

**Human Needs and Problem Solving Approaches to
Creating New Social Structures:**

**Action Research On Conflict Resolution in
Georgia, 2000-2002**

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Ph.D.

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Abstract

This dissertation analyses the design, implementation and results of problem solving research workshops conducted within a conflict prevention intervention in Georgia. The research goal is to explore: human needs theory as a conceptual framework; analytical problem solving as a methodology; and action research as an intervention strategy.

The research themes of the dissertation are: what can be learned about new ways of using human needs theory in the design and conduct of conflict prevention and resolution interventions; what can be learned about options for and methods of conducting analytical problem solving workshops; and what can be learned about action research as a conflict intervention strategy - through a systematic comparison between existing theoretical frameworks and a field-based case study. The needs theory contributions of Burton and Max-Neef; problem solving workshop literature from Mitchell and Hoffman; and action research perspectives from Rothman are focal points.

The dissertation argues, among other things, that while identifying the 'right people' to involve in an intervention is doable in the abstract, in fact there might be no right people on the ground who are available or willing to participate; that action research is a legitimate and credible intervention strategy for creating a safe space for dialogue, that a human needs conceptual framework such as Max-Neef's needs/satisfiers matrix can be a valuable tool for analysis and can be applied explicitly in the workshop setting; and that there are always problematic impacts on intervention design, conduct and evaluation due to time and resource limitations.

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I remain inspired by the vision of Dr. John Burton with whom I studied briefly at George Mason University, and who couldn't realize how much he motivated the past 15 years of my life and work.

I appreciate more than everything else the support of my Masha during the year of dissertation writing, and the many years of unconditional patience, support and love provided by my parents, Eric and Bobbie Bremner.

Chapter One

Theory and practice: Needs theory, analytical problem solving, and action research

A good traveler has no fixed plans
and is not intent upon arriving.
A good artist lets his intuition
lead him wherever it wants.
A good scientist has freed himself of concepts
and keeps his mind open to what is.

Tao Te Ching¹

Somewhere to Start

There are many and varied ways of understanding the fundamental link between theory and practice in any complex endeavor. They may be seen as related but distinct elements of academic, intellectual or social activity. They may be seen as inherently, symbolically and holistically inseparable, as yin and yang. Or, if one adheres to a praxis philosophy, then theory itself is regarded as a form of practice. In many domains, including the field of conflict analysis and resolution, people commonly refer to a 'gap' between theory and practice where there is either not enough theory, or what exists is underdeveloped to the extent that it is not entirely adequate to fully inform or comprehensively explain what we actually can do as conflict resolution professionals, or the theory is too abstract and not informed by practice.

My own experience base begins with theory, if only because I started in the field in an academic program at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University. Having gained some knowledge of theory, I find that there is always and necessarily a theoretical component or perspective

¹ The Tao Te Ching quotes that open each chapter come from the translation by Stephen Mitchell, Harper and Row, New York, 1988.

to my thinking, in the sense that knowledge is very difficult to put back into the box once it has been let loose. I am personally less concerned with the often referred to theory-practice gap, and much more interested in exploring the application of some existing theoretical constructs as tools, reference points, metaphors and frameworks, to assist people in resolving their own conflicts. This reflects my constant struggle as a practitioner with versions of this concern: how do we most effectively put theory to use in a way that will contribute to the development of ever better methods and practice?

The main aspiration of this dissertation is to contribute to the improvement of the practice of conflict resolution. In the process, some 'real work' on existing conflicts in the country of Georgia will be undertaken. The dissertation allowed me to organize and conduct that work in specifically reflective way. However, as the experiences detailed in subsequent chapters will make clear, the dissertation is informed by a particular theoretical framework, namely a modified Burtonian human needs theory and analytical problem solving. Burton's approach is taken as a valid and valuable starting point, because of what it has to offer as a set of analytical tools and as a process for motivating constructive communication between conflicted parties. The aim of the thesis is to create and share some new thinking about practice methodologies and gain some insights that will contribute to the evolution of those theory elements that I employ. It is a significant challenge to work on practice, theory, and Georgia all at the same time, and the complexity doesn't come without some costs and cautions. But, as the Taoist journey metaphor above implies, it has been a practical and intellectual journey that has been traveled with an open and hopefully intuitive mind, flexible plans, and without a pre-determined end point.

How I Got Here

During the South African political transition of 1990-94, I was part of a team working on community conflict resolution in some of the violence torn townships of South Africa. Our institutional base was a religious, community-based organization (CBO) near Johannesburg.² A region of Soweto known as Meadowlands became a flashpoint for some of the worst 'black on black' violence between members of the African National Congress (ANC) lead by Nelson Mandela, and members of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). There were many would-be interveners including some of the officials of the South African Peace Accord. However, at the time of the worst violence in Meadowlands the local faction leadership from both sides declared in no uncertain terms that there would be: 'no negotiation, no mediation, no peace committees here in Meadowlands!' Various hopeful peacemakers who traveled to Meadowlands were threatened with violence against them, despite their good intentions.

The Wilgespruit community conflict team designed an initiative inviting the warring parties to a 'research workshop'. We told them that we had no intention of mediating the ongoing crisis and that no cease fire was required or expected. We suggested to them that at some point in the future it could be meaningful to have a researched history of the community, and that as researchers we needed to get 'both sides' of the story recorded. To hear from both sides we proposed convening a joint workshop or series of workshops. On this basis the

² Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre, Roodepoort, South Africa. We were a five person 'Negotiation and Community Conflict Program' team, involved in attempting to mitigate the community violence that preceded the first South African election, including work with the South African Peace Accord structures, the Goldstone Commission, and the Independent Election Commission.

parties to the conflict participated in a series of research meetings which evolved into a direct intervention into their conflict, and then, through a combination of negotiation and mediation, finally resulted in the creation of a local peacekeeping structure for Meadowlands and a cessation of hostilities.³

In Soweto, opportunities to meditate on our work were few and far between, and structured reflection seldom happened. Of course we thought that our efforts could have been improved if we had found time to try and learn from some difficult mistakes and our occasional successes. Opportunities for such reflection only occurred long after I left South Africa. As events unfolded on the ground, they seldom bore much resemblance to our meager attempts to consciously employ theory in the design or conduct of that intervention. What we had originally envisioned and initiated as an adapted analytical problem solving process was essentially abandoned in order for us to directly mediate between the parties during a particular violent phase of their conflict. While we made some positive use of a human needs conceptual framework, the attempt to conduct problem solving workshops as action research, while initially successful, was eventually derailed.

Since those somewhat amazing and definitely stressful days I have been looking for the right way and best opportunity to improve my conflict resolution practice and knowledge by designing and conducting another intervention based on needs theory, problem solving, and action research, which are the

³ By way of treating the Meadowlands experience academically I have written about it from different angles in two journals. Bremner, Davin, "South African Experiences with Identity and Community Conflicts", in Journal of Peace Research, Volume 38, no. 3, May 2001. Bremner, Davin, "Local Peace and the South African Transition", in Peace Review, Volume 9, no. 2, 1997.

frameworks and processes of most interest to me. This was one strong motivation for taking up a Ph.D. program and has shaped all the strategies that inform this thesis and my conflict prevention activities in Georgia.

Action and Research

The Georgian Regions Project of International Alert (IA) was a 'conflict prevention' initiative designed to contribute to positive social change in Georgia.⁴ This dissertation research was embedded within the Regions Project with the support of IA and the knowledge of the Department for International Development (DFID) of the British Government, who funded the work. The relationship between the dissertation and the intervention is detailed and diagrammed in Chapter Four. The dissertation was designed as action research, and the core activity of the Regions Project intervention also incorporated action research. It is therefore critical at the outset to define exactly what I mean by action research in this dissertation and project. In the third chapter literature review some of the various types of action research are named and described. Though I failed to prevent the entire enterprise from becoming quite complicated, I did try to keep it simple at the onset by investing in this most fundamental definition of action research:

As the name suggests, action research is a methodology which has the dual aims of action and research . . . action - to bring about change in some community . . . research - to increase understanding on the part of the researcher, or the client, or both, (and often some

⁴ Formally, "A Programme of Conflict Prevention and Confidence Building in the Regions of Georgia", a project of International Alert's Eurasia Programme, funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) of the British Government, and initiated in April, 2000.

wider community).⁵

The complication begins because I make a distinction between the *dissertation action research* (henceforth the *DAR*) and the *intervention action research* (*IAR*). The action element of both the *DAR* and the *IAR* is focused on social change in Georgia. The increased understanding of the *IAR* accrues with the project participants through the activity of problem solving research workshops conducted in Georgia, while the increased understanding of the *DAR* benefits myself as researcher, International Alert as a conflict transformation organization, the conflict resolution field and any other academic constituencies through the written dissertation.

Early on, the *DAR* goal was formulated thus:

To explore the utility of human needs theory as a conceptual framework; action research as a methodology and intervention strategy; and analytical problem solving as a method, in situations where the satisfaction of fundamental human needs is being systematically or institutionally frustrated, resulting in social conflict and/or persistent underdevelopment.

From this goal, three specific research themes can be formulated, and they are directly related to the intellectual and practical, or practice oriented, interests that developed from my previous work as described above:

- 1) What can be learned about options for and methods of conducting analytical problem solving workshops?
- 2) What can be learned about new ways of using human needs theory in the design and conduct of conflict prevention and resolution interventions?
- 3) What can be learned about action research as a conflict intervention strategy?

⁵ From a web-published thesis, "You Want To Do An Action Research Thesis? How to Conduct and Report Action Research". Bob Dick. Accessed at URL: <http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/art/arthesis.html> .

Stated explicitly, the action goal of the intervention was, in part: To facilitate conflict prevention and problem solving dialogues between Georgian authorities and community leaders from certain Georgian regions that will improve their relationships and benefit the creation of viable social structures and institutions.

The three research themes above lead to a series of questions that were partially formed prior to the beginning of the research, but which also evolved through the course of the work. It is these specific questions that will be addressed by the end of the dissertation:

- How do we make best use of human needs theory - explicitly or implicitly, and how can we make it most possible for people to internalize the framework?
- Who are the right people to involve in problem solving workshops and how are they best included or recruited?
- By what process are the subjects of an intervention vested with 'ownership' of the effort, and what are some of the ownership issues and dilemmas?
- What are some of the implications of time and resource limitations on an intervention?
- What are some of the possible positive outcomes of problem solving workshops and how do we evaluate them?
- What are some of the perceived risks of participating in a conflict intervention?

These questions are primarily concerned with how we do what we do, in other words with the practice. Needs theory is dealt with in the thesis primarily in terms of its utility within the frame of the problem solving process.

Motivation and Method

The dissertation and the Regions Project motivation and methods were

based on some assumptions and personal perspectives that gave shape to the activities and opportunities that we created. The first assumption, based on an analysis written at IA that is described in Chapter Four, was that a human needs framework would be relevant for working towards fundamental structural social change in Georgia's evolving post-Soviet society. The intervention was based on the notion that satisfying basic human needs such as identity, security and understanding is a legitimate and dynamic organizing principle for reforming and creating social structures and institutions. The analysis was that the existing social structures were dysfunctional for the purpose of satisfying needs and thereby creating tensions and the potential for overt or violent conflict in Georgia. The 'problem to be solved' then becomes: what *would* satisfy these needs in the Georgian context, and how could Georgians create sustainable social structures and institutions that purposively facilitate needs satisfaction? This perspective focuses on the utility of needs theory. This is important to state because, while the dissertation takes note of critiques of needs theory, particularly in Chapter Three, the thesis is not primarily concerned with a critical examination of needs theory with respect to conflict resolution.

A second assumption is that the most efficient and effective way for me to examine the themes and questions above and provide the opportunity for creating new information is through the deliberate integration of theory frameworks and practice methodologies within the context of 'real work'. I have been known to explain to the typical 'lay' audience, (e.g., family and friends), that the type of action research I'm engaged in is 'real work' that we could be

doing without the dissertation aspect, but the dissertation created a structured process for reflection on the work, and for treating it academically as a way to share the insights generated with the field. This is based on the 'action-reflection' model of learning espoused by Freire, and further discussed in Chapters Three and Four. In other words, to each of the three research themes above that start with 'what can be learned about...', I will usually add the phrase 'by doing some', at least in conversation.

Since the completion of our Regions Project problem solving research workshops and the research phase of the *DAR*, a number of publications have emerged, at least in preliminary or evolving forms accessible via the internet, detailing attempts to draw 'lessons learned' by reflecting on comparative case studies of conflict, and sometimes humanitarian and development interventions.⁶ What distinguishes the dissertation from these interesting efforts is that they are based on examining and comparing completed case studies, most of which were not designed or conducted as action research, whereas the *DAR* element of the Georgian Regions Project included reflection on theory frameworks as part of our intervention design process, and reflection on theory, process, practice and outcomes throughout the course of the intervention in ways that impacted directly on the process and thereby further influenced the results and conclusions.

Finally, by way of addressing the motivations of the dissertation and intervention, the thesis is an exploration of my own commitment to the visionary

⁶ For example the Reflecting on Peace Practice project (results of which are available on the internet as Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners, (<http://www.cdainc.com/rpp/publications/confrontingwar/ConfrontingWar.pdf>), and the collection of papers in the Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation (2003).

ideology of Burton that he came to call 'provention'. Burton's ideas are ideological in nature as he argues that if provention could be institutionalized in the social change processes of a society, then it is expanded beyond treating any individual conflict and becomes the basis of a 'political philosophy', or a 'general approach to government'.⁷ In my words, provention means preventing and resolving conflicts by reforming, re-creating, or inventing new social structures and institutions that serve the purpose of contributing to and supporting the satisfaction of fundamental human needs. If my work can be understood, in part, as an expression of this ideology, then the reason for and activities of writing the thesis are a method of learning about how to communicate the vision and embody the ideals through structured and deliberate reflection on an intervention experience.

A word about what is not in this thesis. As a consequence of the use of action research, there is no hypothesis to be proved or disproved. Nor is there a wealth of critical analysis of the myriad of existing theoretical prescripts and formulations in the field of conflict and peace studies, as many of these lack any direct relevance to the concerns of the thesis. The theory frameworks that were selected, adapted and utilized as an activity of the *DAR*, as described in Chapter Five, were chosen as representative of the existing 'state of the art', and for their functionality in terms of the intervention design task as we created it. There is a fair amount of descriptive narrative which tells the 'story' of the project, essential to the dissertation because of the manner in which dissertation themes were developed and evolved. The conclusions are

⁷ Burton, John W., Conflict Resolution: It's Language and Processes, Lanham, MD, The Scarecrow Press, 1996, pg. 38.

modest, shaped with an emphasis on practice, particularly about how we do problem solving workshops or projects. There were some unsatisfying results, and questions left unanswered. However, the story, the reflections, and the outcomes on the whole were entirely satisfying to me, and I appreciate the opportunity of sharing them through the thesis.

Outline of the Dissertation

The First Chapter has been an introduction to the thesis. The research goals, themes, and questions are detailed here, along with the key definition of action research, and a brief description of the distinction between the dissertation action research, and the intervention action research. I've asserted my aspirations and motivations, and probably indicated some biases. Finally, the first chapter included some background information that described how my research interests were developed with respect to previous work and my ongoing intellectual and professional development.

Chapter Two is a background and historical chapter. The events in the region since the breakup of the Soviet Union create the context for the existing conflicts and challenges facing Georgia, and are key to understanding the analysis from which I developed the original project proposal. Specifically, Chapter Two describes the existing situation in the Samtskhe-Javakheti, Samegrelo, and Ajara regions of Georgia when the intervention was designed and initiated.

The Third Chapter reviews the literature on human needs theory, action research, and analytical problem solving methodologies. The work of several

authors is introduced here, but taken up more fully in Chapter Five. Also in Chapter Three, there is a section describing two similar conflict resolution interventions that were being conducted at the same time as the Georgian Regions Project, with respect to the Georgia - Abkhazia conflict. There was no published literature on these projects at the time of designing the Regions Project, but I have interviewed colleagues and reviewed materials from these projects since the completion of my research, and there are important and interesting elements to compare and contrast among the three initiatives.

Chapter Three also contains the introduction to the work of Chilean economist Manfred Max-Neef. Max-Neef's matrix of needs and satisfiers is a powerful conceptual tool, and offers several important advancements to needs theory. The *IAR* and Regions Project relied on the Max-Neef human needs framework, and one contribution of the thesis is to demonstrate the relevance of Max-Neef's work to the conflict resolution versions of needs theory and problem solving.

The Fourth Chapter will first detail and diagram the methodological frameworks of this dissertation, and clarify the distinctions between the dissertation research and the intervention, as well as between the *DAR* and *IAR*. There are diagrams here showing the relationship between action research as a research paradigm, various types of action research as methodologies, and problem solving workshops as an example of methods. The Georgian Regions project as an action-reflection process is illustrated, as well as a diagram showing the other confidence and capacity building elements of the Regions Project, and their relationship to the *IAR* and *DAR*. Chapter

Four then evolves into the narrative component of the dissertation during which the 'story' or activities of the project are laid out. This narrative reports on the consultations that took place in Georgia prior to beginning the design phase of the *IAR*.

Chapters Five through Seven break down the *IAR* into three phases: the activities concerning the design of the problem solving research workshops, and in particular our efforts to design with explicit reference to the existing body of theory; the implementation of the intervention and the conduct of the problem solving research workshops in Georgia; and finally the outcomes, evaluation, and reflections on the workshop and conflict prevention activities.

Chapter Five is the account of the design phase of the *IAR*, which was intended to be a key activity of the *DAR*. Some of the theoretical frameworks mentioned in the literature review are presented more fully in this chapter. There is narrative about our group designing efforts, although we only managed to engage with eight of twenty-two prepared theory frameworks. The remaining frameworks are presented here however, in order for me to discuss their relevance to the *IAR*. Towards the end of Chapter Five, our designing results are summarized and illustrated with diagrams of the problem solving process and the schedule of problem solving research workshops and seminars.

Chapter Six is the narrative rendition of the problem solving research workshops held over a period of eight months in Georgia during 2002. The chapter details the analysis results from the workshops, and the ways in which we applied the Max-Neef matrix and other conceptual frameworks to the work.

Our facilitation team and workshop event cultures are described here, as well as the evolution of the guidelines that we employed to motivate the workshop participants to gain a sense of ownership of and commitment to the project. Chapter Six concludes with the final problem solving research workshops and the resulting project proposals that were developed through our intervention.

Chapter Seven shares the results of the evaluation activities that we conducted with participants, and the corresponding reflections of the local project partners who co-facilitated the workshops, and some of the key workshop participants, through interviews that I conducted. The research questions above are discussed here between myself and the other key individuals, to indicate how other people regarded our results and what they felt was learned.

In Chapter Eight, I attempt to integrate my own reflections with the relevant theory perspectives, with the opinions of the local partners and Georgian participants, and to offer our collective conclusions regarding the research goals, themes, and questions. The lessons learned are delineated here, as well as some suggestions for future practice.

Chapter Nine concludes the narrative of the Georgian Regions Project. It is essentially a postscript, more than a year on from the completion of the problem solving research workshops. It offers additional conclusions and summarizing remarks, and a brief update of events in Georgia since the end of our intervention there.

