



The Global Coalition for
Conflict Transformation

Bi-monthly GCCT Newsletter - September 2013

Introduction

TransConflict (www.transconflict.com) is pleased to present the fourth bi-monthly Global Coalition for Conflict Transformation (GCCT) newsletter, which provides a host of insights into the work of the GCCT and its members. The main purpose of this newsletter is to a) share information about the work of the GCCT and its members to a wider audience, and b) to strengthen co-operation and co-ordination between GCCT members themselves and with other interested parties.

- [Click here to learn more about the GCCT](#)
- [Click here for a complete list of GCCT members](#)

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- 2) **GCCT Members in Focus – United For Peace Against Conflict International – Ivory Coast**
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- 4) **GCCT Activities, Research and Requests** –members to share information about their activities and research, plus calls for partnership and support, thereby strengthening exchanges between GCCT members.
- 5) **GCCT Advocacy – Defusing tension on the India-Pakistan Kashmir borders** - a recently-launched petition raises concerns about the gradual escalation of tensions at the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, warning that violations of the ceasefire that has been in place since 2003 as part of an agreement between India and Pakistan have adversely affected the lives of people in the disputed region.
- 6) **Follow the GCCT and TransConflict**

To contribute to the next edition of the GCCT newsletter – which will be published in mid-November – please contact TransConflict at - gcct@transconflict.com.

1) New members of the GCCT

The GCCT was pleased to welcome a host of new members in the past several months, including (click on the links below for further information):

1. [Organization for Intra-Cultural Development \(OICD\)](#) – **Japan** – creates and disseminates tools and interventions that utilize the structure and workings of identities to transform conflict and build cohesion. Recent advances in the social, behavioral, political and neurological sciences demonstrate that identities are complex systems that operate within their own internal parameters and mechanisms. Understanding and targeting processes within these culturally-determined identities (intra-culturally) unlocks the potential to target destructive identities and regenerate cohesion between individuals and communities. The analytical tools, the systematic strategic methodologies, and the field-based interventions and working practices associated with the understanding and utilization of identities are referred to collectively as Intra-Cultural Development. The OICD is a group of academics, practitioners and professionals committed to applying this emerging knowledge and practice to conflict transformation and cohesion building in communities and societies around the world.
2. [Kashmir Institute of International Relations \(KIIR\)](#) – **Kashmir** – drawing upon various faith-based traditions to promote consensus with regards to peacebuilding at the grass root level, KIIR works to develop a cadre of next-generation Kashmiri leaders who are committed to transforming the political, social and spiritual dynamics of the region through faith-based reconciliation. KIIR builds momentum for peace on an incremental basis; first by working with the individual parties to the conflict and, once a cooperative attitude has been established, by working with them collectively.
3. [Centre of Management and Promotional Support \(CEDAP Asbl\)](#) – **Democratic Republic of Congo** – aims to promote a spirit of understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, whilst stimulating cooperation among people and local authorities towards securing peace and integral development. In response to the recurrent conflict and crises in the DR Congo, especially in the eastern regions, CEDAP focuses on empowering local communities singularly women, youth and local leaders of civil society in order to understand the importance of peace and reconciliation between individuals. Therefore CEDAP is building strong leadership through skills enhancement, training and welfare assistance to vulnerable groups. It also promotes reciprocal understanding, love and sincere dialogue between communities in conflict.

If your organization is interested in joining the Global Coalition for Conflict Transformation (GCCT), then please click here for further information on how to apply!

2) GCCT Members in Focus – United For Peace Against Conflict International – Ivory Coast

Distressed by post-election violence and North-South ethnic tribalism, James Offuh created United for Peace Against Conflict International (UFPACI) in January 2012 to build community cohesion and respect for cultural differences. UFPACI contributes to peacebuilding activities, teaching about the causes and consequences of conflict and proposing practical transformative measures in order to enhance the adoption of a culture of peace and non-violence.

Dialogue in Nigeria - Muslims and Christians creating their Future - Model of engagement replicated in the Ivory Coast

In May 2012, Offuh discovered the Jewish-Palestinian Living Room Dialogue - California USA, and requested a copy of their 2012 documentary film, “Dialogue in Nigeria – Muslims and Christians creating their Future”. The [documentary](#) “gives voices and faces to 200 courageous Muslims and Christians – diverse young women and men – who unite successfully in Jos, central Nigeria.”

