

Chapter Four. An Agenda for transformative peacebuilding?

This paper started by briefly outlining the current global crisis and the opportunity this presents to the field of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. It went on to outline some of the advances made over the past twenty years at different levels, as people have searched for more cooperative, less violent solutions.

But there is a long way to go to realise the full potential of the field, from grassroots to high politics. The previous chapter focussed on the role of civil society peacebuilding, and set out some of the main constraints for peacebuilders who seek to generate credible alternatives to the destructive ways in which intractable national and international conflicts are currently addressed, and to develop expertise and the necessary depth for the essential shifts to be made.

These shifts will almost certainly require more research, linked to clearer articulation of the emerging alternative(s), skilful engagement with the wider public, and determined lobbying, especially perhaps in political and business circles. They will also need to be underpinned and resourced by people across the world who are able to embody, advocate, guide and resource the implementation of new policy directions. Powerful ideas without practical backup risk being unfairly discredited.

Somehow a tipping point must be reached, where this can start to happen. There are tantalising signs of what could be, if peacebuilders can mobilise imagination and their own power, and reach out to their natural allies. Two areas, we suggest, need to be addressed simultaneously: what we can do, and what we can say. This chapter seeks to sketch out some responses and invites the readers' engagement.

4.1 What can we do? – an Agenda

4.1.1 Accountability

In response to internal divisions, there is a need to re-instate communities and their wellbeing unambiguously at the heart of our priorities. How can this enable an inspiring yet practical vision to emerge again?

Looking closely at who INGOs are accountable to in reality, it is often much more to funders and governments than to the people they work with and the communities they serve. Project proposals are, due to understandable practical constraints, often made with minimal consultation between local CSOs and INGOs; instead, a wealth of discussion between an INGO and a funding body, governmental or private, culminates in a logframe. This does not sit easily alongside a commitment to positive peace, justice and wellbeing of people and their communities. How would practice change if these unambiguously became central priorities? How would it look like, for example, if INGOs encouraged local partners to set and monitor their own change agendas, and accompanied them as needed, rather than the reverse, which so often happens now?

In addition to this 'vertical' accountability, peacebuilders could see themselves more readily as connecting horizontally in time:

- *to the past* – to those who have struggled for peace and justice, often paying with their lives, as well as those who laid the intellectual and practical basis for the field and the very concept of peace.

- *to the future* – to those who will build on what will have been achieved, hopefully with increasing success.

4.1.2 Global issues

In response to the perceived narrowness of vision, there is a need to integrate peacebuilding efforts with those addressing other major threats to survival and security. What does this mean for our vision of sustainable peace?

Mainstream politics at global as well as national level marginalises human values. Political processes often seem bereft not only of integrity but of any sense of urgency in the face of an already manifesting global crisis. Such politics makes conflict transformation at best an uphill struggle, however strong or weak the field of peacebuilding itself is; mitigating the effects is no longer an adequate goal.

At the same time, peace, as we have seen, cannot be separated from economic justice, or environmental issues, or human rights, including the right to participate in public affairs. In order to have a transformative, not simply technical impact on policies, a new kind of politics needs to evolve at all levels, one that is built on the values of respect, care and cooperation²⁹ and that challenges the current power disparities that distort and divide societies, including those associated with wealth, gender and race.

One of the implications of building such a change is that economic analysis will need to play a much larger role in conflict analysis. If so much of the way the world works is driven by the global market and the corporations that dominate it, these must clearly feature more in our understanding of why things are as they are, and in our theories of change. This may in turn necessitate an increasing willingness to challenge the behaviour of market capitalism, well beyond corporate social responsibility, where this bears down on the communities by whom, and for whom, the struggle for peace is taking place. It may well mean being more willing to build alliances with those who are creating social and political alternatives, whether through popular movements or more local initiatives and structures.

At national and international levels this will certainly mean that INGOs will have to start serious conversations with others working on different issues. In so doing they will inevitably need to rethink and restate what they mean by positive / greater / sustainable peace. And they will need to start taking their potential in shaping the future more seriously.

