

THE CONTRIBUTION OF ART AND CULTURE IN PEACE AND RECONCILIATION PROCESSES IN ASIA

A literature review and case studies from
Pakistan, Nepal, Myanmar, Indonesia,
Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh

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The Contribution of Art and Culture in Peace and Reconciliation Processes in Asia – A literature review and case studies from Pakistan, Nepal, Myanmar, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh, September 2015.

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Dr. Ereshnee Naidu. Photo: Paul Silverman

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Ms. Naidu-Silverman has more than 10 years experience working with civil society organizations and local communities to undertake research and develop program models and advocacy strategies that promote human rights, reconciliation and social justice. She has broad expertise working in post-conflict and developing contexts, particularly Africa, Asia and the Middle East and North Africa regions. Utilizing a multidisciplinary approach and participatory methodologies in research, advocacy, policy development and training, Ms. Naidu-Silverman has worked with a broad range of stakeholders including marginalized social groups such women, youth, refugees, ethnic minorities and survivors of violence. Originally from South Africa, Ms. Naidu-Silverman obtained masters of arts degrees in Dramatic Arts and Forced Migration Studies from the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa and a doctorate in Sociology from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She has a range of published and unpublished works focusing on reconciliation, memorialization and reparations in post-conflict societies.

Abstract

The past decade has seen a global increase in donor, scholarly and practitioner interests in the role of art and culture in peace and reconciliation processes. Focussing on Asia, where diverse conflicts hinder peaceful development, this study offers an overview of existing artistic and cultural responses to pre- and post-conflict. Due to the attention to resolving complex, violent and identity-based conflicts by including art and cultural activities, this study presents an inroad to understanding interlinks between art, culture and conflict. A literature review serves as the background for a mapping of art and cultural activities in conflict-affected areas of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Nepal, and Indonesia and an in-depth examination of the different approaches to art and culture in peacebuilding, reconciliation and conflict-prevention processes.

Keywords

Asia, conflict, war, post-conflict, transnational justice, conflict prevention, peace, reconciliation, art, culture, cultural activities



Elsebeth Krogh is interviewed about CKU's work in Nepal
Photo: Rajneesh Bhandari, Nepal.

Foreword

From Pakistan in Southern Asia to Indonesia in Southeastern Asia, art and culture offer spaces for dialogue and healing for population groups in conflict-affected communities. But there is still a gap of knowledge when trying to fully grasp the complex relationship between art, culture, conflict and peace: Which artistic involvement and cultural activities contribute positively to peace and reconciliation processes – and how can their success be enhanced and measured?

The task of documenting and collecting existing knowledge and concrete cases is therefore a challenge for all of us, who support the integration of art and culture in pre- and post-conflict situations in order to increase the likelihood of lasting peace and avoidance of any future conflicts.

Therefore, it is a great pleasure for me to present this study about the role of art and culture in peace and reconciliation efforts in Asia commissioned by CKU and authored by Dr. Ereshnee Naidu-Silverman. Her work sheds light upon the culture-conflict relationship by systematically synthesising existing relevant literature on the topic. Reviewing recorded work produced by researchers, scholars and practitioners provides the starting point for her in-depth case studies on art and culture in post-conflict situations in Asia.

Dr. Naidu-Silverman comprehensively describes cases of artistic and cultural engagements in Asian hotspots – sensitively balanced against a local context analysis and historical conflict timeline. Interviews with over 30 key persons provide a resource base for the study's empirical section. We are honoured to know some of the interview persons and are pleased to be introduced to others.

In diverse and multiple ways, their organisations have managed to navigate in terror attacks, natural disasters, hostile environments, and address neglected atrocities and small-scale intrastate conflicts that receive no media attention. On that ground, the study serves as an eye-opener and a potential inspiration catalogue for other organisations, donors, and peace builders across the world.

Strengthening peace in reconciliation in post-conflict areas through art and cultural activities is one of five priorities formulated in Denmark's Strategy Framework for Support to Culture and Development, 'The Right to Art and Culture' (2013). CKU's core task – as a self-governing institution under the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs – is to implement 'The Right to Art and Culture' in alignment with Denmark's over all development engagement. CKU ensures that Danish support to art and culture is long-term, partnership-based, and strategically managed as an approach to strengthening the chances for a peaceful and inclusive development in less privileged countries.

Therefore, sharing knowledge by providing documentation, lessons learnt and research that prove the close correlation between art and culture and peace and reconciliation is important to CKU. With this fresh look at peace and reconciliation processes, we – and other stakeholders working with art and culture in pre- and post-conflict areas in Asia – are now equipped with a review of existing literature, inspirational case studies and innovative methods to be replicated or up-scaled in other places.

Elsebeth Krogh
CEO, Centre for Culture and Development (CKU),
Copenhagen

Introduction

Civil conflict in Asia over the past 20 years – whether interreligious or interethnic – has killed more civilians than interstate conflict.¹ In addition to identity-based violence, tensions between the state and specific groups, weak governance systems, diminished cultures of human rights and limited access to justice and security have exacerbated conflict in the region.²

The post-Cold War era, which brought with it new democracy building projects, has seen significant shifts from traditional warfare between states to protracted interstate conflicts.³ The increase in identity-based conflicts such as religious, ethnic and racial conflict and new patterns of violence has resulted in deliberate attacks on civilian populations.

This study examines art and cultural activities as an element in peace and reconciliation processes in these complex and multi-faceted contexts of Asian post-conflict situations. The examination is unfolded by asking the central research question: How can art and culture contribute to peace and reconciliation in post-conflict societies?

This study shows how art and cultural activities have contributed in these contexts by creating dialogue between opposing groups, rebuilding trust and empathy in communities devastated by conflict and promoting tolerance and diversity.

Scope of the study

Through an in-depth examination of art and cultural activities in four countries in Asia – Myanmar, Nepal, Indonesia and Pakistan – this report examines the role of art and culture in peacebuilding, reconciliation and conflict-prevention processes. It highlights practical models and best practices in the field; and proposes the preconditions necessary to realize its visions for art and culture to contribute to peace and reconciliation efforts.

This report draws on 34 qualitative virtual interviews (see Appendix One for a full list of research participants), an interdisciplinary review of literature from the fields of art, culture, transitional justice, human rights and peacebuilding as well as additional

programmatic resources provided by the research participants. It also benefits from the author's more than ten years of practice and research in the area of transitional justice, memorialization and reconciliation.

Key research participants were selected based on their work in the fields of art, culture, development, education, transitional justice and peacebuilding in Asia. The study uses a purposive sampling strategy, drawing on a homogenous sample group of practitioners, victims' association and civil society representatives. These research participants – through their knowledge and work in the field – were able to share their experience and expertise, contributing to the central research question: How can art and culture contribute to building peace and reconciliation in post-conflict societies? Key research participants included individuals representing CKU's partners in the region as well as individuals identified through the author's network.

A semi-structured research questionnaire guided all interviews. Additional information was collected through email exchanges with research participants. The report uses a qualitative research methodology together with a case-study approach to examine the central research question as well as to understand some of the broader lessons for the use of art and culture in peacebuilding and reconciliation. The study is limited in representing the views of donors and policymakers. However, this limitation is in part addressed through the stakeholder analysis outlined in Appendix Two. The analysis examines some of stakeholders – multilateral donors, international organizations, foundations and international and local organizations – working in the areas of art, culture, reconciliation and peacebuilding; outlines examples of the types of projects that are currently being funded in the region; and maps the potential relationships between stakeholders.

Outline of the Report

The first section of this report reviews the literature in the fields of art, culture, peacebuilding and transitional justice. It examines the links between culture and conflict and provides a theoretical overview of peacebuilding and reconciliation concepts. The section concludes with an in-depth examination of the role of art and cultural activities in addressing violence and contributing to peace and reconciliation through healing, building trust, facilitating dialogue and promoting intercultural competency and understanding.

Using a case-study methodology, section two offers an extensive exploration of art and cultural activities in Asia and their role in contributing to peace and

1 See <http://asiafoundation.org/media/view/slideshow/108/critical-issues-ethnic-and-religious-conflict>.

2 See <https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/4PagerPeacebuildingNov098.5x11.pdf>.

3 See for example Michael Mann (2005) for a discussion of the relationship between ethnic cleansing and democracy building.



Vietnamese artist Pham Khac Quang portrayed peasants engraved on wooden spatulas to tell the stories of farmers from a village forced to dislocate.. Photo: Pham Khac Quang

reconciliation. By examining innovative approaches – including participatory theatre techniques, video, storytelling and festivals – and their use in promoting dialogue, facilitating trust building, raising awareness and inspiring hope, this section highlights best practices. The replicability of programs to create a critical mass in post-conflict and authoritarian contexts, the revival of traditional art forms to address current issues of intolerance and a multidisciplinary approach using the art as one strategy to address social issues are some of the examples of highlighted best practices. Finally, this section also examines some of the challenges and opportunities when using art methods in post-conflict, post-authoritarian and repressive societies.

Section three addresses some of the challenges of monitoring and evaluating projects in dynamic environments – like post-conflict contexts – in which stakeholders, relationships and situations are constantly

in flux. This section examines the three predominant models – Logical Framework Model, Most Significant Change stories and Outcomes Mapping – currently used in the development field. It outlines the successes and challenges when using each of the models, proposing that for effective monitoring and evaluation to take place – especially when measuring issues like attitudinal change and relationship-building processes – a combination of models should be utilized.

The conclusion of this study outlines recommendations for best practices if art and cultural activities are to support the rebuilding of societies in the aftermath of violence or in repressive contexts. This section does not seek to provide definitive answers but, drawing on the research, provides guidelines for using the opportunities available to support the rebuilding of just societies that value a culture of human rights, peace and tolerance.



SECTION ONE UNDERSTANDING THE INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN ART, CULTURE AND CONFLICT

"We might be trapped, but our creativity and artistic visions are not." Visual artist Shareef Sarhan, Gaza, Palestine
Photo: Shareef Sarhan.

Art, culture and conflict have a complex relationship. Defining and understanding the links between them is a necessary first step before examining how art and culture can contribute positively in pre- and post-conflict societies.

Culture and Conflict

Conflict, identity and culture are inextricably linked. Culture broadly refers to the language, dress, customs, ethnicity, race, sexuality and gender that groups share. While culture may be transmitted across generations through social memory processes,⁴ it is never static;

⁴ See for example Paul Connerton (1989).

culture is constantly fluctuating and evolving, informing how we define ourselves, shaping how we perceive the world and how we enact our identities (LeBaron, 2003; Fortier, 2008; Shaheed, 2012).

As Michelle LeBaron (2003) observes, "Cultures are like underground rivers that run through our lives and relationships, giving us messages that shape our perceptions, attributions, judgements and ideas of self and other". Culture defines the boundaries between the in-group – the group to which we belong – and the out-group, or the other, providing markers for inclusion and exclusion. According to Simon Clarke (2008), groups need the other to define their own identity, as it is only in relation to the other that identity can be formed.

» Rebuilding of society in the aftermath of violence requires careful context-specific interventions. «

Since culture is linked to identity and shapes our understanding and meaning of the world, it intersects with conflict. In recognizing that conflict is a necessary part of daily life and interactions, LeBaron (2003) highlights that culture may not necessarily be a cause of conflict; however, when boundaries between groups are threatened, culture informs how we perceive this threat, whether we react violently to the threat and the outcome of the threat.

“When boundaries between groups are threatened, culture informs how we perceive this threat, whether we react violently to the threat and the outcome of the threat.”

Furthermore, while group membership may imply social cohesion, as Farida Shaheed (2012) argues, belonging to a group may not necessarily result in all group members having equal power or access to equal rights and treatment. Identity in its constant state of flux is a struggle over meaning and is therefore linked to “underlying structures and dynamics of power related to accessing and exercising control over economic, political and cultural resources” (Shaheed, 2012: 6).

Michael Mann (2004) echoes this understanding of identity and power, and their relation to conflict, arguing that differences in and of themselves don't cause conflict; instead, violent conflict occurs when one group uses its power to exploit another group. It is this struggle for meaning, power, boundary making, recognition, legitimacy and equality that results in violent conflict.

Given that culture is intertwined with conflict for better or for worse, culture not only affects conflict, but conflict influences the cultural content of group identity. During periods of protracted violence, new cultural patterns develop and perpetuate a culture of violence even after the conflict. According to Daniel Bar-Tal (2003), over time, groups within a conflict situation develop certain societal beliefs about the conflict, such as the in-group's victimization, the de-legitimization of the out-group and beliefs related to patriotism and loyalty to the in-group.

Additionally, the conflict produces certain cultural products such as memorials and new ritual practices that tend to support the ongoing conflict, increasing hostility and perpetuating the myths that have developed during the course of the conflict (Bar-Tal, 2003). These cultural effects fuel our anger and hate toward the other, dehumanizes the other and sustain our own feelings of victimization and need for vengeance.

Long-term violence involves the emotional investment from members of the warring factions – not only do members of a group mourn the losses of other members of that group as they would family,⁵ but the resentment, anger, mistrust and feelings of revenge are perpetuated throughout the group.

In the aftermath of violent conflict, how does one rebuild these wounded societies? What are ways to transform the negative cultural and social norms that have contributed to, and developed during the course of, the conflict? How do we build trust among neighbours, enable victims to reintegrate into their community and allow perpetrators the opportunity to re-establish their humanity?

Defining Reconciliation and Peace

In societies ravaged by conflict, a range of mechanisms needs to be established, with the goal of:

- rebuilding society,
- re-establishing the rule of law,
- ensuring justice for victims,
- laying the groundwork for long-term and sustainable peace.

These initiatives require the participation of all members of society and should take place at all levels of society. Reconciliation processes are just one of the ways that societies can begin to come to terms with the past. Reconciliation is commonly understood as the rebuilding of relationships in societies previously divided by conflict. According to Priscilla Hayner (2002), “Reconciliation implies building and rebuilding relationships today that are not haunted by the conflicts and hatreds of yesterday” (p.161). While the meaning of reconciliation varies across contexts and is open to interpretation by different stakeholders, it is generally a forward-looking process of social rebuilding.

Scholars (see Daly and Sarkin, 2007; Hayner, 2002; Verdeja, 2009; Cohen and Yalen, 2003) note that for true reconciliation to be realized, stakeholders at multiple levels need to:

- address injustices,
- acknowledge the wrongs of the past,
- tackle inequalities and other root causes of the conflict,
- rewrite new narratives that acknowledge the truths of the past,
- recognize the suffering of others,
- make available spaces for forgiveness and healing.

5 See Bar-Tal (2003).

» Given the hopelessness, despair and trauma that come with violent conflict, art and cultural activities may present a temporary outlet from the actual situation, serving as an avenue for coping and imagining alternate scenarios to the reality of conflict. «

While there are nuanced meanings of reconciliation, questions of rebuilding respectful and trusting relationships – and the degree of positive interaction amid new and multiple post-conflict identities – are core factors for social cohesion in post-conflict societies. While much of reconciliation literature focuses on post-conflict contexts that are emerging from protracted active violence, reconciliation may be necessary in other contexts, too, where horizontal conflicts between groups have resulted in entrenched social cleavages that give rise to other types of violence such as structural and cultural violence.⁶ In these societies – including Indonesia, which will be discussed later in the report – stakeholders may need to address similar issues as post-conflict societies as they attempt to rebuild relations between clashing groups and address underlying sources of latent conflict.

According to Johan Galtung, Carl G. Jacobsen and Kai Frithjof Brand-Jacobsen (2002), structural violence and cultural violence, together with direct violence, are barriers to realizing an ideal peace where conflict can be handled in a non-violent, empathetic and creative way. It has been shown thus far that the relationship

“Rebuilding respectful and trusting relationships are core factors for social cohesion in post-conflict societies.”

between conflict and culture is complex. Given these complexities, the rebuilding of society in the aftermath of violence requires careful context-specific interventions. These interventions could enable societies to re-imagine new cultures of peace, justice and equality. They could also facilitate trust building, empathy and respect for others as well as create platforms for dialogue, healing and forgiveness. The next section of this literature review focuses on the role of art and cultural activities in contributing to these processes.

⁶ Structural violence generally refers to the unequal power relations, allocation of resources and opportunities within a society that result directly from the structures that govern these relationships. Examples of structural violence may include colonialism, slavery and apartheid. Cultural violence refers to issues such as racism and sexism that rely on norms and values that have become entrenched within a society or group, where one group views itself as superior to the other, legitimizing the use of violence to respond to conflict (Galtung et al. 2002).

The Role of Art during the Different Phases of Conflict

State Repression and Authoritarianism:

During periods of state repression and authoritarianism, art and cultural activities can serve different purposes. For example, events such as music festivals, documentary films, and art exhibitions can raise awareness about the oppression.

- Serves as an early warning of conflict
- Supports resistance
- Raises awareness
- Promotes rebellion

In-conflict:

While conflict contexts may prove dangerous for artists, when accessible, safe, local performing art events, and traditional ritual ceremony, for example, could serve the following goals:

- Relativizes the conflict
- Shows sympathy and concern for those affected
- Serves as a coping mechanism
- Renews hope.

Post-conflict:

In the aftermath of conflict, there is a range of recovery and reconstruction needs. Activities such as commemorative ceremonies, memorialization initiatives, performing art productions, film and visual art could serve broader rehabilitation and reconciliation needs:

- Healing and therapy
- Creates spaces for dialogue and engagement
- Facilitates empathy
- Promotes new identity formation
- Recognizes victims
- Fosters cross-cultural fluency
- Builds tolerance
- Rebuilds trust.

» Rebuilding of society in the aftermath of violence requires careful context-specific interventions. «

The Role of Art and Cultural Activities in Reconciliation

Art and cultural activities have as much potential to build peace and facilitate processes of reconciliation as they do to fuel cultures of violence and conflict.

“Creativity is the power to reject the past, to change the status quo, and to seek new potential. Simply put, aside from using one’s imagination – perhaps more importantly – creativity is the power to act.”

– Ai Weiwei, Chinese artist

However, if strategically harnessed with the goal of rebuilding a just and peaceful society, art and culture can indeed contribute to lasting peace and reconciliation. Art have always played a social role within our world. Artists are the voices of some of the most marginalized groups within societies– they mirror the social, cultural and political realities of their time and propose new and alternate imaginings for the future.

Art play a role during all phases of conflict, addressing different types of violence and violations. During periods of authoritarianism and state repression, the art can support resistance, awareness and rebellion. The art that emerges from these societies and the ways in which artists are treated – whether they are censored, silenced, intimidated or executed – could serve as an early warning of disaster to come (Mani, 2011). It could also signal to civil society and the international community the need for intervention to prevent future human rights violations or outright war (Mani, 2011).

