been on the team for four years now; WfP Director Steven Bennett says they have to recruit very little now and can be very selective.

Sandra van den Bosse revealed some pitfalls in the arrival of a new BPT team members: “An introduction packet was written but not always followed. Sometimes the departing team member was reluctant to leave, causing troubles; sometimes they were eager to leave and too negative towards the new team member... Sometimes the new team member thought they knew it all already and refused to be introduced.”⁴³

With a mix of full-timers and reservists on a CPT team, it is important to stagger arrivals. The full-timers might stay three months and go away for a period and come back for three more months, or they might stay six months or more. Sometimes a team might be

39Ibid: 144

40Mahony/Eguren 1997: 242

41Mahony/Eguren 1997: 243

42Coy 1997: 229

43van den Bosse - interview with author

made up of two long-term people and two or three reservists.⁴⁴

Staggered arrivals at the beginning of a project are not a good thing, however, according to Kate Kemp of the Cyprus Resettlement Project. "[Other difficulties] could have been overcome had we all arrived at the same time so that initial orientation could have involved discussion of these points.... We could have saved a lot of time (and perhaps confusion) later on in the project."⁴⁵

Thorough and sensitive orientation can help a new member acquire skills and information needed to accomplish group goals and tasks; introduce him/her to the neighbourhood, the conflict, and team contacts; ease the disorientation and emotional turmoil of "culture shock"; and allow her/him to work through the identity transition that is always part of joining a new group.⁴⁶ But this does not always happen. If a team is over-extended in its work or experiencing conflict within, for example, often less care is given to the orientation of a new member. The result is that it takes the new volunteer far longer to become effective, more team time is taken in answering questions, the new member will lack confidence to become a full participant in the work or in team decision-making, meetings will be inefficient and consensus process compromised.⁴⁷

3.2.1.4 Team compatibility and internal conflict

"Some people have some gifts, skills or capabilities. People who work in teams and who are committed complement and influence each other in a synergetic way. This compatibility is an important criterion when constituting our peace teams."

-Katarina Kruhonja⁴⁸

This is an issue which will just be touched upon here and which needs to be considered in depth in the training plan for NP. It is clear that team-sending organisations have relied too heavily on the "gifts" of incoming team members and that specific skills of conflict resolution, team-building, and multi-cultural sensitivity must be taught more extensively during training. Good intentions for being a part of international nonviolence do not necessarily come accompanied with person-to-person skills for problem solving and relationship. Training must take that into account.

John Heid, finding himself on a very unformed Michigan Peace Team, said, "There were all kinds of people coming in who had gifts that I didn't have, but they didn't know how to build community."⁴⁹

One team member told me that living and working with people you have never met before and people that you would perhaps not usually befriend is too hard to do and only enjoyable "on those rare occasions that nobody was pissed off at anybody."⁵⁰

44Evans - interview with author

45Kemp in Moser-Puangsuwan/Weber: 2000: 125

46Coy 1997: 201

47Coy 1997: 202

48Culture of Peace. Centre for Peace, Non-violence and Human Rights Osijek's Publication. Osijek, 1/2001

49Heid, John - 4/01 interview with author

50Source confidential

Team members at times experience "burn-out" on internal team dynamics. During these times, a team might put a great deal of energy into its work in the field, even its clerical work, but do anything to avoid meetings about team dynamics. This will inevitably compromise the orientation of a new member arriving during this time, and if there are actual disputes within the team, the new member may be quickly recruited to take a side.⁵¹

CPT has a written policy to address internal problems, which is included here as a relevant example:

"Procedure for Dealing with Conflicts and Grievances in CPT...

- Any concern or disagreement should be addressed by either party within a reasonable length of time. As a general guideline, no more than five days should elapse between any of the following procedural steps. When delays are involved, the procedure to be used and the time frame should be outlined and agreed upon in preliminary discussions. These procedures apply to areas of personal relationships and to work/supervisory issues.
- Step 1: Where there is a concern or disagreement, the two people involved should attempt to come to a satisfactory solution through honest speaking and compassionate listening.
- Step 2: Where a solution is not found, the two parties together will agree on a third party to be a mediator. CPT encourages use of the next-level supervisor as a mediator.
- Step 3: Where the first effort with a third party mediator is unsuccessful, one or both of the parties should take the matter to the CPT Executive Director for resolution.
- Step 4: If steps 1-3 are not successful, any of the parties concerned should submit a written request for help to the chairperson of the Steering Committee...⁵²

3.2.1.5 Behavioural ethics

Very little about behaviour on a team is found in writing, either as rules or as narrative of what goes on within a team. Some organisations, like SIPAZ, believe that rigorous application screening and training processes will reveal problems that would manifest themselves in inappropriate behaviour in the field.⁵³ The communication of ethics begins in their job announcement: "As a SIPAZ volunteer you must be willing to live simply, sharing in the lives and work of the Mexicans you will meet, and being respectful of their cultures and beliefs. It may require adjusting to new ideas, cultures, climate, living conditions, etc..."⁵⁴ And because peace team organisations train applicants before accepting them onto a team, there is opportunity for assessing a person's judgement rather than enforcing a set of rules.

For SIPAZ team members, the strict screening is followed by a three month trial period

51Coy 1997: 202

52CPT Mission Statement, Policies, Guidelines 3/24/95

53Poen - interview with author

54SIPAZ volunteer job announcement - 1/00

and then an evaluation. Director Poen says there have been times when that initial evaluation revealed that things weren't working out well. No person has had to be removed from a team; rather there have been a couple of times when the volunteer and evaluator agreed after training that placement wasn't appropriate.

BPT, however, had a written list of rules, included below (their Conduct Policy is discussed in Chapter 4.5).

BPT Rules and Guidelines⁵⁵

1. Go in pairs
2. One person stays at the home base
3. Tell the others where you are and how long you will be
4. Files and documents should be kept in a safe place
5. Don't disclose information
6. Use prudence at all times
7. Volunteers are not to work for any other person or organisation during the term of service nor fundraise on behalf of other groups.
8. After service with BPT is over, volunteers cannot work with another organisation in the area for a period of one month
9. Take 1 day off per week and 2 more days a month
10. We are not here to solve the problems, but to enable local people to solve their problems themselves
11. Be aware that it is not our business as foreigners to tell people what they have to do, and be cautious against the Western tendency 'to do something.'
12. Each action should be assessed as to what risk the action entails for the volunteer, what risk it entails for the BPT getting evicted from the country, what it means for the people you are working with, what the long term effects of it probably are.
13. Never give in to the pressure that 'you have to do something' or act against the will of the people concerned
14. Do not promise anything you are unsure of being able to fulfil
15. Respect the rules of non-partisanship. BPT organisers have defined impartiality as not working for any organisation/group as volunteers by: a) counselling them; b) hanging around in their offices too much; c) translating letters, making telephone calls, etc for them; d) have their office in an independent building; e) present themselves as members of the team; f) avoid political statements; g) maintain contacts with many different groups and organisations; h) stress their independence as foreigners; i) listen to people, without offering agreement or support; and j) avoid close personal friendships.

BPT policy discouraged team members from favours for locals outside the activities of the project, nonetheless translations were sometimes made and cars loaned. "Sexual relationships were discouraged but nevertheless happened, and three volunteers ended

⁵⁵Declaration of goals and principles of BPT, 1994, cited in Schirch 1995: 87,88

up getting married to locals... Social relationships with ordinary locals were encouraged, however, to get a better understanding and find friends outside of the team and activist populations."⁵⁶

Steven Bennett acknowledges that there have been plenty of personal crises on WfP teams. The organisation has rules for the conduct of a team member officially representing WfP in the field, but not for personal relationships. "It would not be right for us to make policy about relationships between team members," and there is no proscription on relations with locals. Bennett says there have been many marriages both on the team and with locals..⁵⁷

"Romantic pairings among team members are common and impact on the consensus process and team relations in a variety of ways. Most team members appear to go along with these relations, are willing to make the switches in bedroom assignments that are usually necessary to accommodate them, and accept the extra demands they made on consensus and team relations... Yet they are not always welcomed by the entire team. While no doubt an extreme example, one Japanese volunteer was distressed in late 1993 when the other six members of the Sri Lanka team *all* paired off romantically." The result for that man was loneliness, a complication of team relations, a feeling that others were less committed to the work and the team, and a moral issue based in cultural difference.⁵⁸

A member of the Guatemalan Accompaniment Project spoke of sexual relations between volunteer men and Mayan women. "There's so much of it. And when it happens, that young woman becomes a social outcast in a way. She will most likely never be able to marry."⁵⁹

Problems with behavioural ethics are much more likely to occur within large groups that have been hastily recruited or not unified by one organisation's standards and style. An example would be the mass accompaniment of returning Guatemalan refugees in 1993. Hundreds of unscreened volunteers came from all over the world to respond to the need - many with no organisational affiliation, training or preparation.

