

Contextual analysis

The Gukurahundi era and many other human abuses still make the hearts of many sore. Zimbabwe is a politically fractured country where a just reconciliation process is needed. After the previous experiences people feel insecure and are afraid to participate and openly share knowledge for the common good of communities. They lack the confidence to deal with conflict, abuse of rights and power. Media remains a battle ground with state media controlling everything with partisan propaganda and hate speech and restriction on alternative views. Hardliners maintain autocratic rule throughout the country by manipulating, isolating and intimidating people, using the negative controlling power of bribes, threats violence and lies. They use well controlled structures which are hard to penetrate. Several civil society organizations have found it very difficult to introduce peace-building human rights etc programs. While many agencies are working on peace building, they lack methods and materials for working on difficult issues, with difficult people in difficult areas. While ACPD has access to some of the difficult provinces, it is not yet able to respond to the huge demand for its services.

The process of healing and peace-building

The Zimbabwe National Healing Organ was born after the Global Political Agreement (GPA) in September 2008. The organ draws on a specific clause of the GPA and of the then Prime Minister Mugabe's famous Reconciliation speech of 1980, **"To be strong and effective every Zimbabwean at home and abroad must articulate their views on how we together as Zimbabweans must build the bridge to a Zimbabwe that enjoys peace"**.

Sometimes the above could be just statements that are supported for a while and then forgotten. This statement could be supported by the fact that a few years later the then Prime Minister's statement was contradictory to the events of the day.

Yes the birth of the Organ was appreciated but at the same time it is felt that much is not being done as it (organ) lacks the political will. It is also being criticised of failing to go to grassroots and continue to hold meetings in hotels. The grassroots people are left with no option but hear about the Organ on the radio and other media. They seem to be running away from their original objective of reconciling warring parties. However, the Organ's core strategy of implementing its programs through multiple partnerships e.g. churches, civil societies has made a difference. This is how ACPD has got the opportunity to support the National Healing Organ through the peace-building process.

ACPD uses innovative community publishing methods to expand freedom of expression and access to information. Because we have a very strong network we have always gathered information through listening to what people feel strongly about, survey/research. Because at the end of each year we carry out reviews or evaluate our work to check on our progress, impact, challenges, and lessons, we also get the opportunity to plan the way forward. A critical analysis which was carried out revealed to us that nothing else would move without constructive relationships and non violent communication within the society. That was our starting point towards the peace-building process. As our process is as important as the product we embarked on a consultative and research process starting with representatives from the ten provinces in Zimbabwe and a book called **Lighting up our unfolding way**

– constructive relationships, conflict transformation and peace-building was produced. For more information you can go to our website: www.acpdt.org
(Talk about how a book is produced)

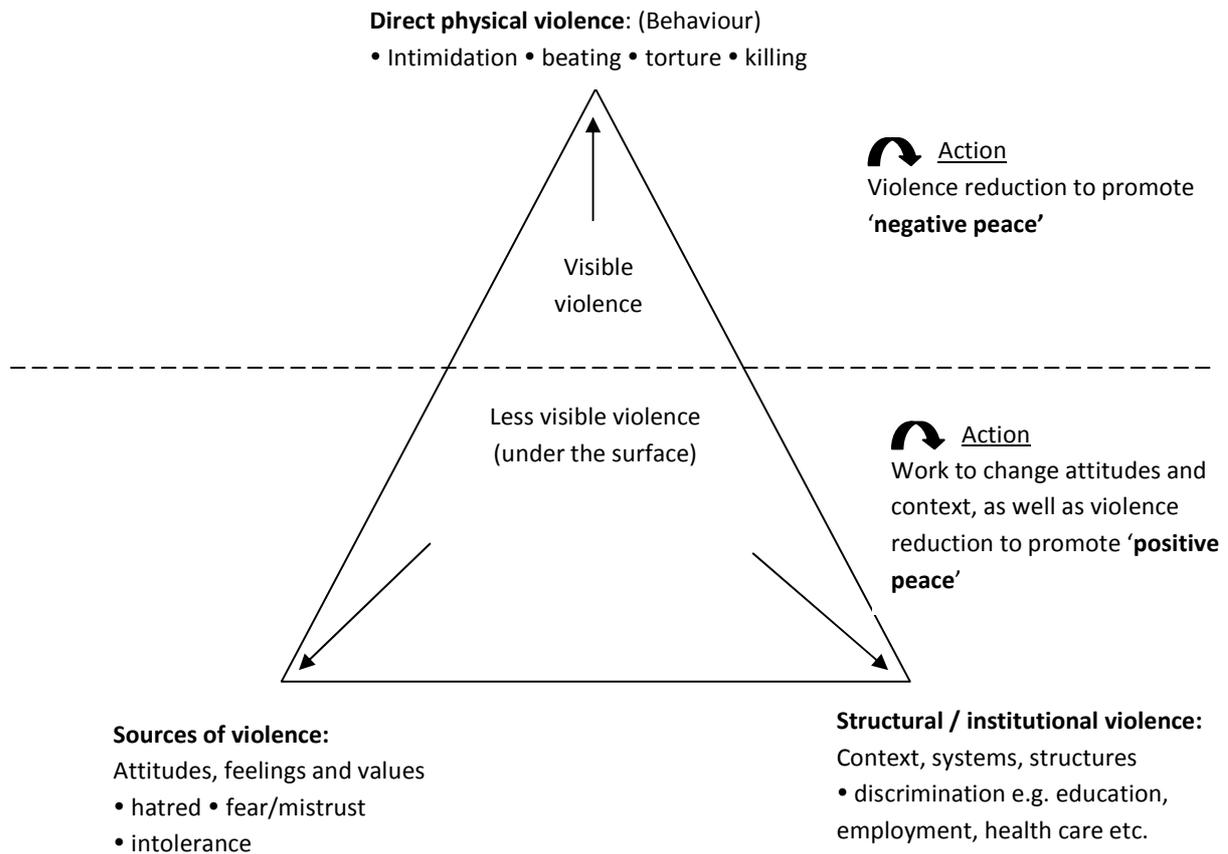
Our initial stages of the peace-building process was to strengthen the capacity of the local leadership in the selected provinces then districts for peace and democracy. In this process they would understand the concepts of peace, conflict, violence, analyse problems related to relationships, violent communication and authoritarianism. They would also learn to solve problems through participatory peace-building skills and the knowledge would be spread through continuous training at different levels and distribution of books.