In periods of active violence, art and cultural activities may be used as a tool to “relativize” conflicts (Fukushima, 2011). Kiki Fukushima (2011) notes that artistic productions, especially those brought in by international actors to a conflict zone, may allow people to feel that they are still part of a global community and that there are others who are interested and concerned about their situation. Additionally, given the hopelessness, despair and trauma that come with violent conflict, art and cultural activities may present a temporary outlet from the actual situation, serving as an avenue for coping and imagining alternate scenarios to the reality of conflict. The role of art and culture in post-conflict reconstruction, peacebuilding and reconciliation is well documented. In the aftermath of violence and loss, individuals emerge traumatized and unable to verbalize, let alone able to make sense of the many emotions that

they experience. Jenny Edkins (2003) argues that for survivors coming out of situations of gross human rights violations, there is no language that is able to convey the trauma. She posits that language gains its meaning through family and community, and since violence destroys the very social fabric of life, everyday verbal language is incomprehensible and inadequate to relay the extent of trauma and the depth of emotions that survivors experience (Edkins, 2003).

Similarly, John Paul Lederach (2005) observes that people in post-conflict milieus seldom use language to analyze conflict; instead, they use metaphors and images to make sense of the reality of violence and their experiences. According to Stephanie Wise and Emily Nash (2012), the use of metaphor – such as ritual, drama, writing, movement and storytelling– in trauma recovery, enables trauma survivors to engage with their experiences of trauma while creating enough distance from the traumatic event, to prevent re-traumatization.

Several scholars (see Shank and Schirch, 2008; Cohen, 2003; Fortier, 2008; Cohen and Yalen, 2004; Daly and Sarkin, 2007) note that one of the most important roles of art in post-conflict societies is its ability to restore victims’ capacities to participate

“One of the most important roles of art in post-conflict societies is its ability to restore victims’ capacities to participate in reconciliation processes, access their emotions and begin their individual healing processes”.

in reconciliation processes, access their emotions and begin their individual healing processes. It is only through creative acts that are responsive and adaptive to survivors’ needs that survivors of conflict can make new meanings and create new languages to understand their reality (Cohen and Yalen, 2004; Lederach, 2005).

Aesthetic processes such as visual art therapy and dance have the potential to overcome verbal barriers, communicating and reaching hidden emotions and feelings that everyday language is unable to bring to life. Art has the power to “democratize” therapy and healing, moving it out of the realm of professionals and enabling ordinary people to work together to engage in their own therapeutic processes (Boal, 1995). For societies emerging from conflict, the art provide a new form of communication and a creative tool to address the silences and pain that are rendered unspeakable.

» It is in fully understanding the other that groups are able to find common ground to live together and to begin trusting one another. «

If opposing groups are to transcend their feelings of animosity and begin rebuilding their relationships, they require spaces that provide opportunities for discussion, dialogue and active listening. Dialogue is an important and necessary tool for building relations between groups and contributing to long-term peacebuilding processes (Galtung et al., 2002). According to Paulo Freire (1997), dialogue is an active process requiring reflection and action that eventually leads to some kind of transformation. For David Bohm (2015), dialogue is a practice that enables people with different ideas, opinions and assumptions to come together to listen to each other without making judgments or particular conclusions.

Since dialogue participants are required to “suspend” their assumptions and actively listen to others’ points of view without defense of opinions, Bohm (2015) notes that the process may become frustrating. However, it is through the open sharing of ideas and opinions and listening to one another that dialogue participants are brought closer together – they begin to get to know one another, understand what is important to one another and, by working together on a common issue, begin to trust one another (Bohm, 2015). Since dialogue cannot be “deposited” or “consumed” (Freire, 1997) and is a

“If opposing groups are to transcend their feelings of animosity and begin rebuilding their relationships, they require spaces that provide opportunities for discussion, dialogue and active listening.”

process in which no one particular view prevails and nobody is a winner (Bohm, 2015), it requires non-didactic, participatory tools for its full potential to be realized. Art methodologies – by their nature – can provide dialogue spaces for these interactions to take place. Following on both Bohm’s and Freire’s definitions of dialogue, within the context of art and culture, a dialogue space would be a safe, neutral space where people could come together to participate and share in cultural activities and, through the content of the activities, critically reflect on their own ideas and assumptions related to a specific issue. In post-conflict situations, some art forms such as participatory theater or spoken-word – discussed below – could also “reveal assumptions”⁷ in a nonaggressive way by highlighting the collective underlying issues and concerns that are prevalent and that are causing divisions. Since it is a creative, neutral and interactive space, individuals can

⁷ According to Bohm (2015), an important feature of the dialogue in a group is that it should eventually reveal the assumptions that are causing the rifts and divisions.

determine the extent of their participation, and nobody is blamed or shamed in the process. Furthermore, in post-conflict societies in which trauma impedes discursive communication and former enemies are reluctant to listen to one another (Cohen, 2003), creative processes such as theater and storytelling offer nonthreatening spaces for dialogue to begin.

As will be highlighted in the case study section, Brazilian dramatist Augusto Boal’s Forum Theatre and Invisible Theatre⁸ are spaces that facilitate dialogue among audience members (participants) and provide opportunities for former opponents to create joint imaginary solutions to social issues and begin to see one another as more than perpetrator or victim. Because the participants are challenged to find joint solutions to social issues presented by characters, they begin rehearsing working together. The joint problem-solving and group interaction requires that each individual be open to the other’s input and ultimately develop a sense of hopefulness within the group, since participants expect specific outcomes from their actions (Freire, 1997). Additionally, such participatory art practices promote empathy – necessary for peace – by allowing the participants to identify with, and put themselves in, a specific character’s position.

Drawing on Aristotle’s concept of empathy, Boal (1985) defines empathy as “the relationship between the character and the spectator which provides a delegation of power on the part of the spectator who becomes an object in relation to the character” (p.102). By facilitating processes of empathy, the art can enable opponents to understand the plight of the other and once again see the human being within.

Apart from empathy, reconciliation requires the ability of individuals to understand and develop a cultural awareness of one another as well as an understanding of the social issues that need to be addressed to prevent renewed cycles of violence. Art forms such as spoken-word, for example – which gained increased popularity during the American civil rights era as a socio-political discourse – can serve as a medium for raising awareness around socio-political issues and contributing to broader advocacy and education

⁸ Forum theatre is a participatory theatre practice that focuses mainly on social issues. During a performance, if an audience member is unhappy with a situation, the audience member can enter the scene as a “spect-actor” to change the situation. Additionally, a Joker is present to intervene in the performance at any time, mediating between characters and breaking the traditional audience-actor divide. Invisible theatre is a type of performance that takes place in public spaces with actors disguising themselves as ordinary people. Invisible theatre usually tackles controversial social issues and aims to get ordinary people involved in the action- moving them from a space of bystander to active participant in addressing an issue. See for example Boal (1995).

» Memorialization initiatives and other artistic endeavours can provide alternate narratives about conflict and through metaphor and symbolism address the silences and taboos that conflict has left in its wake. «

efforts. Using personal storytelling and wordplay to address pressing social and political subjects, the art form encourages poets and their audiences to engage openly – emphasizing a responsibility to the self and to the community for honesty and genuineness (Alfonso and Fontanilla, 2014). According to Allysa Alfonso and Alexa Fontanilla (2014), spoken-word draws on the ability of all individuals to communicate and provides a platform for people to share their own experiences, thereby encouraging new connections and building understanding between people. It provides an avenue for people from different backgrounds to creatively share information and experiences and deliver important messages by emphasizing truth and sincerity.

In post-conflict societies, it is this understanding of one another and the issues that are important to each other that begin re-building relationships. It is in fully understanding the other that groups are able to find common ground to live together and to begin trusting one another. For groups to live and work together in the pursuit of peace, they need to move beyond the divisions of self and other, differences and similarities (Lederach, 2005). They require a “paradoxical curiosity” that mobilizes the imagination – a type of curiosity that is creative and inquisitive and goes beyond the dualities that are highlighted during periods of conflict (Lederach, 2005). Scholars (see Fortier, 2008; Preis and Stanca Mustea, 2013; Seidl-Fox and Sridhar, 2014) note that art and cultural activities can nurture this curiosity by providing platforms for the celebration of cultural diversity and intercultural exchange.

Post-conflict activities such as commemorative events and art and cultural festivals prompt collaboration, facilitate discussion, inspire curiosity and enhance cross-cultural fluency and understanding. These activities shift beyond the dichotomy of self and other, victim and perpetrator, to contribute to positive identity formation while also building trust and mutual respect among diverse individuals. In post-conflict societies struggling to rebuild a national identity, art and cultural activities can provide the foundation to build a new identity that marks

“Art and finding our way back to humanity [are] connected.”

Lederach (2005)

the end of a culture of violence and division and provides inspiration for a future based on peace and harmony.

For societies emerging from conflict, peacebuilding and other reconstruction processes and decisions have generally been restricted to the domain of the political elite. Art and cultural activities provide an avenue for

ordinary citizens at all levels of society to engage in broader national processes. Memorialization initiatives and other artistic endeavours can provide alternate narratives about conflict and through metaphor and symbolism address the silences and taboos that conflict has left in its wake. They can bear witness to the atrocities, recognizing the survivors of the conflict and providing evidence of the horrors of violent conflict. By unmasking the truths about the past, they can serve as a deterrence for future generations.

In summary, violent conflict is difficult to address. As Lederach (2005) points out, we are essentially dealing with brokenness. Society, community and individuals are broken. Loss, hopelessness, despair, shame, betrayal, anger and pain are a few of the emotions that individuals experience. Violent conflict is a no-win situation for ordinary people – everybody is a victim. Art and cultural activities provide spaces to creatively address the trauma that comes with active conflict as well as make accessible the tools such as dialogue, education and awareness to address structural and cultural violence. They are a life force that allows individuals from opposing sides to come together– to laugh together and cry together. They facilitate reflection and critical thinking. Most of all, they enable ordinary men, women and children to imagine a different future, an alternate future, absent of all types of violence, in which conflict can be resolved in nonviolent and empathetic ways. As Lederach (2005) poetically posits, “Art and finding our way back to humanity [are] connected.”

Despite the links between culture, identity and conflict, art and culture have traditionally been viewed as a soft area of peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts and have been underutilized in these fields. While this may be attributed to the fact that art methodologies are not readily available to peacebuilders or that artists may feel no reason to explicitly explain the sociopolitical nature or the functionality of their work (Shank and Schirch, 2009), there has been increasing interest in understanding how to maximize the role of art in peacebuilding and reconciliation (Reichert, 2015).

According to Dagmar Reichert (2015), these changes may be a result of artists increasingly wanting to move away from art establishments and trying to find their own social and political voices. Furthermore, there is a willingness within the peacebuilding field to find new and innovative approaches to addressing violence and its consequences.

Through a series of case studies, the next section of this report will highlight the successes and challenges as well as the creativity and innovation that are ignited when these fields strategically come together to contribute to peace and reconciliation.



SECTION TWO CASE STUDIES

"Theatre can make people laugh. Through theatre one can begin to puncture the balloons of patriotism and piety," says Shahid Nadeem, Ajoka Theatre, Pakistan. Photo: Ajoka Theatre.

Case studies provide us with background to best practices as well as the challenges experienced and opportunities available when using art and cultural activities to contribute to peace and reconciliation.

Pakistan: Countering Extremism and Facilitating Dialogue for Social Justice

Background

Pakistan was founded as a Muslim majority state during India's partition in 1947. Since its early beginnings, the country has experienced waves of political and economic instability. Plagued by conflicts between provinces, the shifting between military and democratically elected

"Pakistan has struggled to develop a national identity or a political system that reflects all members of the society."

Lederach (2005)

governments and the dilemma of adopting a secular or Islamic government, Pakistan has been unable to consolidate its democracy.⁹ Despite its shared religious identity, Pakistan is a linguistically diverse country with more than 20 languages and 300 dialects. Given this diversity, the country has struggled to develop a national

⁹ For an in-depth discussion of Pakistan's political history, see <http://asiasociety.org/pakistan-political-history>. See also <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-12966786> for a comprehensive timeline.

» Extremist groups have captured cultural and artistic spaces by either reinterpreting these spaces to glorify violence and produce prejudices or by making them irrelevant. «

Pakistan Conflict in Brief

- 1947- East and West Pakistan founded following India's partition and the end of British rule. Violence ensues. Hundreds of thousands die during the violence and millions migrate.
- 1956- Constitution declares Pakistan an Islamic republic.
- 1948-1971 Ongoing conflict with India and changes in political leadership.
- 1971- East Pakistan breaks away to become Bangladesh.
- 1977-2000 Ongoing clashes with India, conflicts between provinces, shifts between military and democratically elected governments and questions of a secular versus an Islamic state.
- 2001- President Musharraf supports the US in its fight against terror and supports attacks against Afghanistan.
- 2002- President Musharraf bans two militant groups and takes steps to address extremism.
- 2004- Pakistan begins military offensive against suspected Al-Qaeda leaders and supporters on the border of Afghanistan.
- 2008- President Musharraf resigns. The government is in a debt crisis.
- 2009- Government agrees to implement Sharia law in northwestern Swat valley to convince militants to agree to a ceasefire.
- 2009- Ceasefire mediations break down as Taliban-linked militants extend their control. Government launches an offensive attack to gain back control of Swat.
- 2009-2010 Ongoing terrorist attacks kill civilians.
- 2011- Founder of Al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden is killed in Pakistan by US forces.
- 2013- Taliban-linked attack kills more than 80 people in a church in Peshawar.
- 2014- Musharraf goes on trial for treason.
- 2014- The government begins peace talks with Taliban leaders.
- 2014-2015 Ongoing Taliban attacks against civilians including the Peshawar school-attack.

identity or a political system that reflects all members of the society (Snellinger, 2015).

Additionally, local sectarian violence between Sunni Deobandi and Shia Muslims – exacerbated by transnational terrorist networks and the regional security dynamics – has increased in recent years, resulting in numerous civilian casualties (Rafiq, 2014). From the Afghanistan border, the Taliban and other extremist groups have managed to extend their influence into Pakistan, posing a threat to national security with violent terror attacks and fuelling extremist impulses.

According to Amil Khan (2013), violent extremist groups such as al-Qaeda are using existing narratives such as Pakistan's founding stories to promote themselves and gain support. These narratives – such as the ongoing war against Islam – are gaining traction among ordinary Pakistani people as they provide a way to make sense of their world and the current political trends in Pakistan and globally (Khan, 2013).

“Young people are at the forefront of violent conflict. They are conditioned to idealize the forces of death and terror. Art helps them recognize the beauty and aesthetic of life. Art revitalizes – it brings hope, life, interaction, compassion, justice and beauty.”

– Raziq Fahim, College of Youth Activism and Development, Pakistan

According to research participants, political instability, religious extremism, intolerance and class divisions are the key factors hindering the realization of a peaceful and democratic society. Local organizations use art and cultural activities to focus on two key issues: religious and political extremism and social justice. Below is a description of some of the strategic interventions in these areas.

Using Art and Culture to Counter Extremism and Religious Fundamentalism

The success of extremist forces within Pakistan can be attributed, in part, to their ability to influence youth's perception of the violence and conflict by taking advantage of the vulnerability of youth as they go through their own process of identity formation. Extremist factions are competing with peacebuilders and human rights activists to capture young peoples' attention, recruiting and radicalizing them to participate in acts of violence. These groups have captured cultural and artistic spaces by either reinterpreting these spaces to glorify violence and produce prejudices or by making them irrelevant.

» The oral history collection tells the story of a rich and diverse past – one that provides an alternate discourse to national narratives about Pakistan’s founding history. «

A cursory look at the extremist communication strategy, for example, reveals that extremist groups package symbols and contents which mostly resonate with youth – focusing on questions of identity, narratives of injustice and victimization, and notions of sacrifice for one’s religious and community and traditional way of life. Cultural, religious and artistic symbols and metaphors are used to justify hatred, discrimination and violence ultimately seeking to channel youth energies towards militant activism.¹⁰

In recognizing the struggle over artistic and cultural spaces and their power to also forge peace, the College of Youth Activism and Development (CYAAD) uses art as one of its many strategies, to engage youth on issues of peace, tolerance and human rights. Established in 2009, CYAAD uses a three-tiered approach training, dialogue and cultural and social action – to equip youth with leadership and peacebuilding skills. During the training phase particularly – through creative participatory methods – youth are engaged in leadership skills, community mobilization, conflict analysis, advocacy and nonviolent communication.

Art forms such as music, poetry and fine art are used to enable youth from diverse backgrounds to interact with each. These artistic mediums are also used to spark discussion about sensitive issues such as religious extremism, tolerance and peace. It is also during this phase that young people engage in issues related to identity formation, exploring questions of masculinity and gender justice and equality.

“Artists and activists are constantly threatened and intimidated and people generally avoid organizing cultural activities.”

The dialogue phase provides spaces for young people to interact with other youth groups within and outside the country with the aim of building understanding and empathy between individuals beyond the symptomatic understanding of the conflict. Through in-person and virtual gatherings, youth engage in discussions about stereotypes and cultural divides and identify solutions to address some of these challenges.

During the action-taking phase, participants practically utilize the skills that they have gained: They work with other youth to lead training-of-trainers workshops as well as engage their communities and local authorities in peace, human rights and tolerance dialogues, using art as one of the mediums of engagement. CYAAD has

successfully changed young people’s lives, particularly working to reintegrate youth who have been exposed to violence. Given the model of peer-to-peer training and mentoring, in 2014, the organization successfully reached approximately 100,000 youth. Much of CYAAD’s success is based on the scalability and replicability of its basic training model that supports maximum outreach.

Extremist and militant groups have appropriated cultural spaces by declaring only certain forms of cultural activities – those that resonate with their ideology – as proper. Artists and activists are constantly threatened and intimidated and people generally avoid organizing cultural activities. CYAAD through its multi-dimensional approach enables youth to acquire skills of creative expression and supports them to use these skills to explore multiple genres for artistic, reflective and broader social rebuilding processes. Through this process, CYAAD has worked to open

“Theatre can make people laugh. Through theatre one can begin to puncture the balloons of patriotism and piety.”

– Shahid Nadeem, Ajoka Theatre, Pakistan

up the cultural spaces that have been shut down by extremist ideals, reviving cultural expression to encourage youth to explore the fluidity of identity, develop critical thinking and provide alternate narratives to the culture of violence to which they are exposed.

Similarly, Ajoka Theatre – an internationally renowned theatre company – uses the performing art to create counter narratives to the prevalent national narratives of patriotism, religious fundamentalism and extremism. Using Sufi and liberal values, the company combines the aesthetic form with thematic foci. Cutting-edge plays such as *Dekh Tamasha Chalta Ban*, which centers on the rise of religious fundamentalism and the consequent persecution of religious minorities, questions the role of the audience as silent bystanders. The play – first performed in 1992 amidst violent clashes between religious groups – is a commentary on religious fundamentalism and violent conflict. Through productions such as this, the company aims to “create a world that is free and relaxed, where people can address complex, provocative and taboo subjects.”¹¹

Since, by its very nature a theatre production is limited in time and space, the company creates socially meaningful theatre, problematizing social issues related to discrimination, marginalization and religious

¹⁰ CYAAD unpublished brief and author’s email exchange with Raziq Fahim, 26 August 2015.

¹¹ Author’s interview conducted with Shahid Nadeem, 11 June 2015.