The film explores the participants’ experiences:

“Refusing to be enemies, they are together during days and evenings of the 2010 International Conference on Youth and Interfaith Communication. They are tense yet excited to finally cross lines of religion, economics, tribe, and gender to transcend the status quo and discover empathy for each other's personal life experiences. Together they realize that “an enemy is one whose story we have not heard,” while listening-to-learn and thus dignifying themselves and the “others.” Face to face and in small circles, they begin with ice-breakers and continue in depth to discover one another's equal humanity – fear, grief, needs, hopes, and concrete plans for a shared future. These determined young Nigerians illustrate how others worldwide can successfully connect and communicate to create authentic community.”



Step One - Preparing Locally in Abidjan

By August 2012, Offuh planned and replicated in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, his first small workshop based upon on Dialogue in Nigeria. Offuh complimented the model for “a new awakened, unprecedented creativity and wisdom needed to build a future that benefits all the public communities within our reach.”

In particular, Offuh referred to:

1. [Facilitators Guidelines for face-to-face experiences](#)
2. [Process of Change described in graphics and text](#)

In August 2012, young adults gathered from different political, religious and ethnic communities, including Yopougon and Abobo women and men from the Abidjan District. They experienced tools for face-to-face engagement – from safe icebreakers to deeper exploration of one another's life experiences and humanity – to discover that "an enemy is one whose story we have not heard”.



‘Youth as Artisans of Communication and Peace’ was the vision offered by Mr. Ochee Ogwa, a professional journalist with the Nigerian News Agency's mission to Cote d'Ivoire. Dialogue was promoted through a variety of means:

1. **Perspective Squares** - participants realize that others have diverse perceptions and views of life, and there is more than one way – my way – to perceive a situation. People see 16, 17, 18, 40 and other numbers of squares.
2. **Hand outlines** - this introductory ice-breaker helps participants to know one another in a safe way. Two people trace the other's hand, making them partly overlap. Each person then writes words that describe one's personal qualities and values. Then they discover what unites them in shared meaning. This allows people to become aware of their uniqueness and also similarities. It helps to overcome judgment and stereotypes. Two diverse participants joined their thumbs with a shared vision of one nation – Cote d'Ivoire. The hand on the left describes his uniqueness: Northerner Senoufo ethnicity. The right hand describes – Southern Attie ethnicity.
3. **Masks and culture** - an art experience to journey inward and discover how one's culture shapes and influences personal responses to life. This increases self-awareness and

closeness to one another by opening a window to oneself and common challenges universally faced in all cultures.

Offuh concluded the session and inspired the diverse youth to continue taking the steps toward change – from monologue to dialogue, from isolation to community for themselves, Cote d'Ivoire, Africa, and humankind.

Step Two - Akoudo Village, Cote d'Ivoire

By 15 November 2012, Step Two in Akoudo Village, Cote d'Ivoire, similarly gathered women, men, and youth of the alienated Ebrie people and Attie people for a day of healing and communication excellence. At the request of UFPACI, police security was deployed by the Ministry of Interior to ensure safety in the Akoudo village.

Kouame N'Guessan Zita, one of UFPACI's leaders, invited religious communities to cooperate with schools, media, and government institutions to motivate more organized young people to engage in community-based inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue. Offuh prepared people to tell their Personal Life Narratives while their partners become good listeners, discovering each other's shared and equal humanity.

The Attie village group came face-to-face with the Ebrie group, narrating their stories for each other, dignifying each other, discovering a new quality of listening-to-learn, experiencing that "an enemy is one whose story we have not heard."



The Masks and Culture Exercise helps familiarity and trust grow, as Ebrie and Attie leadership and community members - women, men and youth - discover and reveal what masks they wear in public, and how they can become more human and their true, better selves.

The Broom Exercise illustrates strength in unity. A strong person was not able to break the broom in bunch. The woman easily broke a singled out broom stick. When we exclude anyone or compete excessively, we are vulnerable and cannot complete important tasks that benefit all. But in unity we are stronger.