The UK government's geo-strategic forecasters recently produced a review of strategic trends in the next 30 years, which depicted the global future as fraught with dangers and risks, arising from issues such as population and resources, identity and interest, governance and order, and knowledge and innovation.³⁰ The recommended responses are largely along the lines of 'getting there first': if only 'we' keep ahead of the game, 'we' will stay safe. But doing so will inevitably involve restricting the rights of citizens, in the interests of national security, and risks further exacerbating those same dangers it tries to address.

The absence of imaginative, future-oriented policy-making, found in many places at governmental levels, is ultimately self-defeating. If what it takes to stay safe is to play the same game better

²⁹ Francis, Diana. A project to transform policy, starting in the UK. CCTS Review 35, November 2007, p.7. Available at <http://www.c-r.org/ccts/ccts35/review35.pdf>

³⁰ The DCDC Global Strategic Trends Programme 2007-2036. Available at <http://www.dcdc-strategictrends.org.uk/>

than the 'enemy', are we not simply speeding up a deadly game to the point of mutual destruction?

The challenge is out there now. How can peacebuilders resist such pessimism about the future and respond to the need for a better way to manage difference and disagreement that is evident both in politics and elsewhere? For example, could there be a cooperative effort to research and publish a formal response to the above-mentioned review?

Case study 6. Picking up the emerging themes – International Alert and International Crisis Group

Peacebuilding organisations have indeed begun to link up with emerging global issues. For example, in response to the threat of climate change, the International Crisis Group has compiled a database of resources on climate change and conflict, and International Alert has produced a report on the links between climate change, peace and war. Still, these are only initial steps, yet to be built upon.

These two organisations have also attempted to explore the role of energy competition and multinational corporations in conflict. For example, International Alert contributed to the development of 'Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights', a set of principles on business practice aiming 'to guide companies in balancing the needs for safety while respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms' in three areas: risk assessment, relations with public security, and relations with private security. Such efforts however tend to stop at assessing and mitigating the risks associated with climate change and economic activity in an unsafe environment, and are yet to address the systemic connections between these factors and their contribution to global conflict.

Sources: www.crisisgroup.org, www.international-alert.org, www.voluntaryprinciples.org

4.1.3 Empowerment

In response to deferential attitudes to power, there is a need to look for ways to empower ourselves, especially in relation to our own governments and business communities. What more can we also do to support the empowerment of our partners, and to disempower those who sustain and promote violence in all its forms?

It is not possible to be serious about change and stay out of politics. This is often self-evident at the local level. Why is there such reluctance amongst most INGOs to accept that peace is about transforming violence in all its manifestations into practical politics? What will it take for them to take power and politics seriously, especially in their home countries? Unless they do, the main thrust of their programmes is likely to be technical rather than transformative, in the terms of this paper, and thus be ultimately irrelevant to real change.

The need for local empowerment as the centrepiece of analysis and practical work has been long recognised in the development field. Peacebuilding organisations have adopted the same rhetoric, but often fail to honour this at local level. In a world characterised by huge power disparities, changing power relations needs to move to the heart of peace work, at the local as well as global level, encompassing both political and economic structures.

Perhaps this points to a need to develop new and varied forms of power, more cooperative and persuasive, yet highly political and hard-nosed, which would be based on an integrated analysis of global issues. Could this mean a greater willingness to support civil resistance movements – whose record of mobilising political change is much stronger than that of CSOs? Could it mean a renewed interest in, and commitment to, active nonviolence?

There are huge possibilities for expanding this dimension of peacebuilding, including working intensively alongside disaffected groups and those showing civil courage by resisting oppression, defending the rights of nonviolent resisters, and promoting fair and accurate media coverage of nonviolent initiatives and movements. More broadly there is great potential for developing a stronger discourse of nonviolent struggle and to promote this through educational and wider information programmes.³¹

Underlying much of the empowerment issue is of course the question of funding. While it is hard not to admit that the rise of the peacebuilding sector has been due almost entirely to the generosity of Western governments, it is equally hard not to ask whose interests have been principally served up to now. There is, has always been a gap between what governments call peace (stability by another name in many cases) and what grassroots communities want and need (social justice, environmental sustainability and livelihoods at a minimum). This, as we have seen, poses an apparently invidious choice between, on the one hand, maintaining values and adopting a stance that is independent of government but losing most of the current means of survival, and, on the other, receiving government funds at the cost of collective complicity.