» Using cultural spaces to address sensitive issues such as gender equality and sexuality is often easier and presents more results than directly addressing these issues with opponents. «

fundamentalism, forcing audience members to reflect on their own views regarding these topics and challenging them to envision an alternate, just and secular Pakistan. In reiterating the role of art as a nonthreatening medium to address controversial issues, Shahid Nadeem notes, "Theatre can make people laugh. Through theatre one can begin to puncture the balloons of patriotism and piety."¹²

In recognizing the need to build a national identity that captures the narratives of ordinary Pakistani people and is reflective of the multiple identities and experiences in the country, The Citizens Archive of Pakistan (CAP) is dedicated to cultural and historic preservation of Pakistani heritage and history. Drawing on Pakistan's tradition of oral storytelling, the institution emphasizes the importance of ordinary, everyday narratives in the dialogue on national identity. The oral history collection, together with photographs, letters and other artifacts, tells the story of a rich and diverse past –

"...Our history: His-stories and her-stories are a fundamental part of who we are. They give us a sense of who we are collectively and who we are individually, and they also shape how we imagine the future. So for me, the importance of history lies not in the past but in the future and who we think we are and more critically as pathways to the future through the history of the past."

– Farida Shaheed, United Nations Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights

one that provides an alternate discourse to national narratives about Pakistan's founding history. CAP has built an archive of over 1,800 oral history interviews and collected approximately 63,000 historical images. In its School and College Outreach Tours project in Pakistan and Exchange for Change program with India, CAP uses photography, film and innovative education methods to engage learners on issues related to prejudice, tolerance, peace and understanding. During the School and Outreach Tours, learners are shown videos that focus on the Partition history, they listen to audio oral history accounts of the past and view photo exhibitions. The content of these education materials highlights the history that is not taught at schools, emphasizing the point that classroom history may be biased.¹³

Following these activities, students engage in a facilitated discussion about the Partition, learning about the victimization of both Indians and Pakistanis during the violent conflict. The Exchange for Change program connects learners from India and Pakistan, with CAP facilitating the exchange of letters, postcards, videos and artwork.

Finally, through the oral history phase of the Exchange for Change workshops conducted in schools, learners from Pakistan hear oral history accounts collected from their Indian colleagues that focus on how the Partition was experienced in India. The goal of these activities is to encourage young people to form their own opinions about their counterpart in India, question their own perceptions of Pakistan's history, understand the commonality that they share with Indians and envision the possibility of peaceful relationships.

The organization has reached over 8,000 students through its outreach tours and trained over 3,000 oral historians of the next generation. CAP's success lies in its ability to develop sustainable partnerships with like-minded organizations and its excellent outreach efforts. Through a range of media and aesthetic forms, CAP has engaged a new generation of Pakistani youth, inculcating values that could create a restored, peaceful future for Pakistan.

Art and Culture for Social Justice

PeaceNiche – a non-profit-organisation based in Karachi – uses art, culture, science and technology to promote dialogue and creative expression and address social change. Starting out as a small space in an office building, today the organization provides a home for artists from varied backgrounds and disciplines to come together to address social justice issues and build an active citizenry. While programs are aimed at a range of beneficiaries, PeaceNiche targets young people, using art and cultural initiatives to promote critical thinking and build leadership through public engagement and mentoring.

Drawing on local coffeehouse traditions PeaceNiche provides a community space for dialogues through a stream of liberal art programming, with events ranging from poetry readings and film screenings, to vibrant debates on critical issues. The organization's success lies in the fact that it is a home for a range of progressive and creative voices. PeaceNiche navigates in the threatening environment of Karachi by organising small-scale and multiple events rather than large-scale events that attract too much attention and heighten the risk of terror attacks. PeaceNiche mobilises audience for their events through SMS and/or closed Facebook-groups.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ The documentary movie "The Look of Silence" by Joshua Oppenheimer (Indonesia) and Photo:Circle's newly launched education material (Nepal) also react to biased History curriculum.

Furthermore, its sustainability is guaranteed through innovative income generation endeavours. For PeaceNiche's founder, Sabeen Mahmud, "The ethos of PeaceNiche's work is to engage in rationality and dialogue as a counter to extremism and religious-based violence in the city and, on a larger scale, to prompt democracy and social revolution in which ordinary citizens feel ownership, responsibility and pride for their city."

Shirkat Gah Women's Resource Centre (Shirkat Gah) is a leading women's rights organization that strives for social justice and equality for women. Through its capacity building, advocacy campaigns and other programmatic work, the organization uses a range of art techniques – such as film, music and other performing art – to engage communities around issues related to women's rights, create dialogues around the cultural discrimination of women and promote pluralistic, democratic and peaceful values. Given that groups are particularly receptive to theatre, the organization has successfully used drama to train local women and youth to advocate for women's rights within their communities and as a way of engaging communities in discussions about taboo subjects.

During its 16 Days of Activism campaigns, Shirkat Gah uses performance and community dialogues to raise awareness about gender-based violence. In an upcoming initiative, for example, the organization plans to use traditional performance art forms such as poetry and storytelling to challenge patriarchal and extremist views of women and sexuality and build solidarity among women working on a common issue. Additionally, the project seeks to revive these traditional artistic practices, which have been forgotten by the younger generation, since religious expression is the only form of cultural expression that is deemed acceptable in Pakistan today. In their women-friendly spaces – safe spaces for women's participation that Shirkat Gah has established in districts – women of different ages will be encouraged to participate in open mic sessions, using song, narrative, dance and poetry to learn from one another and to criticize patriarchy and sexuality issues that have flourished as a result of extremism and religious fundamentalism.

Each open mic session is preceded by training workshops that include one to two days of games and exercises, allowing the women to get to know one another and begin working as a group. Following this, trainers with particular expertise in theatre and other cultural expressions will train the women on artistic techniques. Given the threat of intimidation and extremism in the country, Shirkat Gah has conceived the project so that it draws on traditional practices in which women would gather during weddings and

Factors for Success

- The scalability and replicability of programs to ensure broad outreach and the engagement of a critical mass of people on issues of peace, tolerance and reconciliation.
- The use of local traditions and art forms to engage the public in sensitive and controversial issues in a context where freedom of expression is limited.
- Creating alternate narratives to fundamentalist discourses about the past.
- Holistic and multidisciplinary approaches that use art and culture as one methodology amid a range of other strategies.

other events to critique patriarchal structures through songs and dance. The organization has found that using cultural spaces to address sensitive issues such as gender equality and sexuality is often easier and presents more results than directly addressing these issues with opponents.

Shirkat Gah has also successfully lobbied for new legislation on early marriage to raise the age of marriage for girls from 16 to 18 years. Among its different strategies, the organization used Boal-inspired participatory theatre methods and storytelling to create dialogues focused on the early-marriage age and its relation to domestic violence and other health and social concerns. Following a theatre production, women were invited to assume the roles of different characters and through that part portray a different outcome.

Through these spaces of creative exploration, women were able to express their views and confront male decision makers in public – something that they would otherwise not have done. While Shirkat Gah is not a cultural or art organization per se, it is successfully using art and cultural methods as one strategy to take women's rights from the local to the global level, seeking to reduce the state-citizen gap and challenge the role of non-state actors in denying women their rights.

Challenges

Human rights and social justice activists are working in high-risk environments. Given the proliferation of violent extremist forces, these individuals and their

organizations are constantly faced with the threat of violent attacks and intimidation.

While some organizations are set up as social enterprises, others face challenges with institutional sustainability, since much of their funding is received on a project basis.

Opportunities

One of the greatest threats to peace and stability in Pakistan is extremism and religious fundamentalism. As extremists distort and mythologize Pakistani history and culture for their vested interests, human rights activists and artists are successfully using the very same medium to counter these narratives. The achievement of organizations such as CYAAD, CAP, Ajoka and Shirkat Gah is the scalability of their programs – their ability to reach large groups of people and work with a critical mass that can reflect and engage on issues of peace, tolerance and reconciliation.

Furthermore, many of the cases discussed here highlight that artists and activists are successful in addressing sensitive and controversial issues as well as in overcoming some of the cultural conservativeness by drawing on local art and traditional practices as a medium of expression.

“As extremists distort and mythologize Pakistani history and culture for their vested interests, human rights activists and artists are successfully using the very same medium to counter these narratives.”

Finally, despite the ongoing threat of the Taliban and religious fundamentalism, the fact that the country has an elected government and a democratic system in place, provides – to some extent – an enabling environment for art and cultural activities.



Telling Stories of War, Peace and Hope in Sri Lanka

“Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity.”

– Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, author, Nigeria (quoted on Herstories’ webpage)

Sri Lanka’s civil war began in 1983 between the government and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). It was only until 2009, when the Sri Lankan military undertook an offensive strike against the LTTE – with the government finally declaring victory – that prospects for peace started to be considered. The Sri Lankan government has since taken steps towards democratic reforms, even initiating a Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission, which was later dismissed as biased towards the government.

The war destroyed entire families and devastated whole communities. Women, however, bore the biggest burden of the conflict. Almost 80% of women were either widowed, unmarried, divorced, or living separately from their husbands. Despite a range of post-conflict initiatives that seek to address women’s needs in the aftermath of war, there were limited spaces for women to share their very personal and intimate experiences of the conflict.

Herstories – an archive of 70 oral history narratives of Sri Lankan mothers’ from diverse religious and ethnic groups who were affected by the war – aims to fill this gap. The archive of oral history, which has been developed into a travelling exhibition, seeks to provide a gendered perspective on war, peace, and security from the very real experiences of women at the grassroots level.

Curator, Radhika Hettiarachchi designed and undertook an ethical and process-oriented approach to collecting the oral history narratives. Working with local community-based organizations, the project team

identified volunteers to participate in the project. The team then met with the volunteers at a joint community meeting, outlining the objectives of the project and the potential risks associated with their participation in the project. Through home visits and by working closely with each woman, the project team began to gather their stories, photos and other memory objects that related to their experience. Photography and video was used to support each of the oral history narratives.

While no promises of money or services were made to any of the volunteers, an unexpected outcome of the project was that it established an informal referral system of services by connecting women to development organizations and institutions providing psycho-social support. Despite the voluntary nature of the project and the risk of intimidation from the government’s security forces, women volunteered to participate in the project because they wanted to share and preserve their stories as well as build support and empathy from their communities and others who were engaging with the exhibition.

Through the stories of self, family, and community, the oral histories, which have traveled around the country and internationally, invite the audience to engage with these women’s experiences – their strength and their hope – and reflect on questions of peace. More importantly, for these mothers, who had no access to any formal truth-telling mechanism – such as a truth commissions – the process of storytelling provided a cathartic platform for recognition and sharing.

In reflecting on the significance of Herstories and the process, Radhika Hettiarachchi posits “We create the building blocks for empathy. Empathy is important to reconciliation and each story is valuable and has a truth to it. The existence of the story is recognition.”

See <http://herstoryarchive.org/about-us/> to view part of the exhibition.

“We create the building blocks for empathy. Empathy is to reconciliation and each story is valuable and has a truth to it. The existence of the story is recognition.”

– Radhika Hettiarachchi, Herstories, Sri Lanka

Photo: Word Warriors

Nepal: Community Empowerment and Social Reconstruction

Background

Historically, Nepal was governed by a series of royal dynasties, until 1991, when political parties launched a popular movement for democracy. Following a succession of street protests that resulted in numerous deaths and arrests, King Birendra finally ceded power, and a multiparty democracy was established.

Between 1991 and 1995, Nepal continued to experience cycles of political upheavals resulting in, among other things, the dissolution of the communist government. This was followed by the beginning of the Maoist revolt, or the “People’s War,” in 1996— which sought to establish a republic and change the constitution — throwing the country into ten years of violent struggle. Approximately 13,000 people were killed and 1,300 went missing.¹⁴ On 21 November 2006, the government of Nepal and the Communist Party of Nepal signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which officially marked the end of the war.

Currently, amidst power mongering, Nepal faces the challenge of completing its constitution-drafting process. While frustrations about the delays in finalization of the constitution are seen in episodes of violent conflict between state authorities and citizens,¹⁵ for example, victims groups continue to struggle for recognition.

In early 2015, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a Commission of Inquiry on the Disappearances to uncover the truth about the conflict years and bring justice for victims, was established. However, in addition to being created amidst dissent from civil society,¹⁶ officials from both these commissions have been criticized for their bias towards the political elite rather than taking a victim-centered approach and prioritizing victims’ voices.¹⁷ The constitution-drafting process together with the commissions’ establishment and operations thus far have all highlighted the stratification of Nepalese society and

the marginalization of ordinary Nepalese citizens by the political elite. Furthermore, these processes exemplify the lack of a democratic culture of consultation and citizen engagement.

Nepal has always been a stratified society, marked by caste and class divisions that shaped the daily social, political and economic interactions of the Nepalese people. While the 1990s provided some hope for social reconstruction and equality, today a large percentage of the population remains poor. The 2014 Human Development Report estimates the poverty prevalence at 23.8%.¹⁸

In addition to the vulnerability of being a post-conflict society, Nepal recently experienced devastating twin earthquakes in April and May 2015 that killed thousands and left thousands more homeless. As ordinary citizens come to terms with the devastation wrecked by years of violence and more recently by natural disaster, art practitioners and social activists are using art methodologies to contribute to positive social reconstruction.

Creating New Narratives and Recognizing Everyday Heroes

One of the most striking legacies of Nepal’s history as a monarchy is that the national narratives tell the stories of royalty and the heroes celebrated are people in power. Accounts of everyday life and ordinary people’s contributions to Nepal remain largely absent from the national landscape. **Nepal Picture Library Digital Photo Archive**, run by Photo Circle, is a repository of photographs that aims to capture Nepal’s diverse history.

Through the collection of family albums and photographs, the archive seeks to — in an inclusive way — include the stories of ordinary people and minorities that have been excluded from the larger political and economic structures.

As the country prepares to become a full-fledged democracy and begins to address and embrace its diversity, the archive — with more than 24,000 photographs — contributes to this process by using the past to build a new and inclusive future. As NayanTara Gurung Kakshapati observes, “If the archive is looking

14 See http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/NP/OHCHR_Nepal_Conflict_Re2012.p for a detailed background on Nepal and <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-12499391> for a comprehensive timeline.

15 See <http://www.cnn.com/2015/08/25/asia/nepal-police-protester-deaths/>

16 See <https://www.ictj.org/our-work/regions-and-countries/nepal> for further discussion.

17 See <http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2015-08-19/it-takes-two.html>

18 See http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/nepal_nhdr_2014-final.pdf.

» Art and cultural activities can play a role in post-disaster areas, serving as tools for hope, enabling victims to reconnect with their community members and encouraging a sense of normality. «

Nepal Conflict in Brief	
1951-1991	Royal dynasties govern Nepal.
1990-	Pro-democracy protests suppressed by security forces results in mass arrests and deaths. King Birendra agrees to a new democratic constitution.
1991 –	Nepali Congress Party (NAP) wins first democratic elections.
1994 –	Communist party wins the elections.
1995 –	The Communist party is dissolved.
1996 -	The Maoist revolt begins, marking a ten-year period of violence that kills approximately 13,000 people and leaves 1,300 missing.
2001 –	The Maoist rebels' violent attacks increase. Prime Minister GP Kerala resigns and is succeeded by Sheer Bahadur Deuba.
2001 –	Maoists declare failed peace talks and begin targeting police and army posts.
2001 –	A state of emergency is declared. Over one hundred people are killed during the Maoists attacks.
2002 –	Parliament dissolves. Sher Bahadur Deuba heads interim government. King Gyanendra dismisses Sher Bahadur Deuba and postpones elections.
2003 –	Rebels cease peace talks. Months of violence follow.
2005 –	King Gyandendra dismisses the government and takes direct control. Maoist rebels and opposition parties agree on a plan to restore democracy.
2006 –	King Gyandendra reinstates Parliament, which votes to limit the king's political powers.
2006 -	The Comprehensive Peace Agreement is signed.
2007 –	Maoists join the interim government and lobby for the end to the monarchy. The Maoists then leave the interim government. As part of the deal with the Maoist party to re-enter the government, Parliament abolishes the monarchy.
2008 –	Ram Baran Yadav becomes the country's first president.
2009 –	Maoists leave the government after political parties refuse to integrate former rebels into the military.
2010-2015	Political clashes and contestations result in delays in the drafting of the new constitution.
2015 –	Violent street protests break out as opposition-supporters object to the parliamentary vote on the disputed constitution.
2015 –	The government sets up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a Commission of Inquiry on the Disappearances amidst protests from victims groups on the lack of consultation.
2015 –	Twin earthquakes in April and May 2015 kill thousands and thousands more are homeless.

back, then it also informs how we think about the present and future.¹⁹

In focusing on questions of identity and representation, and how these issues pertain to youth specifically, the organization is currently working with educators to develop strategies to make history more engaging and accessible.

By embracing multiple voices and experiences of all Nepalese, the Nepal Picture Library Digital Photo Archive hopes to provide youth an alternate, more

inclusive narrative that could serve as an inspiration for building a new national identity as well as a foundation for a peaceful future.

“If the archive is looking back, then it also informs how we think about the present and future.”

– NayanTara Gurung Kakshapati, Nepal Picture Library Digital Photo Archive

¹⁹ Author's interview conducted with NyanTara Gurung Kakshapati, 9 June 2015.

Ensuring Everybody's Right to Speak

Word Warriors – one of Nepal's first spoken-word poetry groups – recognises the right of all Nepalese to express and share their stories and the importance of these stories in writing a new inclusive yet diverse national narrative. Through the Write to Speak project, Word Warriors is using spoken-word to engage young women from marginalized communities. In a series of workshops and through ongoing support, these women – many of whom have been suppressed because of cultural and social norms – share their stories in an artistic and powerful way.

In addition, Word Warriors encourages them to establish their own youth-led artistic collective within their community, enabling them to create new and innovative spaces for free expression and dialogue through poetry. Ujjwala Maharjan of Word Warriors observes, “Spoken-word poetry brings forth arguments and issues not through slogans and banners but instead uses the power of artistic expression that forces people to reflect.”



Ujjwala Maharjan from Word Warriors performs at a spoken word-event in Kathmandu. Photo: Rajneesh Bhandari.

Community Engagement and Empowerment

Both Ujjwala Maharjan of Word Warriors and Nischal Oli of Siddhartha Art Foundation observe that art – or engagement with art – in Nepal is a privilege.²⁰ While certain social classes have better access to art and cultural activities, the broader public has limited contact with galleries, theatres and other art spaces. The main focus of Siddhartha Art Foundation is the democratization of art.

By providing skills to art leaders and new professionals, the organization hopes to take art outside galleries and into the public space. Furthermore, it aims to raise awareness among artists about the role of artistic interventions in contributing to community empowerment as well as begin to create community ownership of art initiatives.

“The artist’s role is to foster dialogue and engage communities on critical social issues.”

– ArTree, Nepal

Currently undertaking an art, education and community engagement project, Siddhartha Art Foundation takes a multi-pronged approach to achieving its goal. The organization trains artists, art institutions, journalists and others interested in a career in art management, curation, marketing, audience development and art criticism. Following the training, participants of the training program – through research and engagement with experts and local communities – design art projects based on the community’s needs. Trainees are then provided small grants and programmatic support to undertake their local projects.