"The accompaniment did not always put its best foot forward: the volunteers couldn't stop bickering among themselves. Cultural, ideological and strategic differences among the volunteers were difficult to overcome in such a short, intense period. The Guatemalan government refugee commissioner even accused the accompaniment of using illicit drugs and stealing food and blankets, and some volunteers admit that this may have occurred."⁶⁰ A UNHCR official denigrated the situation and volunteers thus: "These people get into buses that we paid for. They sleep on mattresses that had been given to refugees. They are eating [the refugees'] food. They are really tourists or hippies, joining the movement. I don't think they really represent a real protection, because you don't know who they represent, seriously, coming on their own like that."⁶¹

⁵⁶van den Bosse - interview with author

⁵⁷Bennett - interview with author

⁵⁸Coy 1997: 203, 204

⁵⁹Source confidential

⁶⁰Mahony/Eguren 1997: 135

⁶¹ibid

Choices that seem minor can undermine the respectability of an entire group. The leader of WfP delegations to Central America required women to wear bras and forego short shorts to respect the local standards of modesty. One woman went running in jogging in shorts anyway. Another time, a Wicken group that was part of a WfP delegation celebrated winter solstice with a dance on beach. "Wherever you are working, there needs to be exquisite sensitivity to history and culture!" says Phyllis Taylor⁶²

The European Network for Civil Peace Services has started to discuss " Guiding Principles for Civil Peace Services". A first draft of a paper that might become something like a Code of Conduct, and that was heavily influenced by the Code of Conduct developed by International Alert, was presented in 1991.⁶³

3.2.1.6 Stressors and other problems

Stress is created for the team in the field by:

- Living closely together
- Danger
- Lack of clarity about what to do and how to do it
- Fear of being ineffective
- Disillusionment
- Cultural discomfort
- Boredom
- Dealing with people who are traumatised, grieving, fleeing, hungry
- Viewing death and destruction
- Overwork without sufficient time for relaxation
- Insecure funding
- Psychological or physical health concerns

One of the frequent stressors mentioned and experienced by teams is that of living and working together in limited space. SIPAZ volunteers rent an office/house in Chiapas. Interntional Coordinator Poen says "If it's a positive experience, you become very close... But it's an extremely difficult thing to succeed at."⁶⁴ BPT team members found it difficult. They lived in a small house, using the living room as office space. Sandra van den Bosse advises NP, "Don't make people live and work together in one house... Do it professionally!"⁶⁵

Ambiguity about the team's role or about the effectiveness or appropriateness of that role undermines confidence. John Heid of the Michigan Peace Team gives this a creative spin: "Being there is like being in a petri dish; you're introduced into the culture

⁶²Taylor - interview with author

⁶³The Draft of the Guiding Principles is appended to this chapter. It has been written by Helga and Konrad Tembel (Germany) and not yet adopted by the EN.CPS, but may be of interest.

⁶⁴Poen - interview with author

⁶⁵van den Bosse - interview with author

and it isn't clear yet what you'll be. We're acting on faith; this isn't rocket science."⁶⁶

Inadequate or insecure funding forces teams to work harder, scrambling to keep equipment running and trim costs. "BPT funding was very insecure most of the time, which led to a lot of completely stressed meetings and very demotivated volunteers," says van den Bosse.

Debilitating stress was created in the Gulf Peace Camp by an inordinate number of people with special psychological needs, whose activities regularly disrupted camp routine.⁶⁷ Such extreme problems will be screened out by NP, but all teams need to be aware of and deal with psychological needs. A CPT team in Hebron was really struggling and describing what they were experiencing as burn-out. However, with counsel from the home office they realised it was really one person on the team who was not functioning well and affecting them all adversely. Subsequently they were coached to be aware of the signals early on.⁶⁸

Teams and their sending organisations need to be proactive in elimination of unnecessary stress, in development of coping tools, and in support for healing and growth. It often takes difficulties to bring about the awareness of what is needed. After an intense experience for the Guatemalan PBI team, "they worked more deliberately on team support and mental health, conscious that its own teams were as vulnerable to the debilitating psychological effects of state error and political threats as the Guatemalans they hoped to serve."⁶⁹

To some extent, the stresses of team work can be mitigated by eliminating as many of the surprises as possible. PBI team members composed a letter to accompany the recruitment of potential short-term volunteers, to prepare them:

...We have seen many people suffer a lot of emotional turmoil because they were not adequately prepared for the difficult situation...We cannot guarantee our presence will prevent acts of violence, rather we hope it will lower the probability of such acts. The possibility of violence against the people we are with and against ourselves remains very real and we need to be able to accept that. Do not think, as many do, that you are safe... Your ability to respond to a violent or tense situation could well depend on how honestly you have accepted the danger and prepared yourself.

... The very protection you offer as an international observer is in itself a constant reminder of the danger they face and the oppression that makes you safer than they. The response to this contradiction varies, but it can express itself in outright anger and mistreatment. Dealing with this requires patience and tolerance, and a belief that people who fight for human rights have a right to live, and an accompaniment service cannot be contingent on their personality or their emotional response to an intensely stressful situation. We must all keep in mind that it is not their responsibility to please us, to meet our needs, or even to pay attention to us. We are there to serve.

The idea of accompaniment may sound glamorous or romantic from a distance, but in fact it is hard work, and very demanding. ..One of the most difficult problems

⁶⁶Heid - interview with author

⁶⁷bid

⁶⁸Evans - interview with author

⁶⁹Mahony/Eguren 1997

volunteers face is boredom. The work is not for everyone, and we'd like you to think seriously in advance about whether it is the right work for you.⁷⁰

3.2.2 Relationship to local groups

George Willoughby, one of PBI's founders, admonishes that foreigners cannot know what they can do for a people in conflict. A long-term relationship needs to be formed with groups in a region if intervention is to take place.⁷¹

The forming of this relationship is often referred to as partnership, but the term has no consistent definition among peace team organisations. It sometimes connotes a formal arrangement with the local group which includes agreed upon goals and tactics. I use the word in this chapter to indicate a working relationship in which the third party organisation is invited to contribute its energy and expertise and the local organisation is relied upon for insight to the conflict, connections to other groups and leaders, and the personal investment of its members.

Lisa Schirch advises approaching this relationship by asking the following questions: What kind of peace efforts are already going on inside the country? Who are the non-aligned groups that the teams can work with and empower with moral and practical support? Who are the authentic leaders that might already be involved in efforts towards peace and reconciliation and who will have the authority to provide leadership after the teams have left?⁷² Is there broad-based support for intervention among local people who will be working with the invited team,⁷³ clear and shared perception of goals of outside intervention,⁷⁴ and a common understanding of how and by what means those goals will be achieved?⁷⁵ Schirch proposes empowerment of the leaders locals turn to (which might be traditional leaders such as chiefs, elders and religious leaders)⁷⁶ and a multi-track approach to the field with relationships on levels which include government, middle-range actors (religious, ethnic, sectoral leaders and NGO), and grassroots (Indigenous NGO, community developers, women's associations, local religious, health, municipal and business leaders and refugee camps).⁷⁷

Partnership to local groups has direct bearing on non-partisanship. Placing volunteers with a local group means that you are working for them--any claim on non-partisanship would be misleading. This becomes even more complicated when "formal" partnership is established and yet the project seeks to remain somewhat independent. Some organisations have decided against having a local partner (or at least a single local

70Mahony/Eguren 1997: 53

71Schirch 1995: 16

72Schirch 1995: x

73Schirch 1995: ix

74Schirch 1995: iii

75Schirch 1995: iv

76Schirch 1995: x

77Lederach, John Paul in Schirch 1995:1 pp.

partner) in order to avoid identification with one side (e.g. Pax Christi in Herzegovina).⁷⁸

There are four models of 'having local partners':⁷⁹

a) International volunteers are placed with the local group, working for them as their international volunteer. Examples: most projects of the Austrian Peace Services, Pax Christi (one volunteer with church community in Columbia), BPT-France plans to do the same in Kosovo/a.⁸⁰

b) With a formal local partner, but volunteers bring their own (an 'extra') project. This could be done in two ways:

1) with a formal invitation but carried out as independent work (as BPT and PBI)

2) as a partner with whom a project is then developed (typical for German CPS, and especially for German development services.)⁸¹

c) With no single partner but with a developed relationship to a network of groups. Example, Pax Christi in Herzegovina. Reason: Having one partner (as required by law in order to get government funding under the CPS scheme) would be detrimental for mediation work because it would place PC with one of the ethnic groups. Therefore, PC made its own locally registered office the formal 'partner' and works with a variety of groups.

d) Formation of a network of mutually supportive partner organisations which includes both local and third party groups⁸²

Witness for Peace practices the third kind of partnership, with a network of local groups. They have maintained a practice of working closely with local groups in each country they have entered, and their intervention goals develop from contacts with religious communities and government officials.⁸³ One of the factors of their success, according to Ed Griffin-Nolan, is the emphasis on development of partner relationships with local people and agencies.⁸⁴ These include organisations that do educational and religious work, regional and local task forces concerned with Central America, and the Inter-religious Task Force on Central America.

