From shared truths to joint responsibility

(sha:re)

Training Manual
For Mediators and Dialogue Facilitators

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1. Introduction

1.1 About this Manual

This manual has been developed to enable the wider distribution of the sha:re approach of dialogue facilitation within the Nepali society. It is designed for Nepali trainers who are supposed to train facilitators ans mediators using this approach. However, it is not restricted to the Nepali context. We hope that this manual can inspire dedicated people in different parts of the world who assist peaceful settlements of conflicts and support reconciliation within societies. We would be more than happy, if this contributes even in a small way to reducing resentment and mistrust, rooted in the past, in different ethnic, social and religious backgrounds or gender.

This is a practical manual for trainers. It is designed as a 10-day training workshop. Nevertheless, it is also possible to use the individual exercises separately. The aim of the 10-day training is twofold: First, the participants in this training shall be enabled to facilitate dialogue groups (according to the sha:re approach); second, they shall be enabled to conduct mediations in families, neighborhoods and communities.

The origin of the sha:re approach

The Nepali civil war ended in 2006. It took until April 2011 before the about 14.000 former Maoist combatants were allowed to settle in various communities in Nepal. In many cases, this significantly changed the demography of the respective districts. In many villages, the integration went well. However, tensions, resentment, a lack of trust and mutual fear of violence soon became explicit. The root causes oftentimes related to past grievances and experiences of violence during the civil war.

The German development cooperation GIZ in cooperation with the Nepali NGO pro public created a group composed half of former combatants and half of community members. The aim was to build capacities for the resolution of conflicts within these communities as well as to support the reconciliation and trust-building process. In 2012, inmedio berlin was assigned to develop a concept and training methodology and to guarantee backstopping for its transfer into practice. After a total amount of 15 training days within one year, the participants learned to intervene and mediate in escalating conflicts and organize sha:re dialogue groups, which enable a reconciliation and trust-building process. Based on inmedio’s experience from other parts of the world and on the feedback from the training group on the specific needs and features in the Nepali context, the sha:re approach was co-developed in a joint effort. In 2015 and 2016 the project “From shared truths to joint responsibility” was supported by inmedio and Culture for Peace, funded by Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa) – zivik with funds from the German Federal Foreign Office.
Today, the facilitators are organized in 5 sha:re centers which they had funded in 2014/2015 (www.sharecenternepal.org) in four districts (Chitwan, Kailali, Saptari, and Surkhet). They support the reintegration process in their respective districts, mediate conflicts, organize peace events and initiate and facilitate dialogues. Their goal is that potential political, social ethnic and communal disputes are resolved peacefully and that harmony is maintained in their society. Since 2014, they have successfully mediated more than 120 local disputes and reached out to more than 650 people in dialogue groups and dialogue camps. Furthermore, they have established 45 dialogue groups and conducted 5 large-scale dialogue camps This manual is used by the sha:re center facilitators in order to train new sha:re facilitators which can then reach even more people.

During our cooperation, the sha:re facilitators contributed important feedback and ideas to the training, which helped to adapt it to the cultural context and daily reality. During the longtime cooperation, our former trainees became colleagues from whom we love to learn and who inspire us in our work. We are especially grateful for the deep relationship that was created by sharing their (and our) life stories and manifold other experiences. We would also like to thank Raphael Vergin from Culture for Peace who co-directed the project in 2015 and 2016, Elisabeth von Capeller from Swiss Development Cooperation for initial considerations, GIZ Nepal and Pro Public who had set up and coordinated the project in 2014-2014, Bibushan Timsina and Jyothsha Shresta who have served as interpreters, advisers and project managers, the colleagues from the Civil Peace Service, the German Embassy Kathmandu and ifA/zivik for their support as well as Larissa Kunze, Mahima Rai and Lea Forbig for their assistance in writing and editing this manual.

Please find a documentary (video) on the Sha:re project as well as a selection of radio episodes, podcasts and articles on the websites of inmedio (www.inmedio-peace-consult.org), Culture for Peace (www.culture-for-peace.org) and the Sha:re Centers Nepal.

**Structure of the manual**

In the first part of the manual you can find background information on the sha:re-approach and it’s combination with arts- and media-based approaches to conflict transformation. After an overview of the training schedule, there are detailed plans for each day which include a time schedule and descriptions of each exercise. ‘Advice boxes’, which can be found next to the description of certain exercises, will highlight challenging aspects of the exercise.

The time structure of the manual is calculated for a group of 20 participants. Therefore, the introduction round is scheduled for 60 minutes, 3 minutes for each person. We have tried to give a little extra time to some exercises so that the schedule is not too tight and trainers can react to participants’ reactions without time pressure.
The training days start at 9:00 am and end at 5:00 pm. 1.5 hours lunch break and 40 minutes (2 x 20 min) coffee breaks are included. This makes 5 training hours per day. If needed, the first and last day of the week can be shortened to allow a relaxed arrival/ departure. This has been the timeframe for the training this manual was created for. Of course it needs to be modified for other contexts. Ideally there should be some time between the first and the second module of the training (e.g. two month) to give participants some time to practice.

The English version of this manual has basically been written as a template for the Nepali translation. Hence, limited efforts have been sent on proper writing-style and spelling. Kindly excuse any inconvenience caused by this.
1.2 From shared narratives to joint responsibility (sha:re): Supporting reintegration of former Maoist army combatants and community resilience to violent conflicts through mediation, dialogue and storytelling¹

“I felt the pain that we caused to each other and after we shared our stories we felt relieved.” (Ex-combatant, Nepali Times, 2013)

“From shared truths to joint responsibility” (sha:re) is an approach for interpersonal dialogue, which was co-designed by a group of Nepali facilitators and the authors of this article in the framework of a project to support the reintegration of ex-combatants after the dissolution of the cantonments. It combines mediation with dialogue and dealing with the past by making use of storytelling methodology.

Background
One of the major challenges after the signing of the comprehensive peace agreement was the question of rehabilitation and reintegration of Maoist combatants. It took years until a political settlement about the modalities was reached and the cantonments were dissolved in April 2012. Some 15,000 former combatants settled in mostly large groups of up to 700 people (Martin Chautari 2013) in VDCs, most of them near the cantonments. The majority did not want to return to their original communities because they “complained of being discriminated against by their communities and families” (C. Bhandari, 2015). In many cases, their presence significantly changed the demography of the VDCs. Donors’ concerns – based on international experience – that the retirement money might be used in a short-sighted manner did not materialise: Most ex-combatants used the money wisely to buy land or shops and create job opportunities. The reintegration can be seen as very successful in this regard (Timalsina 2014, C. Bhandari 2015).

Nevertheless, tensions and resentments have existed under the surface and in some cases they have become explicit. “The relationship between ex-combatants and local communities has been marked by tensions, and many communities have expressed serious reservations about accepting former combatants into their midst. This has created a dynamic that had led to many ex-combatants being alienated from wider society” (C. Bhandari 2015). In a situation where many resources are already scarce, a sudden influx of people is likely to cause problems. And this is only the superficial layer. The underlying issue is related more closely to the past grievances and exposure to violence during the civil war. While some former PLA members feel that they risked a lot for a good cause and should be

¹This article has been published in: Pankaj Adhikari/Subhash Ghimire/Vidyadhar Mallik (eds.): Nepal Transition to Peace. A Decade of the Comprehensive Peace Accord 2006-2016, Kathmandu 2016.
better rewarded for this by society, others do not trust them due to painful experiences in the past. In that case, mistrust, fear and trauma are likely to shape the relationship between the longstanding community members and the newly arrived ex-combatants. Fuelled by these resentments, minor conflicts can quickly escalate into community conflicts.