Through this process, Siddhartha Art Foundation seeks to ensure that people of all classes are able to access the art, and that art managers, art writers, and curators place as much value on their communal duty as they do on their aesthetic intervention. Through capacity building and programmatic support for artists to undertake projects that will empower and engage communities, Siddhartha Art Foundation bridges some of the social cleavages prevalent in Nepal.

Rebuilding Community in the Aftermath of the Earthquake

The twin earthquakes that devastated Nepal in April and May 2015 left a trail of destruction in its wake.

Even as relief efforts are under way, it will take years before the Nepalese people recover from the earthquakes’ devastating effects. While experiences of trauma differ according to events that are experienced and vary on an individual basis, given the loss of loved ones, homes and belongings, earthquake victims may experience similar emotional responses to survivors of violence.

Feelings of shock, anxiety, depression and betrayal may prevail. Experiences of trauma are disempowering and disconnecting. According to Judith Herman (1992) for survivors of trauma to begin healing they need to know that they will be safe, they need to reconstruct the traumatic story, and restore the connections with their community. While trauma is experienced on an individual level, its effects can be felt collectively, manifested through a sense of disconnectedness amongst community members. As has been noted, art and cultural activities can facilitate processes of healing at an individual level while also providing spaces for survivors rebuild relations within their community.

In their focus on making positive investments to the social and cultural life of Nepal, several art, cultural and educational organizations are contributing to the post-quake recovery efforts. ArTree – a collective of contemporary art practitioners – believes that art cannot be removed from the community and that the artist’s role is to foster dialogue and engage communities on critical social issues. In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, ArTree’s members in collaboration with youth groups, local government and community members began documenting the damage caused by the earthquake. The organization developed a rehabilitation program, engaging children in art activities and used art methodologies, skills-based trainings and film screenings to engage communities on issues related to the earthquake, providing platforms for traumatized individuals to begin communicating their experiences and using the fluidity of the art methods for them to access their feelings.

Using participatory art techniques, artists also raised awareness on post-disaster health risks such as water-borne diseases. Plans are under way for artists to work with children affected by the earthquake to use art therapy methodologies to engage them in the production of art installations. Plans are also ahead for women to work with product designers to create knitted works that could be sold. In addition to providing new skills to women who have been severely affected by the earthquake, the project also seeks to restore their material wellbeing the loss of which is also a source of grief and instability. The funds raised will also be used to continue the institution’s rehabilitation efforts in the community.

²⁰ Author’s interview conducted with Ujjwala Maharjan, 9 June 2015 and Nischal Oli, 22 June 2015.

Finally, in recognizing the links between memory, belonging and place, ArTree will create site-specific art installations reflecting the post-disaster circumstances affecting the community. The artists aim to inspire hope and energy for rebuilding through these installations and related activities.

“By working with children on the traumatic event through interactive games and exercises, Karkhana was able to begin processes of healing by reconstructing the story as well as enabling the children to access some of the emotions that were masked by feelings of shock.”

Similar to its use in post-conflict settings, art and cultural activities can play a role in post-disaster areas, serving as tools for hope, enabling victims to reconnect with their community members and encouraging a sense of normality. Karkhana is an education organization that uses innovative, participatory methodologies to provide content for middle school learners in the fields of science, technology, engineering, art and math. Three days post-disaster, staff at Karkhana developed a lesson plan using simple math problems, games and art activities such as collage making in an attempt to engage children at the camps.

Following the success of this initial interaction and realizing that the children were deeply traumatized – unable to understand what they experienced and showing signs of listlessness, anxiety and shock – Karkhana used a small seed fund to refine and expand its program. The organization partnered with local private schools and psychologists to develop a five-day post-earthquake lesson plan and a primer for educators. The primer was an open-source collaborative effort that brought together more than 15 experts from four countries.

At least 120 teachers participated in the outreach to the camps, with local schools making additional in-kind donations to support the effort. Through a training-of-trainers process, Karkhana successfully trained over 3,000 teachers in the Kathmandu Valley to use the interactive post-earthquake lesson plan to engage children on issues related to the earthquake. By working with children on the traumatic event through interactive games and exercises, Karkhana was able to begin processes of healing by reconstructing the story as well as enabling the children to access some of the emotions that were masked by feelings of shock. A second phase took this program to neighbouring

districts, where Karkhana and collaborators trained an additional 3,000-plus teachers – often working in remote and hard-to-reach rural environments – in the same program.

In addition to these two organizations, Artlab – a collective group of street artists – using this aesthetic form to inspire youth to find creative solutions to social issues plans to launch its Re-Color project. The group of artists will organize art activities such as mural painting, art classes and performances at the camps to engage and entertain the displaced populations.

Siddhartha Art Foundation too, in their contribution to recovery efforts, coordinated artists working in disaster-affected areas, documenting their efforts as well as worked with local relief organizations to provide Psychological First Aid training for these artists. One of the challenges of this intervention was that artists were unable to properly integrate the therapeutic methodologies into their work and those that did provide art therapy for traumatized individuals were unable to successfully show the impact of their work.

A lesson that could be gleaned from the intervention, however, is that coordinated efforts across development, art and humanitarian sectors, if undertaken carefully and strategically have the potential to support victims of trauma.

Finally, South Asia Communications – an organization working with youth through media and education – plans to use its Pattern Breakers project to contribute to the post-earthquake rehabilitation efforts. The project featuring a television show and radio shows each month profiles ordinary local heroes with the goal of providing role models for youth. Future episodes will include a focus on the funds received for the earthquake recovery, question how these were utilized as well as provide information for victims about how they can access compensation and other resources for rehabilitation. Pattern Breakers encourages its audience, mainly youth, to find creative solutions to their problems and participate as active and responsible citizens. Furthermore, the project supports citizens' efforts to hold their political leaders accountable, thereby contributing to building a culture of democracy.

Remembering the Missing: Using Art and Culture to Fight for Truth, Justice and Recognition

Enforced disappearances during periods of conflict and authoritarian rule are a mechanism to spread fear within communities and create a feeling of instability and uncertainty. 30 August marks the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances. Families of the disappeared in Nepal – with the support of the National Network of Families of Disappeared and Missing Nepal (NEFAD) – came together to remember their loved ones as well as advocate for their right to truth, justice and recognition.

As part of the events planned for the day, survivors used improvisational Playback Theatre techniques to share their stories of loss, uncertainty and anxiety that come with their particular type of victimization. The theatre audience included community members, families of the disappeared, writers, commissioners and journalists. The goal of the performance was to create public engagement and interaction on the issue of disappearances and to lobby commissioners to recognize the rights of the families of the disappeared to truth and justice.

“Art provides a new avenue for engagement and interaction, enabling survivors to participate actively in voicing their demands for recognition and justice.”

According to NEFAD’s chairperson, Ram Kumar Bhandari, art – compared with other forms of engagement such as seminars and conferences, which pose language and literacy barriers – provides a new avenue for engagement and interaction on the issue, enabling survivors to actively participate in voicing their demands for recognition and justice.

In addition to the interactive theatre performance, families participated in a ritual candle lighting ceremony and remembered their disappeared loved ones through artwork, photographs and poems that took the form of a “memory tree.” Finally, through a NEFAD-supported project, women whose husbands have disappeared are participating in a quilting project that also seeks to raise awareness and support advocacy efforts. Fifty women produced embroidered squares bearing the name of their husbands. The beginnings of this quilting project were also exhibited at the event marking the International Day of Enforced Disappearances.

In addition to the use of art for commemorative ceremonies and events, NEFAD – in partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross and other non-profit-organisations – also works to provide ongoing support to families of the disappeared through a jointly led project entitled Hateymalo or “Joining Hands.”

Project partners work in 43 districts to provide psychological, economic, legal and socio-cultural support to families of the disappeared. Apart from the trauma that results from the uncertainty of the fate of their loved ones, families- especially wives of the missing- face particular stigmatization. Cultural and social norms dictate that they behave and dress as widows; however, most women refuse to follow this social dictate. Furthermore, they lose their position within the family, as they are perceived as one more person to support. Finally, many families face legal and administrative challenges related to inheritance and obtaining citizenship because missing persons do not have any legal status.

The Hateymalo project takes a holistic approach to addressing these issues and providing broad support for families of the missing. Art and cultural activities are one of the strategies that are used to support families. Through interactive street theatre and cultural events, for example, that highlight the plight of the families of the disappeared, local victims’ groups seek to raise awareness about their situation with a goal of creating empathy and building community support.

Given that Nepalese culture is steeped in spiritual and ritual practices, many families express the need to undertake rituals or memorialization activities to keep the memory of their loved ones alive. The project helps families undertake religious rituals to provide healing and peace for the family as well as for the missing relative, whether he or she is dead or alive.

Additionally, public spaces such as water wells, memory pillars, memory gates, waiting areas and temples are constructed in the name of the missing person and inaugurated at a public event. Apart from keeping the memory of the missing person alive, such initiatives also provide recognition for family members. The fact that these memorialization forms have public utility, with all community members benefiting from the initiative, also brings families one step closer to being reintegrated and supported by their communities.

Families of the disappeared live in a space of limbo – with the hope that their loved one may someday appear while at the same time wanting closure but being unable to undertake the proper burial rites. For these families, creative and cultural spaces enable them to collectively share their sense of loss while also building awareness and solidarity for their right to justice, truth and recognition.

Challenges

Some projects with provocative content that challenge the government face censorship. The lack of support for art is further highlighted by the fact that artistic initiatives are supported mainly by international donors, with little to no support from the government.

Opportunities

As Nepal recovers from the most recent disaster and begins consolidating its democracy, the social, political and economic divisions within the country will pose a challenge to any nation-building process. Questions of identity, representation and equality need to be addressed now to prevent new cycles of violence and horizontal conflicts in the future. Artists, educators and activists – through the use of art, education and cultural activities – are providing platforms for this work to happen.

The success of artists, education specialists and social activists in Nepal lies in their ability to network and collaborate. Initiatives undertaken by Karkhana

By using art and cultural activities to work with survivors of conflict, civil society organizations are providing spaces for rehabilitation and recovery, enabling them to reconnect with their community as well as begin to explore some of the emotions related to their traumatic experience. For families of the disappeared, art and cultural activities are mechanisms to raise awareness about their loved ones and advocate for recognition and justice in a context where there is little political will to address victims' rights to justice.

“Questions of identity, representation and equality need to be addressed now to prevent new cycles of violence and horizontal conflicts in the future.”

Factors for Success

- The provision of opportunities for vulnerable and marginalized groups such as victims of human rights violations, victims of disasters, women, children and youth to engage in social and political issues that affect them.
- The creation of safe spaces for the exchange of ideas and opinions around social issues that could facilitate processes of reconnection and understanding.
- Understanding the social, cultural, material and psychological dimensions of trauma and facilitating processes that could address these different dimensions.
- Networking and collaboration maximize resources and increase outreach.

and ArTree for example, highlight that partnerships assist in maximizing resources and increasing outreach. Furthermore, many of the organizations have creative approaches to mobilizing resources. Apart from accessing funds from international donor agencies, others have set up their organization as social enterprises, while some access in-kind donations from local corporations and institutions. This enables organizations to provide a rapid response in emergencies.



Making Music Together in Afghanistan

“When children are sitting in the orchestra and playing a musical piece in harmony, listening to each other’s melodic lines and providing support to each other, such collaboration and partnership also helps students to develop respect for each other and their differences and to live in harmony outside the school and orchestra.”

– Dr. Ahmad N. Sarmast, Founder and Director of the Afghanistan National Institute of Music.

Afghanistan has experienced almost four decades of violent conflict. Between 1996 and 2001, the country underwent an internal civil war as the Taliban rose to power and ousted the incumbent government. The Taliban leaders followed a fundamentalist version of Islam, enforcing a strict Sharia law, which among other things, restricted women’s movement and participation in the public sphere as well as banned all forms of entertainment, including music and dance. Anybody found disobeying these laws was beaten or executed.

In 2001, following the attacks on the World Trade Center in the United States, the U.S. government supported by northern alliance forces launched an attack on Taliban-controlled bases as they searched for Osama bin Laden. In December 2001, the Taliban government finally fell in Kabul. In 2004, Afghanistan held its first democratic presidential elections. Today, Afghanistan struggles to come to terms with its past – democracy continues to be threatened by extremist forces, Taliban insurgency and weak governance structures that breed corruption.²¹

Given this protracted conflict, Afghan culture has been

“Ordinary people lack the skills to resolve conflict by nonviolent means and struggle to overcome the fundamentalist values instilled during the Taliban regime.”

shaped by violence and divisions. Ordinary people lack the skills to resolve conflict by nonviolent means and struggle to overcome the fundamentalist values instilled during the Taliban regime. Class, ethnicity and gender divisions are a few of the challenges that continue to segregate the society.

The Afghanistan National Institute of Music (ANIM) seeks to address some of these challenges by using music and music education to “build a just civil society.”²² The school provides free music education for young people between the ages of 9 and 22, focusing on the musical diversity of Afghanistan while making international music traditions such as jazz, hip-hop and classical music accessible to learners.

By emphasizing the values of equality and uniqueness, ANIM provides equal opportunity for male and female students, irrespective of economic status or ethnic background. Given the cultural and social barriers against females in Afghanistan, the school is unique in that it reserves 50 percent of the available places for girls and practices co-education. The school’s gender representation is also reflected in its ensemble.

For disadvantaged children who left their jobs on the streets to attend the school, ANIM provides a stipend to parents to compensate for the loss of income that the child contributed to the household. Additionally, to overcome the socioeconomic barriers between students from different economic backgrounds, the school provides free uniforms, meals and transportation for all students.

ANIM is unique in that it not only uses music and music education to promote diversity, but the values of equality and democracy are entrenched in its daily practices. Students essentially live what they learn. By bringing students of different classes, gender and ethnicities together to make music, students are inadvertently given the skills to work together and appreciate – lessons that can be exported outside the boundaries of the school.

The school functions under the belief that it is the promotion of the values of equality, respect for diversity, civic accountability and responsibility that learners can together envision a different future for Afghanistan. Dr. Sarmast believes that one of his core goals as an educator is to ensure that “when a family goes to a concert venue, they can share the beauty of music, accepting that music does not discriminate across gender, class and ethnicity.”²³

“When a family goes to a concert venue, they can share the beauty of music, accepting that music does not discriminate across gender, class and ethnicity.”

– Dr. Ahmad N. Sarmast, Founder and Director of the Afghanistan National Institute of Music.

²¹ For an in-depth background on Afghanistan’s history of conflict, see <http://www.insightonconflict.org/conflicts/afghanistan/conflict-profile/> and <http://www.usip.org/publications/the-current-situation-in-afghanistan-for-current-issues-that-the-country-faces>.

²² Author’s interview conducted with Dr. Ahmad N. Sarmast, 11 June 2015.

²³ Ibid.

Mobilizing and Recognizing Victims of Conflict in Afghanistan

One of the greatest needs of survivors of gross human rights violations is to tell their story – for the public to bear witness to the atrocity and acknowledge the suffering.²⁴ In the absence of any formal truth-telling mechanism such as a truth commission, the Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization (AHRDO) utilized Playback Theatre²⁵ – a technique where actors spontaneously enact stories that are shared by audience members – for documenting human rights violations and publically sharing survivors' stories.

While the organization initially attempted documentation through formal means such as traditional workshops and seminars, they found that some survivors did not want to share their stories as a result of fear and distrust while others were too traumatized to talk about their experiences.

By drawing on Afghanistan's storytelling tradition,

“The partnership with psychologists and trauma counselors model is noteworthy as such a process enables art and human rights practitioners to further assist survivors by providing a referral service for those survivors in the greatest need of psycho-social support.”

along with theatre improvisation techniques, AHRDO brought survivors together to share and document their experiences. Survivors as audience members were invited to share their story in an informal way with as little or as much detail as they wanted, following which, AHRDO staff enacted the story using lighting, music and other sound effects to capture the essence of the account. After each performance, the actors together with a psychologist would debrief the audience, asking them questions related to the emotions that the production raised for them and more general issues about how they felt.

According to AHRDO director Hadi Marifat, there is an assumption that art can facilitate healing for survivors of human rights violations. However, while some survivors acknowledged the healing effect of the performances,

at least two audience members showed visible signs of re-traumatization and had to be referred to counselors.

The partnership with psychologists and trauma counselors model is noteworthy as such a process enables art and human rights practitioners to further assist survivors by providing a referral service for those survivors in the greatest need of psycho-social support. The documentation process culminated with the collection of over a thousand stories and personal objectives, creatively told through memory boxes. In addition to using theatre techniques for documentation of human rights violations, AHRDO utilized Theatre of the Oppressed games and exercises developed by the staff and other theatre practitioners to undertake weeklong processes with the goal of building trust among diverse survivor groups.

During the first three days, workshop participants played a series of games and exercises that focused on learning about each other and building trust. In the following two days, the participants made images, using their bodies, to begin telling their stories of the war. The group then worked together to decide and agree on the one story that was most representative of them all. The chosen story was developed into a Forum Theatre performance and was staged for other survivor groups and local communities.

Through the long process of trust building using art methodologies, AHRDO has managed to support victims from diverse groups to work together to establish a Victim's Council in each province, advocating for the rights of all victims. Since there is no political will in the country to address questions of accountability and justice for victims, and many perpetrators are still in positions of power, art has served as a less controversial and accessible tool to address issues of justice and truth in this context. Furthermore, through the medium of art, survivors-

“Art has served as a less controversial and accessible tool to address issues of justice and truth in Afghanistan.”

irrespective of language, religious and ethnic differences- eventually found their common ground as victims working together for justice.

24 See Ereshnee Naidu-Silverman (2014)

25 Playback theatre—developed by Johnathan Fox with Jo Sala—is a form of improvisational theatre where audiences tell stories and actors re-enact the stories on stage. See <http://www.playbackcentre.org/>.

» Peacebuilders and artists view the ethnic divide as one of the greatest challenges to peace and reconciliation in Myanmar. «

Myanmar: Building Peace and Promoting Dialogue across Ethnic Divides

Myanmar Conflict in Brief	
1948-	Burma is liberated from the Japanese occupation becomes an independent state with U Nu as prime minister.
1962-	U Nu is ousted in a military coup led by General Ne Win. Ne Win abolishes the federal system in favour of a socialist system. A single-party state is formed, all independent newspapers are banned and the economy is nationalized.
1974-	A new constitution transitions the country from the military control to a People's Assembly that is headed by Ne Win and other military officials.
1975-	Regionally-based minority groups form the Opposition National Democratic Front and mount insurgencies.
1982-	The law that designates non-indigenous people as "associate citizens" comes into place, barring all "associate citizens" from public office.
1988-	Currency devaluation and the loss of peoples' savings results in anti-government protests. The State Law and Order Restoration Council is established and declares martial law. Thousands, including human rights activists are arrested.
1990-2002	Ongoing negotiations and political agreements between the ruling party and other party's results in bans being lifted and detainees release.
2003-	Khin Nyunt becomes prime minister and begins steps to draft a new constitution.
2004-	Khin Nyunt is replaced as prime minister.
2004-	Thousands of prisoners fighting for human rights and democracy – including 1988 pro-democracy student protestors – are released.
2007-	International Red Cross accuses the government of abusing citizens' rights.
2007-	The military government declares 14 years of constitutional talks complete.
2008-	A series of bomb blasts hit the country and the government blames it on insurgency groups. The government publishes the proposed new constitution. A quarter of the parliamentary seats are allocated to the military, and opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi is banned from holding office.
2008-	Secret trials are held and many political and human rights activists are given up to 65 years jail sentences.
2009-	Aung San Suu Kyi begins talks with military leaders.
2010-	The government announces that the election laws have finally been passed. The national anthem, country's name and flag are changed.
2011-	Thein Sein becomes president of a combined civilian and military government.
2012-2015	President Thein Sein begins re-establishing diplomatic relations and makes reforms.
2015-	A draft ceasefire agreement is signed between the government and 16 rebel groups. Observers are sceptical about whether the ceasefire will hold.