BPT worked on peacebuilding with a variety of local groups. One service valued by the local groups was helping them keep in touch with each other. BPT found it problematic to be asked by embassies and donors about the groups they worked with; so "an informal policy was made that we would not recommend any groups but give a neutral answer that was honest."⁸⁵

⁷⁸Schweitzer interview with Weber, 4/01 and Wilmutz, 3/01

⁷⁹Outlined by Christine Schweitzer

⁸⁰See "Exploration Mission Report to BPT members from Pierre Dufour (BPT France), Tanya Spencer (BPT-Coordinating Committee) to Kosovo/a, 2.-114.March 2001

⁸¹See Schwieger 2000

⁸²This last model of partnership is added to Schweitzer's earlier three to reflect discussion at ISC's 7/01 meeting

⁸³Schirch 1995: 17

⁸⁴Griffin-Nolan in Moser-Puangsuwan/Weber 304

⁸⁵van den Bosse - interview with author

Sandra van den Bosse reports that local appreciation of BPT was spotty; "We were not appreciated by all at all times."⁸⁶ A very positive evaluation of Balkan Peace Team's work comes from Albanian and Serbian activists in the region. Ymer Jaka, a leader of the Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms stated: "If reconciliation is going to happen, the work of the Balkan Peace Team must continue and be strengthened."⁸⁷

Christian Peacemaker Teams, in Hebron, has worked closely with the Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions and the Palestinian Land Defense Committee on the issue of the demolition of Palestinian homes by Israeli authorities. CPT also engages in non-violent actions with Israeli peace groups such as Gush Shalom and Rabbis for Human Rights. Any slight claim they have to non-partisanship is helped by the affiliation with Israeli groups while living in solidarity with Palestinians. CPT does not have formal partnerships, but works with local groups who share their desire for nonviolent pursuit of justice.

Local groups report that they respect the CPT team and feel encouraged to keep up the work because of their presence. In Chiapas it was harder to gain good rapport with local groups simply because there are so many NGOs working there. "Now we have gained respect," says Claire Evans. "Though some groups think we're too weird; that our public nonviolent actions are too scary."⁸⁸

Peace Brigades International has a unique partner relationship with the groups it accompanies, e.g. returning refugees, human rights groups or labour movement. They have been practitioners of multi-track entrance to the field since their first year in Guatemala, which they spent "visiting rural farmers, clandestine contacts, and government and military officials, introducing themselves and feeling things out." They were determined above all, to take the lead from local groups.⁸⁹

SIPAZ, as an international coalition, has Latin American member organisations, a Mexican woman on the Board of Directors and a local team leader in Chiapas. This helps with the issues of outside intervention. SIPAZ is usually viewed by local organisations as "cautious," according to Director Poen. He believes they find this caution comforting in the beginning, perhaps allowing them to enter into a relationship with less fear. The SIPAZ team strives to develop affiliations with every level and category of organisation.

The Michigan Peace Team was in Chiapas at the invitation of the Delores Hidalgo community, which sought internationals to be present but absolutely covert so armed factions wouldn't know when they were there and when they were not. "Each community we went to was a community that invited us. That's foundational." Extending the invitation is a risk to the communities in and of itself in a counterinsurgency situation. The difficulty is that it doesn't stay clear what they invited you to do and what you came

⁸⁶van den Bosse, Sandra - interview with author

⁸⁷<http://www.BalkanPeaceTeam.org>

⁸⁸Evans - interview with author

⁸⁹Mahony / Eguren 1997: 16

to do. "An invitation doesn't protect you from the opinion that you shouldn't be there."⁹⁰

Being sufficiently clear about the relationship with local groups is a challenge all intervention teams face. Teams have had to learn how to be very explicit in describing their mission and goals in order to avoid misunderstanding and false expectations. All have had the experience of discovering that the local people thought they would bring money or material aid, that they would work for them (doing translations or driving people around), that they were missionaries⁹¹ or U.S. spies.⁹²

Working closely with local organisations is essential to all the teams. They would no doubt share the basis for an evaluation Dave Bekkering made about BPT, "The future of Otvorene Oci depends on the length of time domestic NGOs think they need its support."⁹³ Intervention decisions are best made within relationship. This is the strength of third party "outsider" but at the same time an inhibitor. An example might be made of the Delores Hildalgo community decision that MPT volunteers should be covert in their movements from village to village. If peace team experience is that tactics of presence and accompaniment depend on visibility for effectiveness, does this wisdom take precedence over the wishes of a local partner? Will the partner agree? Is the partner perhaps right, bringing judgement on specifics of the local situation unknown to the team? CPT Director Stoltzfus draws the line at risk. "We as outsiders can and should make the decision about the amount of risk we are willing to face based on advice we choose to listen to, recognising that the final responsibility for the decision is ours."⁹⁴

3.2.3 Relationship to other INGOs and GOs working in the region

Following a time of armed conflict, a region is sometimes inundated with international NGOs, perhaps tripping over fresh grant money and one another as they try to help locals get back on their feet. This is less often true before or during the escalation of violence, but it remains important for INGOs and GOs to co-operate and allow one another to utilise the special skills each brings.

The organisations studied and other compatible INGOs usually support one another's work. WfP works with SIPAZ, Mennonites, AFSC, and the Interreligious Task Force on Central America. PBI entered Sri Lanka with the help of Quaker Peace Service and other INGOs.⁹⁵ SIPAZ co-ordinates its work in Chiapas with CPT, WfP, and Michigan Peace Team and will accompany the relief caravans of INGOs. Osijek teams work in good relationship with INGOs from Norway, US and Sweden and partners with Austrian Peace Services.⁹⁶

⁹⁰Heid, John - interview with author

⁹¹Weishaupt 2000

⁹²Schweitzer, verbal information

⁹³Bekkering in Moser-Puangsuwan / Weber 2000: 206

⁹⁴Gene Stoltzfus, verbal information

⁹⁵Coy 1997: 131

⁹⁶Hämmerle, Peter - interview with Christine Schweitzer

Often it takes more than one INGO to get a job done, as can be seen in the case of protection for Selvakumar in Sri Lanka. The ICRC visited him in prison and documented his case; Amnesty International in London contacted PBI and suggested a visit; a Sri Lankan human rights organisation arranged a meeting between PBI and Selvakumar, and Amnesty International sent out an Urgent Action appeal. This sort of information-sharing and task-sharing is a typical activity among INGOs like PBI and Amnesty International.⁹⁷ Likewise, in order to monitor Sri Lanka's election in 1994, two domestic coalitions joined with a third group made up of PBI and two other INGOs.⁹⁸

CPT's use of civil disobedience sometimes keeps them a bit separate from other INGOs and definitely suspect to GOs. Some international groups want to keep their distance from CPT for fear of being lumped in with the activist team when dealing with immigration officials.⁹⁹

CPS in the Balkans strives for co-operation by simultaneously making contacts for logistical and security reasons, for goodwill, and for pursuit of program goals.¹⁰⁰ Examples include participation in NGO meetings, attendance at security briefings, checking passports and registration with UN/ KFOR/ OSCE, arranging for mail delivery via the German army (ForumCPS in Kosovo/a), registration for evacuation lists with KFOR/ SFOR. These early contacts would also include registration with embassies for any of several reasons: protection, because the embassies might be asked to give information on the project if a government is asked for funding, or because volunteers are COs doing alternative service.

Witness for Peace actively seeks meetings with governmental and international organisations for both long-term teams and delegations. This has been so from their beginning, as can be seen in early work along the Nicaragua/ Honduras border. At that time they met with government figures Ernesto Cardenal, Sergio Ramirez, and Interior Minister Tomas Borge and with Daniel Ortega, head of the governing junta.¹⁰¹ WfP finds that governmental organisations are sometimes more willing to meet with them because of their outspoken policy against advising locals on how to govern themselves. This policy of non-interference does not guarantee amicable relations with governmental organisations, however, if they depend on U.S. connections for money or military and WfP has taken a stand against the U.S. foreign policy which provides it (e.g. paramilitary in Colombia).

SIPAZ volunteers visit embassies, political offices, and leaders of military groups. Their mission involves relationship on as many levels as possible and with as many groups as possible. One thing the team will do for government officials is arrange meetings and visits for them, for example a visit last year for the Undersecretary of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of Great Britain into rural areas of Chiapas.¹⁰²

97Coy 1997: 157, 158

98Coy 1997: 168ff (For this event, the sensitive relationships between NGOs and INGOs was made easier because PBI chose not to monitor the election but to accompany the local monitoring teams and observe the degree of freedom they had to conduct their polls watch.)

99Evans - interview with author

100 verbal information from Schweitzer, see appendix to 2.2

101Griffin-Nolan in Moser-Puangsuwan / Weber 2000

102SIPAZ Report, February 2001: 12

The work and presence of Osijek teams is tolerated by governmental authority but sometimes seen with suspicion (especially under Tudjman government). A good relationship exists with OSCE and UNHCR. For example, in order to begin work in Berak and Popovac, the Peace Team made arrangements with the National Committee for Trust Rebuilding, municipality authorities, and OSCE.¹⁰³ BPT utilised the Refugee Protection Working Group meetings provided by the United Nations High Commissioner on a bi-weekly basis which provided networking and sharing of resources with other NGOs.

Like every other action in the field, affiliations with other organisations must be based on careful analysis of that group's relation to other actors and to the conflict. An example of this would be BPT's decision in Croatia to remain distant from UN and European monitors because they were despised by locals; BPT did not, therefore, use UN cars or carry their passports around openly. In another situation, that relationship might be quite different. Case by case analysis is urged here. Good relations to the international military might be helpful in a practical sense, but will certainly effect the perceived identity of the group.