Anticipating these types of conflict, in January 2011 GIZ – the German international cooperation agency which had been working in the cantonments for many years (Gutsche 2013, 2015) – and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), which had supported psychological counselling for the ‘discharged minors’ after their release from the cantonments in 2009 – consulted with the authors of this article, who shared their experience from mediation and dialogue projects in various countries. Applying the insider-partial model of mediation (Mason/Wils 2009, Lederach 2015), we thought that the only effective way to resolve conflicts and improve trust between ex-combatants and community members was to have teams of mediators from both groups who would be able to work together constructively. No single mediator from only one side would be able to gain trust from both groups, according to the underlying hypothesis. Although many community mediation projects had been working successfully in Nepal before (see, for example, Lederach/Thapa 2012; Suurmond/Sharma 2012), they did not involve ex-PLA as mediators: this was simply not possible before 2012 because the latter were concentrated in the cantonments.

Secondly, assuming that conflicts would be influenced and triggered by a general mistrust related to the past, we thought that mediators should be able to tackle this layer of mistrust not only in acute conflicts, but also as a preventive measure, combining mediation with dialogue and dealing with the past.

Thirdly, if ex-combatants and longstanding community members were to work together as mediators, one would have to assume that this mistrust applies to them as well, so they would need to undergo the process of dialogue and trust-building themselves first.

In April 2012, shortly after the first ex-PLA members had arrived in the communities, these preliminary hypotheses were tested in a workshop with GIZ field staff who had witnessed the process on the ground. Conflicts and tensions were mapped and analysed. It became clear how conflicts about access to resources are influenced by underlying fears and mistrust, rooted in past events (see Box: Water Tap Conflict). On the one hand, many community members took the view that the Maoists originally aimed to change the country positively and thus should be warmly welcomed. However, elite groups within the communities seemed to regard them as a potential threat to traditions such as the caste system, largely due to the Maoists’ practices such as inter-caste marriage. Most of the longstanding residents considered the amount of money paid to ex-combatants as a retirement package to be far too high while the ex-combatants felt humiliated by the fact that they had never officially been honourably discharged from the rebel army. Rather than returning as heroes of a victorious struggle for social change, they re-entered civilian life as part of an unwanted minority of strangers and losers.
BOX: Water Tap Conflict

Reported in April 2012

A group of ex-combatants who had just settled in a VDC near their old cantonment asked for access to the existing water tap. Old community members rejected this request, arguing that water was scarce and with the retirement package, the ex-PLA should have enough money to install their own water tap. The latter argued that this water tap was built in the framework of a project supporting the cantonment and nearby communities – so without them it wouldn’t exist. Secondly, there would be enough water for everyone if only it were not being wasted. Underlying needs, fears and emotions of the two groups were analysed and mapped, using the two icebergs metaphor (in boxes: common needs/fears of both groups).

This was corroborated by a baseline study from September 2012 conducted in five districts by Pro Public on behalf of GIZ (Pro Public 2012) and by subsequent research (Martin Chautari 2013, Timalsina 2014, C. Bhandari 2015, Bogati 2015) and media reports (e.g. Republica 2014). The baseline study showed that in general, positive attitudes were displayed by ex-combatants and old community members.
community members towards the other group. However, a significant number of comments indicated the underlying level of mistrust. We assume that this level must have been much higher due to a methodological research problem: When we asked people about reintegration and their relationship towards the other group, we often found that people would in a first encounter respond very positively, presumably because this was thought to be most face-saving. To reveal problems would be seen as embarrassing. Only after an intense dialogue and trust-building would they reveal in hindsight that there had been mistrust before. Even three years after the cantonments were dissolved, some participants in dialogue groups report that this was the first time they had actually met any ex-combatants.

**BOX: Statements from the focus group interviews (Pro Public 2012)**

"They welcomed us with thoughts of harmony"
(Ex-combatant in Banke talking about how he was received by the community)

"I promised them that I will not engage in war again"
(Ex-combatant in Sunsari, explaining why he thinks the community has a positive perception of him)

"They have a negative attitude towards us, because we have been engaged in warfare"
(Ex-combatants in Kailali, explaining why they think the community has negative perceptions of them)

"The ex-combatants must not settle in a new community. They have to go to their home. Why aren't they going back to their home?"
(Senior Police Officer, District Police Office)

"ECs might secretly keep some old weapons, so there really is a challenge of insecurity among the people. They were the victims of the Maoists in the past, and they still have feelings of revenge."
(Former Chairperson, Nepali Congress)

"ECs have arrived. There is a kind of a fear due to their past history, but gradually things will go well."
(Social activist)

"People can't say 'NO!' to them. They are accepting them unwillingly... The VDC needs extra police force and more safety measures since their arrival"
(Secretary, Mother Group)
Project design

Based on these preliminary findings and considerations, four districts were chosen, according to where GIZ had been active before and had been seen as a trustworthy actor, and the numbers of incoming ex-combatants. Among these four districts were the three with the highest number of PLA in the cantonments: Kailali, Chitwan and Surkhet (Timalsina 2014), with Saptari being the fourth project district. It could thus be assumed that these districts would be particularly challenged by the reintegration. Pro Public set up a group of potential mediators/dialogue-facilitators, consisting of new community members with a PLA background as well as longstanding members of the communities and local NGOs. They underwent 15 days of training, conducted by inmedio on behalf of GIZ, between November 2012 and April 2013. Based on the experience gained on the ground and during training, as well as on inmedio’s experience in other countries, the methodology for combining elements of mediation, dialogue and dealing with the past (storytelling in particular) was developed through collaboration. We later started to refer to this approach as sha:re – from shared narratives to joint responsibility. After completion of the training, which was funded by GIZ and coordinated by Pro Public, the group members started to offer their services with the aim of supporting the reintegration process in their districts by

- conducting informal dialogues/mediation in acute conflicts, particularly group conflicts related to the settlement and reintegration of the former combatants,
- organising peace events and interactions,

2 When reflecting on conflict, it is important to have names for the groups in conflict. One of the obstacles in this regard was that many ex-combatants did not like to be labelled as ex-PLA or ‘Maoists’ because they saw it as stigmatising (see also Timalsina 2014). Others felt ‘ex-PLA’ was at least much better then ‘ex-combatants’ (the official government and ‘donor speak’). In fact, the common distinction made at that time between ex-combatants (or ex-PLA) and community members implies that the former are not community members. From a linguistic perspective, the social divide that needs to be overcome is reinforced by this. So the trainees decided to refer instead to the groups as old community members and new community members, which emphasises that the recently settled ex-combatants are now members of the community – at least they should be seen as such.
• initiating and facilitating dialogue groups and dialogue camps in which members of different parts of society undergo an intense trust-building process.