Chapter Two

Post-Soviet times in Georgia

When rich speculators prosper
while farmers lose their land;
when government officials spend money
on weapons instead of cures;
when the upper class is extravagant and irresponsible
while the poor have nowhere to turn –
all this is robbery and chaos.
It is not in keeping with the Tao.

The Chaos of the Early 1990s in the Caucasus

As the 1980s came to an end the political and social enterprise that was the Soviet Union was drawing to a close. The ethnic, religious, linguistic, and national identity groups with various and sundry histories of conquest, independence, autonomy, resistance to domination, and cultural evolution found themselves facing a political power vacuum in the Caucasus that could easily be characterized as filled with risks and opportunities. The flanks of the Caucasus mountains and the river valleys that span from the Black Sea to the Caspian hosted dozens of peoples with diverse languages and ancient traditions, among them the Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Chechens, Abkhaz, Ingush, Kabardinians, Balkars, Ossets, Adyghei, Circassians, and of course the Georgians. The south Caucasus¹ has been described as having a 'bewildering variety of religion, ethnicity, language, terrain, politics and demographics'.²

¹ The region is also known as the 'Transcaucasus' meaning the land 'across the Caucasus Mountains'.

² Awde, Nicholas, in the introduction to the edited volume, Transcaucasian Boundaries, Wright, Goldenberg and Schofield, editors. 1995. St. Marten's Press. Pg. 2.

An academic or intellectual journey into the hundreds and thousands of years of history of any one of these nationalities could be the topic for a number of dissertations. Time spent socially with Georgians always includes reference to the long history, cultural traditions, heroines and heroes of the Georgian people, and that deep sense of history clearly serves as one satisfier of Georgian identity needs. However, this thesis is limited, for all practical purposes, to the decade 1990 - 2000 in terms of background and history, in order to set the scene for the Georgian Regions Project.

The Russian Federation border runs along the summits and ridges of the Caucasus Mountains, with a host of ethnic groups sometimes referred to as 'mountain peoples' living on the northern facing flanks, or the 'North Caucasus'. These autonomous republics and provinces include Kalmykia, Chechnya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachai-Cherkessia, Adyghei, and Dagestan.³ The South Caucasus then comprises three states that have gained their independence with the breakup of the USSR: Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. The four major violent conflicts that have befallen the region have occurred in both the North and South Caucasus.⁴ Nagorno-Karabakh is

³ A history of attempts to create a confederation of 'mountain peoples' of the Caucasus goes back at least to 1917, when there was a United Mountain People's Alliance. This strategy was reinvigorated in August 1989, possibly at the behest of the Abkhazians, as the Assembly of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus, which would become the Confederation of Mountain People of the Caucasus in 1992 in Grozny. Some armed forces said to represent this alliance aided the Abkhaz against the Georgians.

⁴ Four might be considered by some to be an arbitrary number. Armed conflict occurred between North Ossetians and Ingush in 1992, and is not dealt with here. The Georgian 'civil-war' is not numbered in the four, but is discussed below. The relative sense of 'major' conflict ascribed here to the Karabakh, South Ossetian, Abkhazian and Chechen conflicts relates to levels of violence, numbers of displaced persons, and the intractability of these conflicts, all of which seem impervious to conflict settlement by traditional diplomatic means.

disputed land fought over between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis.⁵ Ethnic Armenians make up the majority of the population but the territory lies within what the international community recognizes as Azerbaijan. Armenia did better in the war which was fought militarily in 1992-94. Hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis were displaced, and as of 2002 the conflict remains 'frozen'.⁶

The complex dynamics driving Chechnya and the Russian Federation apart have resulted in two periods of vicious armed conflict, in 1994-96, and again since 1999. Despite the political spin on information about the conflict coming from Moscow, generally in the form of claims that the war has been won and only 'bandits' or terrorists remain to frustrate the possibilities of a negotiated outcome, armed resistance to the exercise of Russian political authority or military control is the daily reality in 2003, with no end to the violence in sight.

The Turmoil in Georgia

Which brings us to Georgia, where there have been three violent conflicts during the 1990s, two of which remain unresolved after years of political manoeuvring, diplomatic intervention, cycles of tension and occasional flare-ups of violence. During the years of the Soviet Union the relative amount or form of 'autonomy' fluctuated for both Abkhazia and South Ossetia according to

⁵ The conflict in Karabakh actually predates the 1990s and the breakup of the Soviet Union, and one author has written that, '...it was the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh that began to unravel the USSR. It was a watershed in Soviet Politics'. Margot Light, "Russia and Transcaucasia" in Transcaucasian Boundaries, 1995, pg. 39.

⁶ The common description 'frozen conflicts' applied to the Caucasus and elsewhere is not uncontroversial. Jonathan Cohen remarks that if frozen implies 'no dynamic movement in the conflict or peace process', then he would disagree with this as a characterization of the Caucasian conflicts. Interview with Jonathan Cohen, London, UK, 12 December, 2002.

the political machinations of Soviet policy and leadership. According to one chronology of events leading to the Abkhazian conflict, the important moments included:

(1918-21)...Initially Abkhazia is granted a degree of autonomy, but Georgian policies towards minorities such as the Abkhaz and South Ossetians become increasingly oppressive...

(1921-31)...Separate Soviet Socialist Republics of Georgia and Abkhazia with equal status are created...And earlier reference to Abkhazia as an autonomous republic in the 1924 USSR Constitution remains unratified until 1931 when Abkhazia's status is reduced to an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic within the Georgian SSR...

(1933-53)...Abkhaz representation in local administration is restricted, Abkhaz schools are closed, the Abkhaz language is banned...This period is referred to by Abkhaz as the 'Georgianization of Abkhazia'...

(1953-78)...the Abkhaz language is reinstated and some restrictions on Abkhaz cultural life are lifted...Abkhaz intellectuals petition Moscow in 1956 and 1967 to allow Abkhazia to secede from Georgia and join Russia.

(1986-88)...Glasnost and perestroika under Gorbachev foster Georgian and Abkhaz independence movements...Sixty Abkhaz intellectuals write to Gorbachev requesting the restoration of Abkhazia's status to that existing between 1921 and 1931, before Abkhazia was made subordinate to Georgia.⁷

Most accounts of the events that led to violent conflict in Georgia during the 1990-94 period reference the politics of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, a longtime anticommunist and Georgian patriot who hailed from the Samegrelo region of Georgia. Gamsakhurdia played a leadership role in Georgia's declaration of independence in April of 1991 and was subsequently elected as Georgia's first president in the post-Soviet period, with 86% of the vote.⁸ His nationalist rhetoric, 'Georgia for Georgians', and 'paranoid and dictatorial

⁷ A question of sovereignty: The Georgia-Abkhazia peace process, Accord: an international review of peace initiatives, Jonathan Cohen, editor, London, Conciliation Resources, 1999, pgs. 80-82.

⁸ Ibid., pg. 89.

style...antagonized relations with minorities, threatening their cultural and political security and thereby helping to bring about the war in South Ossetia.’⁹

The physical violence between South Ossetia and Georgia actually began in 1989. As in Abkhazia, described above, the history of the political status of South Ossetia as part of the USSR, and within Georgia, was long and complex. Birch includes, as factors most relevant to the outbreak of the current conflict, ‘the heritage of antagonism; economic grievances; Georgian moves to independence from Russia; Georgian insensitivity to Ossetian needs; the emergence of an Ossetian nationalist movement; and external manipulation of the issue’.¹⁰ In the event, there were tensions and sporadic armed conflict from 1989 - 92. Many Georgians were displaced from South Ossetia, and Ossetians left Georgia for South or North Ossetia. With the help of Russian weaponry (which may or may not have been provided as a matter of official Russian policy), the Ossetians eventually prevailed. While their 1990 declaration of independence from Georgia has never been recognized internationally, de facto independence persists since a cease-fire signed in 1992. The cease-fire is maintained by a ‘Joint Peacekeeping Force’ consisting of Russians, Ossetians, and Georgians, administered by a ‘Joint Control Commission’ and supported by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

While the military situation in South Ossetia presented one front for Georgian forces, the situation between proponents and opponents of

⁹ Ibid., pg. 89.

¹⁰ Birch, Julian, “The Georgian/South Ossetian territorial and boundary dispute.”, in Transcaucasian Boundaries, Wright, Goldenberg and Schofield, editors, 1995, pg. 162.

Gamsakhurdia was spinning out of control elsewhere in Georgia. Various individuals with their own political and/or economic agendas formed their own militias and in December 1991 violence was launched against Gamsakhurdia in Tbilisi. Early in 1992 Gamsakhurdia fled Georgia after a coup, but fighting continued in the Samegrelo region between Gamsakhurdia supporters known as 'Zviadists' and nominally more 'regular' Georgian forces. The Tbilisi violence and the confrontations in Western Georgia came to be regarded as Georgia's 'civil war' and in March 1992, Eduard Shevardnadze returned to Georgia and assumed leadership of the Georgian State Council. He managed to negotiate the cease-fire in Ossetia but armed clashes continued in Tbilisi and in Samegrelo. Furthermore, while Georgian independence was being internationally recognized through membership to the UN in July 1992, the political conflict over the status of Abkhazia was raging. The situation there came to a head when some Georgian officials were taken hostage in the Abkhazian region of Gali, also in July.

Come August 1992, the armed conflict in Abkhazia was initiated by the Georgian National Guard, in reality a faction or militia under the control of one Georgian strongman and not necessarily acting under the direction of Shevardnadze or any central Georgian authorities.¹¹ Under the pretext of

¹¹ Not all sources agree that Shevardnadze did not exert enough control over Georgian forces to avert the armed intervention in Abkhazia. Hewitt, writing from a perspective sympathetic to the Abkhaz, says, "Personally, I am convinced that the attack on Abkhazia was quite cynically planned by Shevardnadze, who, certain that his Western friends would not raise even a squeak of protest (as indeed they did not), no doubt hoped first, that it would unite both his and Gamsakhurdia's supporters around the patriotic campaign to preserve Georgia's territorial integrity in the face of its greatest threat, and secondly, that it would lead to a Kartvelian victory in a matter of days...If my assessment of events in August 1992 is correct, then Shevardnadze was proved wrong on both accounts." Transcaucasian Boundaries, 1995, pg. 217.

releasing the hostages and defending a particular strategic railway the National Guard occupied Sukhumi. The Abkhaz leadership was forced to flee up the Black Sea coast to Gudauta.

Throughout 1993 negotiations were conducted, sometimes mediated by Russia, sometimes with the support of the United Nations and the OSCE (then known as the CSCE¹²). Cease fires were concluded and then failed. Zviadist forces were taking advantage of the chaos and fighting Georgian forces elsewhere in Samegrelo. The Abkhaz attempted repeatedly to retake Sukhumi, finally succeeding in September of 1993. They benefited from equipment sourced from the Russians, from the participation of some mercenaries, and by help of allies from the North Caucasus and elsewhere. As Georgian forces retreated the Georgian population of Abkhazia also fled. Survivors of the Georgian exodus from Sukhumi and Gali and other communities numbered as many as 250,000 people, most of whom are regarded by the international community as 'internally displaced persons', or IDPs.¹³ Large numbers of IDPs congregated in Zugdidi, Kutaisi, and Tbilisi, some staying with their Georgian families, but many finding only emergency accommodations and developing dependencies on humanitarian assistance.

By this time the Georgians were desperate to receive military assistance from Russia and had joined the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), a political and economic alliance created from the remains of the Soviet Union.

¹² Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

¹³ This is a controversial figure used by some now to tell how many IDPs are in Georgia at the present. A 1989 census put the number of Georgians in Abkhazia at 245,000, some of whom fled to Russia, becoming refugees. Persons of other ethnicities, and even some Abkhaz also fled the fighting.

Russian troops intervened to defeat the Zviadist paramilitaries, and made themselves available for peacekeeping in Ossetia and Georgia. Negotiations involving Georgians, Abkhazians, Russians, and the United Nations resulted in the deployment of CIS peacekeeping troops¹⁴ along a demilitarized zone between Georgia and Abkhazia and the United Nations approved a peacekeeping observer mission (UNOMIG). In the years between 1994 and 1999, tensions between Tbilisi and Sukhumi ebbed and flowed. The Gali region proved especially difficult to control, with armed groups variously described as militias, guerillas or 'partisans' from both sides involved in 'defence', but also in criminalized economic activity, kidnapping, and intimidation of local populations. Some spontaneous return of Georgians to Gali occurred through time, but armed clashes in 1998 again put Georgian civilians to foot.

The brevity with which the Georgian - Abkhazian conflict is treated here should not diminish the import of the humanitarian tragedy or the dehumanizing effects of violence and armed conflict visited on civilian populations during the 'hot' periods of these wars. These things cannot be described or summarised adequately by mere words, but the following passage offers one attempt. The tragedy is by no means limited to the Georgian - Abkhaz conflict. Each of the violent wars mentioned above had the result of thousands killed, hundreds of thousands displaced, and left an entire region emotionally and psychologically traumatized:

The brutal nature of the war in Abkhazia was characterized on both sides by ethnic sweep operations, terror, expulsions, looting and

¹⁴ Known as the CISPKF, or CIS Peace Keeping Force.

rape inflicted on civilians of the other ethnic group. Taking an increasingly ethnic imprint, violence extended into villages and even families within which Georgians and Abkhaz had previously lived together peacefully. Personal experiences of ethnically based violence led to cycles of retribution, many of which were interrupted, but by no means finished, when the cease-fire was enacted in May 1994. The outcome of the war was a near complete separation of Georgians and Abkhaz, with many harbouring deep mutual hostility.¹⁵

Critical to the consideration of each of the conflicts detailed so far were the various roles played by Russia, or sometimes by Russian-based interests with unclear connections to formal structures of Russian policy and governance. The interests and strategies of the new Russian Federation were clearly central to the geopolitics of the region as the meaning of 'post-Soviet' economics, politics, society and psychology evolved. These strategies, however, played out in unpredictable and sometimes contradictory ways. In the situation where every identity group was at some point a minority with respect to some other group and determined not to be 'dominated' by the perceived majority, the timeless principle of 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend' becomes a conflict resolution analytical framework. Some Georgians support some Chechens against Russians. Some Russians support some Georgians against Zviadists. Some Chechens support some Abkhaz against Georgians. Some Russians support some Abkhaz against Georgians.

The Georgian perspective often assumes there is a hidden Russian agenda and a strong motivation to control or even 'take back' Georgia. The reality may be somewhat less calculated or deliberate than the Georgians generally assume:

¹⁵ Hansen, Greg, 'Displacement and return' in Accord - A question of sovereignty: The Georgia-Abkhazia peace process. 1999. Pg. 58.

Especially in the first years after the USSR disintegration, Russia's involvement in the former Soviet republics was very ambiguous and fluid, as it reflected no coherent and articulate policy, but rather an unclear and even contradictory mixture of military and political interests of different power groups. Had it been military intervention, supplies of weapons, information sharing, financial or other support, it remains unclear which decision level it emanated from. Taking into account the existence of many disorganized and uncontrolled elements within the military as well as the splintered political representation, commands were often arbitrary, which nevertheless does not lessen the Kremlin's responsibility for such involvement.¹⁶

While noting the somewhat perplexing task of understanding the role of the Russians throughout, Frichova also points out that the Georgian perception tends towards the conspiratorial. "Russian hands and KGB paranoia was, and to some extent still remains omnipresent in the post-Soviet Georgian society, strengthening mutual distrust and suspicion among its actors."¹⁷

Through the course of the 1990s the issues of the Russian military presence in Georgia; of Georgia remaining within the Russian 'sphere of influence', or not; and of Russia not only flexing its muscles but deliberately provoking or sustaining ethnic conflict contributed to destabilising the Georgian - Russian relationship in ways which would significantly affect the other Georgian regions that we are about to examine in more depth, namely Javakheti, Ajara, and Samegrelo.

¹⁶ Frichova, Magdalena, "Georgia's Rebirth: Nationalism, Nation- and State-Building Struggle of the Past Decade", unpublished paper, 2000, pg. 32.

¹⁷ Ibid., pg. 31.

The International Alert Analysis in 1999

I came to International Alert in 1999, from the Ph.D. programme at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR),¹⁸ with the purpose of creating an action-research opportunity that could be based on human needs theory and analytical problem solving. The project work of several IA programmes and their various analyses of many conflict situations in different global regions were reviewed. Within the Eurasia Programme there was an internal discussion document that was primarily focussed on the Georgian - Abkhazian conflict, but also remarked on the generally weak Georgian state, and the somewhat tense situation with regards to several other regions of Georgia. This specific observation jumped out:

...the central authorities in Georgia have difficulty developing appropriate and viable institutions which would define their relations with...Ajaria, Javakhetia, and Mingrelia.¹⁹

The document summarized the wider difficulties of weak local governance structures, conflicted relationships between civil society and government structures, structural economic and political deficiencies and widely perceived instability of the Georgian state. The research into the situation in the three

¹⁸ At George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. It was at ICAR in 1987-89 that the author studied with John Burton who is most often acknowledged as the progenitor of needs-theory based 'analytical problem solving'.

¹⁹ Gevork Ter-Gabrielian, unpublished internal discussion document, 1999 International Alert. Regarding the spelling of place names in the dissertation, Mingrelia is the Russian name for the region Georgians call Samegrelo. In early Regions Project documents we referred to Mingrelia, but changed to speaking and talking about Samegrelo through the course of the project. The dissertation will still refer, at some point, to the Mingrelian language, which is discussed in those terms in Georgia. The Georgian spellings for the other project regions are Ajara, and Javakheti, and that is how they will be spelled throughout the dissertation. Javakheti is a sub-region of Samtskhe-Javakheti, and the Regions Project initially focussed on the smaller region, but expanded its efforts to include Samtskhe-Javakheti as a practicality during the course of the project.

regions of Georgia that were thus identified as problematic began within this context, with the notion that there was a task of defining, creating, or reforming social structures and institutions and that there was potential for conflict if these challenges were not adequately engaged. We turn now to look at the three difficult regions, in turn.

Javakheti - Isolated and Remote

Javakheti is situated on a high plateau in the south of Georgia bordering both Armenia and Turkey. It forms part of the larger administrative region Samtskhe-Javakheti (a *Mkhare* in Georgian, of which there are twelve in the country). However, it is physically distanced from Samtskhe by a geological escarpment and some really, really bad road. As much as 90% of the population is ethnically Armenian,²⁰ and otherwise there are a few Georgians, some Russians, and a small number of ethnically Russian *Dukhobors*²¹. Javakheti has two significant towns, Akhalkalaki, and Ninotsminda. The population of the region was about 108,000 in 1989, the date of the last census.²²

Because Javakheti shares a border with NATO aligned Turkey it was the site of a Soviet military complex during the time of the USSR. The region had

²⁰ Javakheti Region in Georgia: Problems, Challenges and Necessary Responses, drafted jointly by FEWER (Forum of Early Warning and Early Response), and CIPDD (Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development), May, 2000, pg. 3.

²¹ The Dukhobors were a religious group who were sent from Russia in the 1800s. More than 2000 of them returned to Russia during the 1990s, leaving one remaining Dukhobor village.