Good connections in this international scene can clearly make program goals possible. They have the additional benefit of making it possible, when appropriate, to introduce one's local partners to INGOs which will be helpful to them. Then again, perhaps familiarity with the operations of INGOs and GOs might reveal that these groups do not act in the interest of conflict resolution and justice. Then the opportunity and responsibility for whistle-blowing will present itself. (For example Pax Christi criticism of OHR for not implementing the requirements of the Dayton agreement quickly enough).¹⁰⁴

3.2.4 Relationship with the sending organisation

Where does the "expertise" lie for different types of decisions about work in the field? How will these decisions be made quickly enough and with the input of people with maximum information and vested interest? The team itself has first hand information of risk and the political situation; outside committees are removed from it. Short-term team members may not understand the history of the organisation and may not have as much nonviolent experience of the activists on the project steering committee or international directorate. Only the head office struggles to match the activities with requirements of donors and public relations issues. The result of this can be constant tension within the organisation.

PBI has struggled since its beginning to become an efficient bureaucracy that can make and implement effective and informed decisions about complex conflict situations. The International directorate delegates most of the project-related decisions to semi-autonomous project steering committees. These hold intense week-long meetings with the team in the field several times a year to hash out policy and program strategies.

¹⁰³Culture of Peace. Osijek, 1/2001: 22

¹⁰⁴Weber - interview with Schweitzer

Meetings "sufficiently thorough to enable the project committees to absorb as much as possible of the current field reality from the team, and for team members in turn to clearly understand the long-term concerns of the more experienced project committee members." These meetings take considerable time because of PBI's commitment to consensus but lay the groundwork for later decisions that will have to be made quickly by the team in an emergency.¹⁰⁵

Often there may be a general feeling on the part of the people in the field that those back home do not understand what is going on, are too slow in decision-making, or do not take input from the field seriously enough. A bewildered e-mail sent back to the Michigan Peace Team reflects the same doubt, laced with anxiety: "I am not sure if the gravity of the situation here is familiar enough to all parties in the office, and the trust I had put in the office to offer enough team support on the ground was why I ended up here."¹⁰⁶

John Heid described his Michigan Peace Team as hampered by poor communication with the home base. In that case, the team felt their ability to determine a safe course for themselves was undermined by the fact that the home base was communicating with villages in the field and making commitments about when the team would arrive, without allowing the team to make that determination based on its actual situation.¹⁰⁷

A person on a team or delegation has the right to assume that the sending organisation has put together a team that can be trusted, with communication that can be counted on and a plan that is in keeping with the overall philosophy of the organisation. CPT once erred by trying too quickly to put together an emergency delegation to Vieques, recruiting people they didn't know well, five of whom hardly knew anything about CPT. The opportunity for civil disobedience came 24 hours after the delegation's arrival in Vieques, and the team leader and co-leader were both arrested, leaving the others to figure out what to do next.¹⁰⁸

Difficulties in the relationships between Balkan Peace Team Coordinating Committee, the teams, and the sending organisation eventually became so insurmountable in the team's eyes that they resigned. The office memo began: "On January 11, the BPT Coordinating Committee received an email letter from the five volunteers on the Kosovo/a team, stating that they had all decided to end their work with BPT. They explained in their letter that they felt, after a number of situations, that Balkan Peace Team was unable, as an organisation, to fulfil its responsibilities to them as volunteers nor to the team's projects."¹⁰⁹

Among the structural shortcomings listed in an internal paper written by Christine Schweitzer about the collapse of BPT¹¹⁰, the following points speak of the relationship between teams and their sending organisations.

➤ for many areas no clear responsibility was assigned within the Coordinating

¹⁰⁵Mahony in Moser-Puangsuwan / Weber 158, 159

¹⁰⁶Source confidential

¹⁰⁷Heid - interview with author

¹⁰⁸Evans interview with author

¹⁰⁹Wilsnack, Dorie/ Bachman, Eric, 1/22/01 e-mail message to BPT-Internal

¹¹⁰Schweitzer 2001

Committee, which meant that often nobody in the CC had the 'last word', which meant that decisions not only took a long time, but sometimes simply were not made in time.

- information transfer between field and IO, field and CC
- no sufficient guidance and efficiency in dealing with emergencies in the field

In her summary evaluation of the Mir Sada attempt, Schweitzer illuminates a problem which may be inherent in all working relations between teams and their sending organisations. "A big problem for the organisers probably was that of the responsibility they bore. Since they initiated the project they felt more responsible than those who came following their appeal. And of course it would have been them who were blamed by others... if something had happened to participants of the action. When it became obvious that travelling on after Prozor bore a high risk, they did not feel capable of taking the responsibility for it. I think that this was also the result of an organisational structure which does not guarantee real equality between all participants."¹¹¹ This last sentence speaks precisely to the issue. Those in the field and those at home base all need timely information and parity in decision-making in order to share the burdens of responsibility.

3.2.5 Other issues effecting relationship

3.2.5.1 Entrance to the field (Visa, registration with authorities, etc.)

A good share of the time, team members have had to enter the field with a tourist visa. This was true for BPT in Yugoslavia and for PBI in their early work in Guatemala, it is true for CPT, MPT, SIPAZ and for most WfP team members.

Tourist status has been a problem for peace teams in Chiapas. Michigan Peace Team volunteers, in spite of their efforts to just blend in, were stopped at barricades and told "Tourists don't visit here." Robert Poen is very frustrated by the visa situation for the SIPAZ team in Chiapas. Their volunteer from Uruguay had to renew her visa every two months; the U.S. volunteers get six months if they're lucky. Travelling to renew visas is "a tremendous burden financially, and the time costs are enormous. On a tourist visa you're not supposed to interfere in the domestic politics in Mexico, and you can be expelled on the flimsiest excuse. Our volunteers have never been expelled, but they are often stopped at road blocks and not allowed to continue to where they were going."¹¹²

During their early work in Guatemala, PBI volunteers could enter only on tourist visas; applications for formal legal status met consistent delays.¹¹³ It was only after deportation and return that PBI was allowed a change in status. Team members witnessed a police shooting, were questioned in the Office of Foreign Relations and given 15 minutes to choose between legal deportation, court charges of "illegal involvement in an event resulting in a woman's death", or leave the country voluntarily under protection of their embassies. The volunteers were told that if they refused to leave, the entire PBI team

¹¹¹Schweitzer in Moser-Puangsuwan/Weber 2000, 274

¹¹²Poen - interview with author

¹¹³Mahony/Eguren 1997: 43

would be expelled and their lives in danger. They co-operated and were deported.¹¹⁴ But PBI went public with its story after the murder and deportation, insisting on the legality of their presence; and in the end special visas were sanctioned by the Guatemalan Congress.

In Colombia, the Government considered PBI presence consistent with its own commitment to human rights and thereby authorised special "courtesy" visas for team members, which were eventually registered and legally recognised. This is unique in the history of peace team projects.

SIPAZ reports that their 30 international observers during the Mexican elections were required to get FM3 visas (for human rights monitoring), which was an unbelievably time-consuming process and limiting to their activities. The new government has made it possible to do international observation work without an FM3 and not be expelled. Michigan Peace Teams found that the visa for observers was too restrictive for regular team work in the villages, however.

PBI begins their program at each location with a round of visits to national and local authorities, both civilian and military. In Colombia, for example, PBI explained the function and methodology of accompaniment to each authority, thus fulfilling the deterrence strategy requirement for communication regarding the existence and possible political consequences of accompaniment. They also recruited support from the diplomatic corps, which was kept closely informed of PBI work. The Colombian groups receiving protection also formally notified the government of the accompaniment they were now receiving.¹¹⁵

For all projects in the Balkans, registration with the police is required by law, even if entering the country as a tourist as many projects do. BPT sometimes avoided it in Kosovo/a, but it was a risk. They tried registration as an INGO in Croatia, but it was very slow to come through because the law was just being put into practice. CPSes do not necessarily contact national governments upon entering the field but in BiH and Kosovo/a are registered as internationals.¹¹⁶

3.2.5.2 Facility in local language and use of interpreters

SIPAZ, PBI, and WfP all have very high standards for fluency in the local language. Any person who inquires about being on a SIPAZ team is sent information and an application form in Spanish; so the relationship is begun in the language which will be needed. BPT and Austrian Peace Services offer two-week language classes during training and expect team members to continue to learn while in the field (BPT held these classes in the country). Resultant facility is minimal for use in the field. German CPS (and development services) offer intensive language training with a special organisation before going to the field.

A new volunteer on a Michigan Peace Team was at Spanish immersion school on her way to Chiapas before she realised that no one on the team would be fluent in Spanish.

¹¹⁴Mahony/Eguren 1997: 118

¹¹⁵Mahony/Eguren 1997: 228

¹¹⁶Further research is warranted on registration as INGO. There are reports that in some countries enormous taxes are demanded for all income of such internationals.