In late 2014, the group of facilitators decided to be independent and started to found their own NGOs in the four districts, now known as the sha:re centers for mediation and dialogue facilitation. They successfully expanded their activities in 2015 and 2016, supported by inmedio and the Berlin-based NGO Culture for Peace, funded by the German Institute for Foreign Relations with support from the German Federal Foreign Office. By April 2016, they had conducted five dialogue camps and facilitated 32 dialogue groups, more than 50 informal dialogues/mediations and other interaction programmes.³

The sha:re trust-building process

The approach that we chose for the training sessions, which was later modified and further developed in a joint process with the group, was based on our own experience of working with war refugees from the former Yugoslavia in the late 1990s (Wuestehube 2007). It was inspired by the work of the Israeli psychologist Dan Bar-On, who initiated dialogues between survivors of the Holocaust and children of Nazi war criminals and, later, between groups of Israelis and Palestinians (Bar-On/Kassem 2004), and by the socio-therapy groups in post-genocide Rwanda (Richters 2010).

The underlying thought is: When dealing with collective atrocities and traumatic experience, a fundamental improvement of relations and a true reconciliation with the past will not happen unless the painful memories, gruesome (war) experiences and stories of the victims are being shared in front of members of the ‘others’. When experiencing the authenticity of the storytelling and the authenticity of the reactions of listeners, a change of mind and sometimes even a change of perspective can happen. This is the basis for the development of new trust and readiness to cooperate when working for a better future.

While this seems to be common sense, a ‘forgive-and-forget’ approach was being discussed by a significant number of politicians in Nepal at that time (Spring 2012). In peace/dialogue events, the desire for peace was often expressed but the problem of mistrust was not addressed. There was hardly any culture of ‘working through’ the conflict, which seems to fit into a common stereotype that encouraging people to express feelings of anger and sadness was not culturally appropriate in Asia. This results in a shying away from openly dealing with the past. However, other experiences were also gained, not only in the project at hand. John Paul Lederach (2015) refers to the MSBK Project (Mahila Shaki Kendra Nepal), which used a storytelling approach with rural single women: “(…) women from different sides of the warring parties who had lost husbands to the other side were suspicious and angry with the other women. Only after hearing other women’s stories could the feelings of anger be


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reduced. They initially wanted to be in separate groups, but once the stories emerged, the women realised that friendship could develop” (ibid. p. 72). Similarly, the Hateymalo Accompaniment Program, ICRS’s psycho-social support programme for families of missing persons in Nepal, found that sharing their painful stories was very much appreciated by the victims’ families.

**Sha:re dialogue groups**

The idea of sha:re dialogue groups came into being: Up to twelve old and new community members meet for five to ten sessions, which are led by at least two facilitators. Their objective is to contribute to a smooth reintegration of the ex-combatants in the VDC, to the creation of trust and to the resolution of conflicts within their communities. They would undergo an intense trust-building process and – if things turned out well – plan and implement joint activities for the community. After some preliminary trust-building and the joint assessment of the current situation, the sharing of painful memories (usually related to the times of the insurgency) is at the core of the approach (“From shared narratives …”). This often paves the way for joint activities that promote development in the community, social harmony and conflict prevention (“… to joint responsibility – sha:re”). The underlying theory of change here is that a change of perspective and trust-building are more likely to happen in smaller groups and cannot be a one-off event. The attitudinal change of the group members will affect the whole community through the joint activities they implement, as well as through their general interactions. The group process is of course flexible – however, certain steps are typical and are generally applied:

1. Getting to know each other/joint assessment of the situation
2. Joint conflict analysis and preliminary trust-building by stepping into each other’s shoes
3. Sharing of painful memories
4. Discovering resources: Positive childhood memories
5. Joint activity planning

Two elements proved to be particularly important in this process of developing trust among the groups: The joint analysis of conflict between ex-PLA and old community members using the method of conflict perspectives analysis, and the sharing of painful stories and experiences from the time of the insurgency. These elements will be therefore discussed in more detail.

1. **GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER / JOINT ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION**

The session starts with a song, poem or ritual and some general information about the facilitators and the approach and purpose. However, the introduction of the participants and the general assessment are combined by choosing the methodology of partner interviews: Participants team up in pairs,

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4 We later found that this process of ‘spreading the news’ to the broader community needs more systematic support, e.g. through arts- and media-based activities (see ‘Future Prospects and Challenges’).
5 For a detailed methodological description, see Wuestehube/Splinter 2016.
consisting of an ex-combatant and a longstanding resident. They are requested to interview each other on the question: ‘What has worked out well with the reintegration of the Maoist ex-combatants, and what difficulties have arisen?’ After this, they return to the large group and report what their partner has told them. In this way, the opportunity is provided to slowly start approaching each other and begin to undertake an initial change of perspective.

2. CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE ANALYSIS AND ICEBERG METAPHOR

The goal of this step is to analyse a typical conflict between two groups in such a way that each side is able to develop empathy for the other. From a methodological perspective, the well-known iceberg model and the ‘empathy lists’ from conflict perspective analysis are helpful tools in this regard, because they foster empathy and change of perspectives (Splinter/Wuestehube et al. 2013, 2015; Walter 2013). After introducing a case study – a specific conflict between old and new (ex-PLA) community members from the participants’ VDC or from the facilitators’ experience, e.g. the water tap conflict (see above) – the group is requested to split into two homogeneous groups. The participants are asked to step into the other’s shoes and express wishes, emotions and fears the other side might hold. Through brainstorming, they are encouraged to speak solely from a first-person perspective; this means that new community members stepping into the shoes of the old community would make statements starting with “We, the old community, feel… (wish … / fear …)” and vice versa. Facilitators list the statements (see illustration above). Subsequently, the sub-groups unite and present each other with their lists. In the concluding feedback rounds, it is usually highlighted that examining the other side’s needs, fears and feelings was a completely new experience for most of the participants. It generally creates a degree of trust and understanding, which paves the ground for the next step.

3. SHARING OF PAINFUL MEMORIES/STORYTELLING

As mentioned before, we regard the sharing of individual stories and experiences, mostly painful memories from the time of the insurgency, as a crucial step in facilitating trust-building, healing and readiness for reconciliation. It is of course crucial to determine the right time in the group process. A degree of confidence is needed, yet it is not possible to wait indefinitely. Facilitators need to assess whether it is likely that the group members have a certain level of openness and are willing to listen to the others’ stories. Naturally, individuals are afraid that others will ridicule their stories, particularly if the listeners are members of the group perceived as perpetrators in that incident. Facilitators have to create a conducive atmosphere through the preliminary trust-building activities (see above) and create a safe space by setting clear ground rules, such as: “We will make sure that everybody’s story is listened to – nobody will be interrupted or ridiculed.”
Different from most other approaches, whenever possible we chose to work with pictures, meaning that we ask the participants to begin by drawing a picture of the incident/their story. This is very common in trauma counselling, but is used less often in dialogue. It often creates some confusion at the beginning, yet it is very helpful: Firstly, a picture helps participants to stay focused, making the story more vivid and real. Secondly, with a picture it is much easier to actually tell your own story, rather than simply reacting to the stories of others. Thirdly, with a picture it is also a lot easier to keep on listening, even after one has already heard six or seven stories. Fourthly, drawing a picture is to some extent a symbolic externalisation of the story. This creates a greater mental distance to the painful memories. This is already a first step on the way to owning a story as opposed to being overwhelmed by it.

The guiding question is: “What happened in your own or your family’s life that shaped your view of the other group (here the former Maoist combatants/the civilians) and/or your beliefs regarding the conflict/the insurgency? Please think of one specific incident and draw a picture that symbolises the incident.”