It is as well to remember that civil society is already far from powerless in the face of its own governments. It is interesting to ponder, for example, how the UK government would have responded to a unanimous and well publicised position taken by peace, relief and development organisations before the Iraq invasion in 2003 that they would boycott all 'post-conflict' work in that country on the grounds that the invasion was illegal. Many democratic governments have come to need civil society to deliver key aspects of their domestic and foreign policies. Other, more authoritarian regimes can be vulnerable to assertive civil society movements and organisations, who have access to external media and may be in a position to challenge the regime itself. There is no a priori reason why peacebuilders should adopt the apparently co-optive, 'me-too' attitude to government so uncontroversially prevalent at the moment.

In this context, it could be beneficial if peacebuilders came together to look at their relations with government, to explore ways of maximising their collective power and thus developing more symmetrical relationships with the state and other foci of influence.

In so doing they might also want to consider:

- To what extent government funding shapes programming and the organisations that deliver them.
- What work they want to do which is not acceptable or fundable by government or business.
- How it might be possible to become less dependent on government funding.
- The advantages and pitfalls of alternative models of resourcing, including corporate funding.

4.1.4 Networks and linkages

In response to organisational rivalry, there is a need for joined-up work with others. How can we make the separate elements of peacebuilding add up to more than the sum of its parts?

Much peacebuilding work, whether local, national or international, consists of separate projects by independent organisations. There is a wealth of successful projects at the local level. However, all too often they remain unconnected to the wider context at the regional and national levels, upon which local peace ultimately depends.

³¹ Similar ideas are developed in Merriman, H. and J. DuVall, *Dissolving Terrorism at its Roots*, in Ram, S. and R. Summy (eds) *Nonviolence: An Alternative for Countering Global Terrorism*, Hauppauge, NY, Nova Science Publishers, 2007, and in Francis, Diana. *People, Peace and Power: Conflict Transformation in Action*, Pluto Press, 2002.

There is a range of existing networks and coalitions, of varying quality and effectiveness. How can these be reinvigorated in order to connect work for change at different levels and across the different issues and locations? For genuine peacebuilding to take place, we need to challenge the idea that each organisation is an island seeking its own independent wellbeing, and begin to share information and resources systematically. Building such alliances will create a new source of legitimacy and power.

Peacebuilders sometimes embrace a certain degree of evangelism: an assumption that those on the other side of the divide, so to speak, need to change their values for peace to be built. Not surprisingly, people (and even less institutions) do not easily respond to arguments of this kind. They would probably respond more to arguments based on the evidence that certain approaches are more likely to work than others in given circumstances, and be cheaper to implement. This suggests that it is process – policies, techniques and methods – that may often provide the most acceptable entry-point to other constituencies. In that case it will be vital to find ways to integrate the seeds of transformation within these technical methodologies.

Networks can also be subversive, in the best sense. There is, we believe, a significant number of people in government and business institutions who would like to see their organisations adopt a more creative, values-based approach to peace and conflict, and are in a position to influence policies on these issues if they have the arguments and relevant knowledge to hand. They can be seen as ‘insiders’, those who are looking for alternatives, can see the advantages of systematic, well-resourced peacebuilding work, and recognise the failures of the dominant control-oriented, militarised paradigm. They are interested to learn how to do things differently, but do not want to buy into a significantly different values system. Nor could they while retaining their jobs. Is this a possible space where informal approaches, either explicit in intent or perhaps based initially on common identities or interests, can lead towards cross-fertilisation of ideas and a gradual change in attitudes and practice?