Steps taken for implementation

- Seeking permission from provincial authorities.
- Round of workshops to train district facilitators mainly focusing on constructive relationships and non-violent communication. We believe relationships are central in human life. However, human relationships can be destructive but obviously we focus on constructive relationships.

*Due to limited resources we narrowed to three provinces which were strong holds of the former ruling party and which have been seriously affected by violence. It has not been easy to convince those in authority that we wanted to start a process on peace-building. Questions like **“You want to introduce a peace-building process, where is the war?”** were asked. Surely there was need to break the barriers that blocked our way to good society. In this case we needed to build bridges of trust among all stakeholders. This made us not to be selective to who attends our meetings or workshops.

The challenge was of being faced with different groups of people who had different perceptions towards peace-building e.g. those who want to use violence to achieve their goals or protect their interests; those taking a non-violent stance; others with views in between would also support peace initiatives but with different ideas on what peace is. People often think of the absence of physical violence as the presence of peace and yet it's more than that.



In Zimbabwe, preaching about peace should not be done as if it's an inexperienced person trying to defuse a bomb otherwise it could be worse. In one of the provinces, after introducing a process on peace-building an angry man stood up and said, **"I am organising my family to revenge and mentioned that he was saving money to be trained as a sniper in Germany."**

Approach

Usually we start our meetings / workshops with an exercise we call centering which challenges participants to have insights / deep thoughts about the subject being discussed.

- e.g. – The symbol of the spear and the clay pot.
 – The story of the rainbow etc.

Topics covered so far in phases

One

- How constructive / destructive relationships and violent / non violent communication are identified at different levels (families, communities, workplaces) in relation to religion, politics and culture. How do we build on the positive and correct the wrong?
- Sharing experiences of what has happened to people as individuals, families and communities. Discussing how people can deal with them in a constructive and non-violent way.
 * A lot of theatre is used to express feelings.

- Sharing ideas on how the process can be used to empower more people on peace-building initiatives.

Two

- Analysing pillars that support both constructive / destructive relationships and violent / non violent communication.
- Discuss how the positive can be built on and how the negative can be dealt with.
* This is where people talk and learn about advocacy skills and lobby for support of the initiative.

Three

- Learning how to use an effective tool on codes (which are described as presentations of problems, which communities feel strong about.) The codes can be in different forms, i.e. poster, poem, songs, pictures, story or case studies. Codes raise questions.
- Codes are used to pose problems or communicate something.
- Codes challenge adults / people to discuss real issues that are of great concern in their lives.

How to design a code

1. The initial stage / the most important part of the whole process in designing a code after carrying out a survey.
2. Take note of the issues that concern the communities in their day to day lives.
3. Critically analyse the information from the survey.
4. What are people speaking about with strong feelings?
5. Prepare problem posing materials which will stimulate discussion when you use them.
6. The clearer the problem-posing materials, the more participants will be stimulated to think and discover for themselves.

How to use codes

1. Presentation of codes to learners
 - a. Describe the codes
 - b. Analyse the code
 - c. Relate the code to real life
 - d. Go into deeper analysis.
 - e. Action planning

How to use the codes

1. Describing the code
What did you see happening?
2. Analysis
Why did this happen?

3. Real life
Does this happen in your situation? Give examples.
 4. Related problems
What problems does this lead to?
 5. Root causes of the problems
What are the root causes of the problems?
 6. Action planning
What can we do about it?
- * Give examples of codes

Networking

A network of civil society organizations called Peace-building Network of Zimbabwe (PBNZ) has been formed to enhance a co-ordinated and sustainable community-based healing and reconciliation process across Zimbabwe in the wake of political and structural violence since the 1980's in order to foster and promote a political culture of tolerance. Despite the efforts being made to ensure that the network becomes effective the main challenge is of insufficient resources.