Usually, the old community members would tell stories of how they/their friend or family members were victimised by the Maoists or the National Army – how they witnessed killings or lost loved ones. Ex-combatants would often tell stories of how they happened to become PLA members, how they were sometimes falsely accused and put in prison for being Maoists and became Maoists later; stories of how they were afraid for their lives in skirmishes, how they were wounded, tried to save their comrades’ lives and sometimes lost them. Unlike official hearings in truth commissions, Gacaca courts (Rwanda) or victim offender mediation, in this type of dialogue, individual perpetrators are not confronted with ‘their’ victims. Typically, however, people who have been victimised emotionally view any member or proxy of the other group as a representative of ‘the perpetrators’. The process is challenging, but it has its own healing effect.

Everybody is asked to share his or her story and present the drawing. The drawing of the person who is telling the story is placed in the middle of the circle and participants usually take five to 30 minutes per person and story. If the person’s story is very short, facilitators encourage her/him to go into more detail. They do so by asking questions which explore the background and emotions of the story, focusing, for example, on specific details in the drawing or how the person felt in a particular situation. They reflect back the emotions that have been expressed between the lines, e.g. “So you must really have been afraid for your life in that situation?” and thus demonstrate their understanding. In this way, they act as a role model for the other participants, showing how to acknowledge the stories.

6 Facilitators emphasize that it is not a drawing competition and demonstrate that just using symbols and child-like drawing is perfect, averting participants’ fears that they would not be able to draw properly.
7 When we did this exercise the first time with the core group, many old community members told stories of how they were victimised by the state security forces, rather than directly confronting the PLA. When we did it again six months later, significantly more of them told stories in which the Maoists were perpetrators. We see this as an indication that trust had grown in the meantime.
Often, people start from a certain incident but then they happen to tell their whole life story. Sometimes the storyteller gets sucked into the whirl of events that they experienced and drifts off into more and more details, finally getting stuck in the story. If the participant gets lost in his/her emotions, the facilitators ask some factual questions that relate to the present (e.g. “Has the village been rebuilt now?”, “How many years did you spend in prison before you were released?”, “What is that person doing these days?”).  

After the storyteller has finished the story, showing appreciation is crucial. We recommend starting by simply saying “thank you for that story”. The facilitators continue by commenting on each story with much empathy and compassion. They then encourage the other participants to express their feelings of compassion and empathy. Many listeners find themselves shedding tears. When we conducted a storytelling session with a group from Odessa (Ukraine), one participant commented: “We learned how to shed tears together.” We call this the ‘compassionate sharing round’.

**BOX: Resource-oriented reframing**

Resource-oriented reframing by the facilitator is vital to help people overcome their sense of helplessness. The facilitator emphasises how the storyteller managed to survive and cope with the situation (=his/her inner resources). Here are two examples:

A lady tells the story how, when she was a child, her siblings were killed by a roadside bomb, and she bursts into tears. At the end of her story, the facilitator asks: “What helped you cope with the situation and with your grief after that happened?” She tells how relatives helped her. The facilitator summarises and reframes: “So by today, you know best, from your own experience, what a person who is in such a situation needs. You are the expert in that. You could teach us all about how we could support somebody who is full of grief and mourning.”

A person who has just told the story of a situation in which his/her life was in danger will be asked by the facilitator: “How did you manage to survive in that terrible situation?” The person explains, for example, that she managed not to panic, but to stay calm and react in a very focused way. Facilitator: “So thanks to your ability to stay calm and focused – even in such a horrible situation – you managed to survive that incident.” The underlying psychological assumption here is that it will be very helpful for the person if she doesn’t see herself as a completely helpless, victimised person, but as somebody who could do something in order to survive. The facilitator might also add: “And I’m glad you survived and that you are with here with us today”. That focuses again on the present.

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There are widespread fears that re-traumatisation and flashbacks might occur. One could argue that only fully trained psychotherapist should deal with potentially traumatised people. While we agree that facilitators should be sensitised and know how to deal with flashbacks, we do not agree that those flashbacks are more likely to occur during such activities. The point about flashbacks is that they cannot be controlled by the person and they can happen any time in daily life. The fact that a person consciously decides to memorise a certain incident in the storytelling exercise makes flashbacks rather unlikely. Since they could happen any time it is also inevitable that non-professionals have to deal with them. Rather than only focusing on a few highly qualified professionals, many people need to be sensitised.
After everybody shared his/her story, including the compassionate sharing rounds, facilitators would wrap up with a quick reflection: “How did you feel before you shared your memories, and how do you feel now?” Here are some typical statements that also explain the rationale and effect of that approach:

- I felt pain and sadness.
- I remembered friends or loved ones with sadness.
- I was in a dilemma about how to tell the story.
- I had to muster courage to share my story with my friends.
- There was a fear that friends might ridicule my story.
- Before, I had the feeling that I was the only one who is in pain – now it’s different.
- There was a sense of pain but that has gradually eased with the storytelling process.
- When others listen to my story attentively, it eases my pain and gives me hope.
- This was the first time I told this story to anybody. I felt suffocated before. Now I feel much lighter.
- I understood that everyone has the same pain.
- I felt that the other side of the war also has all these feelings.
- Before, we thought that journalists and human rights activists falsified the truth, but here we got to know Mr. … whom we now respect very much.
- The impact of the conflict has lasted longer and we cannot see the pain from the surface.
- Each individual has to face suffering, pain, ups and downs, in their life. It gives us courage that even in such a situation, we can move forward as human beings.
- It gives us strength to deal with the difficulties.
- It helped to develop a consciousness for the future generation on the way to peace.

4. DISCOVERING RESOURCES: POSITIVE CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

In order to contrast the painful memories with something beautiful and to strengthen the bonding process within the group, it is good to examine positive childhood memories. This frequently evokes the feeling of having something in common: Despite all the differences in political beliefs etc., we were all children at some point. Usually this insight leads to an impulse of parental care for one’s own children and the future in general.

Sha:re facilitators usually start with a relaxation exercise, focusing on body awareness. Then they ask participants to take a ‘walk’ through their childhood memories and stop at a place where, as a child, they felt really good and secure. Even if their whole life has been one of suffering so far, there must have been (at least) one happy moment. Sharing these stories about happy childhood moments usually brings up a lot of laughter, as these stories are about love and care or funny incidents.
5. JOINT ACTIVITY PLANNING

Building upon this positive energy, it is now possible and often desired by the dialogue groups to start working on plans to organise joint activities that will help the community and spread the trust that was built within the dialogue groups. These activities might consist of joint celebrations, working together on community infrastructure or sports events.