This would pose a challenge for the peace-building community to collaboratively tease out its collective learning, from failures as well as successes, and articulate it in a practical, jargon-free way for those who are not part of the sector, so that they could understand and make use of it. Would this perhaps call for a single forum, real or virtual, where the different actors and viewpoints in the field can share experience and seek synthesis?

Case study 7. Connect Four – an initiative to develop a common policy platform in UK

In July 2006 a small group of peace practitioners in the UK held a consultation with people engaged in the four areas outlined in Chapter 1 above: economic justice, environment, peace and rights. The intention was to test the idea of joined-up thinking between the different fields and between agencies working on the different issues. In a report they wrote:

“The tentative thinking that we shared was that we would begin by elaborating our analysis, through individual and collective thinking and writing, in a variety of contexts, and through the circulation of ideas in different circles, using different forums for dialogue and debate. On the basis of the analysis we reached, we would begin to formulate policies, through similar modes of thought and exchange, and once they were formulated disseminate them more widely, seeking entry points into different circles and institutions.

“What we hoped to achieve during this consultation was first an exploration of the connections between the four fields, as seen by our participants, so that the rationale for cooperation is articulated. The second question we wanted the group to explore together was what kind of initiative – if any – would be productive. This exploration might, we thought, point us to (a) publication(s); to an ongoing or occasional

conversation; to a big joint conference; to joint lobbying; to behind-the-scenes dialogue, or to a unified and concerted campaign. We were open to all possibilities...

“On the day in question an excellent group of some 20 people came together in Oxford and the exploration that took place was rich in analysis and in ideas for popular outreach, as well as for more ‘weighty’ work to influence policy. The consultation’s proceedings were duly written up and circulated to all concerned, and several people expressed interest in ongoing involvement. We felt sufficiently encouraged to apply for much more substantial funding. The proposal we made was still focussed very much on a dialogical process, wheeled out into communities, as well as on more specific working groups related to media, publications and so on. Maybe the proposal was both too lacking in specifics and too ambitious, but we had no success in getting funds to take the idea forward. And negotiations that began with a specific organisation that showed a lively interest in taking on the project ran into the ground...

“The need for a policy initiative of this nature seems even more urgent now than it did then. The potential for a disastrous attack on Iran; the increasing erosion of human rights and civil liberties; the growing gap between the wealthy and the poor and the increasing evidence of the impending devastation of climate change all make the need for change even more urgent.”

The initiating group remains active and welcomes ideas to take this thinking forward.

Adapted from: Francis, Diana. A project to transform policy, starting in the UK. CCTS Review No35, November 2007, available at <http://www.c-r.org/ccts/ccts35/francis.htm>

4.1.5 Delivering change

In response to an over-emphasis on projects, there is a need to raise the level of aspiration and achievement to the bigger picture. How can we deliberately include transformative elements in all peacebuilding work, be that resistance or promoting new initiatives?

Evaluation and needs assessment have been areas of major progress in recent years. There is now a greater tendency to focus on delivering ‘outcomes’ of a particular project, and to gain more reliable knowledge on whether they are achieved. But, with the focus on projects, the bigger picture often remains unaffected. Reporting, honest or not, still largely overlooks the effect on the wider context.

There is a need to broaden horizons, and to value process as well as significant outcomes. Peacebuilding is not only about programmes that have impact in their own terms, but also about delivering real transformative change. It is about making sure that programmes connect with, and affect the ‘peace writ large’. In doing so, they need to be influencing policies of others, local, national or international, political or economic. What real difference is made? How does one know? Who cares?

Sometimes the impact sought will be not so much about new initiatives as building resilience and resistance, by not allowing political expediency to interfere in a particular situation, or by challenging short-term solutions that have negative long-term implications, or by defending the gains won in previous years. It is also important to keep in mind that the seeds of transformation can be present in any single piece of work, as Table 1 in Chapter 3 demonstrates.