Background

Myanmar is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in Asia and has suffered one of the longest civil conflicts in modern times (Sakhong, 2012). Following failed nation-building projects since independence, Myanmar was subjected to military rule for more than 50 years. The country began a slow process of political transition, beginning with its first democratic elections in 2010, which finally resulted in the election of a civilian

leadership.²⁶ Several observers inside and outside the country were sceptical of the new government and its ability to make the necessary reforms required for a sustainable democracy. Many noted that the outgoing military regime manipulated the elections, ensuring that military officials secured one-quarter of parliamentary seats.

²⁶ For an in-depth background of Myanmar's transition, see Priscilla Clapp (2015) and Stefan Bachtold (2014). See also <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-12992883> for a comprehensive timeline.

However, President Thein Sein made several reforms, including freedom of expression and permitted the National League for Democracy – which later won the 2012 elections – to return to the formal political process (Bactold, 2014). As Myanmar waits to hold its parliamentary elections in late 2015 and its 2016 presidential elections, many remain doubtful of the military's support for the transition. They question whether the ceasefires signed with different armed groups will hold, and doubt the ability of the state to address potential violence that may result from armed groups vying for power, recognition and resources (Bachtold, 2014).

According to Lian H. Sakhong (2012), Myanmar's inability to consolidate a democratic state since independence can largely be attributed to its struggle with building a national identity. Despite the array of ethnic groups, post-independent governments have attempted nation-building projects as one ethnicity, one identity and one religion. As different ethnic groups competed for recognition and equality, many began taking up arms, which resulted in the long-term conflict and entrenched ethnic identities in the country (Sakhong, 2012). Armed groups have mobilized ethnic identities in their struggle and have created new cultures of violence based on difference. It is against this backdrop that peacebuilders and artists are working together to bridge ethnic divides, heal traumatized communities and bring peace to local populations.

Peacebuilders and artists who participated in this research project view the ethnic divide as one of the greatest challenges to peace and reconciliation in the country. Additionally, some participants noted that the peace process remains a top-down initiative that has not reached people at the grassroots level. Furthermore, some participants questioned the idea of "peace," arguing that politicians and the political elite are paying lip service to issues of peace in an attempt to appease an international community, yet there have been no significant reforms in policy or practice.

As Myanmar struggles with its transition to democracy, artists and peacebuilders are making positive contributions to this process in three key areas: facilitating dialogues on peace, promoting creativity and contributing toward healing processes.

Facilitating Dialogue through Art

As has been noted, dialogue is an essential tool for peacebuilding and conflict resolution. In Myanmar especially, where ethnic divisions are so deeply entrenched, dialogue processes are necessary to build

empathy and trust as well as enable individuals to connect on a human level. According to Carlos Ossa, founder of the Myanmar Art Social Project (MASC), "Art is a soft approach to addressing multiple, difficult social issues."²⁷ MASC, founded in 2012, is a network of artists, therapists and peace practitioners working together to support personal and individual social transformation.

MASC works with a range of stakeholders including internally displaced people, youth, street children and the elderly. Supported by the idea that peace start at an individual level through human connections, the network uses diverse methodologies such as theatre techniques, group discussion, drawing, and mural- and collage-making to provide ordinary people with the tools for nonviolent communication, promote dialogue and overcome literacy and language barriers.

Simple theatre exercises such as the use of the body to express emotion, and Boal's Forum and Image Theatre are used as education and awareness raising tools in a context where education is didactic, strict and formal. MASC director, Tanya Hubbard observes that in a context like Myanmar, art methodologies provide opportunities for different kinds of social interaction to happen – people are more likely to engage honestly, take risks, listen deeply and share smiles and laughter that are welcome releases from the tension and anxiety of daily life in a conflict situation.²⁸

"People are more likely to engage honestly, take risks, listen deeply and share smiles and laughter that are welcome releases from the tension and anxiety of daily life in a conflict situation."

– Tanya Hubbard, MASC director, Myanmar

While there was initial resistance from peacebuilding and human rights organizations to use art in their programs in Myanmar, through MASC's training with beneficiaries and lobbying with other non-profit organisations, art is increasingly being used as an additional peacebuilding tool. Furthermore, given state security and local police monitoring of human rights activities, art presents a non-threatening tool to address these issues and it attracts less scrutiny from authorities. Ossa believes that if individuals are brought together to listen to one another on a human level, then there is a process of rehumanization that happens – art methodologies assist in facilitating this process.

²⁷ Author's interview conducted with Carlos Ossa and Tanya Hubbard, 10 June 2015.

²⁸ Author's email exchange with Tanya Hubbard, 21 August 2015.

Similarly, Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR) – a regional human rights organization working with survivors of gross human rights violations – uses participatory art techniques to enable individuals from diverse ethnic groups to come together to discuss the legacies of violence and the culture of impunity in Myanmar.

Among its several initiatives, AJAR successfully brought 40 female survivors from different ethnic groups together and using participatory art methodologies such as theatre, drawing and painting, enabled them to share their stories of violence and trauma. Overcoming barriers of language, class, education levels and ethnicity – through art techniques – these women were able to laugh together and cry together. They were able to listen to one another, begin to understand that one individual did not represent their entire ethnic group, and that irrespective of differences, they all shared similar experiences. They began to empathize with each other.

“Art presents a non-threatening tool to address social issues and it attracts less scrutiny from authorities.”

According to Laetitia Bonnet, “The use of games and art to facilitate interaction and see each other on the same level is extremely powerful in a context like Myanmar.” However, she warns that the success of these techniques is dependent on the context and should be used strategically.²⁹

In addition to providing spaces for dialogue on issues related to peace and diversity, others such as visual artist Ko Z use their work to raise awareness about the current peace process. Through art installations– such as his use of clothes collected from internally displaced persons (IDP) camps– in public spaces, Ko Z compels the public to reflect on the meaning of “peace” in the peace process, on issues of “equality” and “change” and questions what this change would look like for all citizens within the country. By portraying victims’ experiences in his artwork, Ko Z highlights the suffering and futility of war, while also bringing the distant peace process to the people.

²⁹ Author’s interview conducted with Laetitia Bonnet, 17 June 2015.

Telling Stories of Peace and Tolerance

“This is your book, you are allowed to do with it what you like and read it when you want”

– Mindy Walker, The Third Story Project

The Third Story Project in collaboration with Myanmar Storytellers develops a series of children’s books based on themes related to peace, tolerance and diversity. Through an interactive performance, the group narrates the story to children and then distributes full-colour illustrated books to each child. For many children, this is their first experience of the magical world of storytelling.

According to Mindy Walker, apart from “facilitating better understanding in communities through children,” the project also aims to ensure that each child has his or her copy of the book. In Myanmar, children’s books are not readily accessible. Those books that are available are locked away in a library, and any other available books are religious in nature and in black-and-white. In rural communities, most children have not even seen a book, let alone held their own.

The success of the project and its attraction to donors is that it produces tangible results – children with books. Thus far, 40 000 books have been distributed in 14 states. In addition to the broad outreach, anecdotal evidence collected from learners and teachers show that children are able to extract lessons of tolerance, empathy, acceptance of difference and the importance of sharing and working together, from the storybooks.

In writing about her reaction to a story about difference, one child for example wrote “you must help with empathy...you must help all human beings equally,” while another child wrote, “people need to share their knowledge [with] others and not make others sad.”

While the longitudinal effects of the project are yet to be determined, as Walone from Third Story Project notes, through the age-old art of storytelling, the narrators “hope to plant a seed” and use their art to create future peaceful communities.

Handwritten Urdu text in a cursive script, covering the background of the image. The text is dense and appears to be a collection of phrases or a longer passage, though the specific words are difficult to decipher due to the overlapping nature of the handwriting and the focus on the central subject.



Promoting Healing and Creativity through Art-based Approaches

Thukhuma Khayeethe (Art Travelers) is a travelling theatre troupe that trains young people in participatory theatre techniques and its use in social rebuilding. The troupe brings youth from diverse ethnicities to work together to create a joint performance. After two weeks of working together, these youth tour local communities, performing their production. Following the performance, audience members are invited to discuss issues of diversity, tolerance and peace.

According to Thila Min, a member of Thukhuma Khayeethe, their work does not seek to provide answers but instead facilitates a process of creativity for communities and young people to explore these issues.³⁰ In addition to providing platforms for creativity, a central goal of the performances is to provide traumatized individuals the opportunity for

“Humour – jokes, skits, films and other media – can serve as tool for coping, healing and renewal while also restoring people’s ability to laugh again.
(Zelizer, 2010)

entertainment and, through that process, contribute to broader healing. Traumatic experiences, by nature, restrict traumatized individuals from thinking and feeling freely. Art and other creative approaches to trauma can enable survivors of trauma to connect with their feelings and experience their emotions in dynamic and new ways without becoming re-traumatized (Nash and Wise, 2012).

Several other research participants have observed the role of art in promoting creativity and healing in a context like Myanmar. In addition to using art techniques to facilitate dialogue, MASC also uses art forms with the goal to promote creativity and healing.

By providing spaces for creativity in an environment where people have been suppressed by years of military rule and violent conflict, art build the confidence of ordinary people (thus to finding their own solutions to the social and political problems that they face). Ossa posits, that “it gives them the permission to create and to use their imagination.” Both Ossa and Bonnet also acknowledge the healing potential of art techniques.

Factors for Success

- Empower communities to find innovative solutions to resolving conflict.
- A multidisciplinary approach to addressing peace and reconciliation.
- Long-term trust building processes.
- Provide safe spaces for traumatized individuals to engage with their experiences from a distance.

According to Ossa, given the protracted conflict, many people carry their pain within their body and mind. Art allows for opportunities of playfulness and laughter. It creates a new and different energy that bears new possibilities for renewal and hope.³¹ Craig Zelizer’s (2010) examination of the role of humour in peacebuilding supports this theory. Zelizer (2010) posits that humour – through jokes, skits, films and other media – can serve as tool for coping, healing and renewal while also restoring people’s ability to laugh again.

Challenges

Despite the creative and innovative work being undertaken by artists and peacebuilders in Myanmar, there are numerous challenges that institutions and individuals face. Like their peers in Pakistan, all research participants highlighted security as a key concern. Human rights and peace activists are forced to keep a low profile as they continue to face threats and intimidation from extremist groups and local authorities. Non-profit-organisations require travel authorizations from the local authorities, which

“Human rights and peace activists are forced to keep a low profile as they continue to face threats and intimidation from extremist groups and local authorities.”

30 Author’s interview conducted with Thila Min, 17 June 2015.

31 Author’s interview conducted with Carlos Ossa and Tanya Hubbard, 10 June 2015.

subject them and their projects to scrutiny. In a context like Myanmar, where mistrust is pervasive, travel authorizations and state scrutiny hinders the trust-building process necessary for non-profit-organisations to interact with their beneficiaries.

Several research participants also commented on the lack of funding for peace and reconciliation work using art methodologies. While some attributed the lack of funding to the fact that the international donors want to focus their support on the government's peace process, others pointed that donors require demonstrated, quick results.

Given that much of this kind of work is process driven, related to attitudinal and behavioural changes, donors are reluctant to support these initiatives. Furthermore, donors need to be convinced of the role of art in contributing to peace and reconciliation efforts.

Opportunities

Myanmar presents unique challenges for reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts. The range of ethnic diversity and divides within the country informs the way the conflict is perceived and the ways in which it should be resolved. Much of the success of artists and peacebuilders working in Myanmar is a result of their ongoing efforts to build trust with their primary beneficiaries in a sustained and ongoing manner.

AJAR's successful gathering of women from diverse ethnic groups is a result of a long-term trust building process undertaken separately with each of the

different groups. Furthermore, organizations such as MASC and Thukhuma Khayeethe are beginning to show that the art can serve as tool for rebuilding trust by providing creative spaces for different groups to come together to share their experiences and identify opportunities for working jointly on issues related to peace, tolerance and reconciliation. Art forms also serve as mediums for individuals in post-conflict contexts to begin healing by providing safe spaces for engagement and facilitating processes where community members can begin to re-connect with each other.

Peacebuilders and artists are the bridges between divided communities in Myanmar. They bring the peace process to the people, facilitating healing and providing platforms for exchange of ideas and social renewal. While the uncertainty about the ceasefires and the transition looms large, it is these initiatives at a grassroots level that assist ordinary people to move one step closer to peace.

“Much of the success of artists and peacebuilders working in Myanmar is a result of their ongoing efforts to build trust with their primary beneficiaries in a sustained and ongoing manner.”



Building Peace and Tolerance through Memory in Bangladesh

The Liberation War Museum (LWM) in Bangladesh, established in 1996 seeks to recognize the suffering and heroism of the people of Bangladesh. Bangladesh – originally East Pakistan – emerged as an independent state in 1971, following a bloody war with West Pakistan. West Pakistan in attempting to suppress the struggle of the East Pakistani people for national and democratic rights launched an attack on East Pakistan, killing approximately three million civilians and displacing millions more from their homes.

Originally conceived as a people's museum, LWM museum trustees worked with both urban and rural communities, reaching out to diverse populations, ensuring broad community participation and ownership in the development of the museum.

Today the museum that includes a collection of memorabilia from the war, photographs and an archive of newspaper articles and other historic documents is a center for citizens' engagement. LWM's outreach and education programs highlight its commitment to community ownership and engagement. Working with schools, the museum established a human rights, tolerance and education program.

Apart from learners visiting the museum, LWM has also created a mobile museum in a school bus. The school bus – which includes replicas of the original museum exhibit – travels to different part of the country, where

learners are able to view the exhibition. Additionally, students engage in facilitated dialogues that focus on a Universal Declaration for Human Rights exhibition.

Finally, these young people are encouraged to engage with older relatives or neighbors who experienced the war – they collect and write-up the story of that person's experience of the conflict. There is no formula for the young people to collect the stories; instead there is an emphasis on learning first-person accounts of the war and through an inter-generational transfer of memory, lessons about the futility of the violent conflict are passed on.

“Through an inter-generational transfer of memory, lessons about the futility of the violent conflict are passed on.”

Teacher representatives from each participating school form part of a LWM Teachers' Network. The teachers serve as liaisons between the learners and the museum, collecting and submitting oral history write-ups as well as meeting regularly with other educators who are part of the network to share and exchange teaching models focused on human rights, peace and tolerance. Through its outreach program and commitment to community engagement and inclusivity, LWM has collected over 20,000 eyewitness accounts of the war while continually engaging the current generation in lessons of peace and tolerance.

Indonesia: Creating Dialogues for Community Empowerment and Promoting Religious Tolerance

Indonesia Conflict in Brief

- 1965-1966 in the aftermath of a failed coup, hundreds of thousands of ordinary citizens suspected of being communists are killed.
- 1966- Sukarno hands over emergency powers to General Suharto.
- 1967-1998 General Suharto is in power.
- 1976- Indonesia invades East Timor and incorporates it as a province.
- 1999-2001 Ongoing ethnic violence in different part of the country.
- 2002- East Timor becomes independent.
- 2002- Constitutional changes. Voters will democratically elect a president and vice president.
- 2003 – Peace talks between the government and Free Aceh Movement breaks down and a martial law is imposed.
- 2002-2004 Bali bombings and other terrorist attacks kills hundreds of ordinary citizens.
- 2005- The government signs a peace deal with the Free Aceh Movement. Rebels begin disarmament and government troops begin to pull out.
- 2006- First elections held in Aceh.
- 2006- An earthquake and tsunami kills thousands of people in Java.
- 2007- Police capture the alleged head of the militant group Jemaah Islamiyah and the leader of the group's military wing.
- 2009-2012 Government cracks down on extremist groups and begins sentencing accused terrorists.
- 2011 Two churches are set alight during a Muslim protest about blasphemy.
- 2010-2013 Violent attacks occur between the military and armed men in Papua province.
- 2014- Joko Widodo is declared president.

Background

Being the biggest archipelagic country in the world, with the fourth largest population globally, Indonesia has an ethnically and linguistically diverse population. There are more than 300 ethnic groups and 726 local languages. The country's motto – an old Javanese phrase – celebrates this diversity and literally translates to “unity in diversity.”

Following the 31-year Suharto authoritarian regime, Indonesia has since successfully established a democracy (see Hutabarat and Hayunta, 2014). Despite the country's success in sustaining its young democracy, much of the rural population lives in poverty. Corruption is rife, and the government still struggles to establish a culture of human rights and address the legacies of impunity.

Not only is there widespread religious and ethnic intolerance resulting in violence, but this, together with other factors such as poverty, has nurtured violent extremist groups. While there are few active conflicts, Indonesians face cultural and structural violence in their

“Indonesians face cultural and structural violence in their daily lives.”

daily lives. Lateral conflicts – conflicts across different social groups – have resulted in violent outbreaks. For research participants, one of the greatest challenges is the diversity in the country and the consequent range of social, cultural and political issues that need to be addressed.

Artists, peacebuilders and cultural activists are working at different levels of society to combat extremism, build tolerance and empower communities to use non-violent communication methods such as dialogue to address religious, ethnic and gender divisions.³²

³² See for <http://asiasociety.org/causes-conflict-indonesia> for a detailed discussion on the causes of conflict in Indonesia and <http://www3.qeh.ox.ac.uk/pdf/crisewps/workingpaper54.pdf> for a discussion on the role of the military in perpetuating state violence in Indonesia. See also <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-15114517> for a comprehensive timeline.

» In a context like Indonesia where speaking out on social issues and public dissent is against cultural and social norms, art and cultural activities provide communities the tools they need to navigate their daily lives. «

Dialogue and Community Empowerment

“Art isn’t about artistic production only. It is about building relationships and creating dialogues.”

– Ade Darmawan, Ruangrupa, Indonesia

Ruangrupa – a non-profit-organisation established in 2000 – is a collective of musicians, visual artists, filmmakers, social and political researchers, writers and architects who use art to address social issues within the urban context. Through exhibitions, festivals, workshops, research and publications, these artists use different methodologies to engage communities in current social issues. Festivals such as the ORDE BARU OK. – a media festival that focuses on the historic role of the state in controlling the media and shaping public opinion – seeks to address social issues such as citizens’ roles in a democracy and their responsibility to find creative solutions to their social problems outside of the state’s intervention.³³

Through festivals such as this that use different methodologies like exhibitions and media and have a broad outreach as well as through smaller more focused community-centered initiatives (described below), Ruangrupa seeks to make positive social change. For Ruangrupa, this change within the Indonesian context is the empowerment of people to find their strength and power to take control of their lives, their histories and their narratives, and to evaluate their surroundings actively and critically.³⁴

The collective that initially began as a small space with six artists has grown to include 40 people, becoming a vibrant creative center that includes a library, editing studio and archive. Using a social enterprise model, Ruangrupa has been successful in developing a sustainable network of artists who are passionate about contributing to social change and working with local communities.