She wrote back to the base, "Moving ahead with this without a strong base of fluency would be not only personally challenging but potentially life threatening for people we are trying to shield... If I do not have a fluent person on the team I am considering leaving... This is not tourist travel where one can muck along through language with a conversation travel book".¹¹⁷ John Heid reports that as he worked in Chiapas he had many doubts, questions and suggestions, but had to go along with the program because of his weak language skill.¹¹⁸

In Colombia, all CPT team members must be fluent in Spanish. Originally, only one person on their Chiapas team was fluent; now they try to have two at all times. In Hebron, they rely on locals who speak English and the on translators who have assisted CPT long enough to understand their work.¹¹⁹

Team-sending organisations do not normally require familiarity with indigenous languages or with second languages of the region. PBI, for example, was handicapped in its Guatemalan work, particularly in rural areas, by the fact that no volunteer spoke a Mayan language.¹²⁰

How much fluency is needed? Beth Abbot of Project Accompaniment says it is "the ability to speak Spanish well and not to lose that ability in tense situations!"¹²¹ WfP tells potential applicants, "Conversational fluency means that you can converse with fluency in Spanish, that you can communicate your thoughts and ideas without much hesitation and that those you are talking to can understand you. It also means that you can understand and respond to those talking to you. This implies that: (a) you can use all the verb tenses: present, past, future, imperfect, subjunctive, conditional, present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect tenses, (b) you have a good working vocabulary."¹²²

3.2.5.3 Unwelcoming local government

Only in Guatemala and El Salvador have any of these peace teams experienced being made explicitly unwelcome by the local government. In Guatemala, General Mejia Victores used the immigration department to cut off visas for 10 PBI volunteers in 1985, saying they were illegally meddling in internal politics.¹²³ In El Salvador, five PBI volunteers were detained in November of 1989, and the entire PBI team was "exiled" to Guatemala.¹²⁴

Both CPT and PBI have practised the peace team "relay method" - if one team member is expelled, she/he is replaced as quickly as possible by another.

PBI believes that accompaniment as effective deterrence depends on adequate

117Source confidential

118Heid - interview with author

119Use of translators in Hebron requires accompanying them to and from their homes and necessitates going to get them when an urgent situation arises which cannot be understood without translation.

120Mahony /Eguren 1997: 63

121Abbott in Moser-Puangsuwan /Weber 2000:170

122<http://www.witnessforpeace.org>

123Mahony in Moser-Puangsuwan / Weber - 2000: 138

124Mahony / Eguren 1997: 179

communication with the state, but this has not always met with positive response. In Guatemala, PBI met with local military and civilian authorities to inform them of its presence in El Quiche. The meetings, which called for attention to protection and international interest focused on the CERJ, had mixed results. Local mayors were polite, some supportive. But the governor threatened to have volunteers thrown out of country if they got involved in internal politics by attending CERJ events.¹²⁵

PBI's heaviest clout is the use of political influence from Northern Hemisphere countries. They used this to good effect after their expulsion from Guatemala by issuing a public statement, visiting embassies and government officials, emphasising PBI commitment to nonviolence, to non-intervention in internal affairs of Guatemala and to acting within the law. Their international alert system includes government officials in places a small country may not want to offend. PBI insists on high visibility, use of international pressure, and a claim of non-partisanship to work in the field even when a local government is less than excited about their presence.

¹²⁵Mahony / Eguren 1997: 63

3.3 Experiences of larger-scale organisations

Corey Levine

3.3.1 Introduction

This chapter is based on the author's experiences of 6 years working in conflict areas with a particular focus on civil society development, human rights and democratisation. During this time the author worked with the following organisations: Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, CARE International, Amnesty International and OSCE in Bosnia, Croatia, Russia, Bangladesh and Kosovo.

The following are reflections of her observations in the field as well as discussions with colleagues, from both NGOs, IGOs, and national government organisations (GOS) including OXFAM, IRC, UNHCR, UNDP, IPTF and other UN civilian peacekeeping personnel, the Council of Europe, CIDA and USAID on many of these issues.

3.3.2 Working and living in a team

There is a wide range of practices used by IGOs, GOs and INGOs in the field. On the one hand you have an organisation like ICRC which has its delegates both live and work together, to the other end of the spectrum where people are responsible for their own living arrangements. They make whatever arrangement may best suit them – living with a local family; sharing a place with other internationals; living in a hotel, etc.

Many organisations fall somewhere in between. They may have a house for their workers and others attached to the organisation who come through from time to time, such as consultants. If the organisation is very small (in terms of personnel and/ or programs on the ground), the living and working quarters may be in the same place. Some organisations such as the U.N. may even take over a whole hotel or series of apartment buildings for their personnel.

Many living and working arrangements depends on the security situation on the ground and how security conscious an organisation is. For example, employees of the U.S. government, either with the embassy or an organisation like USAID, are only allowed to live in places which are deemed 'secure' by the U.S. government, often behind a tightly secure and barricaded compound with their fellow compatriots.

This is the norm for all U.S. government employees in almost all overseas postings considered unstable. However for IGOs and INGOs, how much of a role they will play in their employees living situations more depends on the security situation on the ground as well as factors that address the liveability factor of the place rather than any coherent policy. For example, it would be more common for international personnel to live in compounds in a Mission like East Timor rather than Kosovo. However, most organisations are security conscious and so encourage group living in places considered 'secure'. ICRC is the only other organisation which demands of its delegates that their employees live together.

Living arrangements also depend on whether or not the posting is a family posting. In most conflict and post-conflict Missions, the posting tends to be a non-family station.

But some people, not wanting to be posted for such long periods away from their families, move their families to the nearest safe place to which they have easy access. For example, although Kosovo is a non-family posting for international organisations (both for INGOs and IGOs), some people moved their families to Skopje Macedonia (approximately 1 ½ hours' drive from Pristina) so they could at least spend the weekends with their families. And some postings allow for families to come along, even if it is not a family posting. For example, during the war in Bosnia, many INGOs had their HQ in Zagreb, Croatia for safety reasons. Some workers moved their families to Zagreb even though they themselves might have spent most of their time in Bosnia.

Although neither one of these scenarios is that common a practice, you do find some international workers trying to make arrangements like these, depending on several factors such as how long the posting is, the nearness of 'liveable' places, whether the worker has young children, and whether it is the mother or the father working in the field, etc. Mothers would be more likely to make some kind of arrangement to be closer to their families. However, it is much more common to find married men with older children, single women of all ages or younger, single men in the field than it is any other type of person.

Given that most of the smaller INGOs generally do not have family postings as it is expensive proposition and that the vast majority of postings, IGO, GO and INGO in conflict areas are non-family postings it is not surprising that this is the majority composition of those working in the field. However, the possibility of family postings versus non-family postings are one of the factors that distinguish larger scale missions from small peace teams.

There are both pros and cons to living together as a team. If the security situation is such that the organisation explicitly demands or encourages its personnel to live in one place, than the place will have any number of security arrangements and precautions. Internationals who do not live in 'secure' conditions are more vulnerable to being targets to local warring factions (the ICRC delegates who were killed in Chechnya for example) but on the other hand those living mixed in with the local community could just as easily be perceived by the local population as more committed and more trustworthy than fellow internationals living behind a secure compound.

Ultimately I think there needs to be a balance maintained between attempting to secure your safety but not being walled off from the environment in which you are living although it is often a delicate and at times competing balancing act.

Aside from security precautions, while living together can produce more of a sense of community and team spirit between individuals working in the same organisation, it can also produce tensions, especially because there is often little other diversion – no families; few extracurricular activities or community involvement outside of the work. Living and working together at the best of times can be a recipe for difficulties but when you add in an unfamiliar environment where there is often nothing much to do outside of work or no one else you can depend on, the closeness that develops can be a two-way street. Most people living and working together in the field find it really important to have their own time and their own space at least some of the time.

3.3.3 Relationship to local groups

The relationship between local groups and the international community is often a complex one. There is a mutual dependency that is beneficial but it can also be a doubled-edged sword.

Often the very presence of the international community creates an atmosphere of expectation, much of it unrealistic, of what can be achieved on the ground. These expectations are created as much by the international community bringing in large infusions of financial and other aid and resources and implicitly or explicitly offering solutions to the problems that have plagued the country. As well promises are often made which cannot be kept.

However the dependence goes the other way as well. Both the IGO and INGO communities need local groups to give their work legitimacy and relevance, but as in all other benefactor-type relationships, the relationship on the part of the international community to local groups is often patronising and paternalistic. Many international organisations feel it is their right to dictate course of action because they are the ones with access to vitally needed financial and material resources and assistance.

These days in conflict and post-conflict areas international organisations, both INGOs and IGOs, generally tend to work either through, or with, local groups either on a formal or informal basis. Most INGOs have formalised relationships with local partners through which their assistance is channelled while IGOs at a minimum collaborate with the local community in developing projects for the targetted group.

While this can be seen as a positive development in that rarely is programming developed without some input from the local community, as mentioned above the dynamics of the relationship is often one of paternalism. As the old adage says, those who hold the pursestrings also hold the power.

This kind of situation works to create competition rather than cooperation between local organisations because local organisations must compete with each for assistance from the international community. Not only do local groups often find themselves pitted against one another in accessing aid but because of the explosion of financial and material resources in the area, local NGOs have been purposefully set up, often at the initiative of the donor organisation, which are not self-sustaining.