²² FEWER, CIPDD, pg. 2.

special 'border status', meaning that travel to and from was restricted for Georgians and other Soviet citizens. This contributed to the physical isolation of the region. The current Russian military base remains in Akhalkalaki and is one of the most salient elements of the potential instability of the region until today. The base is by far the largest employer in the region and one of the few significant economic factors. So significant is the economic impact of the base, where the local civilian employees are paid in Russian *rubles* rather than Georgian *lari*, that the entire local economy operates in *rubles*, or sometimes Armenian *drams*. There is no consistent local source of Georgian *lari*. There were no Georgian banks servicing the region as of 2000.

The maintenance of the Russian military base in Akhalkalaki is part of a larger diplomatic conflict between Georgia and Russia. Russia had maintained four military bases in Georgia,²³ which the Georgians regarded as impinging on their sovereignty. Agreements for the removal of the bases were attempted in 1995 and renegotiated at an OSCE summit meeting in Istanbul in 1999, where the Russians agreed to remove the Vaziani and Gudauta bases. They were then supposed to come to agreements on the timetable for removing the other two bases by the end of 2001. But it wasn't that easy. As of 2002 Vaziani had in fact been vacated by Russia. The status of Gudauta (in Abkhazia) is complicated by the Georgian - Abkhaz conflict. The Batumi base supports the autonomy status of Ajara which will be discussed below. In Javakheti the Georgians argue that the base could be removed within a two-three year time frame while the Russians claim that fifteen years is more

²³ In Akhalkalaki; in Vaziani near Tbilisi; Gudauta in Abkhazia; and Batumi, in Ajara.

realistic.²⁴ The local Armenian population supports the base because of their obvious economic dependency, and also because of the perceived security the base provides for them from Turkey, a source of fear that remains psychologically potent for Armenians based on the early 20th century conflict between Armenia and Turkey.

Another potent and divisive issue that puts local interests and Georgian 'nation-building' policies at odds is language policy. Most of the population in Javakheti has a very limited knowledge of Georgian, and Russian is the most commonly used language with Armenian a close second. No Georgian language television broadcasts reach the region and people therefore see most of their news and any other TV in Russian or Armenian. This limits their awareness and the quality of information coming from Tbilisi about Georgian affairs, politics, policies, and contributes to the sense of isolation. Because the educational and economic opportunities in Georgia are limited there are few incentives for ethnic Armenians from Javakheti to learn Georgian and there has been a high level of (seasonal) economic and educational migration to Armenia and Russia, further de-motivating the use of Georgian in the region.

The view of Javakheti from Tbilisi is of a 'fragile' relationship between region and center and there are fears, sometimes manipulated in the media, that there are separatist agendas or ethnically motivated political organizers who would want to create a situation similar to that of Karabakh.

Sensationalistic media representations of the 'tensions' between Javakheti and the Georgian state are frequent and provocative:

²⁴ "Research and analysis on the situation in the region of Samtskhe-Javakheti, Georgia", CIPDD Monthly Report, May 2001, pg. 7.

According to observers in Tbilisi and on the spot, the area represents a time-bomb...Today the area is a no-go area for non-security - rather than security - reasons - and the threat is faced by Georgians rather than foreigners. The clandestine Armenian-manned road-blocks, kidnappings, and shoot-outs are the symptoms of the larger problem: an Armenian breakaway movement by the name of Javakh...Javakh is said to count for some 10,000 activists, several thousands of whom walk the streets with guns on their belts...Security officials in Tbilisi sadly nod at the suggestion that every town, village and even estates in Javakheti are stuffed with arms of all calibers - "with the possible exception of atom-bombs."²⁵

The process of establishing local governance structures in Georgia which will be discussed in more detail below, is problematic in Javakheti because of the local reality of a majority Armenian population in a country controlled by Georgian politics. Two different types of local governance structures coexist, but only with great difficulty. Local councils, called *sakrebulo*s represent the population at each administrative level, and the members are elected. However, a parallel structure with a *gamgabelli* or mayor, and an administrative office called the *gamgeoba* has more political power, and the *gamgabelli* is an appointed official, assigned from Tbilisi. The pattern in Javakheti has been for the local elections to favour ethnic Armenians for the *sakrebulo*s, while the *gamgabelli* has usually been a Georgian, and usually not a local. The legislation that would determine the distribution of power and the relevant 'competencies', by which the Georgians mean job descriptions and responsibilities, and the mechanisms for communication, coordination, or cooperation between the structures have been inadequate or simply never completed. Local governance then, from the viewpoint of the Armenian

²⁵ Charles van der Leeuw, "Georgia's Troubled Corners - Javakheti: Karabakh Revisited", The Azeri Times, March 1999. I would note here that having visited the region repeatedly since 1999, I've never once come up to an unofficial road block, or seen anyone walking the streets of Akhalkalaki or Ninotsminda with arms of any kind.

population is not transparent, not accountable, and generally believed to be corrupt. In any case, power is in the hands of the Georgians. Taxation and budget issues have been controlled completely by the appointed authorities, and *sakrebulo*s sometimes have no office, budget, furniture, phones, or staff. In Javakheti this leads to resentment of the political power wielded from Tbilisi. In Samtskhe-Javakheti, where there is a 'President's Special Representative', a sort of super *gamgabelli* for the entire region, the problem is less ethnic since there is more of a balance between Georgians, Armenians and other ethnicities, and the concern is with political corruption. The region went through six different President's Special Representatives in as many years.

The development of the Georgian Regions Project originally focussed on Javakheti. However, as will be explained further on in the dissertation, the project widened its scope to include representation from the regional capital, Akhaltsikhe, and thereby marginally included the larger Samtskhe - Javakheti region. One of the significant political issues threatening instability for Samtskhe - Javakheti beyond the economic and political challenges facing the entire country, pertained to the return of the so-called 'Meskhetian Turks',²⁶ a large group who had originally populated the Samtskhe region, which is also known as Meskhetia. Deported by Stalin in 1944 to Uzbekistan in Central Asia,²⁷ this group has suffered from ethnic discrimination and conflict

²⁶ This group is also sometimes called the Muslim Meskhetians, or perhaps, most neutrally, simply Meskhetians. The dissertation will mostly refer to them by the simple label.

²⁷ According to a report from the International Organization on Migration (IOM), archives claim about 92,000 Meskhetians were originally deported, while representatives of the current identity group claim that 200,000 is a more accurate estimate of the original action. Today there are estimated to be some 300,000 people who might be identified as Meshketians, but absolutely no idea about how many of those actually consider themselves

repeatedly since that time. In 1989 there were Meskhetian communities in Uzbekistan, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, and in the Russian Federation. In 1996, Georgian President Shevardnadze signed a decree providing for the repatriation of a small number of Meskhetians (5,000), but the project proved difficult to implement. In 1999, as a condition for joining the Council of Europe, Georgia renewed its commitment to undertake repatriating Meskhetians, an issue that European human rights organizations lobbied for. But resistance to any Meskhetian return to Samtskhe-Javakheti is virulent on the ground. Residents in the Samtskhe region are not interested in either the economic competition any influx of people would entail, or engaging in legal battles over the return of properties that were vacated in 1944 and have since been adopted mostly by Georgians. Armenians are even more set against any significant (or even symbolic) return of 'Turks' to the region, and vow to resist Meskhetian resettlement by force.

The reality is that no one knows how many Meskhetians would want to return to Georgia, or specifically to Samtskhe-Javakheti. Surveyed by the IOM in 1998, Meskhetians in Azerbaijan expressed conflicting sentiments:

All of the Meskhetians we spoke to...stated very firmly that they wanted to have the right to be able to return to their homeland in Georgia. They felt that there was no place in the former Soviet Union which they could call 'home'...Nonetheless, when pressed further, many Meskhetians accepted that in practice even if it were possible for them to return to Georgia, they would probably remain in Azerbaijan. It was recognized that it would be difficult to make a new life for themselves in a country which most of them have never lived in, without considerable external assistance. By far the majority of Meskhetians living in Azerbaijan do not speak Georgian...For many Meskhetians whom we met, the desire to return to Georgia is an expression of a political demand to see their right to be able to live in their former homeland restored, even though in practice they

potential returnees to Georgia.

recognize that they would not necessarily take advantage of this possibility should it occur.²⁸

In 1999 and 2000 there was much talk within the community of international NGOs and other international actors about the 'problem of Javakheti', which was regarded as a particularly delicate matter confronting Georgian stability. It was, however, somewhat difficult to actually define the problem. According to the FEWER report from 2000, the 'problem' might be characterised in at least these three different ways:

'There is no problem of Javakheti...that would make the region qualitatively different from any other region in Georgia. So, it is wrong - and may be dangerous - to single out Javakheti at all.'

'Javakheti is a political, or, more precisely, ethno-political problem, due to potentiality of irredentist or other kind of nationalist claims...this problem is further aggravated by the presence and/or possible withdrawal of the Russian military base...'

'Javakheti is first of all an economic problem: it is an extremely poor region even by Georgian standards. Unlike other regions of the country, however, here natural expressions of dissatisfaction caused by poverty may develop traits of ethnic unrest...'²⁹

The Samtskhe-Javakheti region then, suffered from ethnic tensions, weak local governance, geopolitical manipulations, local corruption, economic underdevelopment, and the Javakheti sub-region was further challenged by geographical, cultural, and informational isolation throughout the 1990s. We turn next to Ajara, where the isolation was of an entirely other sort.

²⁸ International Organization on Migration, "Deported People of the Former Soviet Union: The Case of the Meskhetians", 1998.

²⁹ FEWER, 2000, pgs 4-5.

Ajara - The Benefits of Autonomy

Ajara sits in the southwest corner of Georgia on the Black Sea coast. The city of Batumi is the capital and it is Georgia's most active port. One of the remaining three Russian military bases is in Batumi. The population of Ajara is ethnically Georgian but was converted to Islam in the 16th and 17th centuries, under the influence of the Ottoman empire.³⁰ The people of the region have a history of conflict, foreign domination, ethnic marginalization, resistance, attempted assimilation, occasional relative autonomy and political intrigue to equal any of the other 'minority' groups in the Caucasus.

During the Gorbachev period, Ajara joined the Abkhaz and the Ossetians in petitioning Moscow for 'removal from Georgian jurisdiction'.³¹ During the Gamsakhurdia period of Georgian nationalist politicking, 'Tbilisi nationalists saw the spread of Christianity among the Ajarans as essential for the unification of the whole Georgia...dissidents began to organize the reopening of former mosques into churches in Ajara'.³²

Critically for Ajara, the region had a significant cultural institution that had remained more or less stable through hundreds of years of history in the form of strong local aristocratic families that were powerful even under the Ottoman regime. The leader of Ajara through the period of the 1990s and until today, Aslan Abashidze, hails from one of these powerful Ajaran clans:

³⁰ Mike Dravis, "Adzhar in Georgia", unpublished paper, 1995, pg. 2.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Judith Hin, "The interest of the local potentate in keeping violent conflict at bay", paper delivered at the Convention for the Association for the Study of Nationalities (ASN). Columbia University, New York, April 2000, pg. 8.

The actual power in Ajara and the rest of Muslim Georgia under Ottoman rule remained largely in the hands of some local aristocracy families, the so-called 'begi' families...Among these influential families, the Abashidze clan should be mentioned. They were the family controlling lower Ajara - the surroundings of Batumi, now the capital of Ajara - and managed to preserve their privileges throughout the Ottoman period. Later, during the communist revolution, the Abashidze family would become known for their pro-Georgian attitude and support for the autonomous status of Ajara to 'liberate the Muslims of Georgia' (Darchiashvili, 1996), and in post-Soviet Ajara the Abashidze family would become the leading clan.³³

There were tensions between Ajara and Tbilisi during Gamsakhurdia's regime and one result of the political machinations was the appointment of Aslan Abashidze to lead the local governance structure, the Ajaran Supreme Soviet. This resulted in protests and unrest on the streets of Batumi in April 1991, but Abashidze was able to consolidate his power and position while committing himself to upholding the autonomy of Ajara, within Georgia. During the chaotic period of conflict between Georgia, Abkhazia and Ossetia, and the struggle between Georgian factions ending with the coup against Gamsakhurdia, Aslan Abashidze established himself as a political operator of the first order, maintaining successful relationships with Gamsakhurdia and then Shevardnadze in turn, offering himself as an occasional mediator between various factions and firmly establishing his complete power over his small but successfully autonomous 'fiefdom'. He benefited economically from the activities of the port and developed close personal ties with the commanders of the local Russian military base.

Between 1995 and 1998, Abashidze pursued every angle and opportunity in creating de facto economic and political autonomy for Ajara within Georgia. He proposed an Ajaran 'free economic zone', which did not win legislative

³³ Ibid. pg. 2.

approval in Tbilisi but existed in fact through his control of the port, customs, and all economic, social, political, and police activity in Ajara. From 1998 there were increasing tensions between Shevardnadze's political regime and Abashidze's ever more manipulative strategies. 'Since the position of taking a neutral position in internal conflicts had become useless in Georgia without civil war, for Abashidze to distinguish himself as strong leader and to preserve his power basis, another possibility was to lambaste the Georgian leadership (Shevardnadze), in combination with demonstrating his democratic and western orientation, while continuing to exploit the economic possibilities and maintaining close relationships with Russia as well.'³⁴

In terms of the International Alert process of analysing the potential for conflict in the Georgian regions during 1999 and 2000, the analysis recognized that on the one hand, Ajara had a certain sense of stability based on the authoritarian rule of Aslan Abashidze, but on the other hand the autonomy arrangement that had come to define Ajara's relationship to the Georgian state might not be sustainable if and when Abashidze's power base was threatened or when, for whatever reason, he is no longer personally a factor in the region's affairs. 'Abashidze lacks a particular successor who could continue his authoritarian regime and prevent a power struggle within Ajara after his retreat.'³⁵ In any case, his version of autonomy is not thought to be a positive model that could lend itself to the resolution of Georgia's unresolved conflicts, or for solving problems between the other Georgian regions and the center.

³⁴ Ibid., pg 17.

³⁵ Ibid., pg 23.

Samegrelo - The Economic End of the Road

Mingrelian is a Georgian dialect associated with an identity group whose homeland is the west of Georgia, along the southern flanks of the Caucasus mountains, and approaching the Black Sea coast, north from Ajara, in the Samegrelo region. While many accounts of the history of the region clearly distinguish between Mingrelians and Georgians,³⁶ by 1999 most of the citizens of Samegrelo consider themselves 'really Georgian' Georgians, and can be a little defensive towards any attempt to draw a distinction. It is however also possible to discern a certain sense of linguistic and cultural superiority, meaning that speaking Mingrelian makes one feel oneself 'a little bit better' Georgian than the rest.

Some of the tension in the region remains linked to the Georgian civil war episode. Zviad Gamsakhurdia came from Samegrelo and his supporters, known as 'Zviadists', find their home base, their clan links, and their 'turf' in the region. Before the outbreak of the war with Abkhazia, the tensions between Samegrelo and Tbilisi were rooted in the competition between Gamsakhurdia's supporters and Shevardnadze's:

The Tbilisi regime had been faced with massive unrest in Gamsakhurdia's native province of Mingrelia ever since his overthrow, and the behaviour of the so-called *Mkhedrioni* (Knights), an ill disciplined militia set up and led by Dzhaba Ioseliani, who at the time was Shevardnadze's deputy in the State Council, towards the citizenry of Mingrelia could not have been better orchestrated had it actually been the intention of Tbilisi to cause Mingrelia to secede from

³⁶ The 'Kartvelian' family of languages is made up of four languages: Georgian, Mingrelian, Svan, and Laz. The Laz live in Turkey, but Svans and Mingrelians inhabit western Georgia. Some academic accounts claim that Georgian is the only written language, and therefore became the language of education in modern Georgia. It seems however, that there was once a Mingrelian language newspaper, and it isn't impossible to find a Georgian - Mingrelian dictionary.

Georgia.³⁷

Samegrelo has two significant population centres, the city of Zugdidi, and the somewhat smaller but more prosperous port city, Poti. The decade of the 1990s was difficult for the region because of the events described previously. Zugdidi sits hard up against the 'border' with Abkhazia. The bridge that spans the Engury river, which makes up much of the cease fire/separation of forces line is reached after a ten minute drive from the city centre. Repeated mass movements of people, mostly Georgians fleeing Sukhumi and the Gali region, inundated Zugdidi creating the social pressures of tens of thousands of IDPs. The Georgian 'civil war' saw armed factions aligned with Gamsakhurdia controlling some Samegrelo villages and terrain, while other armed factions and Georgian militias controlled other locales.

Normal economic activity was completely disrupted by the war and the resulting separation of Abkhazia from the rest of Georgia. This created a dead end, or backwater in the region where the normal flow of people, goods, commerce and agricultural produce into and out of Abkhazia was curtailed, leaving only illicit economies, mostly smuggling of petrol products and cigarettes from Russia through Abkhazia. These economic activities are controlled by criminal gangs whose activities are entwined with the remnants of militias and armed groups known in Georgia as 'partisans'.

While Poti was caught up to some degree in the traumas of the fratricidal Georgian conflicts, and suffered to a lesser degree from hosting IDPs from Abkhazia, the local population came to benefit from the economic

³⁷ B.G. Hewitt, "Abkhazia: a problem of identity and ownership" in Transcaucasian Boundaries, 1995, pgs. 216-217.

manipulations of Aslan Abashidze in Ajara, because the state needed to rehabilitate the Poti port, since neither Sukhumi nor Batumi were any longer providing income to the state. Towards the end of the 1990s, Poti enjoyed some economic stability, to the point that local leaders began thinking in terms of trying to negotiate a special economic status vis à vis the center. This 'affluence' was relative however, since the streets in Poti, as in many medium and small towns in Georgia, remained nearly non-negotiable in an automobile.

Chapter Three is the literature review chapter of the dissertation, however it seems most appropriate to insert a note here about the available non-academic literature on current events in the Caucasus. The Georgian Regions Project emerged from an internal International Alert analysis that was based on interpersonal relationships on the ground in the region, on grassroots peacebuilding activities and NGO networks, and not much on academic sources of information in the form of scholarly books or journals. Perhaps this is one point of reflection on the theory - practice gap. There is an emerging literature on the post-Soviet period, but it has not been particularly relevant to the development of the Regions Project or the dissertation. Much of it is not in English. Some of the more widely regarded sources were cited above. There is a steady stream of interesting, provocative and non-scholarly analysis and comment, much of it generated by international and local NGOs operating in Georgia. Organizations like the OSCE, USAID, and media oriented sources such as Eurasia Net, or IWPR produce a constant flow of information that has a relatively short shelf life and a somewhat low probability of proving accurate or relevant over time. This NGO and media-generated information served as an

undercurrent and a context for the intervention activities of International Alert, and sometimes contributed to the Project atmosphere, but was less relevant to the longer term process of writing this dissertation.