FUTURE PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

The approach based on a trust-building dialogue which includes individual storytelling, discussed above, can and should be combined with arts- and media-based activities in order to reach more people; it should be applied to other social divides, the most urgent being the current ethnopolitical tensions in the Terai; it should be linked with the official transitional justice process in Nepal; and it should explore how political dialogues on track 2 and track 1.5 could benefit from integrating elements of storytelling.

a) Arts- and media-based outreach

While the described approach has proved to be effective for the people it is working with, it is clear that it only reaches a limited number of people directly. One of the challenges is how to reach more people in order to transform a whole community. On the one hand, this is already part of the approach because the members of the dialogue groups are supposed to design joint activities and will spread the message of trust-building in this way. However, it could be followed up more systematically. Since 2015, we have therefore encouraged dialogue groups to use an arts-/media-based approach more systematically – which means using arts and media for the joint activities and involving relevant experts, producing radio clips, videos, photo exhibitions, plays, booklets, poems etc. It is not new to use arts and media for peacebuilding activities, but here the merits lie in the combination with the sha:re-dialogue, because it is more powerful if the message of peace is conveyed not only by those who already believe in the process but also by former ‘enemies’ who have only recently experienced the dialogue themselves and can authentically report about it. An interesting methodology for combining storytelling with playback theatre in order to bring ordinary peoples’ stories on stage and reach more people has recently been introduced by Anne Dirnstoerfer from the German NGO CSSP in cooperation with Pro Public. Close networking between artists, journalists and dialogue facilitators is essential to combine dialogue with arts- and media-related activities. This still poses a challenge in many districts.

b) Relevance: What is the role of ex-combatants in relation to current and potential future tensions?

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9 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NeLF-nr7FSA.
Another question concerns the potential impact of the described community-based trust-building and reconciliation work on the national level. After the violent protests since August 2015, to what extent is the relationship between ex-combatants and their communities still relevant to the overall security situation? On the one hand, the fears that former PLA members would take up arms or join or establish armed groups have not materialised in the short term. On the other hand, the high level of frustration and pessimism among ex-combatants (Boginda 2015, Timalsina 2014, C. Bhandari 2015, Republica 4/2/2014) could fuel a readiness to resort to violence and increase the likelihood that protests in Terai districts will turn violent. Even if ex-combatants were not directly involved – although this has sometimes been the case – they might influence others. It is well-known from conflicts worldwide that a social group’s sense of frustration can trigger violence which may then be carried out by others as well, often young people. Little evidence-based research is available on whether this applies to Nepal or not. More in-depth analysis is needed.

c) Tackle current tensions

Despite the unanswered question of the role of ex-combatants in relation to current tensions, it is obvious that the most dominant social divides in most of the Terai region after the promulgation of the constitution and the violent clashes in August/September 2015 are not between old community/new community members but, rather, between Madhesi and Pahadi, and between Tharu and Undivided Far West etc. It goes without saying that in order to promote effective dialogue between these groups, trust-building is essential. The more violent incidents took place, the greater the need to include dealing with the past elements in trust-building processes. The sha:re approach can easily be applied not only in trust-building between ex-combatants and longstanding community members but also to any opposing identity, religious or political groups in polarised societies. It has been applied in Ukraine (pro-European/Russian-leaning groups), Egypt (Islamists/secular regime critics/ regime supporters) and South Caucasus (Armenian/Azerbaijanis) so far. We believe that this approach has great potential to reduce the current tensions. Immediately after the tragic events in Kailali, the team at the Kailali sha:re-center decided not to carry out any activities because it was seen as too risky, apart from technical problems due to the curfew. However, they later started to engage with political stakeholders in order to promote dialogue. Specific results are still awaited. This is not to say that sha:re dialogue can replace the settlement of the disputed issues at a national political level. Rather, it can complement it and increase actors’ readiness to support political dialogues and their respective agreements and to overcome the repercussions of the violent incidents at the local level, which can otherwise even have an effect on the next generation(s). It is important not to repeat the frequent mistake of postponing the local reconciliation-oriented dialogue until a political settlement is reached.

d) Link with official transitional justice process
Furthermore, we believe that it is a great opportunity to link up community-based storytelling dialogue with the official transitional justice process in Nepal. The latter has often been criticised for being too Kathmandu-centrist and not sufficiently focused on the needs of the victims and people affected by the conflict. Furthermore, the public debate is very much focused on the question of which type of atrocities should be dealt with solely by prosecution and punishment, and under which circumstances amnesties can be considered. Research, however, shows that apart from the question of punishment, other aspects are important from the victims’ perspective, such as compensation, economic prospects, social inclusion, symbolic acknowledgement, and different forms of remembering those who died, e.g. naming squares after them or memorial sites (ICTJ 2014). A wide range of scholars and institutions agree that transitional justice processes should be holistic and integrate various official and unofficial mechanisms (see, for example, Fischer/Petrovic-Ziemer 2013, Hamber 2015, UN Security Council 2004). There is a substantial body of inspiring international experience of community-based bottom-up reconciliation and truth-telling initiatives, e.g. REKOM, a regional commission for truth-telling about war crimes in the former Yugoslavia initiated by local civil society organisations (Fischer/Petrovic-Ziemer 2013), the Recovery of Historical Memory Project (REHMI) in Guatemala, the community-based Fambul Tok in Sierra Leone (see Hamber 2015) and the Arduyne Community Project in Northern Ireland (Bickfors 2007). Yet if official transitional justice processes are to be accompanied by local bottom-up dealing with the past efforts, dialogue comes into play, because financial or other form of reparation that comes without acknowledgment fails. As Hamber (2015, p.12) puts it, “(…) offering reparations without acknowledging the truth about a certain event or doing justice will inevitable result in the accusation that this is ‘blood money.’” Similarly, naming places after missing people or creating memorial sites, for example, can have a very powerful effect and can be decided at a local level (assuming that a framework for such decisions exists); however, it is much more effective if it is the outcome of a dialogue process rather than being imposed by a few decision-makers. The sha:re approach to dialogue could play a strong role in this regard. However, a framework (legal and financial) needs to be put in place in order to facilitate this type of local dialogue-based transitional justice mechanism on a broad scale. Conflict victims’ organisations and international agencies need to keep advocating and demonstrate how this can be done. The Conflict Victims Common Platform (CVCP) recently hosted a conference on unofficial truth-telling in Kathmandu with support from UNDP, which was a step in the right direction (Republica 25/3/2016).

Looking at peace processes in general, we firmly believe that elements of this approach, namely the sharing of individual stories, have great potential to enhance dialogues, not only in relation to grassroots interpersonal dialogues but also at a political level, not least because political dialogues and mediation processes on track 2 or 1.5 often end up in stalemates because deep-rooted mistrust cannot be overcome. Meeting the others as individual human beings and learning more about their
background and aspirations – by storytelling! – can significantly change dialogues and bring them back on a constructive track. There is a great deal of anecdotal evidence about how negotiators were able to deal with each other on a more personal level when they found some common ground (see, for example, Lederach 2005), which in turn gave new momentum to the talks. Sometimes facilitators try to make these moments more likely by offering spaces where members of negotiation teams can have more informal exchange. However, whether they actually make use of it is not something that can be planned. Is there a more systematic way of offering this space for a more personal exchange in the sessions themselves? Of course this is a sensitive issue. This is a context, where participants meet each other with a significantly different motivation than in individual grassroots dialogue. Here it is clearly not about exchanging personal stories, but about exploring possibilities for cooperation, enforcing or convincing others of political positions. ‘Exercises’ which seem to have a ‘pedagogical’ agenda are not really appreciated in that context. However, what if, in a moment where the dialogue/negotiation is stuck and people have a certain readiness to try something new in order to overcome the stalemate, dialogue facilitators were to suggest putting the substantive issues aside for a while and focusing more on personal stories of how the individuals came to hold a certain political view and struggle for the one or the other political cause – simply in order to make the subsequent discussion more effective? When we worked with political party representatives and parliamentary candidates in Egypt who had fundamentally different views, we asked at one point: “What kind of experiences caused you to hold your political opinion?” The storytelling that followed had a very positive effect on the subsequent discussion. Similarly, a colleague who works in a Southeast Asian country with insider peacebuilders who cover the full spectrum of the conflicting parties one day asked them: “How do you continue doing your work despite the fact that it is so nerve-wracking, tedious and may even be in vain?” What followed was an exchange about their personal biographies and relationships to the conflict, clearly generating trust-building momentum. We firmly believe that more of this should be tried.