And because these local initiatives are donor-driven, they will take on activities that do not necessarily reflect the needs and priorities of their constituents that the NGO is not equipped to work on.

For example, there are two programs funded by UNHCR that are dedicated to improving the situation of the women of Bosnia and Kosovo. Known as the Bosnian Women's Initiative (BWI) and Kosovo women's initiative (KWI), they are a \$2 and \$5 million USD program respectively set up to fund women's groups and initiatives by and for the women of Bosnia and Kosovo. However, the problem with both BWI and KWI, which came into existence as a grant from the U.S. Dept of State, was that they, like other donor organisations, are in a hurry to see their money disbursed. Thus, many of the women's NGOs in Kosovo and some of the women's NGOs in Bosnia were set up to access this windfall.

Activities for a single NGO could include everything from basic humanitarian aid to legal

projects, to hairdressing courses. What all this means is that there is an extreme amount of competition between the women's NGOs of both BOsnia and Kosovo, all competing for the same source of funding, an overabundance in the provision of some services and a gap in the provision of others depending on donor interests. As well, there is a strong question of the sustainability of many of these NGOs.

The most important relationship in the field is that with the local population. After all, all intervention is ostensibly on behalf of the local civilian population, whether it is strictly delivery of humanitarian aid or an international military presence or anything in between. Many people deployed to the field have no or little understanding of the current social and political context, or historical and cultural framework of the region in which they find themselves working. Although the issue of training is dealt with in depth in Section 7, it is important to point out in addressing best practices in the field, how effective an organisation on the ground will be, often boils down to how individuals within the organisation [on the ground] not only understands both the current context and historical framework of the local population and the culture, but is able to parlay that understanding into a relationship on the ground with the local population.

This of course in part depends on the kind of training people receive before being deployed to the field, but a large part is also dependent on the personality of the individual. I have seen people deployed into a region with little knowledge other than the basic rudimentaries and yet because they come open-minded with a genuine interest and concern they become well versed in the situation and earn the respect of the local population.

I have also seen people deployed in field 'armed' with a fair amount of knowledge of the politics, history and even language of the region. Yet their arrogance, their unwillingness to recognise that they may have more to learn about the situation, or that the local population understands their own needs better than the intervenor, has obviously made it difficult to foster a constructive working relationship with the local population.

Thus, while it best if you know the language and are well-versed in the issues before being deployed to the region, personal attitude also accounts for a lot. People appreciate effort and not just knowledge. And so, although it isn't necessarily always the best situation to have a translator between you and the local population, there are also many benefits that can come in working with a translator.

One is that it can be helpful to have someone literally to interpret the situation for you because even if you're well-versed in the overall situation and know the language, as an outsider there will always be subtleties and nuances that will be impossible to grasp. As well, because you spend so much time with your translator, a close relationship often develops which can also give you insight into the culture and current socio-political situation of the society that you might not have otherwise had.

On the other hand, if you do not speak the language you are always dependent on someone to 'interpret' the situation for you. 99% of the translators working in the field are not professional translators and many may not even speak the language in which you are working very well, and so often 'interpret' rather than 'translate' what is happening. Cultural differences often come into play as well. Many times a translator tells you what he/ she thinks you want to hear rather than what is actually being said. Some translators will inevitably have their own political agenda through which everything

gets filtered. But most important of all, having the local population work with the international community ultimately puts them at risk, especially if the intervening forces pull out of the region. This was well documented in Kosovo after the withdrawal of KVM and in East Timor after the withdrawal of the international community there.

Also important is the question of what kind of relationship the international community has with the local power base on the ground. If those in power are ambivalent or resentful of outsider presence they could hamper the work of the international community through a variety of ways, including not providing access to certain geographic areas or certain groups of people; making unwieldy entrance requirements to the country; being intransigent on issues that could help work towards resolution of the conflict, as well as other types of actual and figurative roadblocks.

There can also be problems when those in power embrace the presence of the international community; for example, using their offer of continued compliance with the international presence as a means of extracting certain promises or favours that ultimately run antithetical to resolving the situation.

This then leads to the question of neutrality on the ground. It is one of the more debated issues in the field. For some organisations such as ICRC, it is one of the main tenets of their work and guides all their actions right down to refusing to allow its workers to testify at war crimes tribunals even if they may have important information that relate to the charges of alleged war criminals. Those who are in favour of neutrality argue that is a much needed basis from which to operate simply because otherwise a lack of neutrality would jeopardise an organisation's access to those populations most in need of assistance, including civilian populations trapped between warring factions, the wounded, the missing and the detained.

Other organisations, such as Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), do not feel that an organisation can or should operate under a guise of neutrality because this is not reflective of the reality on the ground in that organisations providing assistance can often be perceived as favouring one side of the conflict or another [and sometimes they are]. As well, they see [that the fact of] being 'neutral' can sometimes lead to practices and situations in which the organisation, in providing humanitarian assistance, aids and abets the conflict as well as contributes to further human rights violations.¹²⁶

For example, there is a lot of controversy surrounding the mission and mandate of UNPROFOR in Bosnia and Croatia from 1992 – 1995. All parties to the conflict perceived UNPROFOR to be biased in favour of the other side and thus UNPROFOR often found itself both literally and figuratively hijacked and unable to secure the delivery of humanitarian assistance - one of the main mandates of its mission.

Others feel that any kind of assistance or intervention whether it is perceived as neutral or not, leads to prolonging the conflict and furthering human rights abuses, often because the international community can be either witting or unwitting pawns in the conflict as we saw with the UN Mission in Somalia. The mission was initially ostensibly about ensuring humanitarian assistance to the local civilian population, but soon the U.S. (as the lead country of the Mission) got caught up in the politics of the conflict and allowed itself to become an active player in the conflict further fueling a situation it had

¹²⁶ See Mary B. Anderson's Do no harm approach, described in chapter 2.3 (page 95 pp.)

come to alleviate in the first place.

3.3.4 Relationship to other INGOs and IGOs working in the region

3.3.4.1 Overview

The relationship to other INGOs and IGOs working in the region very much depends on the Mission, the goal and objectives of the organisation and the personnel on the ground. However, generally there is much competition between the various international players for resources, overlap of programming in some areas and a gap in others. As well, there is often a lack of information and knowledge about what the various international counterparts are doing.

However, the international community is trying to address this issue through a variety of methods. There are now often committees or groups formed around an issue (eg. the demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants) or target group (child soldiers) where the international as well as local players get together to exchange information and sometimes join together to pool resources.

But part of the problem with these committees is that often the local community is either intentionally or unintentionally excluded. So while there is more information flow and exchange between the various aspects of the international community, much of this flow remains outside the local community.

And even when there is collaboration and co-operation between the agencies there is still a good deal of competition and jockeying for position. For example in the area of monitoring human rights, you will have the U.N. either within the Mission structure or by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) or often by both, as well as a regional intergovernmental body such as the OAS or OSCE and then by non-governmental groups as well such as Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch. This of course leads to turf wars but often the very issue that should be addressed is not.

For example, in Kosovo at least 5 different organisations go to see prisoners – UNMIK, OSCE, OHCHR, Amnesty International, ICRC. Yet with all these organisations monitoring and supposedly addressing the conditions and lack of rights for prisoners, many prisoners still found their rights denied and facing miscarriages of justice.

Both the Missions in East Timor and Kosovo recognised the problems of the inherent competition and lack of co-ordination between agencies and programs and tried to address this issue by setting up a pillar system. The pillar system is such that one body would be responsible for the all the activities under one particular pillar. In Kosovo for example, the European Union was responsible for all programs and activities within the reconstruction and development arena; UNHCR was responsible for all humanitarian assistance; the OSCE was responsible for the human rights and democratisation part of the Mission and the UN itself was responsible for civil administration.

It sounds good on paper, but unfortunately it did not take away the competition or turf wars. This is partly because the SE issues can not be so clear cut and neatly divided into 4 separate boxes – there is bound to be some overlap. As well, it is impossible to cut out

the competition and petty jealousies particularly in an environment where reputations and careers are at stake because the reality is that for many organisations conflict and post-conflict situations are a business.

This is especially true for the INGOs where their livelihood depends on securing funding for programs they want to run in the region. You might have 3 or 4 different organisations interested in doing water projects, all chasing after the same funders, (such as OCHA or ECHO) and potentially the same geographic or ethnic target groups depending on the interest of the donors. For example, there is not nearly as much aid going to the Serb part of Bosnia as to the Muslim-Croat, in part because the international community feels the Serb entity is less compliant with Dayton and thus tries to use the carrot and the stick approach to aid and reconstruction to bring about compliancy.

However, overall the problem of competition and overlap has gotten better in the past several years even as the field and the number of players have grown exponentially. Those who have been working in the field for at least 10 years talk about the development of co-operation between various INGOs and IGOs. Even the ICRC, which has traditionally worked on its own, is now recognising the value in working with other members of the international community.

3.3.4.2 Relationship with the international military presence

The interaction between the military and civilian components of the international community presence in the field has also improved. Both sides have come to recognise THAT there is a dependency on each other for resources, information and help. The military now has in every operation, units and personnel to deal specifically with the civilian component of a Mission – called CIMIC (civil – military co-operation) – it is increasingly becoming one of the more important areas in a military peacekeeping operation.