Drawing on traditional Indonesian practices of watching film in outdoor spaces or *layar tancap*, for example, the group used film and film production to facilitate the exchange of ideas among community members and to engage them on different social issues that emerged in their daily lives.

Over a period, the artists, designers and information technology specialists worked with community

members, assisting them to design and build a mobile cinema cart as well as produce their own video and films. Each community – through a dialogue process – worked on films that related to their community’s interests and issues. The process capacitated community members with media literacy skills and gave them the opportunity to exchange ideas, critically evaluate what was of most importance to them and then decide how to present the issue through film.

Each of the screenings also became a social event in the community – an opportunity for informal social interaction and discussion around a common issue. Additionally, the project created an alternate form of production and distribution, outside mainstream cinema, as films produced in one province were swapped and exchanged for films in another province.

Given the size of the country and the diversity of the population, this swapping of film across communities that lacked access to information or knowledge of each other, allowed different communities to exchange ideas and learn more about each other as people that are sharing a common nationality. Through collaborative efforts, participating communities have managed to continue the exchange and have adapted the initial project to meet their changing needs and context. Ruangrupa’s achievements in engaging and empowering communities stems from its ability to draw on a range of artistic techniques and tools, providing spaces for individuals and communities to creatively and critically explore their realities and find solutions to address some of the social challenges that they face.

Similarly, Kelola, a non-profit-organisation supporting artists through funding and learning opportunities, has funded projects and worked with local communities to establish “creative communities.” The main goal of the project was to use participatory theatre methods and videography to empower communities to address important issues such as gender equality and conflict over natural resources.

Adapted from Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed models, Teater Rakyat or People’s Theatre – a folk performance that usually describes social life and focuses on issues that may be difficult to discuss openly – was used as a tool to address underlying community disputes and social problems. Kelola brought together ten community members from a village and ten artists interested in social justice in a weeklong training focusing on theatre for development techniques. Using methods such as drama and improvisation, the artists then worked in a single village over a three-month period. During this time, artists lived in the community, identifying local conflicts, facilitating drama workshops and developing trust with community members.

33 For further details see <http://okvideofestival.org/web/en/festivals/new-order-ok-video/statement/>.

34 Author’s email exchange with Ade Darmawan, 24 August 2015.

» Peace and reconciliation efforts are continuing processes that require ongoing community engagement. «

An issue that emerged in one village, for example, was that a new housing and development project was obstructing children's routes to school, resulting in them walking longer distances to get to school. Through the theatre production – which was a big and exciting public event – the performers raised awareness about the issue and invited their community to find solutions to the problem. The village leader began negotiations with the developer – who also lived in the same village – and subsequently negotiated access for the children through the housing complex.

Similar development issues related to land and water resources have been explored through theatre for development processes. The community cadres from this particular village that were initially trained by Kelola continue to use theatre for development techniques to

“Art empowers communities to speak out.”

- Amna Kusumo, Kelola, Indonesia

address social issues in their village. The group sells art and crafts, and using the income generated from these sales together with in-kind sponsorships, hosts theatre performances in their village, raising awareness about pressing social issues. Given the cultural and social restrictions on women's participation in public life – especially in rural settings – of note is that 50 percent of all participants in the 24 villages that engaged in the project, were women.

According to Amna Kusumo, “art empowers communities to speak out.”³⁵ In a context like Indonesia where speaking out on social issues and public dissent is against cultural and social norms, art and cultural activities provide communities the tools they need to navigate their daily lives. This can be applied, whether it is a village housewife negotiating with her husband, her participation in a theatre project or a group of community members voicing their dissatisfaction with a new development. Through art programs, underlying conflicts are brought to the fore and community members are enabled to work together to address the issue constructively, preventing the eruption of violent conflict.

Koalisi Seni Indonesia – a non-profit coalition seeking to strengthen the country's art sectors by mobilizing resources and advocating for public policy – acknowledges the important role of artists in contributing to social and political transformation. The coalition's core goal is to empower artists and cultural activists to come together to exchange ideas

and conceptualize ways in which art activities could contribute to broad social and political transformation.

By supporting art and culture events, facilitating exchanges and providing information and resources for artists throughout the country for example, Koalisi Seni Indonesia plans to build an art and culture movement that could manifest itself through cultural hotspots nationally. The proposed plan for these cultural hotspots is to provide spaces for community members, artists and cultural activists to engage with one another and discuss issues that are of common concern.

Koalisi Seni plans to use exhibitions, performances and film screenings, in conjunction with workshops and public dialogues, to bring these groups together to address issues related to democracy, freedom of expression, pluralism and human rights. While the outcomes of this project is as yet unknown, the proposed project highlights the broad outreach potential of art networks and coalitions and their likeliness to build a movement that addresses important social issues. Currently Koalisi Seni Indonesia is represented by 125 art and cultural institutions from 13 provinces in Indonesia and plans for its membership to continue growing.

Promoting Tolerance and Religious Freedom

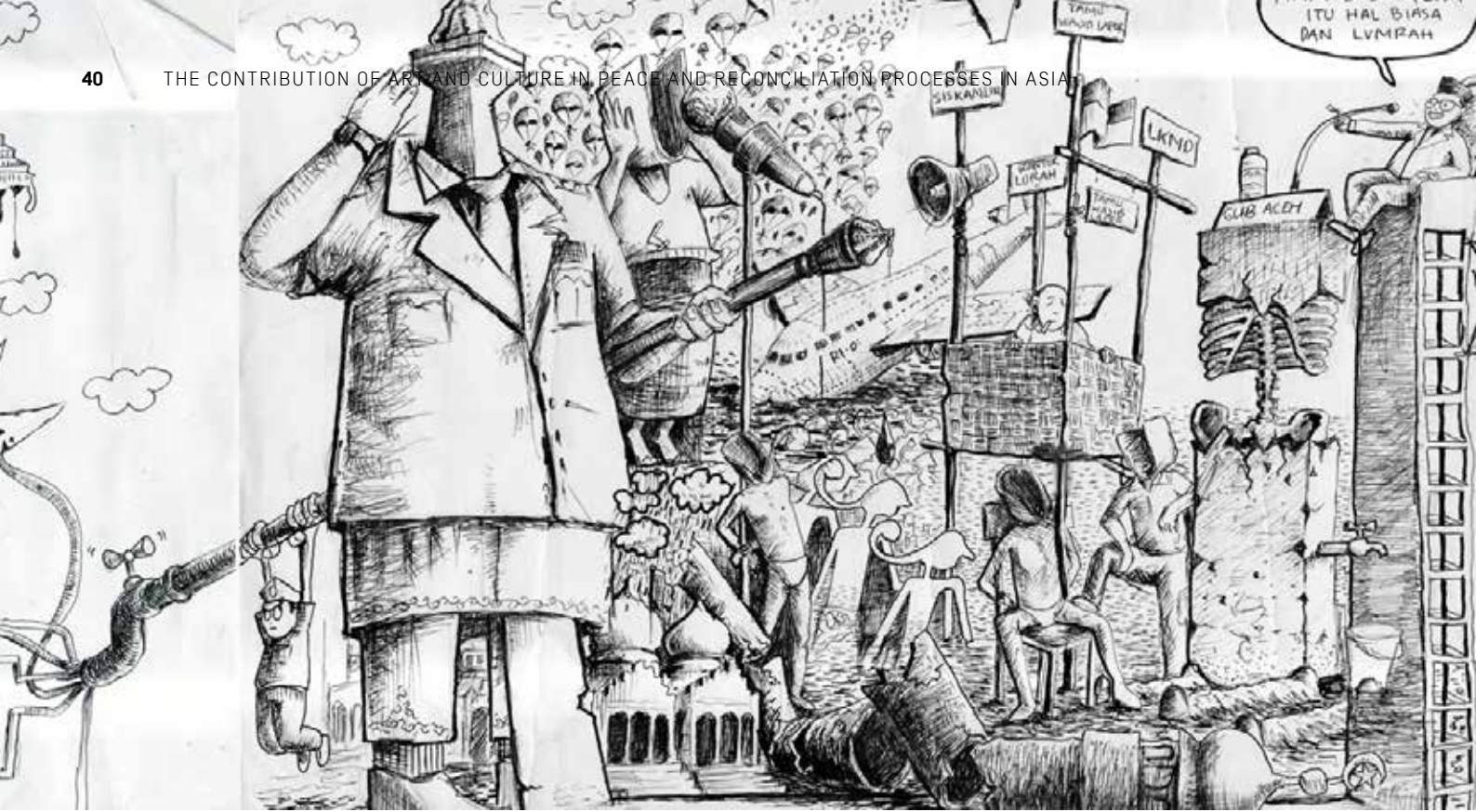
Search for Common Ground (SFCG) is an international non-profit-organisation that seeks to end violent conflict. Working on all sides of a conflict – with victims and perpetrators and with opposing groups – the organization uses media and dialogue to provide communities with the tools needed to find solutions together.

Depending on the context or the issue, SFCG uses art methodologies such as theatre, filmmaking, and media platforms such as radio and television to address questions of diversity, religious tolerance, non-violence and extremism, with the goal of contributing to attitudinal and behavioural changes.

In focusing particularly on religious tolerance and extremism – through prevention – the organization in collaboration with local partner Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat (P3M) worked over two years to facilitate a national debate competition and produce a series of comic books and teacher manuals to promote dialogue among young people. The project targeted 15- and 17-year-old in-school youth in ten Islamic schools across Indonesia.

To engage young people on issues such as respecting difference, understanding conflict, gender equity and

³⁵ Author's interview conducted with Amna Kusumo, 11 June 2015.



non-violent communication to resolve conflict, phase one of the project focused on English-language debate competitions that culminated in a national competition in Jakarta. While some learners felt that the English medium reduced their ability to debate at the same level of some of their more fluent counterpart, the debate format required research, encouraging learners to undertake their own study of issues related to tolerance, diversity and rights.

Furthermore, anecdotal information from the learners highlights that the debate format enabled them to empathize with others – for example understanding what it felt like to be a minority – as well encouraged them to listen and understand different points of view.³⁶

Phase two included workshops and study groups of two six-part series of comic books with themes of religious tolerance and pluralism. In addition to the comic books, project partners developed a manual for teachers to facilitate discussions about these issues with learners. By using popular local tools such as debate and comic books – that appealed particularly to the targeted age groups – as mediums for engagement on sensitive social and cultural subjects, the project successfully reached 245 learners and 62 teachers in Phase One and approximately 4,800 sets of each comic book series were distributed in participating schools. An estimated 1,000 learners across the country read the comics and participated in the reading groups.

Apart from the number of beneficiaries reached, the initiative was successful in that evaluation results comparing pre- and post-surveys showed that learners had made positive attitudinal shifts.³⁷

³⁶ See Cunliffe and Saraswati (2011) for an in-depth assessment of the project.

³⁷ Ibid.

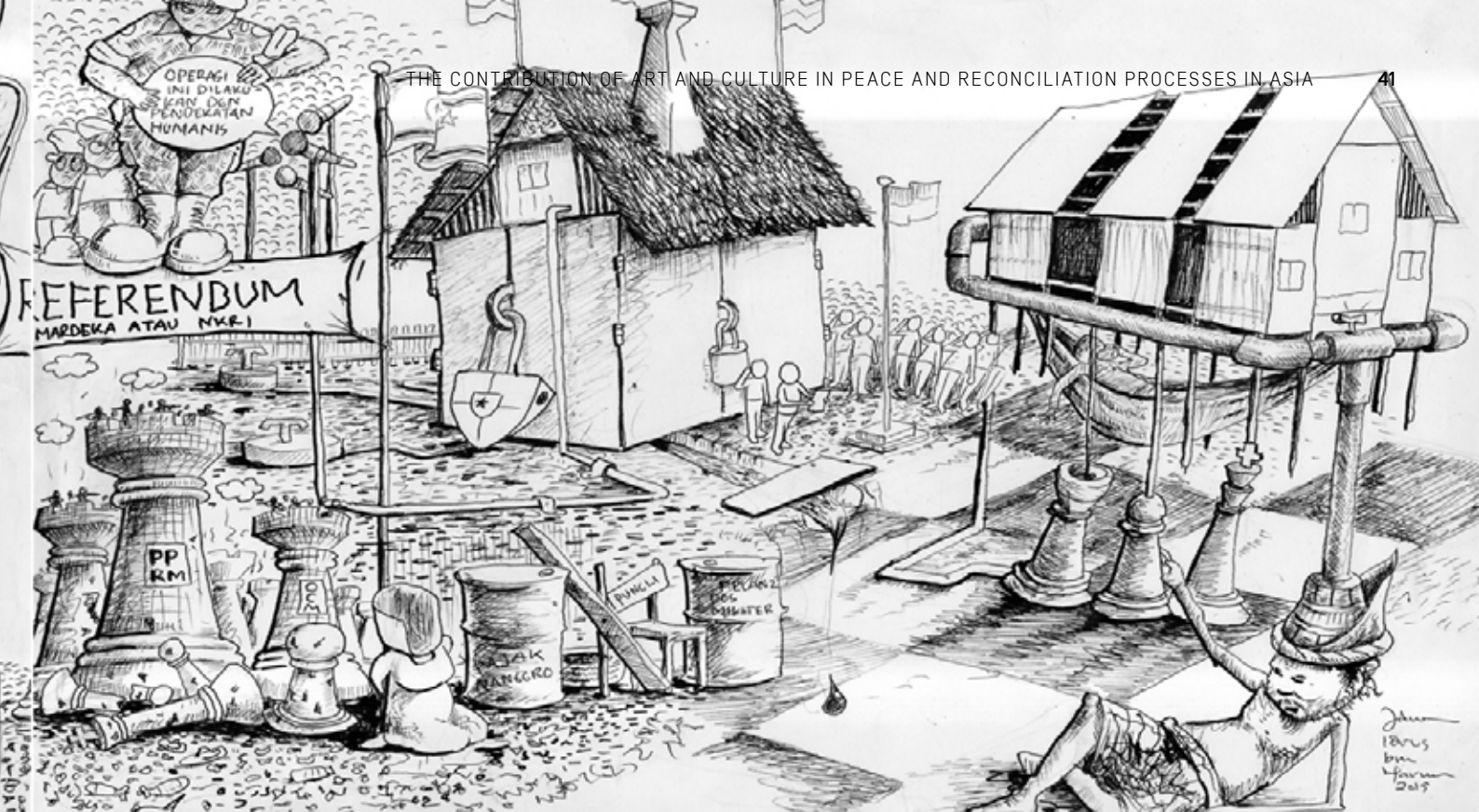
Challenges

As noted, all research participants acknowledged that a key challenge they face is the cultural diversity within the country and the range of social issues that

“Partnering with local organizations provides opportunities to reach out to diverse beneficiaries or those that may otherwise have been inaccessible.”

need to be addressed. Furthermore, certain part of the country – either torn by conflict, are known extremist strongholds or because of poor infrastructure – are inaccessible and unsafe. While organizations such as SFCG have used radio, for example to broaden their outreach, some research participants have noted that these challenges also limit organizations’ ability to monitor community projects and provide ongoing support beyond the lifespan of the project.

Many participants also observed that the lack of national government support for the arts has resulted in a dependency on international donor agencies. Related to funding, others noted that current funding trends of project-based support did not sustainably support artists and activists and was not sufficient to realize long-term goals of peace and reconciliation. Peace and reconciliation efforts are continuing processes that require ongoing community engagement. Organizations require long-term funding to deepen their practice and to solidify their role and relationship in the community. Having emerged from years of authoritarian rule and facing various forms of structural and cultural violence, Indonesia experiences issues similar to those faced by other countries emerging from active violent conflict. Not only does it need to restore structures of democracy and build a culture of human rights, but it



The city Aceh has been plagued by three centuries of violence and killings during the armed conflict between the Free Aceh Movement and the Indonesian Government. Sketch by artist Iru Bin Harun

also needs to destroy the cultures of silence and the lack of public participation that are often a result of authoritarianism.

Most importantly, the cyclic patterns of violent conflicts emerging from religious and ethnic divisions continue to pose a challenge to peace and stability.

Opportunities

Through art and culture activities, artists and peace activists are empowering local communities to break their silences and begin engaging as active citizens. Organizations such as Ruangrupa that are working closely with communities to which they are connected, are successful because their community interventions are context specific, using relevant art methodologies to address particular community needs. Many of the cases highlighted here show that successful community interventions come from a process of trust building and long-term community engagement.

Other initiatives such as those undertaken by SFCG, however, indicate that the use of popular art and education methods can produce positive results in a short timeframe and requires limited resources. Furthermore, partnering with local organizations provides opportunities to reach out to diverse beneficiaries or those that may otherwise have been inaccessible. Finally, partnerships also increase the number of beneficiaries reached.

“The use of popular art and education methods can produce positive results in a short timeframe and requires limited resources.”

Given the expanse of the country and its diversity, it is difficult for Indonesia to forge a single national identity and many communities live in isolation from each other. Organizations such as Koalisi Seni Indonesia and Kelola that provide support to artists contribute to the celebration of diversity and the promotion of cultural tolerance by facilitating cultural exchanges across communities. Furthermore as a network, Koalisi Seni Indonesia find its strength through its membership. Through advocacy and capacity building, the network as a whole is able to deepen its practice and build a movement that focuses on a common goal.

By providing opportunities for communities to find their voices, promoting critical thinking around questions of diversity and tolerance and highlighting ways to address conflict in non-violent and peaceful ways, Indonesian artists and social activists are striving to rebuild a new social and political culture.

Factors for Success

- The use of local art practices that are context-specific and strategically used to address particular issues.
- Long-term community engagement to build trust with local partners as well as among community members.
- Collaboration and networking increases outreach and access to diverse local communities and builds a movement for change.
- Empower communities to break the legacies of silence – that result from authoritarianism – and address underlying social issues constructively.



SECTION THREE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Detail from artwork by Mohammad Shoaib, Bangladesh

As has been outlined in previous sections, art and cultural activities, if undertaken with the goal of peacebuilding and social reconstruction, can successfully be used during all phases of conflict. These initiatives can provide spaces for dialogue, promote healing and empathy, build tolerance, rebuild trust and present non-violent tools to address conflict – especially at a local community level.

Despite these positive potentials, it is often challenging to assess whether art and cultural activities do indeed fulfil these objectives as well as contribute to larger goals of building peace and reconciliation.

Since these initiatives aim to transform individual behaviour and facilitate attitudinal change while also addressing deep-seated emotions, it is difficult to identify a timeline for when the change is going to happen, if it is going to happen and how it is going to happen.

We are essentially trying to measure outcomes – the durable and qualitative social changes – that we are

attempting to make through project activities in an individual's life, in a community and more broadly within the society. Measuring the change made by art and cultural activities in building reconciliation and peace is particularly difficult because we are trying to assess change across two fields that by nature are not open to traditional evaluation methods because they are so process-oriented.