A Candle Lighting among the Ebrie people together with the Attie people marked their first time together after many years of inter-community conflicts.

Step Three – March 2013 – 400km to Duekoue

In March 2013, Offuh and a small team from UFPACI drove 400 km from Abidjan to facilitate relationship-building and ethnic, religious, and tribal healing in Duekoue. Offuh mounted graphics charts to illustrate the public peace process, and introduced the context, motives, and principles of the conference.

Offuh called upon the entire community to embrace the practice of dialogue communication as the Guerre ethnic group sat side-by-side with the Mossi-Burkinabe; two ethnic groups who have been in inter-community violence caused by land disputes. Offuh encouraged the youth to become artisans of peaceful communication and credible peace workers.



A candle lighting experience put the day and the participants “in Light.” Offuh extended an invitation, “All participants please come to the light. Today a new light of hope has come into your life, into your community. The darkness of suffering, pains, and loss of hope have come to an end. Now this light ends your gross darkness that covered Duekoue. Today on this ground where the massacre and mass grave were done, as you take this light home the land will receive peace and calmness. Those that lost their lives during the war will now rest in peace because of you.”

Step Four — June 2013 - Confronting Fear: First Dozos-Guerre Reconciliation in Duekoue

In June, 2013, Offuh drove with a small UFPACI team 400 km from Abidjan to facilitate historic relationship-building and ethnic, religious, and tribal healing between the Dozos and Guerre people, deeply divided since brutal 2011 post-election slayings.

The venue was the broadcast center of Radio Voix du Guemon in Duekoue, at the heart of the March 2011 death and destruction, after which no institution, organization, or government agency had even attempted to facilitate reconciliation between the Dozos and their Malinke

allies, and the Guerre and other ethnic groups. Most Cote d'Ivoire citizens, including Guerre and Dozos, practice traditional animist culture and religion, while 25% are Muslims and 12% Christians.

The Dozos and Wee-Guerre, traditional adversaries, began slowly with ice-breakers and then serious relationship-building experiences. They continued their deep, face-to-face listening and story-sharing into the mealtime together that brought them closer together.

Then Danisha, a Guerre musical artist, sang about reconciliation and living together while inviting the people to hold hands and decide to succeed together in unity and develop their common home in Duekoue.

For the first time, Wee-Guerre and Dozos people held hands and danced joyfully together as one.



A candle lighting ceremony affirmed the successful, concrete step of the courageous Dozos and Guerre participants. Offuh passed light to Dozos and Guerre leaders. “Today I pass on the light of peace, hope, and love to you, just as I have received light from my mentors and life experiences. Today you become a light in the midst of others. Continue to share this light with all Dozos and Guerre around our country – Cote d'Ivoire. Through you, others will hear about this human activity of meeting, communicating, dialogue, and reconciliation. Now go as an ambassador of peace from this day to enrich your community.”

This peacebuilding initiative is a shared endeavour of the NGO United for Peace Against Conflict International (ONG UFPACI) in Cote d'Ivoire and the Jewish-Palestinian Living Room Dialogue in California, USA.

**[Please click here to learn more about and contact
United For Peace Against Conflict International from
the Ivory Coast](#)**

[Global Coalition for Conflict Transformation \(GCCT\)](#)

3) GCCT Insight and Analysis

This section provides an overview of the insight and analysis produced by members of the GCCT on a variety of conflict and conflict transformation related topics (click on the links below to read the entire article):