The now well-publicised initiative in the Northern Kenyan district of Wajir during the 1990s to end inter-clan fighting was in its origin just one piece of work, indeed with many technical aspects to ensure that the objective of ending violence was achieved. But it had transformative elements which ensured that its impact went further, both geographically and in time. These elements included the fact that the initiative was led by women, who themselves were members of wider networks; it aimed to include, influence and empower every person who encountered it, including

government figures and intelligence services; it built a cumulative, multilevel infrastructure of peace embodied in the Wajir Peace and Development Committee; and, crucially perhaps, in the initial stages it refused external funding and raised the necessary resources from those involved and from local sympathisers and businesses.

Thus, delivering change is often less about scale than a careful integration of creatively subversive elements into everyday activity. It involves joined-up thinking and conscious linking, both within peacebuilding work and with other sectors, at different levels. It means thinking and planning long-term, and thus moving beyond the project mentality.

4.1.6 Action learning

In response to the need for a critical mass of highly skilled cadres, there is a need to elicit learning from what practitioners in different fields actually do (and not just say they do), and enable them to apply the insights in practice. How can we make sure our learning enhances our ability to work more systemically for change?

It is not surprising that peace work produces many unintended outcomes, from positive ones to outright failures. We do not live in a world of linear causes and consequences, yet we often plan as if we did. A systems framework would offer more useful insights into how change happens, but it also requires a high degree of reflexive learning and adaptability, at personal and institutional levels. This calls for a willingness to learn from the work of peacebuilding and other sectors, and bring those insights back into practice. For most organisations this will mean a change of culture towards a more proactive and open sharing of successes and failures, and a greater willingness to plan future work with others.

In addition, there is a need to invest in specially designed education for peacebuilders and changemakers, which would put action learning at its heart. An instructive example in the development field is the participatory rural appraisal (PRA) methodology and its many offshoots. What will it take for peacebuilding organisations to innovate in a similar way, with the conscious aim of taking its constituency to a new level?

Case study 8. Applied Conflict Transformation Studies – building a pool of reflexive practitioners

Rationale: bridging the academic-practitioner divide

An attempt to bridge the gap between academic programmes and practitioners' needs has been made by the development of Applied Conflict Transformation Studies (ACTS), a programme initiated by UK-based Responding to Conflict (RTC). ACTS is a two-year part-time Masters course in conflict transformation, structured around six modules (Theories of conflict; Conflict, power and change; Transforming violent conflict; Building sustainable peace; Building theory from practice; and Agents for transformation), each consisting of a residential seminar and on-the-job study. It is currently offered in Asia (based in Cambodia), and Balkans and Middle East (based in Serbia).

Methodology: action learning and research

At the core of ACTS methodology is action research, combined with the study and testing of conflict theories and the practice of conflict-handling skills. Action research methodology involves repeated cycles of action, reflection and planning with a focus on three levels: the self, or action-researcher, the interactive face-to-face context, and the wider community or society. Action research requires students to start with their own practice, recognising that by being part of an intervention, they will affect the outcome of a situation. It is an approach which encourages developing awareness of one's motivations and values, as well as awareness of others and their perspectives. By reflecting systematically on their work, students gradually develop their own practice and skills. What is their role in working for social and political change? How can they become more effective agents of change and leaders in their organisations and communities?

While action research has a strong focus on the individual, it also requires students to look closely at the work they are doing. When are their programmes successful and why? In what ways do they need to improve? What can their colleagues and organisations learn from their research? And beyond that: what would their research mean for the wider field of conflict transformation? At its best, ACTS enables practitioners to write about their work and practice, challenging and contributing to the field of conflict transformation from the perspective of first hand involvement.

Structure: global yet local

ACTS core curriculum is shaped to suit the needs of the particular context; teaching teams are centrally accredited, and are made up of tutors from the region where the course is held and international tutors who bring a wider perspective.

Reflections

ACTS is the first, and so far the only university-based conflict transformation course to be centred on action research. It inevitably faces questions about its legitimacy and quality. However the output of the first group of students who graduated in 2007 suggests that action learning can indeed become a more widely recognised mode of education within the field. Yet as ACTS develops, its team keeps asking itself to what extent their overall goal of building a critical mass of reflexive practitioners in strategic areas risks being lost in the process of establishing such global programme.