In addition to the fact that concepts of reconciliation are difficult to measure because there is no single meaning for reconciliation, the success of reconciliation activities is dependent on a step-by-step process that is further complicated by a range of small and broad context-specific social, political and cultural influences.

For example, in Nepal one measure of success may be local civil society organizations' ability to convince parents to allow their children to participate in art and cultural activities; in Indonesia, an indicator of

» To measure the success of art and cultural activities in contributing to peace and reconciliation efforts, multiple strategies need to be utilized and an ongoing commitment to developing new and innovative assessment tools needs to be made. «

success may be the ability of community members to speak out about underlying social issues. With art and cultural activities that by nature are open to fluidity and spontaneity and rely on creative exploration, measuring impact is difficult.

Lederach (2005) therefore posits that reconciliation and peace initiatives should be created more like artistic processes rather than within a linear framework that focuses on a specific set of activities with a predetermined outcome. Reconciliation and peacebuilding – like the artistic process – has its own sense of timing and process that has unexpected outcomes and cannot fit within the regular development and humanitarian models (Lederach, 2005).

Similarly, Claudia Fontes (2015) criticises current donor methods of evaluating art programs and the instrumentalisation of art for social transformation. She argues that art and cultural practices enable us to deal with uncertainty, build empathy and imagine alternate realities yet the linear evaluation of these projects through predetermined outcomes, stifles meaning and the methods through which it is produced.

Methods and approaches to monitoring and evaluating projects

Most organizations working in international development, transitional justice and humanitarian aid use the **Logical Framework Approach** to monitor and evaluate projects. The Framework – created by the United States military as a tool for strategic planning that was eventually adopted by the development sector – relies on a theoretical matrix designed during a project's conceptualization phase and makes logical connections between activities, inputs, outputs and outcomes (Fontes, 2015).

Essential for this approach is the choice of indicators that are identified to measure the progress, outcome and output of a project. Indicators are usually combined with a notion of means of verification, which answers to how indicators are measured. Applied to projects in which art and culture are linked to peace and reconciliation, some indicators might for example be:

Qualitative: Level of awareness (audience, participants); partners' capacities in conflict resolution (and thus the quality of the intervention and material); peaceful communication; level of motivation to build peace; level of practical knowledge about conflict resolution; degree of interpersonal trust.

Quantitative: The number of events, festivals, meetings, etc. about peace and reconciliation in

communities; percentage of population who have participated in cultural activities about peace and reconciliation; number of participants and audience, number of platforms (real and virtual) where conflict and peace can be addressed; number of peacebuilding materials produced (plays, movies, curricula etc.).

While the Logical Framework Approach may be useful since it provides quantitative indicators and, as Fontes (2015) suggests, may work for projects that are primarily using outputs of projects as evidence of change, it has little ability to measure the qualitative indicators of success. So while it may be able to capture some information about the contribution – through a survey method, for example – that a specific art or cultural activity has made toward peace and reconciliation, it cannot qualitatively assess the real and substantive change that has been made.

Fontes (2015) argues that while artists and social activists use these methods to satisfy donor requirements, they utilize this method with the knowledge that it is difficult to predetermine the impact of their projects (Fontes, 2015). This argument is supported by research participants. They note that given the constantly changing social and political landscapes within which they work, and the fact that they are dealing with individual human beings, it is often difficult to use traditional evaluation methods to measure the success of their work or to predict definite outcomes.

While many have attempted to use the model – since it is a donor requirement – with some organizations using pre- and post-surveys to understand the changes and progression from baseline indicators to outcome indicators at the end of the project,³⁸ others have supplemented this method with the collection of qualitative anecdotal information and use observation methods to understand the outcomes.

The reality is that it is only through identifying individual, substantial transformation in each person's life that success can truly be measured. Furthermore, given the potential of art and cultural activities to reach broad audiences through theatre performances, television, radio and literature, it is equally challenging to understand the collective effects of these programs, beyond the scope of the target beneficiaries. Apart

³⁸ Baseline indicators assist in understanding the starting point for change. For example, in Pakistan, CYAAD administers a pre-survey with youth to assess their attitudes to peace, tolerance and extremism. Outcome indicators show the actual change that has been made. In the CYAAD example, the organization uses a post-project survey, which is very similar to the baseline survey to understand the actual change made through a specific intervention. See Y. Raj Isar (2004) for an in-depth explanation of indicators.

from implementing organisations' reluctance to using the Logical Framework Approach, also donors acknowledge the limitations of this model and are seeking new methods for monitoring and evaluation.³⁹

Despite the challenges of monitoring and evaluating art and cultural programs that contribute to social change, the reality is that the funding trends are changing. While there is reduced spending on art and cultural activities in and of themselves, the donor community is increasingly interested in multidisciplinary, collaborative approaches that use art and culture for development and social change.⁴⁰

Donors are required to document the effects of development projects in order to justify governmental spending on art and culture in development cooperation or humanitarian responses. Apart from funding decisions and evaluating and understanding the change that is being made, monitoring and evaluation is important for practitioners and policymakers because it highlights lessons learned and presents opportunities for sharing new models and identifying ways in which interventions can be improved.⁴¹

“It is only through identifying individual, substantial transformation in each person’s life that success can truly be measured.”

In order to grasp the difference that a project linking art and culture to peace and reconciliation objectives makes, individual experiences as well as the theoretical frameworks can be resources to single out the value of a project and identify the contribution to overall development goals. These evaluation methods could also address some of the challenges and shortcomings posed by the Logical Framework Approach.

Increasingly, development organizations are beginning to use a participatory monitoring and evaluation tool: **Most Significant Change (MSC)**, designed by Rick Davies and Jess Dart.⁴² MSC – based on storytelling – involves a collection of stories from primary and secondary beneficiaries in the field. A selection committee of stakeholders – including implementation staff, donors and field experts – systematically selects the most significant stories of change. The committee then works together to analyse the impact coming from these stories of change and undertakes in-depth discussions on the value of the change.

The domains (or patterns) that appear when analysing collected stories of change can guide the adjustment of input and objectives and bring focus to the crosscutting areas of interest. The suitability of this model for art and cultural programs that are seeking to contribute to social change is its ability to measure unexpected outcomes, its participatory process involving all stakeholders in a particular project, its ability to facilitate discussion and analysis about change and the fact that it does not rely on predetermined outcomes (Davies and Dart, 2005). Still a big challenge that remains is the attribution gap: how to isolate the effect of one particular activity and attribute it to a certain change.

In post-conflict and development contexts – for example, Myanmar – where new spaces have opened up for peace, reconciliation and development work,⁴³ and new funding opportunities have become available, there is a range of local and international non-profit-organisations operating in that environment, all vying for the same funding and similar results. In these contexts, it is difficult to measure the success of one organization’s work among a range of stakeholders and amid other social, political, cultural and economic factors that are influencing the outcomes.

Theory of Change (ToC) – a planning strategy that provides a roadmap of how to get from one point to another – addresses challenges of attribution. As will be exemplified in the next section, the ToC can be articulated through an outcomes map and spells out the long-term goals, identifying the changes that need to take place (preconditions), the underlying assumptions and the theories that explain why change takes place in a certain context. Theory of Change is able to show the complexity around a development intervention and is more explanatory about the change process (the pathways of change). Theory of Change can be adjusted in the implementation process by testing the initial assumption.

As outlined in Appendix Three, the ToC is supported by an **Outcomes Mapping** process, which is a backward mapping of all the outcomes or preconditions that are necessary to achieve the final long-term goal or ToC.⁴⁴ Outcomes Mapping – pioneered by the International Development and Research Center (IDRC) – is a monitoring and evaluation tool that shifts the focus away from products to focus on the results and relationships between stakeholders (see for example Figure A). The outcomes are then measured by changes in people, relationships, actions and attitudes of beneficiaries of a project.⁴⁵

39 Author’s interview conducted with Sophie Leferink, 25 August 2015.

40 Ibid.

41 See also See Y. Raj Isar (2004).

42 Rick Davis and Jess Dart (2005).

43 See also Bactold et. al (2014).

44 See for example <http://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/how-does-theory-of-change-work/example/backwards-mapping>.

45 See http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Programs/Evaluation/Documents/om_pamplet_final.pdf for an overview.

Outcomes Mapping is a participatory method of evaluation and monitoring that enables program teams to identify the change that they want to make and to work together to develop plans and actions that facilitate the envisioned change. Outcomes Mapping as a tool to measure the role of art and cultural programs in peace and reconciliation processes is particularly useful because it is a people-centred approach to change. It aims to promote learning among stakeholders and allows the learning to feed back into the original project plan and for the project to be adapted accordingly.

“Outcomes Mapping supports dynamic and sustainable processes – needed when working in transitioning post-conflict environments.”

Through the inclusion of all stakeholders in its process and its emphasis on reflection of relationships, Outcomes Mapping promotes accountability and joint ownership of projects. Finally, rather than focusing on controlling a specific outcome or claiming attribution, it seeks to produce sustainable changes – change and transformation are owned collectively (Overseas Development Institute, 2009).

Thus far, it has been shown that stakeholders in the fields of art, culture and development are faced with diverse challenges when assessing the role of art and culture in peacebuilding and reconciliation initiatives. While the models outlined above serve different purposes and bring with them their own unique challenges, it is clear that not one specific approach can supply the necessary information for successful monitoring and evaluation. To measure the success of art and cultural activities in contributing to peace and reconciliation efforts, multiple strategies need to be utilized and an ongoing commitment to developing new and innovative assessment tools needs to be made.

CKU, for example, utilizes a combination of a Results Framework (indicators) and Most Significant Change stories. Program managers and program officers monitor projects on a regular basis, with at least one or two in-country monitoring missions per year. While monitoring is organised to support learning from one quarter to the next, the model still relies heavily on indicators. As such, it depends on predetermined indicators of success.

Recommendations: New monitoring and evaluation tools

CKU’s current model captures both quantitative and qualitative information necessary for monitoring and evaluation; however, it can be bolstered by the inclusion of an Outcomes Mapping model. As outlined in Appendix Three, an outcomes map can be designed for broad, long-term program goals, and additional maps may be developed on a project basis. As a monitoring tool, it provides for the development of new outcomes and takes into consideration unexpected outcomes, changes in the environment and adjustments in relationships. It supports dynamic and sustainable processes – needed when working in transitioning post-conflict environments.

Working with multiple stakeholders, donor agencies need to draw on local context and practices to support the development of new monitoring and evaluation tools that meet their need to “show results” but more importantly to enable local partners to create new models and learn lessons that could build and sustain peace and reconciliation efforts on the ground.

As has been noted, peace and reconciliation are long-term processes and as such require long-term investment. By providing continuing technical and financial support for projects, and particularly for evaluation, donors would be better positioned to maintain as well as monitor local-level change.

CKU, particularly, funds six-year project cycles in two phases. This strategy is effective in contributing to sustainable transformation and, for monitoring and evaluation purposes, can support longitudinal evaluation studies that are conducive to measuring the impact of peace and reconciliation programs in post-conflict environments.

For example, through an aggregation of outcomes of projects undertaken over a three-year period and then a six-year period, CKU could assess its mid- and long-term impact in the countries and regions that it supports. Furthermore, innovative approaches – like bringing together year one-beneficiaries in year three to reflect on the changes that have been made in their lives and communities – would not only provide opportunities for reengagement and information gathering but could also inform the country or regional strategy for the following three years. Again, such strategies require a commitment from all stakeholders as well as resources allocated specifically for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

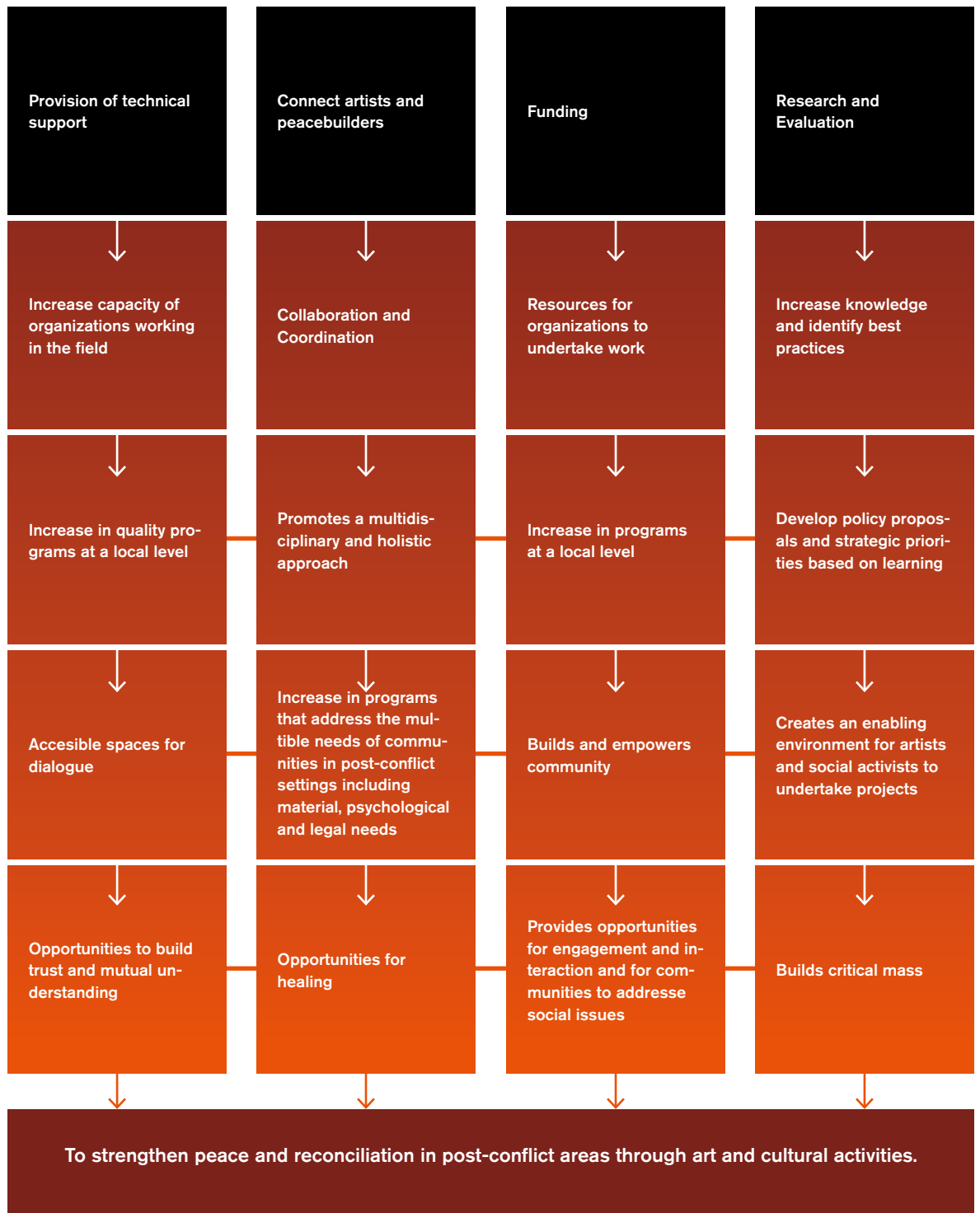


Figure: A simple outcomes map reflecting CKU's theory of change: To strengthen peace and reconciliation in post-conflict areas through art and cultural activities. This is done by strengthening the access of conflict affected and displaced populations to cultural activities as means of re-establishing a normal life; supporting art and cultural activities by means of re-establishing trust and mutual understanding in post-conflict areas; and involving artists and cultural actors to enhance dialogue and bridge-building in peacebuilding programs.

Recommendations: Successful use of art and culture in peace and reconciliation processes

For art and culture to meet goals of peacebuilding and reconciliation, we need to identify some of the factors necessary for successful interventions. By drawing on best practices outlined in the case studies, this section highlights some recommendations for success.

Identify beneficiary needs: While art and cultural activities can be replicated, they need to be context-specific, meeting the very particular needs of beneficiaries. Before an art and culture-project is designed, beneficiaries should be consulted about their needs. They should be provided opportunities to contribute to the project design and identify the art methodologies that may be most appropriate in their particular context. For example, in a culturally conservative community that has taboos about the body or requires women to be fully covered, dance and movement that use the body as a medium of expression may not be appropriate.

Alternate art methods such as music or visual art may therefore be more suitable. Furthermore, a prior process of consultation with beneficiaries builds trust between project implementers and beneficiaries, creating ownership of projects that is required for long-term sustainability. Consultation sends a message to beneficiaries that their views are important and that somebody is listening to them.

“A prior process of consultation with beneficiaries builds trust between project implementers and beneficiaries, creating ownership of projects that is required for long-term sustainability.”

Finally, given the influx of international and local organizations into communities affected by violence, survivors of conflict may experience “survivor fatigue”. If not consulted and their needs not considered, survivors may begin to feel that organizations are benefiting from their victimization yet they are unable to see any tangible outcomes.

Use local tools and traditions: Related to the question of context, is the use of local tools and traditions to address issues related to peace, tolerance and reconciliation. By drawing on home-grown traditions of a community or reviving past aesthetic

practices, beneficiaries are better able to identify with the form and content that is presented to them.

“When used together with traditional peacebuilding techniques, art and culture initiatives become one medium through which peace and reconciliation may be realized.”

Furthermore, in repressive contexts, where artistic expression and human rights or peace discourses are restricted, these traditional practices can serve as a façade for the real issues that are being addressed.

Use a multidisciplinary approach: Art and culture techniques may not be appropriate to meet all types of peace and reconciliation goals. As such, these methods should be used purposefully as part of a broader, multidisciplinary approach. When used together with traditional peacebuilding techniques, transitional justice practices, human rights methods or psycho-social interventions – art and culture initiatives become one medium through which peace and reconciliation may be realized.

Final Conclusions

For societies emerging from conflict, there is a range of social, cultural and political concerns that need to be addressed for societal rebuilding and long-term peace to be realized. These may include providing justice for victims; rewriting narratives to acknowledge the truth about the past; providing spaces for rebuilding relationships, healing and forgiveness; and building cultures based on human rights, peace and tolerance to prevent a recurrence of future violence. While these concerns need to be addressed at all levels of society by a range of stakeholders and through diverse strategies – as has been demonstrated – art and cultural initiatives have the potential to address some of these issues.

During conflict or authoritarian regimes, creative expression is stifled and citizens are discouraged from speaking out. Those who do voice dissent are punished. Over time, this results in cultures of silence and secrecy. Aesthetic forms such as theatre, storytelling and music, for example, using metaphor and interactive art methods, can provide opportunities to break these silences and to reengage citizens. With safe, non-threatening spaces for discussion and interaction, diverse individuals have the opportunity to share in a similar experience, begin to hear different points of view and reflect on the issues in which they are engaging.

Similarly, art and cultural festivals and public commemorative events, in contexts like Indonesia and Myanmar, for example, can provide opportunities for diverse groups to come together to share different cultural experiences, become culturally fluent and learn about the common values that are shared with other members of society. Such initiatives can provide platforms for the rebuilding of trust and facilitate processes of tolerance necessary for long-term peace.