1. [Empowering the forgotten heroines of peacebuilding – the Somali Women](#) – *Tazoacha Francis* – Women have played an indispensable role in conflict transformation and peacebuilding in Somaliland, despite a lack of recognition and marginalization from formal peacebuilding efforts in the country. Mainstreaming these women into formal peacebuilding efforts – empowering them domestically and building upon key UN resolutions – will go a long way to building everlasting peace in Somaliland.
2. [Integrating Somali women into peacebuilding processes](#) – *Tazoacha Francis* – Despite the great strides they have been made in cementing peace in Somalia, women remain marginalized from such processes. As such, the forgotten heroines of peacebuilding need to be further empowered to play a greater role in conflict transformation.
3. [R2P and International Law](#) – *Gerard M. Gallucci* – The responsibility to protect is an international responsibility and not the exclusive burden of any one country, not even the US. But the use of force now or at any time should be left to the Security Council to decide. President Obama should now earn his Noble Peace Prize by scrupulously following international law. There is no reason for the US to act as an outlaw just because Assad has.
4. [Impact of ‘high value resources’ on communities in Eastern Africa](#) – *Kisuke Ndiku* – As new high-value resources are discovered and exploited in East Africa, what is the impact on local communities and the potential for local-level conflict?
5. [Syria and a possible UN approach to chemical weapons](#) – *Gerard M. Gallucci* – The UN would likely play a key role in verifying and overseeing an effort to put Syria’s weapons under international control. But the UN Security Council can only work if the two remaining superpowers put their backs into it.
6. [Taksim – a protest like no other](#) – *Spyros A. Sofos* – The messages conveyed by the popularity of the AKP and the vibrancy of the ongoing protests are unambiguous: the contradictions of Turkish society call, not for political and social polarization, but for the search of a *modus vivendi*, one that needs to be painstakingly invented and continually recalibrated, based on democracy, tolerance and compromise.
7. [From YouTube to Jihad – Balkan volunteers in Syria](#) – *Vladimir Ninković* – Even though conservative Islam is not much appreciated among the liberal and secular Bosniak and Albanian communities in the Western Balkans, radical groups show an increasing online and real-life presence.

**To contribute analysis and insight to TransConflict.com,
please contact us at office@transconflict.com**

4) GCCT Activities, Research and Requests

Advanced Professional Training Programme

The [International Peace and Development Training Center](#) is recruiting expert professionals, policy makers and practitioners for its upcoming Advanced Professional Training Programme for UN agencies, governments and national and international organisations. IPDTC's programmes have been ranked by participants and their agencies as amongst the most professional, intensive and high quality in their field. They provide participants with the opportunity to train together with an exceptional group of experts and practitioners from around the world, coming from governments, community-based, national and international organisations, military and security forces, donors and others.

Upcoming October-November Programmes:

1. [**Making Peace Processes Work: Advanced Mediation and Peacemaking in Complex, Challenging and Intractable Conflicts**](#) - *Executive Leadership Programme, 14-16 October, London* - Facilitated by an expert practitioner in mediation, peace processes, prevention and post-war peace consolidation, the programme will assist those involved in mediation and peacemaking efforts – before, during or post-war – to address key challenges and explore practical ways of improving the quality and results of their mediation and peacemaking processes.
2. [**Making Prevention Work: Improving Operational and Strategic Effectiveness in the Prevention of Armed Violence, War and State Collapse**](#) - *17-19 October, London* - Addresses operational, structural and systemic approaches to prevention drawing on actual cases and identifying practical methodologies and approaches that can be used to prevent deadly conflicts and violence and strengthen capacities for prevention. Special attention will be given to developing and strengthening local, national, regional and international Infrastructure for Peace (I4P) and the necessary capabilities to make prevention work in practice. The programme itself will provide a superb, dynamic environment for exchange and sharing of experiences among experts, practitioners and policy makers from local, national and international levels.
3. [**Advanced Training of Trainers: Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation: Collaborative Approaches to Diversity in Conflict Settings**](#) - *18-22 November, Cluj-Napoca, Romania* - prepares practitioners, policy makers and international peace and development workers to engage as trainers in conflict and development settings by effectively responding to the challenges of diversity in such settings and managing differences as a value. The CoSCAD programme includes basic peacebuilding and conflict transformation framework intercultural preparation on selected focal areas, collaborative leadership skills for working with groups engaged in conflict settings and a full training of trainers toolbox.
4. [**Designing Peacebuilding Programmes: Improving Sustainability, Impact and Effectiveness in Peacebuilding and Peace Support Operations**](#) - *25-29 November, Cluj-Napoca, Romania* - helps agencies, organisations and practitioners working in conflict, crisis and post-war stabilization and recovery to improve the quality, effectiveness and sustainable impact of their programs - including crisis management and prevention, peacebuilding, social, economic and political stabilization, reconciliation in divided communities, and post-war recovery, rehabilitation and development. Drawing on more than 30 years' experience in 40 countries, the program represents the most advanced of its kind for policy makers, practitioners, government officials and donors internationally.