CONCLUSION

As the experience of the sha:re centers, on which this article is based, shows, dialogues that deliberately include a dealing with the past dimension through a storytelling approach can help to build trust not only between ex-combatants and longstanding members of communities where they have settled, but also between opposing identity groups in relation to the current ethnopolitical tensions in Nepal. This type of dialogue can, furthermore, be seen as a community-based bottom-up transitional justice mechanism and thus complement official transitional justice processes. It has potential to be integrated into political dialogues as well. Often, people fear that the sharing of personal painful narratives wouldn’t work because it would not fit into cultural patterns and the wounds of the past were ‘too fresh’ or – if it worked elsewhere – it wouldn’t in Nepal. Yet the experience describes in this article clearly indicates that it does work in Nepal and elsewhere. It is possible. It just needs to be done.
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1.3 Culture for Peace within Sha:re: Strategic Arts- and Media-Based Approach(es) to Conflict Transformation (by Raphael Vergin)

The Sha:re approach as highlighted in this manual can be further intensified in terms of effectiveness and impact by including and incorporating theoretical knowledge and practical insights from the Culture and Conflict field. The recent experience within the project “From Shared Truths to Joint Responsibility (Sha:re)” as regards the implementation of arts- and media-based workshops and peace events, adds further value to the discussion and contributes to advance the peace building methodology for future trainings and project designs. This chapter will thus briefly highlight on a) contextualization and advantages of culture, art and media for conflict transformation, b) strategic arts- and media-based approach within Sha:re and further relevance for the Sha:re Centers, c) project example from the Sha:re project 2016 (drawing, radio/podcast and peace event) and d) summarized guidelines for trainings / project design and lessons-learned. The following contextualization (background) can be included in trainings or workshops on organizational development and methodological backstopping in order to ground the approach conceptually.

Contextualization and Advantages of Culture, Art and Media for Conflict Transformation

Since the 1990s, we observe an increased and highlighted importance of the cultural dimension in conflict and peace building. Politicians, scientists, practitioners and the international community have thus contributed to establish Culture and Conflict (or more positively formulated: Culture for Peace) as a widely recognized field within conflict transformation.

Culture defines and generates modalities of thought, paradigm and action as well as modes of planning, memory and communication. Based on ancient cognitive skill-sets it is as old as humanity itself. It shapes social structures in very fluid, constantly evolving and ever changing ways. Consequently, artistic and creative forms of expression are increasingly perceived as constructive formats to contribute to building peace and to inform social change. They hold the potential to sustainably transform cultural violence and defamation, to develop people's personalities and to provide a framework for building relationships beyond one’s own groups.

Culture - understood on the one hand as a general term for artistic style and on the other hand as a dynamic system of meaning and multi-faceted patterns of action - affects ethno-political and social group interactions in a subtle but very essential way. Dialogue, if we follow the second definition, is a classic cultural instrument for conflict transformation. As a vehicle for identity and meaning, culture, art and media shape perceptions, judgments and ideas about what constitutes ‘us and them’.

10 Raphael Vergin is founder and director of Culture for Peace. He co-coordinated the Sha:re Project and works as a trainer, mediator and coach.

11 The author would like to thank Dr. Hannah Reich for inspiring formulations on defining culture (see also http://www.ifa.de/fileadmin/pdf/zivik/AK_Kultur_Konflikt.pdf).

Especially in protracted, identity conflicts, the unique power of aesthetic forms of expression and creative activity, contribute to tackle fixated, destructive patterns of behavior and thought as well as to transform stereotypes and prejudices about the other, which can be deeply engraved in the collective memory of a group.

Art and media can inform us about injustice, make us reflect upon existing patterns of thought and behavior, inspire us to take action, provoke us to speak out, to listen, to question, and to appeal to our sense of inner peace. As an instrument in trauma healing for example, it helps to acknowledge and grieve losses and to positively imagine a different future. It can be a place of truth telling, testimony and taking responsibility. It can bring together individuals from opposing sides of any conflict, break down physical and mental barriers, help create empathy, and contribute to reconciliation and integration. The following list further summarizes and adds to the most relevant advantages of art and media as instruments in peace building:

Art and media can help (to)

• change dynamics in relations and conflicts on all levels of society,
• transform the way people feel, think and act,
• experience conflict, to work on it and to transform it,
• appeal to having less conflict / more justice etc.,
• people to express themselves,
• to have a (more or less) safe space and the potential to be provocative,
• liberate people from their personal and societal restrictions,
• bring people together and reconcile / overcome division,
• be a language beyond words (e.g. if due to traumata or political reasons there is speechlessness),
• entertain and help to forget the conflict, the misery of one’s own situation,
• be an alternative media to explore past, present and future,
• bring change quickly (e.g. stronger direct impact than words),
• reach out to more target groups (e.g. due to illiteracy)

Still and despite the praise, art and media are per se neither effective nor constructive. Not all art is positive (as propaganda art to advance violence or hate music), not all media/journalism is constructive (as for example the current debate on fake news shows or the fact that images of animosity are often Fostered by media). Artistic forms of expression have little real policy impact in a post-conflict situation if the political will to change socio- economic and political structures is missing on the side of the political elite and the international community. Neither can the creation and consumption of art and media alone straighten the failure of political and military actors in their efforts to solve violent conflicts. Furthermore, as culture in general is in need of disruption and conflict to stay vital, this can mean in a worst case scenario cruelty, war and severe human rights violation – the ugly face of culture.
James Thompson, expert on applied and social theatre from University of Manchester (UK), points out that “Art has been historically very important in conflict zones, both actually maintaining some conflicts and helping people to live through them and to resolve them“ (Thompson 2014: 4).

It seems reasonable then to also underline, that art- and media-based approaches to conflict transformation cannot replace other measures, but gainfully amend them if used strategically.

By Prakash Thapa (Peace Building Artist), Chitwan (Nepal) 2016

Strategic Arts and Media-Based Approaches to Conflict Transformation within Sha:re and Further Relevance for the Sha:re Centers (and Other Local Organizations)

The incorporation of strategic arts- and media-based conflict transformation tools and techniques into peace building efforts moves beyond the mere simplistic statement that art and media are powerful tools for social change. From an impact-oriented perspective that is interested in efficiency and results of any peace building measure in post-conflict situations, it is necessary to understand how arts- and media-based approaches function in peace-building, when it is appropriate and most suitable to use them, what they can achieve and how to evaluate their usage and impact (see Shank/Schirch 2009 for detailed discussion).