Summary

Georgia's first post-Soviet decade was not as horrendous in objective terms as the break up of Yugoslavia, but the perception from outside was that Georgia resembled a 'failed state' more than a burgeoning western-style democracy. With Ajara flaunting its de facto independence, conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia unresolved, Javakheti isolated and ethnically potent, occasional assassination attempts against Shevardnadze³⁸ and Chechen fighters making good use of the porous border with Russia in the 'Pankisi Gorge', Georgia seemed a plausible place for a conflict prevention intervention.³⁹ The British government had a similar perspective, as detailed in testimony given to the House of Commons, for their Sixth Report on Foreign Affairs, published in July of 1999:

The United Kingdom has an interest in the resolution of the conflicts which already exist in the South Caucasus and Central Asia, and as great an interest in helping to prevent further conflict from arising...Dr. Herzig told us that "conflict resolution remains the central problem for the region and should be given the highest priority in British policy"...He suggested that the Government could make a

³⁸ There were serious assassination attempts made against Shevardnadze in 1995 and 1998. He attributed the blame to political opponents 'supported by Moscow'.

³⁹ During 2002, Pankisi Gorge would attract world wide attention as one alleged location 'al-Queda terrorists'. The Russian government was so frustrated by the movement of Chechen militias into and out of Pankisi that several times military aircraft attacked positions on Georgian territory in the gorge. Finally the United States trained and equipped units of the Georgian Army who chased several hundred armed men, whether they were Chechens or Arabs remains unclear, out of the gorge in special operations late in 2002. Pankisi Gorge remains under nominal Georgian government control, but with a firmly entrenched reputation as a route for arms and drug trafficking, and a prime environment for kidnapping, and all manner of nefarious activities.

substantial contribution to conflict resolution efforts through promoting NGO and academic initiatives in confidence-building work and public education projects on the reconciliation of principles of territorial integrity and self-determination.⁴⁰

Reading the IA analysis quoted above, which was embedded in another project's progress report, I engaged the Eurasia team in discussions about the structural deficiencies and challenges that defined the strained and precarious relationships between the three Georgian regions and the central government. I was able to persuade program manager Dr. Ter-Gabrielian that a needs theory analytical framework, wherein the security, identity, participation, understanding needs (and other needs) of Georgian citizens in the regions were unmet and institutionally frustrated would provide an engaging and new perception to those Georgians relevant to resolving existing conflicts and solving pressing problems.

The Georgian Regions Project was thus born from the IA analysis that noted the structural problems and challenges facing the relationships between the Georgian state and its troubled regions and the interests of the British government in funding conflict prevention in the South Caucasus. The IA approach would become both an NGO and academic initiative as called for in the recommendations above. The process of funding and implementing the Georgian Regions Project will be described in Chapter 4.

⁴⁰ Foreign Affairs - Sixth Report, Foreign Affairs Committee Publications, British House of Commons, 1999.

Figure 1: Map of Georgia and Georgian Regions Project



This map shows the project regions of Samtske-Javakheti and Samegrelo (green), and also the intended project region of Ajara (blue). Abkhazia (pink) is colored as it is critical to the analysis of the situation in Samegrelo. Project events happened in the cities shown here, including Tbilisi, Akhalkalaki, Akhaltsikhe, Poti, Zugdidi, Kutaisi and Borjomi.

Chapter Three

Review of Relevant Literature

True words aren't eloquent;
eloquent words aren't true.
Wise men don't need to prove their point;
men who need to prove their point aren't wise.

It Starts With Human Needs Theory

The goal of a perfect social order, a frictionless society, composed of well developed individuals, is very old. This goal has yielded venerable social theories through the ages, each theory claiming for itself the exclusive wisdom of speaking for the troubled humanity and blueprinting its emancipation. But changing human sensibilities, circumstances and concerns have robbed these theories of their utility. Out of the ruins and scattered debris of these theories has now emerged, Sphinx-like, a new theory claiming to put an end to all theories by indicating how a perfect society of perfect individuals could be realized. This is human needs theory.¹

Two things can happen if you care to mention the theoretical framework that forms the foundation of the Georgian Regions Project. "The project is based on human needs theory...", might precipitate a blank stare and a doubting grimace on the face of anyone for whom 'theory' is never a welcome topic. Or, the face flickers with recognition, and the respondent ventures, "oh, you mean Maslow's hierarchy of needs, right? Self-actualization?"

Abraham Maslow's proposed schema of human needs, usually depicted as a pyramid, is the most commonly remembered or recognized needs typology. His version of what the basic human needs are: Physiological needs; safety needs; belongingness and love needs; cognitive needs;

¹ Roy, Ramashray, "Social Conflicts and Needs Theories: Some Observations" in Conflict: Human Needs Theory, edited by John Burton, (1990), pg. 125. Obviously, Roy's statement is made tongue in cheek. His criticisms are cited further on in the main text.

aesthetic needs; esteem needs; and finally self-actualization. Crucial to Maslow's version was the idea that needs will be 'fairly well satisfied' at any lower level before an individual will move 'up' the pyramid and begin trying to satisfy the needs above in the hierarchy.² Maslow's hierarchy remains most useful simply for the symbolic recognition it offers needs theory as a legitimate academic topic and framework.

Fortunately or unfortunately, there is no agreed or definitive list of human needs, and most every needs theorist has one to propose. A tour through "Conflict: Human Needs Theory", edited by John Burton, is relevant and informative on at least three themes - firstly, it introduces the wide span of needs typologies and jargon; secondly, it highlights some of the criticisms of needs theory; and thirdly it makes the link between needs theory that emerged from the realm of social psychology and needs theory as it has become a foundational framework for conflict resolution.

Taking the first of these themes - several essays touch on the fundamental question, 'what are human needs?' In the first chapter of the book, Sites suggests a link between needs and human emotions: "...what I am arguing is that human needs are ontologically grounded in emotions and that negative emotions are triggered in humans when there is a threat to the survival of either the physical organism or the developing self...we need to

² Maslow wrote many articles and books on his social-psychological theory of motivation, detailing his contribution to needs theory. Two of the most widely cited references are "A theory of Human Motivation" in the journal *Psychological Review*, number 50, 1943, and "Motivation and Personality", first published in 1954, with many subsequent editions.

discuss primary emotions in humans and their need analogues”.³ Biologist Mary Clark believes that ‘social bonding’ is paramount: “...the primary human need – in order to live a humane existence – is for a supportive society”.⁴ Sandole also addresses the existential basis of needs to propose that: “there is a common assumption...that our biology influences and pervades our behavior...the biological dimension of human behavior – what we might call the “Biological Imperative” – is not often subjected to analysis because it is not readily “see-able”...rooted in biology but influenced by environment are *basic human needs*: necessary conditions to basic survival and further physical and psychological development.”⁵ These three views are all somewhat holistic formulations as compared with other more run-of-the-mill lists or typologies of needs, but the fact remains, as will be noted below with reference to critiques of needs theory, that there is no agreed or definitive list of needs.

Needs Theory and Positivist Social Science

Sandole’s statement above provides the transition to the second theme mentioned above, the critiques of needs theory. That human needs aren’t ‘seeable’ is one element of a set of common criticisms levelled at needs frameworks. Nobody agrees on what the needs are, or is able to actually prove or disprove their existence. And they are therefore difficult to apply traditional (positivist) research methodologies to. Herein lies a minor theme of

³ Sites, Paul, “Needs as Analogues of Emotions”, in Burton (1990), pg. 16.

⁴ Clark, Mary E., “Meaningful Social Bonding as a Universal Human Need”, in Burton (1990), pg. 40.

⁵ Sandole, Dennis J. D., “The Biological Basis of Needs in World Society: The Ultimate Micro-Macro Nexus”, in Burton (1990), pg. 60.

this dissertation. I agree that human needs are difficult to define, prove, or quantify. I think that it is the utility, rather than the prove-ability, of needs theory that makes it an appropriate framework for action research and other intervention strategies. By this, I mean that I have found the needs concept a useful tool, employed conceptually or metaphorically to help people discussing and analysing conflict situations in various social settings, without being blocked by the lack of definitive proof of its existence. Sites makes the same point clearly and succinctly in a passage that I have quoted many times as a personal rationalization for basing my work in needs theory, irrespective of the lack of scientific, positivistic evidence proving the exact nature of human needs:

In using the human need concept we must ever be conscious that we are operating at an abstract conceptual level and that in the last analysis the actual basis of the need is tied up with certain psychophysiological processes which are in interaction with the environment and which are not at this point in our scientific development directly observable. *The fact that these processes are not directly observable, however, should not prevent us from working with the need concept if it allows us better to understand and to explain human activity.*⁶ (Italics added).

I am completely in agreement with Sites' assertion that human needs are not directly observable, and therefore do not lend themselves to quantitative or other positivistic research methodologies. If however, we move forward and 'work with the needs concept' in the course of a conflict resolution intervention, wherein the constituencies of that intervention are allowed to 'better understand and explain human activities' (including their own) ... we might manage to move some distance from the abstract conceptual level, and make

⁶ Sites, Paul, "Control: The Basis of Social Order" (1973) pg. 7.

needs theory concrete and relevant to actual social change processes. The dissertation sets out to explore how best to work with the needs concept.

Returning to the Burton volume and the criticisms detailed there, Fisher notes the distinction between needs and their satisfiers, which will be central later when discussing Max-Neef's contribution. He also mentions that there are criticisms of the hierarchy assumption about the process of needs satisfaction.⁷ Fisher claims that needs theory and conflict theory begin to link up through the need of identity: "The concept of identity, in particular social identity, has the potential of providing the key linkage between Needs Theory and intergroup and international conflict resolution. The need for identity is regarded by several contemporary needs theorists as a fundamental requirement for constructive human development."⁸

Some of the other criticisms of needs theory are discussed below. With regard to the problem that there are widely varying lists and types of purported human needs, there is agreement at the lowest common level of generalized needs theory that human needs are universal. That is, every human has them, and whichever list you subscribe to, the needs themselves are the same everywhere. It's the satisfiers of needs that are culturally and environmentally determined. What satisfies identity needs in one community or society or identity group will likely be different from what satisfies identity needs in another place, space or group. Max-Neef's argument will make this

⁷ Fisher mentions Johan Galtung as one critic of the hierarchy. Galtung's discussion of needs theory also shies away from specifying needs, but discusses them rather in terms of 'classes' of needs, i.e. security, welfare, freedom, and identity.

⁸ Fisher, Ronald J., "Needs Theory, Social Identity and an Eclectic Model of Conflict", in Burton (1990), pg. 94.

proposition explicit below.

John Burton and the Link Between Needs and Conflict

As to the third theme, the connection between needs theory and conflict resolution, diplomat and scholar John Burton is widely recognized as having conceptualized the link between human needs theory and social conflict, making his case in the book *"Deviance, Terrorism, and War"* (1979).⁹ In what he describes as a 'provocative assumption', Burton claims, "...that there are certain ontological human needs that *will* be pursued, that they provide a power greater than police and military power, that they lead the individual and identity group to defy compliance requirements, and that they explain and even justify in some circumstances anti-social and violent behaviours."¹⁰

Despite what was suggested above about the difficulty of working on needs theory empirically, Burton claims (though seldom cites) empirical evidence that: "there are so many examples of needs of identity leading to tremendous outpourings of time and energy in the pursuit of some social or interest goal, and so many examples of frustrated needs leading to alienation or revenge-type behaviours. Religious and ethnic conflicts are examples of the pursuit of such needs."¹¹

Burton's ideology¹² is simple enough to state as a logical flow of

⁹ Recently updated as "Violence Explained: The sources of conflict, violence and crime and their prevention", (1997).

¹⁰ Burton, John, "Violence Explained", (1997), pg. 32.

¹¹ Ibid., pg. 37.

¹² As I referred to it in the introductory chapter.

assumptions and conclusions: if we accept that underlying much of the protracted social conflict that is expressed as 'deviance, terrorism, and war'¹³ are frustrated human needs of identity, security, recognition, participation (and others), then we can also assume that the social structures of a community or society are probably dysfunctional for the purpose of providing or supporting needs satisfaction. If dysfunctional social structures and institutions are root causes of social conflict, then conflict resolution should be a process for fundamental structural social change, so that social structures and institutions exist explicitly for the purpose of satisfying human needs. If we frame the goal of conflict resolution as a 'problem to be solved', then we need an analytical problem solving process which, 1) can analyse the existing social structures and institutions, in order to determine in what ways they are dysfunctional; 2) determine just what the culturally, socially and environmentally appropriate needs satisfiers would be in the conflicted community or society; and 3) design a process for making the necessary changes or inventing the new structures that would suffice for satisfying those needs that have been frustrated. Finally, if this analytical problem solving process was used regularly in a pro-active manner, rather than reactively in cases of deep-rooted social conflict, then there might be the opportunity to prevent, or in Burton's terminology 'provent' some conflicts from becoming violent and protracted. A comprehensive, holistic and institutionalized, and therefore political method for doing this could

¹³ Deviance often manifested as violence.

be described as 'conflict resolution as a political system'.¹⁴

Not So Fast - There Are Some Criticisms

To his credit, Burton acknowledges that it is early days in the formulation of a new paradigm and he gives space in his own volumes for a wealth of constructive criticism. Writing in the foreword for Burton's "Violence Explained", Jabri raises two of the most consistent criticisms of Burtonian needs theorizing. "One of the primary critiques of Burton's work relates to his definition of needs as acultural attributes...The second point of critique relates to Burton's ideas on conflict resolution...in seeking to deny power a place in the resolution of conflict, Burton wishes to stress that outcomes based on coercion cannot be a basis for long-lasting and self-reinforcing resolution."¹⁵

Burton's colleagues at George Mason University, Kevin Avruch and Peter Black made the most of attacking Burton's alleged aculturalism, which is Jabri's first point. Their argument is most sharply focussed when they apply it towards processes of conflict resolution, and academically speaking, Burton was their favourite target.

The point here is that culture is not reducible to behavior...our perspective on the role of culture in conflict arises from a conception of social life in which culture is seen to be a fundamental feature of human consciousness, the *sine quo non* of being human (Black and Avruch, 1989). It is held to be constitutive of human reality, including such behavioral manifestations of that reality as 'conflict'....The sets of understandings about conflict *held by the people involved* in a dispute are crucially important. We have called such cultural knowledge 'ethnocentric theories'. These theories undergird the techniques or processes of conflict

¹⁴ Which he did, in a 'working paper' of that title, published in 1988 by the Institution for Conflict Analysis and Resolution.

¹⁵ Jabri, Vivienne, in Burton (1997) pgs. xii and xiii.

resolution used indigenously...The first task of a third-party intervenor in intercultural conflict situations, is to pay serious analytical attention to these cultural dimensions. The third party must assay a *cultural analysis* of the situation.¹⁶

Jabri explicates the second point of criticism perfectly in a way that resonates directly and credibly with my own experience of complex intervention processes in communities and societies where conflict is endemic.

The conflict resolution process cannot, however, be reduced to dualism between power and problem-solving as this would seem to negate the possibility that these two modes of intervention may be effective at different points during the life cycle of a conflict. This statement is more a recognition of the limitations of the problem-solving mode of conflict resolution than its whole-sale rejection. It argues that rather than conceptualizing the third-party process in the dichotomous terms advocated by Burton, we could suggest that different modes of intervention come to define a whole process of peacemaking which is interactive and complementary. Problem-solving is only one of these processes...¹⁷

With my just completed M.S. in Conflict Resolution, and before extensive 'real world' experience, I was inclined to see conflict firstly according to the broad generalization ... 'if it's structural conflict, then needs are being frustrated, and we use problem solving ... if it's interest-based conflict, then we do principled negotiation'. What we learned in a practical way about this principle of complementarity in South Africa was that interest-based conflicts are present within all structural human needs based conflicts, and usually a holistic approach and a committed intervention are going to combine the frameworks in some practical way. In the Soweto intervention described in the

¹⁶ Avruch, Kevin & Peter W. Black, "Conflict resolution in intercultural settings", in Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice, edited by Sandole and van der Merwe, (1993), pgs. 132-133.

¹⁷ Jabri, in Burton (1997), pg. xiii.

introductory chapter, as recounted in an article published in the Journal of Peace Research,¹⁸ we confronted exactly this issue. Our original intervention in Soweto was based on Burtonian style problem solving, but a dramatic increase in violence in the community demanded that we design an urgent and theoretically different intervention to replace, at least temporarily, our original framework. The community actually achieved the end of their violence through a principled negotiation of the 'Getting to Yes'¹⁹ variety, which benefited from the analytical problem solving process that preceded it, but was essentially a process dependant on entirely different assumptions, facilitation, time frames, and commitments. Jabri's assertion above and our Soweto experiences are in perfect agreement.

There are other critiques of needs theory. Gillwald describes the dilemma of material versus non-material satisfiers. A simplistic version of the link between human needs and conflict is that some needs satisfiers are perceived to be material in nature, and limited in supply. Competition based on the scarcity of material satisfiers then generates social conflict. For example, having a job in a cash economy provides the resources for purchasing material things like food, shelter, clothing, and other goods, which are satisfiers of subsistence and protection needs. When jobs are limited, some people will get them and others won't, thereby jeopardizing the needs satisfaction of the jobless and their dependents. If the competition for jobs is

¹⁸ Bremner, Davin, "South African Experiences with Identity and Community Conflicts", Journal of Peace Research, volume 38, number 3, May (2001).

¹⁹ Fisher, Roger and William Ury, Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreements Without Giving In. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1981.

experienced along identity group boundaries, meaning that the Georgians are getting employed and the Kurds aren't, or the Protestants are getting paid and the Catholics aren't, or the white people are getting the better jobs and the people-of-color are getting the worst jobs, or none at all, then the basis for social conflict exists, related to the competition over scarce resources with which to satisfy basic human needs. This is simple enough to understand, with regard to the material satisfiers. Gillwald says however, that:

Generally, a need can be met by a number of different material or non-material satisfiers, just as individual material or non-material types of satisfaction can serve to meet different needs. Theoretically, then, there would seem to be unlimited possibilities in the choice and combination of apparently suitable satisfiers.

In reality, however, the choice of satisfiers is restricted, the competition for them intense, and the potential for conflict accordingly great. In the confines of spatial and temporal reality, all satisfiers are scarce. Economic, political, social, and cultural conditions and conventions limit the freedom of choice. Competition and potential conflict exist in both material terms (as a distributional issue) and in non-material terms (as a matter of attitudes).²⁰

Christopher Mitchell describes several concerns he has with the formulations of how needs theory is related to social conflict, and how the resolution processes assume that needs satisfaction is possible for all groups at all times. He asks, "What justification do we have for assuming that BHNs (basic human needs) do not, by their very nature, themselves create conflict?" And, "What is the basic nature and form of human needs?"²¹ He says that most typologies of needs contain exclusively 'neutral' or 'benign' needs, the satisfaction of which might not necessarily lead to conflict or competition. He

²⁰ Gillwald, Katrin, "Conflict and Needs Research", in Burton (1990), pg. 120.