“Art and culture also have the potential to raise awareness.”

In the Nepal and Afghanistan cases, for example, methods such as theatre and memorialization recognize victims of conflict by providing spaces for them to bear testimony to their experiences and to raise awareness about their victimization. Ritual and other creative expressions can enable them to begin to access and address the emotions related to their traumatic experiences and assist in a gradual reintegration into society.

Art and culture also have the potential to raise awareness – whether it’s about sexual and gender rights in Pakistan or the post-disaster health risks in Nepal. In this function, it also serves as an avenue for creative learning and engagement. Because of their very fluid and interactive nature – that speaks directly to emotions and feelings – these methods are able to overcome the language, literacy, social and cultural barriers prevalent in society. They encourage creative exploration and collaborative learning – a skill that can be transferred to other aspects of life such as problem solving.

Apart from the potential to make these contributions to peace and reconciliation efforts, art and cultural activities also provide cost-effective means of reaching broad audiences with limited resources. Activities such as oral history collection and theatre for development are inherently open to replication and can be reproduced through training-of-trainer workshops, capacitating a core group of activists and building a movement for peace, human rights and reconciliation. Furthermore, mediums such as film, radio and social media can reach a wide audience, building a critical mass for change.

While the qualitative outcomes of these initiatives may be difficult to assess, these mediums enable social-change practitioners to access areas where the lack of infrastructure or hostilities may prevent entrance. It also enables them to – as many research participants noted – “plant seeds” for change. Furthermore, as illustrated in Indonesia, watching films may become a community

event that brings people together. These spaces could be optimized to become places of engagement on critical issues.

“Apart from the potential to make these contributions to peace and reconciliation efforts, art and cultural activities also provide cost-effective means of reaching broad audiences with limited resources.”

Artists are facilitators, taking risks, sparking creative processes and enabling communities to find their voices. Despite the achievements and successes of their work, artists are still faced with skepticism about the value of their efforts in contributing to social reconstruction. A long-term investment in local community models that use art and culture methods for social change could support ongoing creativity, enabling practitioners to deepen their methodologies as they reach out to new communities and inspire new visions for the future.

“Artists are facilitators, taking risks, sparking creative processes and enabling communities to find their voices.”

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Appendix One

List of Research Participants

Thank you to the following individuals and institutions for their contribution to the research.

Name	Institution
Nepal	
Ram Kumar Bhandari	National Network of Families of the Disappeared and Missing Persons
Romel Bhattarai	ArtLab
NayanTara Gurung Kakshapati	Photo.Circle
Ujjwala Maharjan	World Warriors
Nischal Oli	Siddharta Art Foundation
Sakar Pudasaini	Karkhana
Santosh Shah	South Asia Communication
Myanmar	
Laetitia Bonnet	Asia Justice and Rights
Thila Min	Thukhuma Khayeethe
Carlos Ossa and Tanya Hubbard	Myanmar Art Social Project
Mindy Walker and Walone	The Third Story Project
Ko Z	Independent artist
Pakistan	
Raziq Fahim	College of Youth Activism and Development (CYAAD)
Shahid Nadeem	Ajoka Theatre
Sara Nisar	Peace Niche/T2F
Swaleha Alam Shahzada	Pakistan Citizen's Archive
Humaira Mumtaz Shaikh	Shirkat Gah
Indonesia	
Linda Hoemar Abidin and Abduh Aziz	Koalisi Seni Indonesia
Scott Cunliffe	Search for Common Ground
Ade Darmawan	Ruangrupa
Amna Kusumo	Kelola
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Hanifa Alizada	Afghanistan Photography Network
Hadi Marifat	Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization
Salim Rajabi	Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization
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Bangladesh	
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Sri Lanka	
Radhika Hettiarachchi	Herstories
Holland	
Sophie Leferink	HIVOS
Denmark	
Signe Leth	CKU

Appendix Two Stakeholder Analysis

Summary of Related Interests & Sample Grant Making

The relationships and feedback loops among donors, communities, and other stakeholders in their joint process of harnessing art and culture for peacebuilding are complex. Below is a non-exhaustive list of the major actors, including multilateral donors, intergovernmental organizations, international organizations, and the local organizations described in this study.

This also includes the human rights, art and culture, and/or reconciliation-related institutional goals of each organization, along with the areas of Asia in which they work and, where possible, an example of art and culture programming that the organization has supported as part of its peace-building strategy.

Multilateral Donors, Intergovernmental Organizations, and Policymakers

European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO): Through humanitarian aid and civil protection, save lives, prevent and alleviate suffering, and preserve the dignity of disaster- and conflict-affected populations

- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, North Korea, Pacific Region, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Thailand, Timor–Leste, Vietnam

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, International Development Cooperation (DANIDA): Fight poverty by promoting human rights, economic growth, good governance, and democracy

- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Vietnam
- Sample Project: Since its establishment in 2013, the first–ever Afghan Youth Centre has offered almost 2,000 young people courses in music, theatre, media, journalism, sports and languages.

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA): Reduce poverty through support of democracy, gender equality, peaceful conflict prevention, and respect for human rights

- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Myanmar
- Sample Project: Since 2013, Sri Lankan NGO Viluthu and Swedish NGO Diakonia have promoted good governance and women's rights through street theatre performances, film discussions, educational courses, and trainings.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF): Improve the lives of children and their families through healthcare, education, nutrition, protection from disaster and conflict, and clean water and sanitation

- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pacific Region, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor–Leste, Vietnam
- Sample project: In "child-friendly centres" in refugee camps around the world, UNICEF provides art supplies as a way for children to cope with and overcome the trauma they have experienced.

United Nations Development Program (UNDP):

Contribute to development progress by promoting inclusive and effective democratic governance, including advocacy, advisement, provision of impartial spaces for dialogue, and institution–building

- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, India, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, North Korea, Pacific Region, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor–Leste, Vietnam

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO):

Build intercultural understanding through protection and support of cultural diversity, scientific progress, heritage, dialogue, and freedom of expression

- (Members) Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, North Korea, Pacific Region, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, South Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor–Leste, Vietnam
- Sample project: The long-term "Routes of Dialogue" program aims to enhance interreligious understanding in Central Asia through identification of shared heritage, such as art forms common along the former Silk Road.

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR):

Identify, advocate for and respond to human rights challenges, and serve as the principal focal point of human rights research, education, public information, and advocacy activities in the United Nations system

- Afghanistan, Cambodia, Pacific Region, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Thailand
- Sample project: As part of the Assisting Communities Together (ACT) project, the Tonga Community Development Trust performed theatrical works, followed by community discussions, in order to promote awareness of discrimination against minorities.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): Lead and coordinate international responses for the protection of the rights and well-being of refugees

- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam

United States Agency for International Development (USAID): Promote economic prosperity for all populations, strengthen democracy and good governance, improve global health, protect human rights, support food security, progress environmental sustainability, advance education, aid societies in preparing, preventing, and recovering from conflicts, and provide humanitarian assistance

- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pacific Region, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vietnam

World Bank: Combat poverty and support development by providing low-interest loans, zero to low-interest credits, and grants to developing countries, thereby supporting investments in education, infrastructure, health, financial and private sector development, public administration, agriculture, and environmental and natural resource management

- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pacific Region, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam
- Sample project: Over eight years, the Culture Heritage Support Project conserved and restored historic buildings in Azerbaijan as a unifying tool to enhance social cohesion during a time of tension and uncertainty across the nation.

Private Foundations

Fetzer Institute: Research, celebrate and foster awareness of the power of love and forgiveness through peace building and conflict resolution work

- Afghanistan, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Myanmar, Philippines
- Sample project: Through the Afghan Women's Writing Project, women create and distribute written and oral stories about their experiences in order to build community and heal through self-expression.

Ford Foundation: Develop and strengthen innovative strategies, approaches, and tools to enforce human rights in context-appropriate ways

- China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka
- Sample project: JustFilms supports digital

storytelling that is centered on social justice and creates opportunities for community dialogue.

Hivos: Seek structural change to address persistent global issues by supporting freedom of expression and democratic change

- Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste

Humanity United: Promote peace and security, prevent atrocities, and ensure sustainable change through network building, direct engagement activities and grants

- Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal
- Sample project: In 2012, Humanity United supported Skylight Films in its ongoing activism filmmaking, which promote international human rights through media as well as educational materials.

National Endowment for Democracy: Foster the growth of democratic institutions abroad, including vibrant civil societies that ensure human rights, an independent media, and the rule of law

- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, North Korea, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam
- Sample project: In 2014, Ajoka Theatre staged human rights-centered plays in Pakistan, with a focus on topics of the dangers of religious extremism and intolerance.

Oak Foundation: End impunity for gross violations of human rights, preserve public memory to prevent their reoccurrence, uphold international law prohibiting arbitrary detention and torture and guaranteeing due process, and protect at-risk human rights defenders

- Afghanistan, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Pacific Region, Philippines, Thailand
- Sample project: In 2013, EngageMedia Collective Inc. brought together a network of activists in Southeast Asia to share lessons and produce a toolkit about using digital media for social change.

Open Society Foundations: Enhance human rights and justice by advocating equality for minorities and women and supporting international war crimes tribunals

- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vietnam
- Sample project: Through the Documentary Photography Project, OSF sponsors photography as a tool for social engagement and transformation.

Prince Claus Fund: Sponsor artists, cultural institutions, and critical thinkers in places where freedom of expression is restricted by conflict, poverty, taboos, oppression, or marginalization

- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor–Leste, Vietnam
- Sample project: From 2009 to 2011, the Sri Lankan NGO nATANDA created the country's first contemporary dance company, which organizes Sri Lankans of all identities to work together in a creative process while addressing social and political issues.

Sigrid Rausing Trust (SRT): Advance the rule of law and respect for human rights in transitional societies by seeking accountability, building truth and reconciliation initiatives, and documenting and disseminating witness testimonies through exhibitions, museums and memorials

- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand
- Sample project: From 2010 to 2014, SRT supported FreeMuse in its ongoing advocacy for freedom of musical expression in oppressive and tense environments.

International and Regional Organizations

International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC): promote action on contemporary social justice issues by using the lenses of history, art, culture, and community dialogue

- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Japan, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand

International Rescue Commission (IRC): provide health care, infrastructure, learning and economic support, with special programs designed for women and children, while building local capacity and self-sufficiency and promoting human rights, participation and accountability

- Afghanistan, India, Japan, Myanmar, Pakistan, Thailand

Search for Common Ground (SFCG): promote conflict transformation through innovative use of dialogue, media, and community-focused programs

- Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Timor–Leste
- Sample project: Through its Student Initiatives for Peacebuilding Workshop, Indonesian youth participated in a creative documentary video training to identify and combat the root causes of religious extremism.

Local Nongovernmental Organizations

Afghanistan

Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy

Organization: advances respect for human rights, social justice, and democracy through art and culture-based programs and community dialogues at all levels of society

Afghanistan National Institute of Music: uses music and free music education to exemplify and promote equality, peace, democracy, and justice in Afghan civil society

Indonesia

Ruangrupa: a collective of musicians, visual artists, filmmakers, theatre practitioners, and architects who use art exhibits, festivals, workshops, and research to address social issues within the urban context

Kelola: supports artists through funding and learning opportunities, including participatory theatre methods that provide communities with new tools with which to navigate social issues

Koalisi Seni Indonesia: a coalition seeking to strengthen Indonesia's art sectors by mobilizing resources and advocating for transformational public policy

Myanmar

Asia Justice and Rights: a regional human rights organization working with survivors of gross human rights violations to promote conflict transformation, education, and community development

Myanmar Art Social Project: a network of international and local artists and therapists that harnesses the creative process to support non-violent personal expression and social transformation

The Third Story Project: a collaboration with Myanmar Storytellers to develop a series of children's books based on themes related to peace, tolerance and diversity

Thukhuma Khayeethe (Art Travelers): a travelling theatre troupe that trains young people in participatory theatre techniques and their use in social rebuilding

Nepal

ArtLab: seeks to build the capacity of young Nepalese to find creative solutions to current social concerns

ArTree: a collective of contemporary art practitioners who promote the role of the artist in fostering dialogue and engaging communities on critical social issues

Karkhana: an education organization that uses innovative, participatory methodologies to provide content for middle school learners in the fields of science, technology, engineering, art and math

Photo Circle: a platform that unites photographers and other visual storytellers to document and foster civic participation with social change

Siddhartha Art Foundation: democratizes art and raises awareness among artists about the role of artistic interventions in contributing to community empowerment

South Asia Communications: a broadcasting and media production institution that engages youth in becoming active citizens and social problem-solvers

Word Warriors: a group of young poets advancing the spoken word movement in Nepal through events, performances, workshops, and competitions

Pakistan

Ajoka Theatre: harnesses the performing art to create counter-narratives to the prevalent national narratives of patriotism, religious fundamentalism and extremism

Citizens Archive of Pakistan: organization dedicated to preserving and providing access to its archive of oral histories of ordinary Pakistanis, as well as building educational programs and tools based on its testimonies

College of Youth Activism and Development: provides training and education to youth in order to reduce poverty, curb religious extremism, and encourage civic participation

PeaceNiche: uses art, culture, science and technology to promote dialogue and creative expression and address social change

Shirkat Gah Women's Resource Centre (Shirkat Gah): uses a range of art techniques such as film, music, and performing art to engage communities on issues related to women's rights, create dialogues around the cultural discrimination of women, and promote pluralistic, democratic and peaceful values

Appendix Three: Theory of Change, Identifying Preconditions and Outcomes Mapping

To understand how CKU can strengthen peace and reconciliation in post-conflict societies, we need to identify the preconditions or the outcomes needed to contribute to this long-term goal. The section below outlines some of the changes that need to take place to effectively contribute to the long-term goal of strengthening peace and reconciliation.

Create Spaces for Community Dialogue on Peace and Reconciliation Issues

Artists, educators and social activists – using participatory art methodologies such as participatory theatre techniques, storytelling and film – to create spaces for community dialogues and interaction on issues related to peace and reconciliation. Through these initiatives – which as highlighted previously serve as non-threatening tools for social engagement – community members are presented with the opportunity to critically reflect on social issues.

In addition to creating opportunities for dialogue, these processes also raise awareness about the issue. Finally, by bringing community members together, individuals are able to interact and listen to each other, thereby building the foundations necessary for trust, healing and empathy.

Build the Capacity of Communities to Address Social Issues

Using art-based techniques – such as participatory theatre methods and storytelling – artists and peacebuilders can successfully provide communities the necessary communication and dialogue skills to address the social, cultural and political issues that affect them. Giving community members the skills to speak about issues affecting them and to address conflict in a non-violent way, prevents the build-up of latent tensions that could eventually lead to violent conflict.

Through specific capacity-building workshops, individuals within communities can gain the content knowledge and skills – such as film production, participatory theatre techniques for development or craft-making – to lead their own locally-based programs. Not only does this ensure sustainable activities within local communities, increasing outreach but it also broadens the network of peacebuilders and artists working on issues related to peace and reconciliation.

Promote a Multidisciplinary Approach – Connect Peacebuilders, Artists and Activists at a Local and Regional Level

While there has been increased use of art and cultural activities in peacebuilding, human rights and reconciliation processes, these disciplines still operate separately. There is limited understanding of the complementarity of these fields.

Some of the most successful projects highlighted in the previous section, were those projects that undertook multidisciplinary approach to addressing peace and reconciliation issues and that brought together a diverse group of project partners to implement an activity. Making these connections among practitioners – from the fields of peacebuilding, transitional justice, development, art and culture, human rights and psychology for example – enables each one to draw on the skills of others within the group, maximizes the use of resources, meets the diverse needs of individuals and increases the outreach to communities.

As exemplified in the case studies, one of the benefits of art and cultural projects is that many initiatives are scalable and replicable. Scalability in post-conflict or authoritarian contexts is important as it ensures that a critical mass is reached and begins to build a movement for peace and reconciliation. While it is important that projects are context-specific, replicability of projects ensures that proven models of success can be adapted and utilized in other contexts. By providing practitioners the opportunity to network – either at a local or regional level – they are able to share training techniques, program methodologies and innovative ideas.

Provide Support and Training for Practitioners

For social activists and art practitioners to effectively use art and culture techniques such as music, theatre, dance or literature to engage communities in peace and reconciliation processes, they require training in peacebuilding, mediation and conflict resolution methodologies and diverse art and education techniques and approaches. Additionally, management, fundraising and entrepreneurship skills are necessary to ensure organizational sustainability and ongoing work in the field.

Artists and peacebuilders working in the areas of social justice, human rights and peacebuilding are constantly open to scrutiny and the threat of violence and intimidation from national security forces and extremist or rebel groups. Similar to human rights defenders' programs, donors could support a program specifically aimed at artists and activists undertaking

peace and social justice work in dangerous contexts. This could include advocacy for the freedom of expression of artists and cultural activists in certain repressive contexts, behind-the-scenes lobbying with repressive states, provision of legal or financial support for activists that are in danger because of their work⁴⁶ or the establishment of an in-country safe house for those at risk.

Appendix Four: Glossary of Terms Used in the Report

Identity-based conflict: Refers to violent and protracted conflicts between identity groups based on racial, religious, ethnic, ideological or cultural difference.

Horizontal conflict: Is a form of conflict that stems from inequalities and is experienced across social groups. This type of conflict may include communal violence, religious and ethnic conflicts. It also implies the lack of state involvement in the conflict.

Peace: Is the ability to address conflict with non-violence, empathy and creativity.

Reconciliation: Is a forward-looking process of rebuilding respectful and trusting relationships within a society in the aftermath of mass violence.

Structural violence: Is a type of violence that is built into or inherent within a social, economic or political system. Examples include Apartheid, colonialism and slavery.

Cultural violence: Is a type of violence that is a norm and is considered acceptable. An example of cultural violence could include xenophobia.

Paradoxical curiosity: Is a type of curiosity that an individual possesses when he/she seeks to understand, and is inquisitive, about the complexity and the multi-dimensional aspects of a situation rather than looking at it in simple binary terms.

Dialogue: Is an active process of listening and reflecting and may include action taking. It involves people coming together to listen to each other's opinions about an issue without judgement or pre-conceived conclusions.

Peace builder: Is an individual that prevents, manages and resolves conflict. A peacebuilder works to prevent the start or re-emergence of conflict by addressing some of the root causes of conflict or fault lines for potential conflict.

46 Author's interview conducted with Sophie Leferink, 25 August 2015.





ABOUT CKU

The Centre for Culture and Development (CKU) is an independent institution that implements the Danish strategy for culture and development, 'The Right to Art and Culture' (2013), in close cooperation with Danish embassies and representations in 13 countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. In Denmark, CKU offers digital educational material on global challenges and a workshop programme with artists from the Global South. The Images Biennale and the CKU Arts Fund present contemporary art from Africa, Asia and the Middle East in Denmark.

Key priorities for CKU's work are

- Empowering people through active participation in art and cultural activities,
- Strengthening freedom of expression for artists and cultural actors,
- Enhancing economic growth through creative industries,
- Facilitating peaceful coexistence in post-conflict areas through arts and culture, and
- Promoting intercultural dialogue.



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