Peace and dialogue projects with limited resources often face the challenge and various constraints to balance requirement and demand with reality. If strategic means long-term perspective, then short funding periods restrict an ideal environment for long-term project design. Nevertheless, it is of utmost importance to place special emphasis on strategic aspects of the arts- and media-based approach in training, project design and implementation. It is extremely important to always include teams of experts (peace building artists and peace builders with a special focus on culture, art and media as tools in conflict transformation) to avoid doing harm by being conflict insensitive. We recommend to always consult with such experts when designing trainings and/or projects. These
expert teams are a reliable source to assess for example, in which context (time/space; objective) which artistic form can be suitable. Strategically here means that activities/modules should be conceptually grounded, coordinated with other peace-building measures, have a long-term perspective and be serious about evaluating effectiveness and impact (Shank/Schirch 2009). For trainings and project planning we suggest to include this paper but adapt it to the certain context you are working in, advance it following your experience, lessons-learned and other projects evaluations.

In the Sha:re project, arts- and media-based activities were conceptually grounded by highlighting and discussing background, theory and practical insights of Culture and Conflict during trainings and organizational development with the Sha:re Centers staff and associates. Coordination with other peace-building measures was understood on the one hand as to coordinate by default with other actors working in the peace building field but on the other hand also in the sense, that the arts and media based activities were coherently and strategically used within the project design itself. The arts- and media-based follow-up workshops to the dialogue groups were thus designed as the strategic conclusion or better, extension of the dialogue group in terms of a) intensification of the learning and relation-building process for participants (and organizers) – we could call it also a further reflection modality to better integrate the experience, learning and knowledge and b) outreach to the wider communities by disseminating the learning results stemming from the dialogue groups and follow-up through creative, product-oriented, expression and media output. The long term perspective was conceived by the implementers in the sense of planting relevant methodological and practical knowledge in the Sha:re Centers organizational memory within organizational development settings for contributing to enable and enhance their future project designs and implementation. By having supported the Sha:re Centers to create artistic and journalistic products (see below on project example), the long term perspective could furthermore be strengthened in the sense that the produced products can be continuously presented in exhibitions, film screenings13 and publications. Effectiveness and impact will be discussed critically in the lessons-learned section (see below).

(Further) relevance of arts- and media-based approaches for the Sha:re Centers (analogue also for other local civil-society organizations):

- Reaching out to a wider audience by disseminating artistic and journalistic products in the context of, for example, local peace events,
- Local peace events provide a perfect setting for local organizations to interact with other community people (like non-participants of dialogue groups) and moreover with local authorities, potential (local) donors and multipliers from civil society,

13 In 2016, a documentary about the Sha:re Project was produced by Culture for Peace to advance media and public relations strategy of the Sha:re Centers. To watch the documentary see http://inmedio.de/ and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0V8LSqH0V8&t=544s
• Implementing arts and media based approaches helps small organizations with a low profile to enlarge and enhance their portfolio in terms of know-how, methods, techniques, tools and strategies. Thus, they increase the scope to connect with potential (local) partner organizations,

• Knowledge about strategic arts- and media- based conflict transformation, promotes local civil-society organization’s basic (and possibly advanced) knowledge in peace education if the arts- and media module is embedded and grounded in conflict transformation theory.

Storytelling through Radio/Podcast, Drawing and Peace Events – Examples from the Sha:re Project 2016 (Nepal)

Within the Sha:re project 2016, a coherent (similar activities in the 4 project districts) and participative arts- and media-based approach could be designed. In line with the strategic logic described above, a 4-day follow-up workshop to the various dialogue groups (26 in all 4 districts in 2016) had been organized in each of the project districts. To these arts- and media-based follow-up workshops, the Sha:re Centers in their respective district invited selected participants from different dialogue groups of the respective VDCs (Village Development Committee). The participants were selected following diverse criteria amongst which a) a clear potential seen in the participant for multiplication of the changed mindsets and changed perspective towards “the other” and b) diverse composition (age, gender, caste, ethnic group, ex-PLA, non-ex-PLA etc.). Two groups were formed to include radio programming/podcast and drawing as diverse tools to support product-oriented output.

For producing the radio program (storytelling episodes)14, an expert on conflict sensitive peace journalism from Kathmandu was invited to ensure full implementation of do-no-harm principles. The expert assisted and counselled the radio producers from the local FM station, thus providing extra training and knowledge transfer to the local radio journalists. Special emphasis was placed on a high quality facilitation of the workshops by the Sha:re dialogue facilitators (DFs). Their major role was to refresh the participants experience from the dialogue groups and (re-)create an atmosphere of

14 On radio as a tool in conflict transformation, see for example Search for Common Grounds Guidebooks (http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/rfpa/guidebooks.html)
understanding by rounds of discussion, using tools and methods described in the manual or including other creative tools such as trust building exercises. The DFs guided participants towards the mindset of joint responsibility for a peaceful future and feelings of empathy towards “the other”. It was ensured that the storytelling sessions moved into a direction, that emphasized the transformative power of the Sha:re approach - the potential and best-practice experience of dialogue for local healing and reconciliation.

It is important to note that naturally, the Nepalese Civil War being only roughly 10 years ago, some participants have the need to relate primarily to their painful past. The facilitators and radio hosts were of course open to that, process-oriented, to the most possible extent. Focus on painful memory reflects the reality on the ground and deserves to get the space it needs. Nevertheless, as regards the product, the content used for the episodes to be aired was carefully selected by the radio producers from the local FM stations in close consultation with the peace journalism expert. Even though desirable, it is not always easy to find FM journalists with advanced training in peace journalism in remote areas of the country. To include such expertise though, is one of the most important factors for the success of this activity and should be regarded as mandatory in all major steps of the implementing process.

The final product with the title “Changed Perspectives - Our Way Forward” was later repeatedly aired by various FM stations throughout the respective district and reached a vaguely assumed number of total 5000 radio listeners.15 The audience of the program in some districts was able to participate via phone and SMS.

A podcast young-professional interviewed selected workshop participants and created various storytelling podcast streams to be uploaded on the Websites of the organizers (and other platforms). In addition to the radio programs, these podcasts were meant to supplement the radio program in terms of variety of content, independence from the FM station and local FM journalists and diversity

15 The numbers were estimated by Sha:re Centers staff and the radio producers
of arts- and media-based tools. To strengthen the SCs experience, knowledge and portfolio in terms of diversity of tools, podcast was a useful complement to the radio program.

To increase effectiveness and impact, the workshop participants had been divided into two groups after the first-day refresher sessions. While one group worked with the radio journalists on the radio program, the other group focused on drawing as a tool for conflict transformation. The SCs invited a (peace building) artist who guided the participants in terms of technical aspects (how to draw?) and message/story (what to draw?). The main objective of the activity was to produce various products to present to community people in the framework of an arts exhibition. Compared to using drawing as a tool within the dialogue group’s story-telling process here, the artistic expression as well as conflict sensitivity became more relevant.

The artist in parts helped to prepare the outlines of the drawing in consultation with the participants depending on what they wanted to present and in line with conflict sensitivity. It was decided beforehand by the organizers to aim at drawings that consist of three separate sections / three different papers – past, present and future. Analogues to the radio program, special attention was given to the transformative power of the Sha:re approach in the sense of, ‘we had a painful past, through dialogue today we create empathy and understanding in order to live as friends in the future’. The drawings were then presented and discussed in the group which opened yet another cycle of reflection under the supervision of the dialogue facilitators. The radio producers recorded some selected participants’ story based on their drawing and thus interlinked the drawing with the radio approach while finally, both groups exchanged their experience in the plenary.