²¹ Mitchell, Christopher, in Burton (1990), pg. 154.

points out that there is no 'complete list' of needs, no proof that there are not 'malign' needs, and that in the absence of a complete list, "efforts to develop a theory of conflict resolution based on removing the factors frustrating BHNs seems doomed to failure – or, at least to a hit and miss strategy that can hardly be said to be based in sound theory."²² Finally, Mitchell turns to the issue of satisfiers, usefully and perfectly framing the topic that Max-Neef takes up below. "...as with human needs themselves, the conception of "satisfiers" as a basis for a theory of conflict resolution requires refinement and the answering of a number of basic questions about a *satisfier's* nature and form, as well as the role that it might play in any such theory."²³

This brings us back to Roy, for whom needs theory is clearly not the new paradigm. Roy's concerns are also about the nature and impact of the satisfiers of basic needs:

Needs theorists rely on three assumptions for making good their claim of the compatibility between individuality and sociality via the satisfaction of needs. First, it is assumed that needs are complementary, compatible and harmonious. The second assumption underlines the fact that once needs are properly satisfied, the possibility of a mature and multilaterally developed personality becomes real. And lastly, it is assumed that needs satisfaction provides a firm basis for forging an identity between individuality and sociality. All these assumptions are problematic.²⁴

To summarise, the critiques of needs theory and/or the Burtonian conflict resolution framework based on needs theory, are that no one really can definitively list or demonstrate what are 'the' basic human needs, and they resist objective scrutiny. They aren't 'seeable'. For those social scientists who

²² Ibid., pgs. 159-160.

²³ Ibid., pg. 168.

²⁴ Roy, in Burton (1990), pg. 144.

study and cherish culture, the claimed universality of human needs, and/or the notion that needs have a biological, and therefore 'deterministic' basis is flawed. To those social scientists steeped in the various schools of political 'realism' (and some others), Burton's assertions that political, military, and authority based power is essentially irrelevant to the resolution of conflict is simply naive, nonsensical, or extremely difficult to conceptualize. Many authors recognize that it is sometimes one group's efforts to satisfy their own needs, at the expense of another groups' needs satisfaction that actually fuels conflict, making it then difficult to grasp how this becomes the obvious basis for conflict resolution. Finally, for some, the seemingly undeveloped theorizing about the nature and role of needs satisfiers leaves needs theory lacking.

Enter Manfred Max-Neef

Max-Neef is a Chilean economist, once an independent candidate for that country's presidency, whose most compelling contribution to the literature of economic and social development is a very small volume outlining what he calls 'human scale development'.²⁵ In it, Max-Neef sets out "to make a theory of human needs understandable and operational for development".²⁶ This formulation motivates one theme of the dissertation, where I could say I want to contribute to making 'a theory of human needs understandable and operational for conflict resolution'. In the process, Max-Neef makes a

²⁵ Human Scale Development is Max-Neef's publication which I personally find most compelling. He is, however, more well known for the 'classic', From the Outside Looking In: Experiences in 'Barefoot Economics', published in 1982.

²⁶ Max-Neef, Manfred, Human Scale Development: Conception, Application and Further Reflections, (1991), pg. 15.

significant contribution to the needs literature with a powerful framework that indeed makes needs and satisfiers understandable and operational across and between disciplines. As he notes, "this effort is not grounded in any particular field of study, as the new reality and the new challenges inevitably compel us to adopt trans-disciplinary approaches".²⁷

It is worth laying out the basics of Max-Neef's framework here, as it is essential to the Georgian Regions Project. Firstly, he comments up-front on the distinction to be drawn between needs and satisfiers.

A prevalent shortcoming in the existing literature and discussions about human needs is that the fundamental difference between needs and satisfiers of those needs is either not made explicit or is overlooked altogether...Human needs must be understood as a system: that is, all human needs are interrelated and interactive. With the sole exception of the need of subsistence, that is, to remain alive, no hierarchies exist within the system. On the contrary, simultaneities, complementarities and trade-offs are characteristics of the process of needs satisfaction.²⁸

By describing needs satisfaction in systems theory terms, Max-Neef deals with the problem of Maslow's hierarchy. He goes on to address the issue of whether needs are universal, or culturally relative. "Fundamental human needs are finite, few and classifiable...Human needs (such as those contained in the system proposed) are the same in all cultures and in all historical periods. What changes, both over time and through cultures, is the way or the means by which needs are satisfied."²⁹

With an acknowledgement that there are many existing typologies of

²⁷ Ibid, pg. 15. Burton as well constantly strove to transcend disciplinary boundaries, claiming his framework was 'adisciplinary'.

²⁸ Ibid., pgs. 16-17.

²⁹ Ibid., pg. 18.

needs, Max-Neef proposed a simple, new and unique framework, designed for utility (to make needs theory operational) rather than prove-ability. The scheme offers two types of needs, 'existential', and 'axiological', which can be arranged in a matrix (shown on the next page), which allows for a visualisation of the relationship of needs to satisfiers. The axiological needs are 'being, having, doing, interacting'. The existential needs are subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, idleness, creation, identity, and freedom.

This allows for the formulation of the fundamental analytical framework as a series of questions such as: What social structures or institutions in a given community or society will provide for or support the satisfaction of 'being-identified' (recognition); 'having-subsistence (food, water, shelter); 'doing-participative things (democracy and civil society); or 'interacting-affectionately (social activity)?

Figure 2: Max-Neef matrix of needs and satisfiers:³⁰

	<i>Being</i>	<i>Having</i>	<i>Doing</i>	<i>Interacting</i>
<i>Subsistence</i>				
<i>Protection</i>		police		
<i>Affection</i>				
<i>Understanding</i>				seminar
<i>Participation</i>			voting	
<i>Idleness</i>				
<i>Creation</i>				
<i>Identity</i>	cult member			
<i>Freedom</i>				

Within the matrix, the cell corresponding to 'doing-participation' might contain 'voting in elections' as a satisfier. The cell 'having-protection' might contain a professional and accountable police force. The axiological need of 'interacting' refers to the places and ways in which humans come together in society in order to have needs satisfied. Therefore, the cell for interacting-understanding might have schools, Internet listserves, or a Ph.D. seminar. The being-identity cell could contain membership in a criminal gang or religious cult...which anticipates or recognizes the criticism that some satisfiers of needs are associated with creating conflict rather than resolving it.

Max-Neef doesn't propose it, and I wouldn't know how to draw it, but a multidimensional matrix might incorporate his assertion that needs can be

³⁰ Max-Neef, Manfred A., Human Scale Development: Conception, Application and Further Reflections. New York: The Apex Press, 1999, pgs. 32-33. In his book, Max-Neef fills in the matrix with sometimes voluminous examples of positive and negative satisfiers, including results from workshops in several societies. The simple examples I inserted in a mostly empty matrix are for illustration, and explained in the text.

satisfied in (at least) three contexts, a) with regard to oneself, b) with regard to the social group, and c) with regard to the environment.³¹

Max-Neef makes a further extremely useful contribution by classifying satisfiers with regard to their utility. He suggests five classes of satisfiers: 1) violators or destroyers, 2) pseudo-satisfiers, 3) inhibiting satisfiers, 4) singular satisfiers, and 5) synergic satisfiers.³² While his definitions of each of these are brief and straightforward it isn't necessary to fully reproduce them here. In working with the classifications in the field it has sometimes been effective to simplify the concept by talking about 'positive satisfiers', 'negative satisfiers' and 'false satisfiers'. Membership in a criminal gang, if intended to satisfy identity and protection needs, may actually be a negative satisfier in that the society experiences crime, and the gang member may end up in jail, or worse. If a buffer of land populated by Jewish settlers is intended to satisfy security needs for Israel, it may be a false satisfier, because the act of occupying the land seems to make Israel less safe not more safe, at least in the current Intifadeh situation. A positive satisfier was created during the South African political transition process when it was decided to constitutionally recognize eleven official languages within the structures of the new government and society, as one means of satisfying identity and participation needs for all South Africa's citizens.

Max-Neef anticipates how the matrix can be applied to conflict analysis and, although he is working in the development context, how using it

³¹ Ibid., pg. 18.

³² Ibid., pg. 31.

resembles analytical problem solving:

The schema proposed can be used for purposes of diagnosis, planning, assessment and evaluation. The matrix of needs and satisfiers may serve, at a preliminary stage, as a participative exercise of self-diagnosis...Through a process of regular dialogue – preferably with the presence of a facilitator acting as a catalyzing element – the group may gradually begin to characterize itself by filling in the corresponding squares.

The outcome of the exercise will enable the group to become aware of both its deprivations and potentialities. After diagnosing its current reality, it may repeat the exercise in propositional terms: that is, identifying which satisfiers would be required to fully meet the fundamental needs of the group...³³

Finally, Max-Neef describes an 'imaginary two-day workshop attended by fifty people', and offers a detailed workshop design. Interestingly, the analytical process begins by identifying the negative satisfiers in a community, which presumably encompass the elements of various structural conflicts.

Max-Neef presents the matrix as a conceptual tool. He states explicitly that '...this matrix is neither normative nor conclusive'.³⁴ Here I've only dealt with that part of his small treatise directly focussed on human needs. His broader conceptual framework for 'Human Scale Development' is also fascinating, powerful, progressive, and a contribution to the literature on economic development. The dissertation will deal with Max-Neef and the matrix throughout, as it became a central element of the intervention design and problem solving research workshops. Here, let me conclude by saying that I consider the conceptual framework symbolized by Max-Neef's matrix and classification of satisfiers a seminal contribution to needs theory that satisfies

³³ Ibid. pg. 37

³⁴ Ibid., pg. 30.

my own understanding needs with respect to the critiques of needs theory summarized above.

By way of concluding the discussion of literature on human needs and development, it is worth briefly noting that the economic development literature was rife during the 1970-80s with a different 'basic human needs' framework. This framework referred to mainly subsistence and education needs in underdeveloped communities and societies, things like potable water, modern sewerage systems, health clinics and healthcare education, education for basic literacy and vocational skills training. This alternative meaning of the phrase can sometimes cause confusion in less developed societies where conflict resolvers come into contact with humanitarian relief and development aid workers.

A second category of peripheral literature that I won't fully review here deals with the links between conflict resolution and socio-economic development, generally based in the realization that when economic development schemes fail conflict can be one negative outcome. We made a modest contribution to this dialogue during work in South Africa, noting what we referred to then as development's 'Catch-22' - 'there is no development without peace and no peace without development'³⁵:

...the residents of Phola Park...(were) blessed with R23 million for development, to include houses, water, sewerage, electricity, jobs, recreation facilities, health facilities, schools, and a community centre. Planact has designed a model project that is going to revolutionize urban development in South Africa. The community is

³⁵ Bremner, Davin, "Development's Catch 22 - No Development Without Peace, No Peace Without Development", in Track Two - Constructive Approaches to Community and Political Conflict, Journal of the Centre for Conflict Resolution, February, 1994.

highly organized and motivated to make the best of their good fortune....Cut to May 1994, in post-election South Africa. Did the residents of Phola Park emerge from their houses, having cooked breakfast on electric stove tops after washing in their bathtubs, to walk along the paved roads, past the health clinic and new school, and cast their votes at the community centre? No. Some residents' committee members were assassinated and the rest replaced in a 'coup' in 1992. The new committee chased away all developers, lawyers, NGOs, and other outsiders. Not one house has been built. Only about thirty water taps service 15 000 people. There are no toilets, electricity, or facilities. Not only was the negotiated development process for Phola Park unsustainable, it was absolutely devastating.³⁶

This area of intersection between the development and conflict realms originally led us to Max-Neef, as we realized that there was a connection to be drawn between needs theory used as a basis for economic development and needs theory used as a basis for conflict resolution.

Analytical Problem Solving and How it Happens

A core group of social scientists took John Burton's lead and began, in the 1960s, to experiment with processes for contributing to the resolution of deep-rooted social conflicts. Some of the terms coined to describe their efforts have included: controlled communication workshops (Burton); interactive problem solving workshops (Kelman); analytical problem solving workshops (Burton); collaborative, analytical problem solving (Mitchell); third party consultation (Fisher); facilitative problem solving workshops (Hoffman); dialogue projects (Ropers). The literature on these activities falls into three or four categories. There are some papers written about the workshoping experiences, usually by the individuals who facilitated or at least participated in the interventions. Herbert Kelman, Jay Rothman and Diana Francis have done

³⁶ Bremner, Davin and Philip Visser, "Negotiation, conflict resolution and human needs", in Managing Sustainable Development in South Africa, (1995), pg. 222.

some of this reflection. There are two 'how-to-do-it' books that attempt to make the methodology 'operational', in Max-Neef's terms, one by Burton and one by Mitchell and Banks. There is scant literature on how such initiatives can be evaluated or what the ethics might be. There is some academic critique in the form of unpublished papers or dissertation research, some of it scathing. This section of the literature review summarizes from that literature.

The first how-to guide to facilitating deep-rooted social conflict through a process wherein representatives of the protagonists meet each other face to face in some sort of an unofficial 'workshop' was published by John Burton in 1987, as "Resolving Deep-Rooted Conflict: A Handbook". It was small, red, and concise to a fault. Burton made additions to the text, mainly in the form of a glossary of selected terms through which he could propound on the 'language of conflict resolution' and published it as "Conflict Resolution: Its Language and Processes", in 1996. The book restates his distinction between conflict *resolution*, and the various forms of conflict *settlement* that for Burton apply mainly to situational disputes over material interests that can be bargained over, or subject to solution through compromise.

For the purposes of this dissertation, the key section of both books is Burton's elucidation of his fifty-six 'rules' that define the process of solving deep-rooted conflict through facilitated analytical problem solving. Rather than reviewing them here, the key elements will be discussed as they were considered during the design phase of the Regions Project, in Chapter Five. It is enough here to note that Burton makes explicit suggestions for how to communicate between facilitators and conflict parties; about who are the

proper participants in a process; about the role of a 'panel' of facilitators, and who those facilitators should be; about how an initiative is funded; about ground-rules and communication between facilitators and participants, and between participants. The 'rules' then outline in a more or less step-by-step way the dialogical progression of a workshop, from initial statements about the conflict, through analytical explorations, explorations of values, work done by the facilitators to summarize and create analytical consensus, then on to problem solving, and the creation of specific proposals for resolving the conflict.

It has to be said that Burton's 'rules' always seemed like a peculiar way of describing his ideal workshop: "Rule Forty-one: The panel poses questions of clarification, especially in relation to values and goals."³⁷ I can remember laughing out loud during my first reading of the 'little red book'. Some would say there is a certain arrogance in the role Burton ascribes to his panel of facilitators: "The participants...are usually too caught up in their own problems to consider alternative solutions. Usually they do not have the knowledge background to design innovative approaches. The success of the facilitation process will, in large part, depend on the abilities of panel members to come up with possible models for participants to consider".³⁸ This attitude will irk those practitioners who work so diligently to 'empower' conflicted parties, and

³⁷ Burton, John, "Conflict Resolution: Its Language and Processes", 1996, pg. 74.

³⁸ Ibid., pg. 79.

create a sense of 'ownership' of the process.³⁹

However, Burton put himself out there and described his facilitation process in explicit detail, with great attention given to the potential problems that can arise and difficulties than can be encountered. He discussed both desirable workshop dynamics and those that should be avoided if possible. Perhaps it is also worth noting that while most other scholar practitioners since Burton have declined to claim that they can actually 'solve a conflict', Burton didn't feel the need to relegate his ambitions to the realm of 'parallel processes' or 'pre-negotiation' talks about talks. His how-to contribution was about resolving the conflict with the principal parties at hand, through processes that would lead to structural social change.

For the dissertation design seminar discussed in Chapter Five, I created several theory framework summaries that were to be shared with the seminar team. The frameworks were intended to be representative of the existing literature, and indicative of the current 'state of the art' regarding practice. They were adapted so as to make them functional for the task of reviewing theory and applying it to the design agenda. The frameworks are included in their entirety as Appendix F, and those that refer to the Burton literature discussed above are found in the Appendix as Frameworks 16-19.

³⁹ In the 'action evaluation' frameworks of Jay Rothman and Paula Garb, discussed further on, the 'ownership' of the process is perhaps the key process consideration, and a fundamental ethical principle.

Facilitation As a Skill

As the field of conflict resolution developed into an academic discipline there needed to be some textbooks for teaching not only the theory of conflict resolution, but the processes. Burton's first attempt was simply too spare or maybe too stern to be of much use. Chris Mitchell and Michael Banks took up the challenge of offering a more accessible "Handbook of Conflict Resolution: The Analytical Problem Solving Approach".⁴⁰

Currently, one common principle among many consultants and facilitators appears to be the general belief that the skills of a successful third-party intervenor can be learnt and taught,⁴¹ so that not everyone has to go through the long drawn out (and often difficult) business of learning through twenty years' experience of practical intervention as a practising third party...The Handbook, then, is an outcome of this attempt to introduce a practical training and skills development aspect to some of the new courses in 'Conflict Analysis and Resolution' that increasingly began to be established in universities and colleges in the 1980s and 1990s.⁴²

While there are a few significantly different assumptions in the Mitchell and Banks edition, for example about who participates in workshops or how they are conducted, the essentials are similar to Burton's process. Some of the differences and alternative assumptions will be discussed in Chapter Five. They do admit however, while Burton doesn't, that, "So far, there are few, if any, examples of a problem-solving exercise that has, on its own, produced a resolution of a complex and protracted conflict."⁴³ And interestingly, despite

⁴⁰ Mitchell, Christopher and Michael Banks, 1996.

⁴¹ John Burton was not so sure, and despite being engaged in teaching the subject at the graduate level, he maintained, quite to the dismay of many hopeful future Nobel prize candidates, that only a lifetime's experience could truly equip one for the rigours of conflict resolution workshop facilitation.

⁴² Ibid., pg. xiii.

⁴³ Ibid., pg. 152.

the fact that Michael Banks dedicated a book on conflict to John Burton and his contributions in the field, there is not a single reference to human needs theory in their handbook. For Burton, the processes and rules of conflict resolution are drawn directly from needs theory. Mitchell and Banks clearly believe that needs theory is not a necessary framework underpinning analytical problem solving as a conflict resolving activity.⁴⁴

A recent addition to the 'how-to' literature, is Francis' book on conflict transformation philosophy and praxis. Before sharing several extended examples of her own workshop practice, she gives some shape to the evolution of the term conflict transformation, which she understands as being an integration of conflict resolution frameworks with 'people power' expressed as active non-violent struggle against injustice. She is sympathetic to Burtonian, needs-based conflict resolution, acknowledging that '...the language of needs...(does) offer a way for people to connect with each other at a level of common human experience...the non-judgemental, compassionate language of needs has the power to cut through the rhetoric of blame and enmity, introducing in its place a recognition of mutual vulnerability and shared humanity'.⁴⁵

However, this doesn't go far enough in Francis' values-based philosophy of peacebuilding. Her thesis is that conflict resolution as currently framed does

⁴⁴ The Mitchell and Banks material prepared as theory frameworks for the design seminar are in Appendix F, numbers 6-8, pgs. 358-360.