The military has shown signs of opening up and sharing some of its vast resources for civilian operations and programs since the adoption of CIMIC. However, one can say there has also been too much a movement to the other side, with more dependency rather than distrust now the common factor. This is in part because often the military are the only ones with full resource capacity and hence the dependency on the military for resources that would otherwise be impossible to secure has grown exponentially.

Although there remains a certain amount of distrust with regard to co-operating with the military, particularly among the INGOs; the international community in general, especially the IGOs, have recognised the 'benefit' in co-operating with the military and now the international military presence is generally recognised as a key and integral component in missions along with the INGO and IGO communities, and local governmental and non-governmental structures. In some missions the military is even under the command of the SRSG (Special Representative of the Secretary-General, who is the civilian head of peacekeeping missions), such as in East Timor. Although they may not be under the direct command of the civilian head of other missions, such as in Kosovo, the military chiefs are routinely included and integrated within the decision-making processes from the top echelons to the grass-roots level.

However, even given the recognition of mutual dependency, the relationship between

the military and civilian components of a mission remains difficult and often tense. This is in part because the military remains suspicious of non-military culture and views the outside world through the lens of its own culture - rigid, hierarchal and orderly and sees the civilian world, the NGO world in particular, as chaotic and 'undisciplined'. Thus, the military continues to have a difficult time understanding the non-military community and the role they play in peacekeeping missions. Some of this is because of the continuing myopicness of the military but some of it is also due to the actions of the civilian presence in the field, which as mentioned above, is often disorganised and competitive, with no clear exit strategy.

In conclusion both the civilian and military components to peacekeeping operations recognise the need to collaborate and the fact that both sides have something to 'offer', however the relationship remains rocky.

3.3.5 Relationship with the sending organisation

Similar experiences in the relationship with the sending organisation exist in both small-scale and larger scale operations, in that the relationship between the head organisation and the field component is a very important element of the equation in missions, but it is often problematic.

This is particularly true if the sending office does not have an office on the ground which is the most common situation particularly for peace teams such as the ones addressed in the section on small scale organisations but also for larger scale missions where the headquarters may in fact have the final say in the decisions affecting the implementation of programming on the ground.

INGOs probably suffer much less from the situation of the geographic division between program implementation and decision-making at the policy level, in large part because they generally have an office on the ground which functions as an autonomous entity from headquarters.

However, even INGOs can not get away from the fact that field personnel often complain that the sending organisation does not understand the difficulties and the needs faced by those working on the ground. This is often exacerbated by the difficulties in communication that can define working in the field, particularly in a conflict zone.

Unrealistic expectations can then develop on both sides about what is achievable. For the field workers, trying to communicate the priorities and needs to an organisation thousands of kilometres away from the person's work can be difficult at the best of times. Add in a constantly changing political environment, evolving response structures on the ground and a lack of reliable communications, and the potential for the sending organisation to misunderstand or misinterpret the needs and concerns of the field workers increases greatly. This is true for both large and small scale operations.

At the same time the reporting requirements of the sending organisation, in order to remain apprised of the situation, can be unrealistic by dint of the constantly changing situation in the field. Thus in conflict zones the work generally tends to be reactive rather than proactive. While it is extremely important to keep the sending organisation as informed as possible, a balance needs to be struck on both sides as to what can be feasibly achieved in keeping the sending organisation informed and involved.

It doesn't add to the relationship that often field workers can have unrealistic expectations about the kind of support (material, emotional, financial) that a sending organisation can give, especially in a constantly changing environment. If the priorities keep changing due to the evolving situation on the ground which dictates the kinds of activities field workers do, and therefore the kinds of resources they need, it can be difficult for the sending organisation to continually meet the resource demands, as well as other needs, of the field workers. Yet, there can be an expectation by the field workers that the sending organisation is an endless reservoir of resources and support.

On the other hand incredible loyalty to an organisation or people attached to a particular organisation often develops in the field, particularly because field workers are so dependent on their superiors and their colleagues as well as on other relationships they build on the ground for their own survival as well as the the survival of their work, often literally as well as figuratively.

This holds particularly true for small scale organisations as well as larger INGOs where the development of loyalty is a natural outgrowth of this dependency on their peers. This kind of commitment to the organisation is generally not as strong with the larger scale, more bureaucratic organisations but nonetheless a sense of dependency on colleagues as well as the organisations is much stronger in the field than in the 'regular' working world. There are many reasons for this.

One is that most people have other interests and people in their life outside of their work environment which provides them with a balance between their professional and personal lives. In the field it is very difficult to achieve that balance where one's professional and personal lives are far more intertwined. You find yourself not only working with your colleagues and superiors, but often living, vacationing (and mating) with them as well. And although your work as an accompanist for local human rights workers will be very different from the engineer with whom you live; nonetheless you work in the same context and under the same conditions. All of this provides for an atmosphere in which intense and strong linkages are formed. In other words, in the field your professional life is your personal life.

The relationship between the field worker and the sending organisation also depends very much on the size and type of sending organisation. For example the ICRC has an intense training program for its delegates before they send them to their posts. This is not only because they want to ensure their delegates are prepared for what they will experience in the field but also because they recognise that a strong, cohesive team is far more equipped to cope with, and resolve all kinds of unexpected situations the workers may encounter on the ground. This also fosters strong loyalty and commitment to the ideals and goals of the sending organisation which other organisations might not get from their field staff.

However, an organisation like the OSCE is dependent on country secondments in which to staff over 95% of their missions. This often means the people sent by a national government are the ones who are not necessarily the most qualified for the position, but the ones with the most connections and often a stronger commitment to their national government than to the OSCE either as an organisation or its mandate. And since an organisation like the OSCE is mostly field-based once the secondment is finished there is no further contact with the organisation.

On the other hand, many of the NGO personnel in the field have either been with the organisation on other missions, or working in the national office of the organisation, or will go to the national office when they leave the field. And because many NGOs are staffed at the headquarters with former workers in the field, this can help build trust and co-operation between the sending organisation and the field staff.

Ultimately though the relationship between the field workers and the sending organisation depends on how remote and bureaucratic the organisation is. The more intimate and responsive an organisation is to the needs and concerns of its staff on the ground, the more likely the relationship will be co-operative and trustworthy.

3.4 Conclusions for Nonviolent Peaceforce

Donna Howard and Corey Levine

3.4.1 Working and living on a team

3.4.1.1 Team composition

Teams will best reflect the philosophy of NP if they are diverse in age, balanced in gender, and multi-cultural. A common language will be essential within the team, or at least within smaller units of a team, to facilitate team-building, resolution of conflict, and everyone's ability to participate in decision-making. Diversity and balance factors on a team should include work-style and personality so there will be both leaders and followers, people who take charge in stress, people who can work alone, those who build community well. Team members will need diversity training to understand and accept differences of culture, age, gender, and personality.

The gender and cultural mix of a team should take into consideration the relative safety of each person within the specific conflict and cultural field where that team will be placed. If NP deploys a large number of people to an area, that team should be divided into small groups or "cells"¹²⁷ which move and work self-sufficiently but are subject to centrally made decisions. In each of these, both genders and people of various ethnicities should be placed together so all will be afforded equal safety by virtue of their proximity to one another. Likewise, there should be one person in each "cell" who has greatest familiarity with the language and culture on the ground, one elder, one who is physically fit.

3.4.1.2 Decision-making

Consensus is the only decision-making method which involves every person and generates investment in the outcome, but it has limited efficiency and breaks down when the group is too large or time is brief. For these reasons, we recommend that consensus be used within NP at every level, but only in small functional groups and for manageable issues.¹²⁸ As consensus cannot be relied upon for rapidity or orderly compliance of a large number of people the model for NP will have to move away from that of the peace teams toward that of larger organisations in the field.¹²⁹

3.4.1.3 Introduction of new members

All that is really clear from examination of small teams is that the disruption of team dynamics and consistent field work is inevitable if new people enter the group without adequate preparation beforehand or adequate time to integrate and complete training in the field. Designated people could be trained to provide on-site orientation within the teams or "cells", giving adequate time for new members to overcome culture shock and

¹²⁷These might be known as affinity groups. See Robert Burrowes quote in section 5.2.1.2

¹²⁸Modification of consensus is recommended, allowing for a vote when the process bogs down. Designated leadership in every situation where neither of these is practical

¹²⁹Taylor, Richard K., 11/20/00 memo "Global Peace Force DECISION-MAKING" puts forth specific recommendations for NP

assume a confident place in the group.

3.4.1.4 Conflict

Teams must be deeply trained and provided with effective tools for handling internal conflict. When conflict cannot be resolved satisfactorily, policy similar to the CPT Procedure for Dealing with Conflicts and Grievances is recommended.¹³⁰

3.4.1.5 Stress

Stress is an unfortunate reality for those working in the field. Team members need to be forewarned of the risk and trauma as realistically as possible and given training, support, and enrichment to deal with the negative outcomes. Some stress can and should be reduced with good management, like living too closely, lack of clarity about the mission and activities, overwork and lack of time for relaxation.