The strengths of this method for the internal group process are evident in the fact that drawing can be used as a storytelling tool beyond words, as a gate to verbal sharing. It can facilitate the storytelling process if people are at first reluctant to share verbally. The process of storytelling can be eased for

16 See for example positive experience about drawing as a tool in peace building from UN Libanon (http://www.un.org.lb/english/stories/creativity-arts-and-innovation-tools-for-peace-building-in-majdel-anjar); see also Shank/Shirch 2009 on painting and UN Arts for Peace (http://www.unartforpeace.org/)
the group as well as it might be easier for some participants to focus on a drawing rather than on the faces that might display strong painful emotions difficult to bear. Drawing helps to externalize the painful memory and to bring the experience and the feelings from the inside onto a sheet of paper – an important insight of trauma therapy. The drawer can thus focus on the drawing instead of possibly being strongly entangled in the feeling of the painful moment or even re-traumatized.

Choosing drawing as a tool for arts- and media-based follow up workshops within the Sha:re approach is consistent in the sense that drawing is part of the Sha:re toolbox for dialogue groups anyhow, dialogue facilitators as well as dialogue group participants thus already familiar with the method from the outset of the dialogue group process.

The conclusive peace events, organized in remote areas of the project districts, exhibited the drawings in the presence of the peace building artists and the creators of the drawings. The exhibition was organized in three sections, whereas the visitor at first encountered the work of the Sha:re Centers, then moved on to the drawings and finally could sit down to listen to a teaser for the radio program to be aired a few days later.

It was well received by the visitors (community people and state officials alike) that they could engage into conversations with the artists to learn more about their story and process of transformation. Strong emotions and empathy was conveyed and lasting impressions had been created on the minds and in the hearts of the visitors. A visiting teacher, who visited one of the exhibitions with his students, phrased it as follows: “The exhibition helps our minds to create harmony, by awakening perception and feeling”. For the workshop participants / the creators of the drawings, the repeated presentation and discussion of their drawings in public, served once again as another reflection cycle and further contributed to integrate their painful story into a hopeful outlook and vision for a peaceful future.
Guidelines for Project Design, Trainings and Lessons-Learned

The following list is meant to summarize our recommendations on how to integrate arts- and media based approaches to conflict transformation into Sha:re methodology as well as to highlight major lessons from the project example Contextualisation and Background

- When introducing the approach to partners and other participants within a training setting, refer to the ‘Culture and Conflict’ field of knowledge to set the frame including importance, formation and genesis of the field within conflict transformation / peace building
- Clearly define terms such as culture and art (also other classical terms from peace education field such as peace, conflict, dialogue etc.)
- Point out advantages and best practice examples of using art and media as tools in conflict transformation
- Sensitise on harmful potential of culture, art and media in order to provide a more complete view of the field
  - Make sure that your partners can refer to the context and background in their discourse if necessary with local authorities and other actors by providing short background guideline papers

Strategy and Relevance
• Place special emphasis on strategic aspects of the arts- and media-based approach in training, project design and implementation
  o How does approach function within wider conflict transformation? When to use it (regarding conflict stages)? Which art form is appropriate?
  o Refer to Shank/Shirch 2009 but also adapt to your context, experience and lessons-learned
  o Approach should be conceptually grounded, coordinated with other peace building initiatives (intra- and interproject), mid-/long-term and impact oriented.

• Relevance of artistic expression and relevance of conflict transformation expertise
  o Always include teams of experts such as experts on strategic arts- and media based conflict transformation and peace building artists / peace journalists

• Be clear on the relevance regarding the interlink between Sha:re and arts- and media based conflict transformation
  o Story-telling, group processes and individual transformation intensified
  o Product orientation / Visibility enhanced
  o Organizational development / portfolio of partner organizations and other local actors strengthened

Lessons learned

• Visibility, long-term impact and effectiveness increase if arts-and media based activities can be scaled up → funds and other resources are crucial

• It is impossible to fully control whole implementation process at all times (eg details of selected material for radio program) → special emphasis on skilled and trusted staff and freelancers.

• Outcomes of the dialogue groups (as the core and precursor activity) are very important in terms of transformative outset if follow-up were to be successful
  o Selection of participants is crucial / Ideally there should be a mix of moderates and hardliners from both ‘sides’.

• Schedule at least 6 days for the whole activity (increases intergroup knowledge transfer, monitoring, conflict sensitivity and artistic expression)

Literature:
DANIDA. The Right to Art and Culture – Strategic Framework for Culture and Development. Copenhagen, 2013


1.4 General Recommendations for Trainers

A good training has to appeal to mind, heart and hands of the participants. Here, the rule applies: The more the participants are actively involved, the more they learn. It is hard to concentrate just on listening to another person for more than 20-30 minutes. Therefore, trainers have to know: Keep it short! Use a watch in order to have an eye on the length of your own speech!

It is important to ensure a variety of methods within the training. This includes: The members of a team of trainers take turns while speaking, as everybody has his/her own speaking style and voice. Furthermore, each training day has to be a combination of different ways to teach and to learn.

These are the different elements:

- **Warming-ups or energizer** [a common song or a game]
- **Calm-downer**, in order to regain focus and attention [e.g. counting until 20, buzz groups]
- **Intro-exercises**, to prepare thematically for specific topics [e.g. camera exercise for trust building, man-mouse-exercise for change of perspective]
- **Practical exercises, role-plays and simulations**, in which the participants practice models, dialogue techniques and communication skills [e.g. paraphrasing exercise, reflecting dialogue exercise, mediation role-plays]
- **Inputs**, introduction of new topics/ models, not longer than 20-30 minutes! [e.g. vicious circle of conflict, violence and trauma]
- **Demonstrations** performed by the trainers, followed by a reflection by the participants [donkey exercise, short(!) mediation demonstrations]
- **Interactive lecture** [e.g. coconut example]
- **Case studies** in groups, apply what you learned to real cases, for example own experiences of participants [e.g. water tap conflict]
- **Sha:re storytelling**, facilitated listening to and telling of own life experiences [e.g. childhood journey, painful memories]
- **Repetition**, repeat important contents after 1 or 2 days, maybe by asking participants to present
- **Sounding boards**, at the end of each training day 3-4 participants share with the trainers how they personally experienced the training day (5 minutes)

Trainers know: Each person learns differently.

1. Learning by listening (with or without taking notes)
2. Learning by observing the trainer’s actions
3. Learning by practicing
4. Learning by teaching in peer groups or presenting topics
Interestingly, number 3 and 4 are far more effective than the other two. Trainers should focus on interactive, practical methods. This requires a good atmosphere during the training, in which it is ok to make mistakes. The trainers have to pay attention: Each articulated criticism has to be respectful and must never denounce other participants!

One word about Trainers attitude when giving feedback

It is very important that you give your trainees individual feedback on their performance e.g. in mediation role-plays, otherwise they cannot improve! Keep in mind that your feedback has to be acknowledging and empowering. So while observing your trainees take notes. When giving feedback, highlight attitude, actions and interventions, which the trainee did well. Phrase the critical points as specific as possible and tell concretely, what the trainee shall do to perform better next time. Remember: Your main task as trainers is to empower the participants and help them to work independently.

Unfortunately, there is a widespread misinformation that one learns best from mistakes. You only learn from mistakes if you can do them without losing your face and if you develop specific ideas what to do differently the next time. One learns best when you analyse and stress what a person or others have done correctly and very well. And if you find the courage to do this more often and also copy good examples from others.