⁴⁵ Francis, Diana, People, Peace and Power: Conflict Transformation in Action, London, Pluto Press, 2002, pgs. 29-30.

not give enough 'attention to questions of power and justice',⁴⁶ and that 'the theory of active nonviolence provides a necessary complement to the insights of conflict resolution, and that the combined strengths of both can provide the breadth of understanding and range of resources needed for a comprehensive approach to conflict transformation'.⁴⁷

Lederach is the academic/practitioner most widely associated with promoting the term conflict transformation, rather than resolution. His most widely recognised conceptual framework is a diagrammatical pyramid depicting 'actors and approaches to peacebuilding', wherein he identifies 'middle-range leadership, as the likely participants in problem-solving workshops and conflict resolution training'.⁴⁸ The term conflict transformation has been defined as, "outcome-, process- and structure-oriented long-term peacebuilding efforts, which aim to truly overcome revealed forms of direct, cultural and structural violence."⁴⁹

Another practitioner, Leonard Doob, who participated in facilitated problem solving activities in Northern Ireland and Cyprus, among other places, wrote both guidelines for practice and also about potential 'perils' of intervention.⁵⁰ His frameworks, while not limited to the activity of problem

⁴⁶ Ibid., pg. 27.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Lederach, John Paul, Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies, Washington, D.C., United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997, pg. 39.

⁴⁹ Reimann, Cordula, "Towards Conflict Transformation: Assessing the State-of-the-Art in Conflict Management – Reflections from a Theoretical Perspective", in Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation, www.berghof-handbook.net , pg. 9.

⁵⁰ Doob, Leonard W., "Intervention: Guides and Perils", (1993).

solving workshops, are important because they lend themselves to both the design of an intervention, and evaluation. In addition, he is one of the few practitioners to put forward a set of normative or ethical questions that might be used to shape a code of ethics or standards for intervention. Doob presents eight elements to take into consideration during the course of considering and implementing an intervention:

- 1) Foreground: after which event and unresolved problem is there a possibility of intervention?
- 2) Participants: who initiates the intervention with whom?
- 3) Rationale: why is an intervention contemplated and why are participants selected by whom?
- 4) Timing: when does or must the intervention begin?
- 5) Method: where and how will the principals interact?
- 6) Morality: may, must, or should there be an intervention?
- 7) Reality: what actually occurs during the intervention?
- 8) Evaluation: how is the outcome of the intervention subsequently viewed?⁵¹

Doob's ideas on who intervenes, what the characteristics of interveners should be, on the timing of intervention, and on methods will be presented in Chapter Five.⁵² It is worth noting here his position on the morality of intervention: "Every intervention or nonintervention raises moral (ethical) questions even when they are not raised by the participants and when there is not time to do so, regardless of whether the person passing judgement – participant, a neutral, or a biased philosophical bystander – subscribes to an absolute or a relativistic system of moral values."⁵³ And he puts forward a unique list of 'commandments' regarding conflict intervention which he

⁵¹ Ibid., pg. 6.

⁵² The Doob literature is represented in Appendix F as frameworks 2-4, pgs. 354-356.

⁵³ Ibid., pg. 140.

characterizes as either 'concrete' or 'abstract':

Concrete commandments are:

- 1) Disapproved in intervention is killing per se.
- 2) Disapproved in intervention is damage to other persons.
- 3) Disapproved in intervention is the use of force.
- 4) Disapproved in intervention is interference.

Abstract commandments are:

- 5) Disapproved are interventions that violate an esteemed principle.
- 6) Disapproved are interventions that violate 'truth'.
- 7) Disapproved are interventions that violate human rights.
- 8) Disapproved are interventions conducted without the principals consent.
- 9) Disapproved are interventions that ignore future consequences.
- 10) Disapproved is nonintervention when interventions are feasible and desirable.

In addition to Doob's so-called commandments, there are two other versions of ethical frameworks that have some relevance to intervention design and conduct. One is the 'Do No Harm' influence of Mary Anderson, who was writing initially about the risks that humanitarian interventions assume with respect to exacerbating or complexifying conflict and conflict environments. Her work is discussed just below. The second is the 'Code of Conduct' of International Alert, a document that is not, in fact, much of a code of conduct, but that does offer a list of guiding principles meant to describe Alert's ethical positions and standards:

- 1) Primacy of People in Transforming Conflicts - We believe that genuine conflict transformation is only possible with the participation and involvement of those most affected...
- 2) Humanitarian Concern - Our primary motivation is the alleviation of human suffering...
- 3) Human Rights and Humanitarian Law & Principles - We are committed to the principle and practice of promoting human rights in our

work...We urge compliance with international humanitarian law & principles...

4) Respect for Gender and Cultural Diversity - We respect the dignity and cultural diversity of all peoples...

5) Impartiality - ...We do not take sides in conflicts...

6) Independence - We are an independent organisation, free to formulate policies and operational strategies...

7) Accountability - We are morally responsible to those whom we seek to assist and accountable to those with whom we work...As a means of enhancing accountability, we endeavour to be open and transparent in our work...

8) Confidentiality - Whilst endeavouring to be open and transparent, we are committed to maintaining confidentiality in situations where the effectiveness of our programmes or the security of our staff and partners may be at risk...

9) Partnerships - We are committed to working in collaboration and complementarity with individuals, organisations, governments and other institutions which can contribute to the prevention and resolution of conflict...

10) Institutional Learning - We are committed to building up our collective pool of knowledge, institutional memory and experience...⁵⁴

Evaluation Frameworks

Doob's contribution has some indications of how interventions might be evaluated, but he is not focussed explicitly on analytical problem solving, or workshops. The literature on evaluating workshops is thin, although there is a growing literature on the broader topic of evaluating conflict resolution or transformation initiatives on the whole. Mitchell and Banks discuss evaluation with respect to whether or not 'change' happens, "1) In the workshop (the impact); 2) From the workshop itself (the output); 3) In the behaviour of and

⁵⁴ Code of Conduct: Conflict Transformation Work, International Alert, London, 1998, pg. 4.

relationship between the parties (the outcome)."⁵⁵ They discuss a number of evaluative activities that might be incorporated into a workshop design, or carried out through post-workshop follow up. Their view of evaluation is very much on the workshop as a singular event, without much consideration of a longer-term intervention (though they mention the possibility of a series of workshops). They conclude that while it might be possible to carry out a "close empirical analysis of the course of the conflict immediately after the exercise...In our experience, dramatic changes seldom occur, so one must look for indicators such as changes in the tone of public statements, the easing of restrictions, the adoption of new labels and concepts, the utilization of ideas or suggestions, or the gradual, public adoption of principles. These are typical indicators of success that most workshops produce."⁵⁶

A broader summary of the current state of evaluation knowledge and methodology in the field of conflict resolution has been produced by researchers at INCORE. They note that: "Unfortunately, evaluation theory specific to conflict resolution has not kept up with the demand, leaving the field comparatively lagging in this endeavour".⁵⁷ They review as 'innovative' three examples of evaluation methodologies - Rothman's Action Evaluation framework; a six-step model used by the National Council of Churches Kenya and Nairobi Peace Initiative with an emphasis on 'the learning process'; and a

⁵⁵ Mitchell and Banks, 1996, pg. 152.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pg. 157.

⁵⁷ Church, Cheyanne and Julie Shouldice, "The Evaluation of Conflict Resolution Interventions: Framing the State of Play, INCORE, Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland, 2002, pg. 5.

'template' used in Northern Ireland called the Community Evaluation Northern Ireland (CENI) Evaluation Template.⁵⁸ They then offer their own framework for evaluation with three significant elements:

- 1) Goals and Assumptions: Why and how is the agency conducting this particular intervention?
- 2) Process Accountability: How was the intervention operationalised?
- 3) Range of Results: What were the short and long term results of the intervention?⁵⁹

A brief but helpful paper written by Mark Hoffman is one of the few pieces to discuss specifically the evaluation of problem solving initiatives. His contribution makes the point that 'interactive, facilitative problem-solving approaches' can be compared and contrasted with more classical, diplomatic interventions. But when evaluation criteria are based on the assumptions related to the more typical, political form of mediation, then, "Because of its focus on leveraged, instrumental mediation and because of its emphasis on visible, empirical (quantifiable) outcomes, it leaves no scope for a more gradual, incremental and interpretive account of the third party process. In other words, the criteria offered and the way they are deployed fails to allow for the more nuanced range of effects that interactive, facilitative third party processes are intended to and can have on a conflict."⁶⁰

Hoffman argues for recognition of the 'contingency' element in evaluating

⁵⁸ Ibid., pgs. 19-23.

⁵⁹ Ibid., pg. 27.

⁶⁰ Hoffman, Mark, "Defining and Evaluating Success: Facilitative Problem-Solving Workshops in an Interconnected Context", in *Paradigms: The Kent Journal of International Relations*, Winter (1995).

not only problem solving workshops, but other types of intervention. The contingency framework holds that at different times in the progress or cycle of a conflict there might be different appropriate types of intervention. This does not, however, imply that problem solving research workshops would only be appropriate at a particular phase of a conflict, but that the designed and desired outcomes could be different according to the relevant contingencies...at what point during the conflict, with which parties, according to relative understandings they themselves have of the opportunity to engage in dialogue:

Conflict resolution must be seen as a process involving different third parties pursuing different roles at different stages according to the particular dynamics of each conflict. It should not be seen as a choice between either facilitative or leveraged mediation, but a process in which the two are seen as contingently interconnected and complementary (along with other third parties and forms of third party intervention). This means that the 'successful' resolution of any given conflict will entail a diverse range of third parties acting at different stages of the conflict. It is a process that starts long before formal negotiations take place (the pre-negotiation phase) and continues well after a final agreement is reached (the post-negotiation/implementation phase)...One of the implications of this interconnected approach is the recognition that the facilitative problem solving workshop cannot and should not be made to carry the full burden of 'successful conflict resolution'.⁶¹

Hoffman's framework for evaluation is discussed further in Chapter Five.⁶²

A final, though different, type of contribution to processes for evaluating interventions has been emergent during the same time frame as the conduct of the Georgian Regions Project, and since its completion. Different, because rather than being concerned with how to conduct evaluation, these actually are

⁶¹ Ibid., pg. 8, web accessed at <http://snipe.ukc.ac.uk/interational/paradigms.dir/hoffman.html> .

⁶² See also Appendix F, Framework 11, pg. 363

evaluations, not just of conflict resolution or problem solving intervention, but of a variety of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding initiatives. Based on the influence of Mary Anderson's 'Do No Harm', a number of projects have taken the approach of deriving 'lessons learned' through examining intervention case studies. In a sense, the Regions Project is a contribution to that strategy, in the sense that it generated one more case study. The Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation, which is most accessible via the Internet at this point, has a number of papers whose format is based on lessons learned from various interventions and projects, including papers by Anderson, Clements, Johannesen, Bush, and Ropers, among others.⁶³ Several of these articles have generated lists of supposed lessons derived from reflection on field experiences. For example, Clements lists and briefly discusses lessons drawn from some of the work of International Alert.⁶⁴

- 1) acknowledge the specificity and relative uniqueness of each conflict
- 2) adopt a multi-disciplinary and multi-levelled analysis to the conflict
- 3) understand the linkages within and between different political complexes
- 4) get a 'harder headed' analysis of the political economy of war and violence
- 5) more attention needs to be focussed on conflict dynamics rather than statistics
- 6) acknowledge the roles and responsibilities of different actors
- 7) peacebuilding and conflict resolution work must not be dislocated from issues of justice and democratisation
- 8) external organizations do not solve other people's problems
- 9) there is a need for proportionality about what external parties (for example NGOs) can bring to conflicts
- 10) there is a dilemma (challenge) regarding how individuals and organisations establish empowering and emancipatory partnerships
- 11) our work must be aimed at sustainability
- 12) the work must be imbedded in some theory of social and political change

⁶³ All these papers are accessible at: www.berghof-handbook.net.

⁶⁴ Clements, Kevin, "Towards Conflict Transformation and a Just Peace", www.berghof-handbook.net/clements/text.htm, pgs. 15-16.

Ropers, writing more specifically about dialogue projects lists nine lessons learned, specifically from projects designed for 'exerting influence on the political macro-conflict'.⁶⁵

- 1) Problem-solving dialogue requires a long-term process of work and learning.
- 2) the choice of the initial protagonists is crucial
- 3) organizational input (finance, preparation, organization) is as much or more of a challenge than facilitation methods and communication techniques
- 4) dialogue projects bear an ethical responsibility to carefully consider their effects
- 5) rather than assume an 'academic-analytical' facilitation style, intervention methodology can be much broader and more flexible.
- 6) a new method for encouraging a change of perspective amongst participants is to have them reflect on a similar ethno-political conflict
- 7) assessment of impact on the macro-political level is difficult, therefore it may be more important to look at possible impacts on the 'meso-social' level
- 8) at some point, a dialogue intervention must find a way to be institutionally based
- 9) perhaps the key contribution of dialogue projects is in promoting a dialogue-based dispute culture

The Georgian Regions Project did not have the benefit of these, and other interesting lists of lessons learned when the project was conceived and designed, nor the two efforts that were also based on reflecting on field work experiences of outsider interveners into various conflicted societies and social scenarios. The Local Capacities for Peace Project resulted in Anderson's work, "Do No Harm: How Aid Supports Peace - or War" (1999), and led directly to the project that more directly reflected on conflict resolution processes, the Reflecting on Peace Practice project, which is ongoing. Anderson, while writing primarily about humanitarian aid projects, did offer some lessons learned that were primarily concerned with issues of accountability and 'implicit

⁶⁵ Ropers, Norbert, "From Resolution to Transformation: Assessing the Role and Impact of Dialogue Project", www.berghof-handbook.net/ropers.text.htm, pgs. 8-11.

ethical messages' stemming from some practices once common among aid and relief interventions. She introduces an analytical framework about 'dividers and connectors' in a conflicted society, and concludes that projects 'do no harm' to the extent that they successfully reinforce connectors, and avoid reinforcing dividers. Most of the actions that lead to unethical behavior, and therefore risk doing harm, can be understood as resulting from dividing the interveners from the conflicted parties, rather than connecting them, through the application of different values, standards, or criteria for appropriate activity.

There is one contribution in the literature that deals specifically with theory development that relates most directly to this dissertation and its purposes. Mitchell, in 1993 wrote:

...the field of conflict research is approaching a point at which problem-solving exercises are no longer regarded simply as pioneering and unique efforts to apply some theoretical ideas about the effects of single inputs of new information into a conflict interaction...Rather, there will be an attempt to develop some soundly based 'craft knowledge' about the generating, testing, and utilisation of relevant theories about social conflict and its resolution in problem-solving exercises...Thus, from a theory development, as opposed to a practical effort, viewpoint, problem-solving exercises will contribute in three ways and at three levels (see figure).⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Mitchell, Christopher R., "Problem-solving exercises and theories of conflict resolution", in Sandole and van der Merwe, pg. 91.

Figure 3: Theoretical Aspects of Problem-solving Exercises

Theory Focus	Theory Level			
		<i>Micro Level</i> Exercise Dynamics	<i>Meso Level</i> Conflict Dynamics	<i>Macro Level</i> Conflict Causes, Origins, Solutions
	Generating	options for conducting p-s workshops		
	Testing		action research as a strategy	
	Applying			uses of needs theory

In Mitchell's diagram above, I've inserted the original research themes of the dissertation in Chapter One, to illustrate by example how the *DAR* as action research should make a contribution to theory building. The intention is to learn about options and methods of conducting problem solving workshops, thereby generating theory about how best to conduct them as exercises. For example, do we make certain 'theory frameworks' explicit during the event, or keep them in the background. The dissertation hopes to 'test' the idea of using 'research' as strategy for bringing parties 'to the table', as an alternative safe space for dialogue, thereby extending our Soweto experience. As the invitation to participate is relevant to the actual protagonists in the Georgian conflicts, this activity plays out at Mitchell's 'meso' level. Finally, if the results of our intervention have an impact on Georgian social structures and make some identifiable contribution to solving problems or preventing future violent conflict, then we will have succeeded in applying needs theory to the root causes of problems in Georgia.

These various frameworks regarding evaluation and how we might do it,

some reflective evaluations that have been done and others that are ongoing, and the ethical dimensions that are interrelated with the activity of evaluation are in a messy, developmental phase within the field. There is little by way of coherence or design to the interplay of theory and practice, as they relate to evaluation and ethics at this point. As will be confessed later in the dissertation, we did not find a very satisfying way to put what does exist as related above to use in either the design or conduct of the Regions Project.

Action Research - Theory in Practice

“As the name suggests, action research is a methodology which has the dual aims of action and research...action - to bring about change in some community, or organisation...research - to increase understanding on the part of the researcher or the client, or both (and often some wider community).”⁶⁷

There are about 31 flavors of ‘action’ science carried out by interveners or researchers that ‘seek to break down the asymmetrical relationship between researcher and researched’.⁶⁸ In the wide literature on action research, much of it in the field of education, reference can be found to action research, participatory action research, contextural and contextual action research, emancipatory action research, action science, action evaluation and more. In the field of conflict resolution, the most relevant literature discusses mainly action research and action evaluation. The two scholars most often referred to

⁶⁷ Dick, Robert, “You want to do an action research thesis?”, web accessed at <http://www.imc.org.uk/imc/coursewa/doctoral/bobda.htm> .

⁶⁸ Chataway, Cynthia, “ ‘ Researched to Death ... or Researched to Life?’ Participatory Action Research with Aboriginal Peoples”, *Journal Interaction*, 5(4). pg. 2.

by conflict resolutionists for providing foundational inspiration in this regard are Kurt Lewin and Paulo Freire.

Herb Kelman is always mentioned as one of the scholars most clearly associated with problem solving workshops, primarily for his work in the Middle East between Palestinians and Israelis. He has written much about the conflicts, and a little bit about the 'how to' of problem solving, and he is one of only a few willing to own the term 'action research' to explicitly refer to the work: "The scholar-practitioner model, in effect, enacts a form of action research, in which our direct involvement in an action program enables us to observe intense interaction between parties in conflict that would not normally be accessible to research."⁶⁹ He offers the 'workshop' as a metaphor for what happens during one.⁷⁰

One can think of problem-solving workshops as workshops in the literal sense of the term, like a carpenter's or an artisan's workshop: a specially constructed space, in which the parties can engage in a process of exploration, observation, and analysis, and in which they can create new products for export, as it were. The products in this case take the form of new ideas and insights that can then be fed into the political debate and the decision-making process within the two societies.⁷¹

Most of the models of action research have as a core value one or another version of Freire's 'action-reflection' learning cycle,⁷² which assumes

⁶⁹ Kelman, Herbert C., "Experiences from 30 Years of Action Research on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict", pg. 3, web accessed at: http://www.fsk.ethz.ch/publ/zuercher/zu_54/zu54_Kelman.html .