Phyllis Taylor, of WfP, wants team-sending organisations to give much more attention to taking care of the families of team members and honouring their participation in the work of the witness.¹³¹ (Dick Taylor's training manual for WfP has a section on family support.) NP must offer deep and authentic support for family members in addition to team members during and after active service.

3.4.2 Relationship with local organisations

Acting in partnership with a local organisation allows for intervention which is less colonial in nature. Partners must be selected for their interest and leadership in nonviolent solutions; NP may then enter the field at their invitation. Partnership (formal or informal) with organisations from more than one side of the conflict can afford a deeper vision of what is needed for just resolution, and it is essential for non-partisan status. No partner at all may be preferable to affiliation with one side of the conflict, but the model which may serve NP best is probably "with no single partner but with a developed relationship to a network of groups."¹³²

NP should seek leadership from locals in all ways possible including the overall appropriateness of its presence but remain free to make decisions regarding risk and design of its intervention according to knowledge of the situation, previous experience, and organisational choices of niche, policy, and tactics.¹³³ Since the very presence of the international community often creates an atmosphere of expectation, NP will need to exercise candour with local groups to prevent unrealistic expectations.

¹³⁰See 5.1.1.4

¹³¹Phyllis Taylor - interview with author

¹³²See 3.2.2, Schweitzer, models for partnership #3

¹³³Carefully drafted policy describing this relationship is needed.

3.4.3 Relationship with INGOs and GOs

Every effort should be made to foster cooperation among organisations in the field, following the information-sharing, task-sharing and diplomacy examples of PBI and Amnesty International, for example. It will be necessary, however, to assess the helpfulness of each group in moving the contending parties toward just resolution before defining a relationship. NP should be wary of affiliation with those organisations and individuals looking to exploit or benefit from the conflict even though they may also offer assistance.

As the work of deterrence is greatly dependent on adequate communication about what activities will be undertaken and who will be aware of those activities, this information will be a major component of early contact with INGOs and GOs.

An open question for NP is how much effort it will make to network and line up individuals and organisations to provide strategies beyond our niche. Will we in fact form partnerships with INGOs whose peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts compliment our intervention?

3.4.4 Relationship with NP governance

It is essential for the high performance of a team that its members feel heard and supported by the home base. Communication must be two-way, swift, thorough and frequent. Combined with clarity about divisions of responsibility, access to advisors on all issues, and an explicit decision-making authority, this communication will provide a solid basis for the relationship. Most of the difficulties within peace teams have to do with the lack of a communication flow-chart assigning responsibility, timing, and exchange of information. NP's larger size will require a relinquishing of autonomy by team members and an assurance that the governance listens well enough to their information to make and support strategic decisions.

3.4.5 Entrance to the field

The review of peace team entrance to the field provides no precedent for NP: tourist visas simply will not do for a large organisation.

3.4.6 Facility in local language

Fluency standards in the local language need to be high, but we submit that careful formulation of smaller units will make it possible to allow variation in that standard. Each "cell" or affinity group must have at least one member who can communicate without hesitation, even under stress. This smaller group could have a "buddy system" within it, pairing a fluent speaker with less one less fluent.

In the event that more than one language is necessary for NP's work in the area of an intervention, cells might include one person fluent in each language.

3.4.7 Final questions

Ultimately these kinds of questions will be at the heart of the development and deployment of any kind of intervening force: What should be the relationship to the local government? To the other warring factions? What is the real or perceived legitimacy of the various local actors on the ground? Can or should an organisation take sides, especially if there are gross injustices and human rights violations perpetrated by one side or the other or even all parties to the conflict? Is there a point in a conflict in which intervention should be reconsidered? What is the best way to work with the local population?

This last question of course lies at the heart of all outside intervention and should guide all NP decisions with regard to putting together an intervening force. We must never lose sight of the fact that the sole legitimacy of any kind of organisation like NP lies in its ability to provide true nonviolent assistance. It must not, like many other organisations in the field, fall into the trap of acting to ensure its own perpetuity.

Appendix

Draft of Guiding Principles for Civil Peace Services

by: Helga and Konrad Tempel, Germany

Spring 2001 for EN-CPS meeting in Basel

- *this is a draft paper which is not decided upon by the European Network nor any of its national participants.*

1 Operative Details

2 General Intention of CPS Teams Work

3 Matters to be discussed later

1 Operative Details

1 Actual Field Projects

- *in general:*

1.1 we primarily intend to empower for nonviolent conflict transformation and to promote dialog between all groups of society

1.2 we are aware of the relevance of emancipatory aspects and try to avoid mere technical ways of handling conflicts

- *goals and methods:*

1.3 we carefully explore and consider regional cultural, economical and political conditions

1.4 we roughly define specific aims and steps and will formulate it more exactly according to experiences in the field

1.5 we choose multi ethnic approaches, if appropriate

1.6 we are looking for joint needs and wishes of opponents and intend to encourage and support cooperation via common interests

1.7 we agree on clear rules for internal and external cooperation and make these rules available to those concerned

1.8 we guarantee quick exchange of relevant information and strengthen media contacts in correspondance with the basic home organisation

1.9 we document our work as agreed before and provide any detail which is needed in the office of the basic home organisation

- *precautions:*

1.10 we care for the safety of our local teams and staff members

1.11 we conceive regulations for outbreak of violence and continuing violent struggles

2 Basic Home Organisations

2.1 we work on the base of humanitarian concern and human rights orientation

2.2 we provide the financial prerequisites by private and public sponsors and try to increase the number of assisting sympathizers

2.3 we provide appropriate management, structures, manpower

2.4 we care for effective work, p.i. through regional coordinators

2.5 we work strictly independantly

2.6 we handle our internal management according to the rules in the field of conflict and work by consens, not by hierarchic instruction

2.7 we strife to profile CPS by publications, consultations, media contacts, amongst others by spreading case studies and success stories

3 Teams

3.1 we work in international or at least in bi-national teams, only exceptionally as individuals

3.2 we include local activists in planning and realisation of our work, whenever possible

3.3 we live with the people we are assisting, whenever possible, and try to avoid privilege and ghetto mentality

3.4 we strife to build and to maintain trust

3.5 we insist on high competences for conflict transformation of volunteers and care for increasing competences of local staff members

3.6 we encourage continous advanced learning of all involved

3.7 we provide supervision, whenever possible

3.8 we wish to be good listeners and to understand even unexpressed feelings, wishes and thoughts, therefore we start with language improvement, if necessary

4 Local Partnership

4.1 we support every party which commits itself to deal nonviolently with the conflict, with respect for the other side

<p>and the will to dialogue</p> <p>4.2 we respect gender and cultural diversities</p> <p>4.3 we estimate values and cultural rites of our partners</p> <p>4.4 we try to avoid hierarchic approaches</p> <p>4.5 we offer staff membership, paid and unpaid</p>
<p>5 Relevant Field Organisations + Institutions</p> <p>5.1 we wish to include experience and expertise likewise of development and relief agencies, of human rights and basis groups and other civil initiatives and try to cooperate on all levels, if appropriate</p> <p>5.2 we understand our work as part of multitrack endeavours to promote dialog and cooperation and to transform conflicts</p> <p>5.3 whenever possible we build Peace Alliances with others</p>
<p>6 Working Process</p> <p>6.1 We think in categories of process and joint learning and are not primarily ‚running a project‘, for this is the medium and not the task or the goal</p> <p>6.2 We therefore are welcoming even tiny and inconspicuous signs of development instead of struggling for visible presentable results</p> <p>6.3 We want to work purposively and effectively, yet we know that unexpected side results and not intended consequences may be extremely influential and even exceeding planned effects</p> <p>6.4 Running a process means for us to be outmost sensitive for different dimensions of our work and to be flexible to adjust attitude, behaviour and plan according to new circumstances and new insights</p>
<p>7 Transparency + Accountability</p> <p>7.1 we work as openly and transparently as possible on all levels, except in cases where confidentiality is necessary to protect lifes and integrity of local partners</p> <p>7.2 we feel accountable to all private and public promotors and sponsors of CPS work and prepare and publish regular reports</p>

2 General Intention of CPS Teams Work

<p>1 The intention of CPS team is to contribute to prevention and transformation of violent conflicts on lower or medium levels of society. They shall be in conflict regions at home and abroad at the side of such social groups and institutions, which are working on conflict transformation. Through wellfounded knowledge about conflict lines and its causes etc. the CPS teams shall be enabled to counsel, to mediate, to assist, to participate in the processes of longterm agreement and reconciliation, and to strengthen structures of civil society. (following the preamble of the curriculum "Training For Conflict Transformation / CPS" (Bonn, 2000))</p> <p>2 We offer nonviolent contributions through CPS teams to the three main phases of handling conflicts: peace keeping, civil peace making and peace building.</p> <p>3 We are aware of the complexity of social conflicts and of the limitations of third party involvement. We know that realistic and sustainable solutions often need long time endeavours. Therefore we regard our engagement and intervention as part of long term processes towards a better understanding and cooperation and refrain from aiming at quick visible results.</p> <p>4 We wish to assist the conflict parties to achieve their own common goals nonviolently. Therefore we refrain from suggesting or imposing our own favorite ideas for handling the conflict to the parties.</p>

3 Matters to be discussed later

Analysis of Process, its Conditions and its Effects
Training

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