Sources: www.globalacts.org, www.respond.org

In response to the series of challenges outlined in the previous chapter, this chapter has so far set out six main steps to consider, which, through happy circumstance, could constitute an AGENDA:

- A** for Accountability
- G** for Global issues
- E** for Empowerment
- N** for Networking
- D** for Delivering change
- A** for Action learning

4.2 What can we say?

While these points indicate possible ways to address the needs of the peacebuilding community, they (or their improved alternatives) will take time to ponder and act on. But arguably we do not have the luxury of time with regard to the current political window of opportunity.

Peacebuilding insights and frameworks continue to be selectively appreciated yet largely ignored in political decision-making, and investment by governments in generating and implementing nonviolent solutions remains limited. Why is this so? Is it because peacebuilding insights are not yet available in a way that can be accessed or adequately implemented in political and policy-making circles? Is there a lack of skilful communication of the lessons learned, or a shortage of political wisdom and clout to get those insights into policy debate, or a failure to address those with vested interests in a militarised view of the world? And what can be done to respond to this moment of opportunity?

A practical step in this direction could be to work towards an integrated policy platform that would seek to articulate policies founded on cooperation, not domination.³² Such a move could initially bring together a range of civil society organisations, with the aim of sharing and

³² Eisler, Riane. *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future*. London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1990 and Francis, Diana. *Rethinking War and Peace*. London: Pluto Press 2002.

deepening an analysis that recognises the interconnectedness of the four domains of peace, economic justice, respect for the environment and human rights / political participation. A grouping such as this might in the first instance commit to:

- Researching the interconnections of these issues at different levels;
- Incorporating the resulting insights in their own work and planning;
- Formulating political policies with attention to all four areas;
- Lobbying for the adoption of these policies, within government where possible, and at the same time looking for new ways to advance them outside and beyond government, including the UN, global civil society and platforms such as World Social Forum;
- Helping to publicise the understanding behind this approach as widely as possible.

Such a process could begin in any country, in Europe as much as anywhere, because it is a cluster of countries who have had considerable impact (malign or benign) on the rest of the world in the past, and continues to have it today.

4.2.1 Generating political change

If we are to make big waves, we need to clarify our theories of how political change happens. This is a topic now frequently covered in peacebuilding programmes, but is less often practically addressed at strategic level, especially perhaps by INGOs. Whatever conclusions we reach, it will be vital to work from grassroots 'up' as well as at middle and 'top' levels.

One of the possibilities is to initiate as soon as possible a time-limited process to synthesize and articulate, more effectively than has been done to date, the core experience of practitioners in bringing about joined-up, multilevel change. The outcomes might take a range of forms: a resource for lobbying and campaigning for coherent policy alternatives at governmental and intergovernmental levels; a video or pocket book aimed at the wider public: short, sharp, with clear policy-making options backed up by evidence and rationale. The aim would be to show how adopting these approaches and principles would make life easier for those in decision-making and influencing positions, both domestically and in foreign policy – if such a distinction can be maintained any longer.

Such a process would impel peacebuilders to come together and identify the distinctive insights and alternatives they can realistically provide and advocate for from their knowledge and experience on various areas of policy including, for example, counter-terrorism, climate and the environment, community relations and education.

There would be distinctive opportunities and entry points in different countries. For example, one of the UK's major think-tanks, the Institute for Public Policy Research, is hosting an independent Commission on National Security in the 21st Century, which aims to contribute to assessment, strategic directions and specific policies for UK's national security policy.³³

The UN offers opportunities for engagement, especially perhaps through the Peacebuilding Commission where, so far, local civil society had limited opportunities to influence policy. Another current process is The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, signed in June 2006 and by now endorsed by more than 70 states. It commits its signatories to supporting "initiatives to measure the human, social and economic costs of armed violence, to assess risks and vulnerabilities, to evaluate the effectiveness of armed violence reduction programmes, and to

³³ For more information see <http://www.ippr.org/ipprcommissions/?id=2656&tid=2656&node=1>

disseminate knowledge of best practices.”³⁴ There is huge scope for the engagement of civil society in turning such laudable sentiments into action, though governments are not universally keen. The Quaker UN Office in Geneva is providing the formal link for civil society to engage with the implementation of the Declaration.