⁷⁰ Some of Kelman's work is summarised in Appendix F as frameworks 9-10, pgs. 361-362, and 13-15, pgs. 365-366.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² A diagram showing how we conceived of this during the Regions Project is in Chapter Four.

a dialogical process between the facilitators and the subjects of an educational, developmental, or conflict oriented intervention.⁷³ Participatory action research goes a step further, in that it requires the participation of the subjects of the research in the design, conduct, and evaluation of the research, including the formulation of research questions, and the use of research results. In the Georgian Regions project, the *DAR* is reflective, with an equal emphasis on 'action' and 'research', but the *IAR* has a much more participatory component, and a less concrete research result. In a sociology Ph.D. dissertation, the end result that I have pursued by combining two action research methodologies was described perfectly as: 'theory in practice, theory from practice, and new practice from theory'.⁷⁴

The conflict resolution practitioner who has most consciously worked from the combined frameworks of human needs, analytical problem solving, and action research is Jay Rothman. His own intervention activities have been both problem solving workshops, and other events such as trainings. In an effort to make training ever more empowering Rothman writes about 'Promoting Explicitness - and Choice - about Goals', and with this emphasis he has evolved his practice towards 'action evaluation' which is a methodology for involving the trainees, who are usually representatives of conflicted parties, in the design, conduct, and evaluation of every aspect of a training activity. His training and other intervention activities include a role for an 'action evaluator'

⁷³ Freire's ideology as it evolved became known (in english) as 'education for liberation' and is still viewed as revolutionary, in the sense that it anticipates fundamental structural social change.

⁷⁴ Franklin, Beth Ann, PhD Dissertation Abstract, 1998, web accessed at: <http://www.lib.umi.com/dissertations/fullcit?p9820420> .

and depend on participants sharing responsibility for outcomes:

The methodology seeks to establish a baseline of goals to be monitored, and their evolution tracked, throughout the life of an initiative and after it has concluded. Built on this process, stakeholders in specific initiatives will be able to establish their own standards for success. Each refinement of goals can, in essence, serve as an evolving standard or criteria for success to be evaluated for the sake of (cybernetic) self-correction at each step along the way. By around the mid-point of an initiative, when goal evolution may stabilize...these standards can begin to be used to internally evaluate the overall progress of an initiative and serve as general standards for external evaluation as well.⁷⁵

Let me suggest here that the conflict resolution field could think and write more about action research as a basic orientation for the work that we do. The sensitivity to calling our methodologies 'research' of any kind is an ethical issue raised by the notion of 'experimenting' on people in their real lives and with their life and death conflicts. However, I think that with the exception of those interventions that are not written about because of confidentiality issues, we are actually engaged in action research every time we reach the point of reflecting academically and then sharing with a wider audience the lessons learned during any 'real work'. This should be a significant and regular process by which theory building happens, the main activity in the cycle above - of theory in practice, theory from practice, new practice from theory...leading to improved efforts to resolve or prevent conflict.

⁷⁵ Rothman, Jay, "Action Evaluation and Conflict Resolution Training: Theory, Method and Case Study", *International Journal of Negotiation*, 1997, pgs. 7-8, web accessed at: http://www.ARIAssociates.haverford.edu/web/essaysetc/journal_negotiation.html .

Is It All Analytical, And Is It Just Problem Solving?

It has to be said that at a certain level the frameworks suggested for problem solving have a base similarity. The Regions Project found itself relying heavily on the Getting to Yes 'circle chart' version of problem solving, wherein the four steps are: 1) What is the problem? 2) What is the analysis? 3) What are possible approaches to solving the problem? 4) What is the action plan?⁷⁶ Kelman's version is similar in the first instance, but stops short of moving to action planning, because he frames his process with respect to parallel 'First Track' activities. He makes the four steps: 1) Identification and analysis of the problem; 2) Joint shaping of ideas for solution; 3) Influencing the other side; 4) Creating a supportive political environment (for negotiations).⁷⁷ Rothman has four steps and the most metaphorically creative acronym for what he does, ARIA. ARIA stands for Antagonism, Resonance, Invention, and Action. Rothman starts with antagonism, recognizing the psychological patterns that usually accompany the process of initially bringing conflicted parties into face to face dialogue. His resonance phase is exactly what Burton calls the analytical part of analytical problem solving, which is when the participants begin to reconceptualize their frameworks in light of the realization that they have shared needs and interests. So Rothman's framework is also highly resonant with the Fisher/Ury circle chart, and any version of problem solving that assumes analysing, then brainstorming, and finally creating action plans or proposals for resolution.

⁷⁶ Fisher, Roger and William Ury, "Getting to Yes", 1981, pg. 68.

⁷⁷ Kelman, op cit., pg. 5.

Critique

There is one extremely thorough (as only a Ph.D. dissertation can be) academic work that has reviewed the analytical problem solving frameworks of Burton, Kelman, Fisher, Rothman, and others. J. Lauren Snyder, in her LSE Ph.D. thesis,⁷⁸ details the intellectual foundations, the evolution and recent writings, and the various critiques of needs theory-based conflict resolution practice, and finds it wanting.⁷⁹ Her criticism is thoughtfully wrought but sweeping, beginning with Burton and extending through the entire enterprise of problem solving theory and workshops.

Snyder argues that needs theory is 'incomplete', that Burton's methodology is trapped within what she terms 'instrumental rationality', and that the field on the whole fails to be critically reflective:

...it should be clear that when one critically re-examines Burton's theory, it is incomplete in light of his aims for facilitated conflict resolution. As the methodology is scientistically oriented, Burton's epistemology is positivistic. Like the broader social sciences, he prioritises instrumental rationality...The apparent commitment to a technically-grounded knowledge is compounded by a lack of self-reflection and analysis of his theory...Rather than engaging in a critical self-reflection and deconstruction of his foundations, Burton incorporates changes at the surface level. Hence, needs theory becomes infused with anomalies, but its validity remains unquestioned.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Snyder, J. Lauren, "A Critical Theory of Peace Practice: Discourse Ethics and Facilitated Conflict Resolution", 2000.

⁷⁹ Snyder uses the Oslo Accords process as one context for examining conflict resolution practice. Her analysis is extremely interesting. While she is critical of Burtonian analytical problem solving, she finds that what happened in Oslo was not designed to be such an exercise, and that it might have been more successful if it had been. She claims that the element of 'facilitation' that is key to the Burton's processes was deliberately not employed by the Norwegian interveners, and that this left key elements of analysis and process lacking.

⁸⁰ Ibid., pgs 100-102.

Snyder thinks that those who followed Burton have made contributions and worthy attempts to move forward, but for the most part fall short or continue to fail. In summarising the work of Fisher, she concludes that, 'His starting point lacks any great self-reflection...at the meta-theoretical level, Fisher, like Burton, subscribes to a foundation that is premised on instrumental rationality...At the theoretical level, his social-psychological approach neither furthers an understanding of the causes nor possible ways of resolving conflict...'⁸¹

Snyder talks about Kelman's work, noting some differences between his approach and Burton. However, she comes close to questioning his veracity in her critique of his reflections on various Israeli-Palestinian interventions with which he was associated.

"There seems to be a contradiction in Kelman's assertions...Subsequent to his alleged contribution to the Oslo process, Kelman seems to contradict such contributing roles as he asserts that the DOP was a series of compromises...The question becomes if some of the parties who participated in the Oslo channel were influenced by the concepts and the process of 'interactive problem-solving', then why were no references made to any conflict resolution literature?"⁸²

She makes several more highly critical observations on Kelman's work, concluding that, "Kelman unhelpfully prefers practice over theory...By not recognising his theoretical commitments, Kelman fails in questioning the underlying assumptions associated with a needs-based approach...As Kelman ignores such an endeavour, he does not substantially expand a way of

⁸¹ Ibid., pgs. 125-126.

⁸² Ibid., pgs. 129-130.

engaging facilitated conflict resolution efforts.”⁸³

Snyder summarizes the contribution of Azar, relating that, ‘...the needs framework is contextualized in an approach that includes the concept of underdevelopment...’⁸⁴ But still she concludes that, “By neglecting the formation of unequal structures, Azar misses an underlying reason for occurrence of structural inequalities...To this extent Azar is no different from Fisher, Kelman, or Burton. Consequently, Azar expands needs theory but does not go significantly beyond it to formulate a framework that could allow the parties in conflict to find their own solutions.”⁸⁵

Snyder is consistent and unrelenting in her criticism. “By remaining committed to a Burtonian theoretical framework and methodology, Banks falls short of realising his goal of completing the theoretical gaps in Burton’s project...”⁸⁶ “...the deconstructive process is not carried to its full conclusion, as Scimecca does not question the fundamental necessity of framing a theory of facilitated conflict resolution grounded on needs.”⁸⁷ She reviews the critics of Burton and needs theory, some of whom were mentioned above. Wehr and Lederer ‘...do not explicate any theoretical frameworks’.⁸⁸ And about Chris Mitchell, ‘...while he continues to critique needs theory, Mitchell does not

⁸³ Ibid., pg. 133.

⁸⁴ Ibid., pg. 136.

⁸⁵ Ibid., pg. 137.

⁸⁶ Ibid., pg. 139.

⁸⁷ Ibid., pg. 143.

⁸⁸ Ibid., pg. 145.

offer a framework that goes beyond needs theory.”⁸⁹ She gives several pages to Jay Rothman, but concludes that, “Rothman’s deductive method of facilitated analysis is unsatisfactory because this line of facilitation indicates that if an archaeological expedition of the hidden motivations and emotions are correctly conducted, then the true cause will become evident. This line of reasoning employed by Rothman follows those of Kelman and Burton.”⁹⁰

Snyder’s critical summation of all things Burtonian is dealt with at length here principally because she has done an extremely thorough and intellectual review of the scholars and practitioners affiliated with analytical problem solving. Her fundamental conclusion is that instrumental rationality is the fatal flaw of every framework that can be linked to Burtonian thought. Her dissertation goes on to propose ‘communicative rationality’ which she associates primarily with Habermas, as the missing element in an appropriate theoretical approach to conflict resolution. My own reflection on Snyder’s is that, regrettably, it is trapped in the abstract. She contends that needs theory cannot possibly succeed as the foundation for a conflict resolution, because of its logical (rational) theoretical shortcomings. In our real world intervention in Soweto, we did successfully put needs theory to use in a workshop setting, and its credibility with conflicted parties as a helpful conceptual framework was entirely in line with the Max-Neef formulation for making needs theory ‘understandable and operational’. The design and conceptual frameworks used were explicitly Burtonian and needs theoretical. The conflicted parties

⁸⁹ Ibid., pg. 147.

⁹⁰ Ibid., pg. 156.

adopted the construct for their own analysis and then successfully reframed their conflict, derived a resolution based on satisfying security and identity needs, and implemented a structural change in the community that ended local violence. Based on this experience, I have continued my work, confident that needs theory can succeed as a basis for conflict resolution.

Post-Research Material

At the same time that the Georgian Regions Project was being conducted, there were two other ongoing interventions into the Georgia - Abkhazia conflict that are relevant here and will be discussed further in the dissertation as well. Paula Garb is conducting a citizens' peacebuilding project that had an action evaluation element designed into it and has co-authored an as-yet-unpublished paper⁹¹ describing her evaluation methodology and some findings. Jonathan Cohen is one of the facilitators of the 'Schlaining Process' dialogue project between Georgians and Abkhazians⁹², and I interviewed him extensively about their methodology, processes, and challenges.

Garb's project is explicitly understood as an exercise in citizen peacebuilding, with action evaluation as the evaluation framework. The methodology is based in Jay Rothman's work, and can be summarised as entailing three steps: 1) Participants articulate their goals for moving towards

⁹¹ Crandall, Vaughn and Paula Garb, "Action Evaluation and Citizen Peace-Building in the Georgia-Abkhazia Conflict: Ownership in Conflict Transformation, unpublished.

⁹² A partnership between Conciliation Resources and the Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management. Our interview was conducted in December 2002.

a peaceful transformation - 'what they want'; 2) Participants engage in thoughtful discussion over why their goals are important to them - 'why they want it'; 3) and finally they create action plans for accomplishing the goals - 'how to get it'. The point of action evaluation is to create a high degree of ownership of the process by the participants, and to continually be reflective, revisiting the questions above, the discussion of said questions as it is conducted between the participants, and the activities that are motivated by the process.

Garb agrees with Mitchell and Banks, and other authors, in working with an assumption that 'any process designed to effectively engage the conflict must have ownership and participation by those most directly affected by the conflict.' Hence the emphasis on ownership by the grass roots participants, and the reported success that action evaluation as a methodology did in fact create or support that sense of ownership.

Cohen is much more ambivalent about using labels to define the nature of the methodology, especially when it comes to discussing the process with participants. The Schlaining process engaged not only citizen peacebuilders. Also included were officials from both sides of the conflict, but only in their personal capacities. He emphasizes contingency and complementarity of multiple interventions:

...it's a cumulative process of everything, of many different interactions. We very firmly see what we're doing as part of a much wider process of engagement. And I wouldn't want to put a value on whether what we're doing is more important than what Paula (Garb) does, or more important than what Bruno (Coppetiers) does, or more important than what the UN does, it all adds up together, to

make change.⁹³

The Schlaining process, because it involves governmental officials, has a much more elaborate and difficult process for getting the 'right people' involved, and his interview revealed more complexity than any of the scholarly works cited above. From the story Cohen tells, there are at least ten different considerations or activities that must be dealt with and balanced in order to try and have the right people in the intervention:

- 1) There are pre-conditions, such as no direct bilateral dialogue
- 2) Several governments must be consulted, and permission granted
- 3) There is consultation and negotiation about who to invite
- 4) Pretexts are created allowing participants to justify participation with the 'other side'
- 5) Local partners are constantly consulted, and participation reviewed
- 6) There are diplomatic procedures and permissions, for example visas
- 7) There is lobbying of various officials and parties
- 8) There are timing elements and ongoing events to consider
- 9) There are negotiations about specific potential participants
- 10) There are compromises and surprises

After all of this effort, it is still entirely possible to have highly desired participants absent and relatively undesirable participants present. As an intervention unfolds through time, there are more strategies needed to keep the right participants engaged:

- 1) Flexible design and innovation
- 2) Facilitation, brainstorming and problem solving
- 3) Participants need to be flexible, sometimes take risks, and be committed
- 4) Confidence building and informal diplomacy, both structured and unstructured
- 5) A 'useful' and 'safe' environment needs to be created

Cohen summarized the conceptual framework that indicates the process

⁹³ Cohen, Jonathan, interview with author, December 2002.

or methodology underlying the Schlaining dialogues.⁹⁴ 1) Contact - the parties have a chance to come together; 2) Mutual Understanding - parties share an understanding of the nature of the problem; 3) Exploration of issues - joint analysis; 4) Speculative Problem Solving - possible solutions are imagined, created, discussed, evaluated; 5) Joint action - if the parties want it. Cohen made it clear that this is not meant to be a linear process, but various activities contribute to these processes going on throughout the course of recurring dialogue and ongoing events.⁹⁵

Both Cohen and Garb made a point of noting that certain facilitator attributes are key to the success of the intervention and motivating commitment from participants. Cohen described the need for a facilitator to be 'patient, persistent, and personable', and emphasized the personability. "You have to be able to get on with people".

I have summarised from Cohen and Garb at some length because of the similarity, simultaneity and geographical proximity of their work with the Georgian Regions Project. Some of their experiences and conclusions will be addressed later in the dissertation.

⁹⁴ And attributed the formulation to Clem McCartney, one of the dialogue facilitators.

⁹⁵ Cohen, in this interview attributed the framework to his colleague Clem McCartney. A diagram appears in Ropers, in the Berghof Handbook, and is attributed to: McCartney, Clem (1986), "Human Rights Education", in 11th Annual Report. Standing Advisory Committee on Human Rights. London. HMSO.

Summary

Human needs theory, starting more or less with Maslow and Sites, and concluding with the framework of Manfred Max-Neef represents one pillar supporting the Georgian Regions Project. The scholarly work of John Burton and his many colleagues, linking needs theory with conflict theory to begin building a methodology for conflict resolution represents another pillar. This pillar includes the 'how-to' volumes, and the 'how did we do?' evaluation frameworks. Action research in its various formulations provides the third pillar. Lest we fail to be reflective and willing to question assumptions, then the critiques of needs theory and/or of processes of facilitated problem solving, as well as relevant but less directly related concepts (referring mostly to Getting to Yes), offer a fourth pillar. The dissertation now moves forward to the ways in which we brought together these theoretical perspectives and processes as we designed and implemented the Georgian Regions Project over several months during 2001.

Chapter Four

Methodology and methods: Action research frameworks and consultations in Georgia

Prevent trouble before it arises.
Put things in order before they exist.
The giant pine tree
grows from a tiny sprout
The journey of a thousand miles
starts from beneath your feet.

Rushing into action, you fail.
Trying to grasp things, you lose them.
Forcing a project to completion,
you ruin what was almost ripe.

Methodologies and Methods

In Chapter Three it was noted that there are many different frameworks for action research or action science. It has been a constant challenge during this dissertation project to be clear, even with my close colleagues and collaborators, that two different methodologies are being employed and to draw the distinction between them. This chapter has four purposes. The first is to explain clearly the two different action research frameworks at work and how they relate. The second is to illustrate the relationships between the International Alert intervention which included both action research and non-action research activities, and the doctoral thesis research activities that link the *DAR* and *IAR*. The third objective is to describe via a narrative format the pre-project processes and the initial consultations that were conducted in Georgia, preceding the project design activities that are the subject of Chapter Five. Finally, the fourth purpose is to conclude by identifying the research themes and questions that arise from the existing literature in combination with our consultations in Georgia, from which the *DAR* took its shape and the

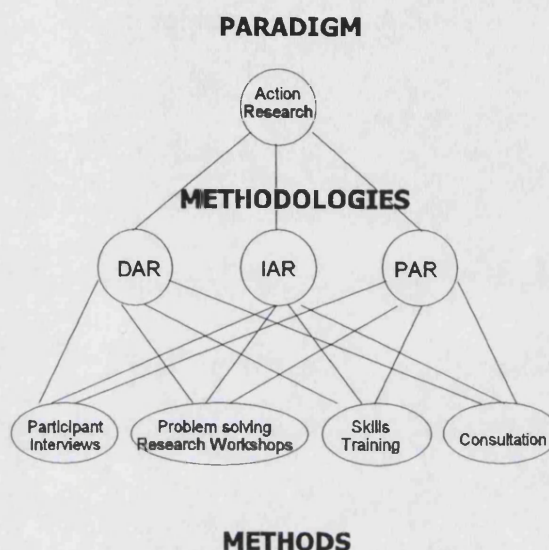
IAR was designed.

Put in its most basic formulation, the *DAR* is an exercise in action - reflection learning and was not participative in the sense that the Georgian Regions Project participants did not participate in designing or evaluating it. The *IAR* was a more participative exercise, and not dependent on action-

reflection activities or exercises. The accompanying diagram illustrates the relationship between research paradigms, methodologies and methods, according to Robert Dick.¹ In the case of the Georgian Regions Project, the research paradigm is action research for both the *DAR* and *IAR*. As methodologies, I don't give any of the variously available labels (action evaluation, critical action research, soft systems analysis and others, as mentioned in Chapter 3), to either the *DAR* or *IAR*. In the diagram above, *PAR* (participatory action research) is included as a third example of methodology. Rothman's *ARIA* framework is another example of methodology. The principal method for the *IAR* I have termed 'problem solving research workshops'.