Participants coming upon the GCCT's recommendation benefit from a 15% discount of the full fee.

5) GCCT Declarations

Defusing tension on the India-Pakistan Kashmir borders

A recently-launched petition raises concerns about the gradual escalation of tensions at the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, warning that violations of the ceasefire that has been in place since 2003 as part of an agreement between India and Pakistan have adversely affected the lives of people in the disputed region.

By Mazhar Iqbal

A petition has recently been launched by the people of Jammu and Kashmir in an attempt to defuse tension on the India-Pakistan borders. The [petition](#) says that the people of Jammu and Kashmir on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC), plus supporters of peace in the region, are concerned about their safety and security, particularly of those in the vicinity of the LoC who are directly hit by sporadic shelling and firing.

The petition was launched by Mohsin Shakil, a Muzaffarabad-based university dean, to serve as a reminder to India and Pakistan that they should avoid muscle-flexing over Kashmir, particularly after the gradual escalation of tensions at the LoC, which have taken an ugly turn in recent weeks. It is hoped that a meaningful protest call – backed by a substantial number of people – could provide an important wakeup call.

Repeated violations of the ceasefire that has been in place since 2003 as part of an agreement between India and Pakistan have adversely affected the lives of people in the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir. There is a danger that these will be a reversal of the gains of this confidence building measure – which has enabled and facilitated interactions, howsoever symbolic, between the two sides of the divided State, provided security and contributed to an atmosphere of healing. These tensions threaten the very framework of peace for which a ten-year long ceasefire at the LoC has been a great bulwark, even though the pace of the peace process has been slow and does not fully engage with the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The petitioners fear that if these tensions at the LoC are allowed to continue, they will compromise the goodwill that has been built and reverse the peace dividends. It is also feared that they will cause massive sufferings to the people of not just the border areas, but eventually of the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir, on both sides. Furthermore, they will provide a greater space to extremist, hawkish and fanatic elements, whilst empowering war mongers on both sides. They also have the potential to drag the whole region into a new war, destroying hopes of long term peace and economic stability.

A Kashmiri journalist has said that the ceasefire is a must and the priority issue for Jammu and Kashmir. Another petitioner, Chandrika JP, from the Indian side of the divide, says “I and my ancestors have suffered a lot due to this issue.”

One concerned person has raised the most poignant side of the issue – “I want a respectable solution for my state Jammu and Kashmir because I am a stateless person for the last 37 years” (Khawaja Ghulam Nabi). For Zafar Meraj from Srinagar, on the Indian side, “it is Kashmir that suffers when the two elephants start fighting’.”

Renowned Kashmiri, Ved Bhasin, suggests that this petition needs to be heard by concerned people in order to push forward the India-Pakistan peace process in order to ensure a peaceful solution to the Kashmir problem, for the welfare of the people of Jammu and Kashmir across the LoC, who have been bearing the brunt of such clashes.

One heart touching reason by a signatory – “being a resident of divided land I feel that every bullet fired is killing me spiritually.”



The signatories of the petition also deplore the war rhetoric and attempts by political or religious groups to justify warmongering and hatred. They call for an immediate end to the hostilities on the LoC.

The petitioners have called upon the political leadership in New Delhi and Islamabad to impress upon their respective militaries to immediately desist from the continuum of shelling and firing incidents. They have also called upon them to initiate actions to begin immediate dialogue to secure a long-term end to these on-going tensions, and to restore the sanctity of the ceasefire that has been in place since 2003 by replacing the strategic insecurities of the two militaries with mutual trust and co-operation.

Mazhar Iqbal is a peace and human rights activist and member of Press for Peace, a rights advocacy organisation working in Jammu and Kashmir.

[To learn more about Press for Peace, a member of the GCCT from Kashmir, please click here!](#)

[Global Coalition for Conflict Transformation \(GCCT\)](#)

6) Follow the GCCT and the TransConflict

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[Click here to add your name to TransConflict's e-Declaration in support of the principles of conflict transformation!](#)