Much of this may sound random, but policy change is more an art than a science. Insiders often say it is a chancy process, in which critical moments of genuine receptivity and openness to change come unpredictably, but when they do, policy-makers will look seriously at whatever is on offer which comes from a credible source and provides answers to their predicament. The viable alternatives at the moment of opportunity can become a policy in a remarkably short time.

When do these critical moments come? Milton Friedman, the economics guru whose disciples have wrought far-reaching and highly contentious change in many societies, wrote: “Only a crisis – actual or perceived – produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around. That, I believe, is our basic function: to develop alternatives to existing policies, and to keep them alive and available until the politically impossible becomes politically inevitable.”³⁵

However, political will must also be mobilised. What is known about political influence suggests that the role of experts in the field who have ample information, experience and good argument at their fingertips is vital, but far from enough. There is also a need for at least two other kinds of inputs, rather as the author of *Tipping Point*³⁶ suggests:

- People who know people, *networkers*, who can spread the word to ‘insiders’, and those with influence through their range of contacts in the political world.
- People who know how to persuade: *champions* who can promote these ideas and values so that they become an accepted currency.

With networkers, champions and practitioners coming together in a concerted manner across global civil society, this could bring the main elements essential for generating political will for a different approach, and for developing new structures and processes where current forms of governance resist or fall short.

The relationship between civil society and state-level policy-makers is, and should be, inherently a difficult one. But it will at least become less characterised by dependency as and when policy-makers begin to recognise that there is useful, applicable, cost-saving knowledge coming from the community of peacebuilders. Power, in this case, would come from more research and better promotion of insights backed by international cooperation and solidarity.

³⁴ Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, p.2. Available at http://www.genevadeclaration.org/pdfs/Geneva_Declaration_English.pdf

³⁵ Friedman, Milton, *Capitalism and Freedom*, 1962, repr. University of Chicago Press 1982, quoted in Klein, Naomi, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, Penguin/Allen Lane 2007

³⁶ Gladwell, Malcolm. *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, Abacus 2002

Conclusion

This paper argues for a deep change – it requires that those concerned about peacebuilding stop (yes, stop) and think together about how what they do contributes to the world they want to see. What are the deepest and most essential changes they are working towards, and how do the concrete actions and programmes they undertake contribute to these?

Such a process will need to be creative in itself, and require people involved to think outside the box. It will lead to a more outgoing approach – meeting people where they are, and avoiding moralising or trying to convert people to particular way of thinking. It will involve working both at governmental levels, to resist or develop policy, and within society, to create alternatives and build movements.

It should raise questions about the effectiveness and cost of current militarised models – in their own terms as well as those of peacebuilding. It should avoid making claims which cannot be substantiated and admit to areas where more practice and experimentation is needed. It should be evidence-based, and justifiable on that basis. It should also avoid being stripped of values and challenge, and thus reduced to technical solutions.

The peacebuilding community, and those who see themselves part of it, cannot, in our view, shirk the challenge. In turning away from its core transformative values and rejecting a wholehearted engagement with power and politics, it has found the resources necessary to develop institutionally, and gained a measure of official acceptance, but, perhaps, lost much of the *raison d'être* which brought it into existence. If the future of peacebuilding is to provide technical expertise to help powerful states and corporations assert their dominance over the global system more amicably and cheaply, in the short-term it is an easier choice to make. But in the long run it will not stand up to scrutiny, as the resources of the world become ever more contested, and rapid deterioration of the environment alters hopes and assumptions about a sustainable future for all.

What next?

Much of what has been said here is incomplete, contentious or both. Some readers may recognise in these pages issues with which they have been struggling, others may prefer to reject its core suggestions, or look the other way and continue with business as usual. Or they might join the conversation. Is anyone out there?