Methods are sub-activities of the methodologies. The intervention

Figure 4: Research Paradigms, Methodologies & Methods

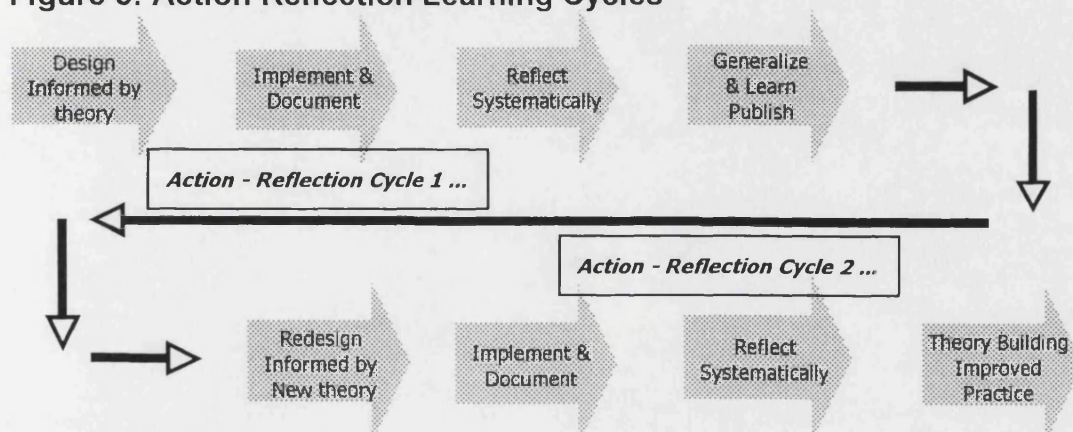


¹ Dick, Robert, in "You Want to do an Action Research Thesis? How to Conduct and Report Action Research", web accessed at: www.imc.org.uk/imc/coursewa/doctoral/bobda.htm. All the text contained inside the diagram's circles are added to illustrate the Georgian Regions Project.

design workshop to be discussed in Chapter Five was one method used for the *DAR*, and the phases of the problem solving research workshops, namely analysis, brainstorming, and action planning are the main activities of the *IAR*. Consultations with stakeholders and local partners are another method of the *IAR*. Interviews with selected project participants and partners were a method of the *DAR*. A simple survey conducted with workshop participants at the conclusion of the problem solving research workshops was a method relevant to both the *IAR* and *DAR*.

The action-reflection learning cycle illustrates the general plan, or conceptual framework that describes the design of the *DAR*. It can be described like this: Step 1): Design the *IAR* activities (methods) informed by current theoretical perspectives on problem solving workshops and needs theory; Step 2): Implement the *IAR* design in the field and document the results; Step 3): Evaluate the results through systematic documented reflection. Step 4): Generalize from the reflective activities, especially comparing and contrasting the actual activities and outcomes with the theory inputs considered during the design phase. Then apply the lessons learned to the next phase of the project, or new work.

Figure 5: Action Reflection Learning Cycles

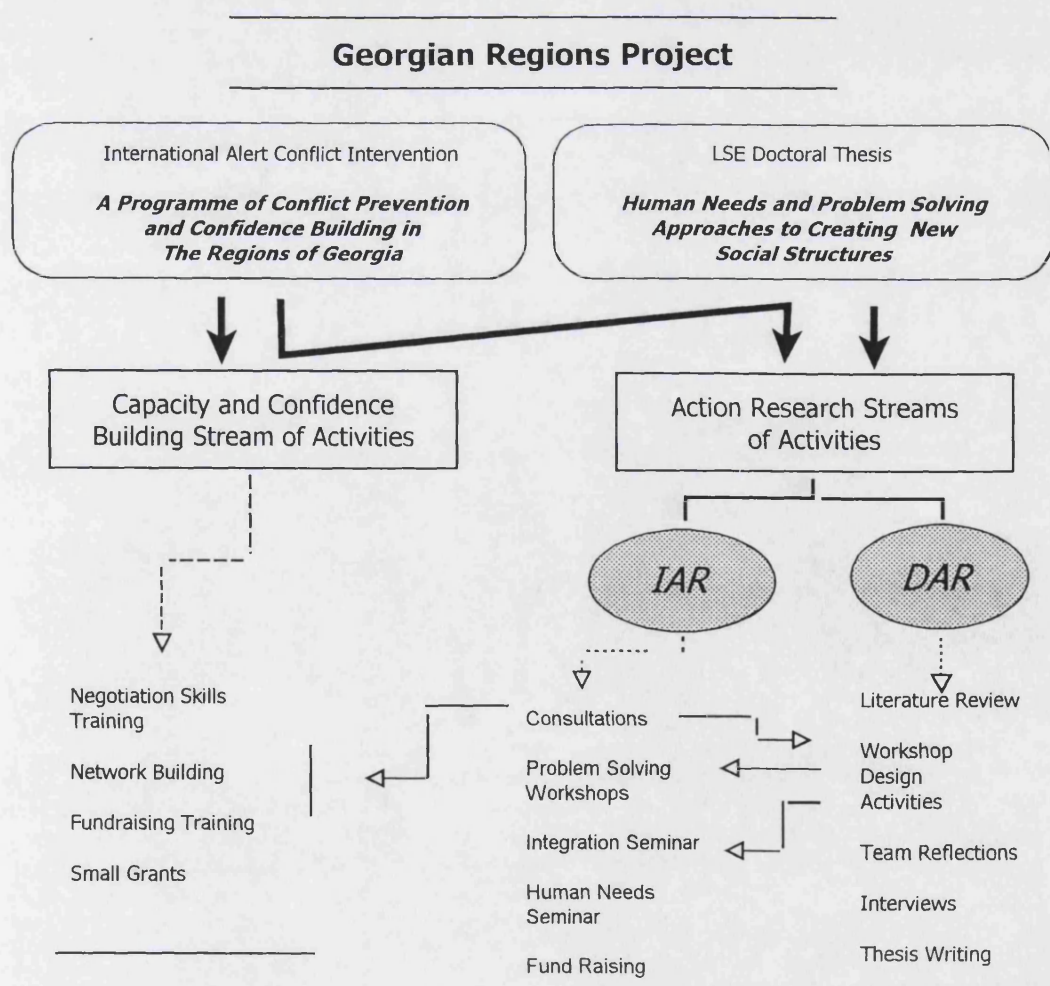


Questions that arise can form the basis for future research. The *DAR* of the Georgian Regions Project is represented here as Action - Reflection Cycle 1. The *IAR* activities are mainly contained within the 'Implement and Document' and 'Reflect Systematically' steps of Cycle 1.

Intervention and Thesis

In addition to the distinction drawn between the *DAR* and *IAR*, there is the added complication of the International Alert intervention, vis a vis the doctoral thesis research conducted under the auspices of the LSE. There have been intervention activities that were not action research, and action research activities separate from the intervention. A diagram of the Georgian Regions Project looks something like this:

Figure 6: Georgian Regions Project



The left hand side of the diagram portrays a number of activities that were conducted as capacity and confidence building exercises, relatively unrelated to either the *IAR* or *DAR*, although obviously informed by our early consultations. The long, bold arrow indicates the integration of the action research activities with the Regions Project. There are discreet activities, such as the *DAR* literature review and thesis writing, and linked activities: consultations informed the workshop design activities, which determined the broad outlines of the problem solving workshops and the integration seminar. The complex reality was that the dissertation research was embedded within and integrated with the IA conflict intervention in a complicated, but also strategic manner.

Research Validity

Discussions of quality and validity in the action research literature are wide ranging and touch on philosophy, epistemology, ethics, values and morality. No serious action researcher dismisses the need for rigor and validity, but the criteria for judging validity and quality are less concrete and established than the frameworks which generally define validity with respect to more traditional research methods.

...the movement in qualitative research has been away from validity criteria which mimic or parallel those of empiricist research toward a greater variety of validity considerations which include the practical, the political and the moral; and away from validity as "policing" and "legitimation" toward a concern for validity as asking questions, stimulating dialogue, making us think about just what our research practices are grounded in and thus what are the significant claims concerning quality we wish to make.²

² Reason, Peter, Choice and Quality in Action Research Practice, University of Bath, Unpublished, 2005, pg. 12, web accessed at: <http://www.bath.ac.uk/~mnspwr/Papers/ChoiceandQualityinActionResearchPractice.pdf>

Reason suggests that internal validity is related to the degree to which we are able to realize and understand the methodological and practical (action oriented) choices that we make and the consequences of those choices. External validity is then related to those choices by articulating them publicly and making them transparent. In the *DAR* our plan for designing the intervention with explicit reference to the existing theory prescriptions, and recording when and why those decisions differ with the existing theory (or practice) knowledge relate to this idea of internal validity, as well as when we engage in reflection about the results of those choices in the conduct of the *IAR*. With respect to the *DAR*, the external validity in this framework is assured by making these decisions in consultation with the IA team, and collaboration with our Georgian colleagues. Within the *IAR* this external validity comes through our wider Georgian consultation process, and by shared responsibility for process and outcomes with the participants of the problem solving workshops.

Newman proposed four points she feels indicate validity that also resonate with the intentions of the *DAR* and the Regions Project. Her points can be worked into a modified diagram which illustrates how the *DAR* design is directly related to this framework for validity³:

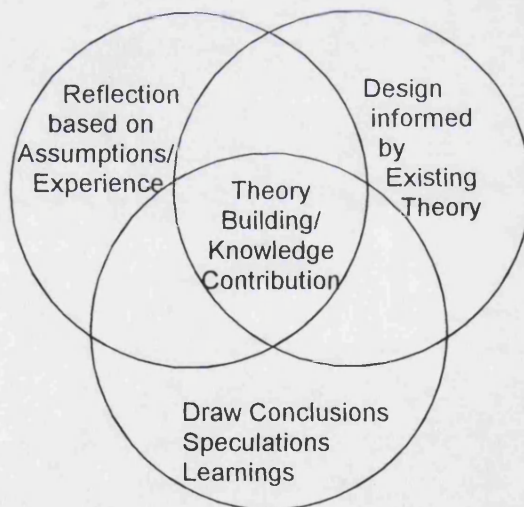
- 1) Does the dissertation offer enough 'thick description' for the reader to 'live' in the situation, to see it in some depth?
- 2) Does the dissertation situate itself in the research conversation, do I make clear the debates which have influenced my thinking?

³ Newman, Judith, M., with Shankar Sankaran, Brian Murphy, Jack Whitehead, Bob Dick, Pam Swepson, John O'Brien, Dina Boogaard and Pat D'Arcy, "Validity and Action Research: An Online Conversation", web published at: <http://www2.fhs.usyd.edu.au/arow/o/m01/newman.htm> , 1999.

- 3) Are my assumptions made explicit, and do I reflect on them?
- 4) Does the dissertation offer some thoughts on 'so what' - will it affect the ways in which I, and hopefully other people, will do our work?

From the principles, Newman created a diagram showing three overlapping circles with a single space where they all intersect. The first circle is 'my experience' and relates to the description of that experience and whether or not the reader can 'live' in, or see it in depth. The second circle related to the point above, she calls 'the research literature'. Third is a circle for 'interpretations and speculations', point three above. Finally, in the intersecting space she places 'Theory' and 'so what'.⁴ This picture can be adapted to fit the action-reflection cycle of the *DAR* design in this way:

Figure 7: *DAR* Research Validity



In this framework, the validity of the *DAR* is indicated firstly, by whether or not the narrative elements, including the early discussions of my motivations for working on these specific themes in these ways, and the story-telling

⁴ Ibid.

elements that relate to our designing, consulting, and reflecting activities makes compelling and credible reading. Secondly, the validity rests on whether the design activities and exploration of relevant literature is clearly grounded in the existing theory and its dialogues. Thirdly, the work should be deemed valid if the assumptions and project experiences are made explicit for the purpose of reflection, and the conclusions and learnings convincingly derive from the project and research activities, and fourthly then, if the researchers and readers find plausible new information that relates to theory building and the accumulation of knowledge in our field.

Appended to the dissertation will be extensive records generated during the implementation of the Regions Project, which will contribute to demonstrating the quality of the data we will generate. These will include notes, frameworks and materials created for the *DAR*, for example theory frameworks to be used during the design workshop. They will include meeting notes from our various consultation processes and meetings throughout Georgia. The records and products created during the problem solving workshops, as well as transcripts of various interviews, intervention specific evaluation results, lists of participants and a calendar of events, funding proposals, are all to be included in the overall *DAR* documentation.

Project Initiation - Narrative

As described in Chapter Two, the Georgian Regions Project was born from an internal discussion document written at International Alert in 1999. The analysis at that time suggested that not only were the existing conflicts in

Georgia apt to remain unresolved, but that there were tensions in other parts of the country and dysfunctional, weak relationships between the central government and Georgia's regions. The previously cited quote that '...the central authorities in Georgia have difficulty developing appropriate and viable institutions which would define their relations with...Ajara, Javakheti, and Mingrelia' presaged the possibility of an intervention based on human needs theory. The spectre of Armenian 'separatism' in Javakheti, the capricious situation of Ajaran de facto autonomy, and the political anxiety in the Zviadist stronghold of Samegrelo suggested tension between autonomy aspirations and the principle of state sovereignty. The Burtonian formulation of this scenario would be that the existing social structures and institutions, or lack thereof, were not adequate for the satisfaction of identity, security, participation, understanding and other basic needs, resulting in an unstable and potentially conflictual set of relationships between the regions and the center. On the basis of this analysis I was encouraged to write a concept note on what an action research project with a human needs framework might look like for Georgia. The International Alert Eurasia Programme manager Gevork Ter-Gabrielian asked me to draft the concept note for his consideration. If it was interesting we would put it forward to DFID to see if they would request a full funding proposal.

The first concept note went through in September of 1999, to the Eastern European and Central Asia Department (EECAD) of DFID. It was met with interest there, and EECAD invited us to draft a full fund raising project proposal

for consideration (attached to the thesis as Appendix A).⁵ A key segment of the proposal included this analytical summary:

The central authorities in Georgia have difficulty developing appropriate and viable institutions which would define their relations with other territorial, ethno-territorial, and sub-ethnic regions. In terms of conflict prevention, Ajara, Javakheti, and Mingrelia are of major importance.⁶

This was timely analysis in that the British Government had recently issued a report including extensive testimony on the situation in the Caucasus. Their report was cited in the funding proposal:

...conflict resolution remains the central problem for the region (the Caucasus) and should be given the highest priority in British policy...the Government could make a substantial contribution to conflict resolution efforts through promoting NGO and academic initiatives in confidence-building work and public education projects on the reconciliation of principles of territorial integrity and self-determination. ... The United Kingdom has an interest in the resolution of the conflicts which already exist in the South Caucasus and Central Asia, and as great an interest in helping to prevent further conflicts from arising.⁷

The proposal then made its fundamental statement of the objectives of the intervention, addressing the analyses of both IA and the Committee on Foreign Affairs:

The second point of our analysis (above), regarding viable institutions that define the relations between the Georgian state and the ethnic regions, corresponds to the Select Committee mention of reconciliation of principles of territorial integrity and self-

⁵ What actually happened to the proposal is that the EECAD staff transformed it more or less verbatim into an internal DFID document, and then made the funding request internally on behalf of IA. The time frame involved seemed lengthy but is not necessarily atypical. The original concept note was first given to EECAD in September 1999, the final funding document was dated February 2000, and work began with funding in mid-April 2000, a gestation period of about 8 months.

⁶ "A Programme of Conflict Prevention and Confidence Building in the Regions of Georgia", International Alert, 1999. Appendix A., pg. 291.

⁷ "Sixth Report: House of Commons Select Committee on Foreign Affairs", July 1999, paragraphs 23, 24.

determination. What this means is that the “problem to be solved”, or conflict to be addressed, in the regions is the problem of designing appropriate social structures and institutionalising political processes that satisfy the identity (and other basic) needs, and autonomy aspirations of ethnic, sub-ethnic, regional or other identity groups, without further threatening the security of the Georgian state. From this perspective, a programme of capacity building for structures of civil-society and local governance, coupled with a focussed analytical initiative to address the autonomy, identity, sovereignty and security issues, is called for.⁸

There was one passage in the proposal that would become controversial and problematic later in the project. Under the heading “Project Approach” the proposal made this claim: “The goal of this project is to prevent violent ethnic or political conflict from breaking out between the Georgian state and any of the regions of Ajara, Javakheti, or Mingrelia.”⁹ While this accurately stated an important goal when the project was being conceptualized, the notion that there was any possibility of violence breaking out between particularly Samegrelo (Mingrelia) and the Georgian center was rejected out of hand by most Georgians. It actually became necessary at one point after the project had been initiated to revise this phrasing in the original project proposal at the request of some Georgian officials. This was an early indication of a point that would become one theme of the project, the perceived risk or possibility of actually creating conflict by talking about it or dealing with it explicitly.

The proposal described the project implementation as a three-phase process. The first phase was ‘Consultation and Needs Assessment’. The second phase was ‘Capacity Building and Analytical Problem Solving’. Phase three was labeled ‘Conflict Prevention and Confidence Building’. Two

⁸ Appendix A, pgs. 291-292.

⁹ Ibid., pg. 292.

streams of activity would run throughout the project: 'consultation - capacity building - confidence building' were the key activities of the first stream, which was related to other IA work and existing methodology. The *IAR* stream was 'needs assessment - analytical problem solving - conflict prevention'. The program of activities for the *IAR* stream described in the proposal was depicted this way:

The method is to propose the satisfaction of basic human needs, such as identity, security, and recognition, as the underlying organising principle for designing social structures, and to apply that conceptual framework for the task of creating functional institutions designed by representatives of the Georgian state and members of the regions, working together. It is likely that a series of pilot projects will be initiated, to begin implementing consensual strategies for reforming and inventing new social institutions designed for needs satisfaction and management of their local-national, inter-group relations.¹⁰

Under a section labeled 'Opportunities and Risks' the outcomes of the project were forecast:

Minimum success would be a contribution to further networking and some additional capacity for conflict handling among NGO and civil society structures in the Georgian regions.

Maximum success would be a modest but demonstrable contribution to a real problem solving and conflict prevention effort between the Georgian state and authorities in the three regions, accompanied by some theory development and indications of replicable processes that would inform ongoing conflicts in the wider Caucasus region.

In the worst case, there is the risk that political and social circumstances beyond the control of IA, of our local partners, and of other would be peacebuilders will prevent any movement towards conflict prevention or resolution, and that violent conflict in the region could increase. In this situation we will try to sustain the network through these periods, without putting the safety of our partners at risk.

¹⁰ Ibid., pg. 298.

There is a risk that has been discussed with our DFID partners, of raising project participants expectations of change, and then failing to find ways to take concrete projects and action plans forward. We acknowledge this concern, and are absolutely committed to designing a process that assumes carrying through on the “problem solving” part of analytical problem solving, as opposed to stopping short after accomplishing the analytical tasks. Additionally, we believe it will be important and possible to create a climate of shared responsibility, meaning that project partners and participants fully share with us responsibility for outcomes, including shortcomings (and there will be some), while fully owning positive project successes and accomplishments.¹¹

These projections about the outcomes of the project will be revisited in the final, concluding chapter. The project was projected to run over two years, beginning with approval of funding, and the requested amount was £249,408. DFID added £10,000 for a project-ending London conference, and rounded up to award a total of £260,000 (about \$440,000 at the time).

Central to my role in conducting the *DAR*, the project was designed to fully employ me as the ‘Research Officer’ with responsibility for managing the project, funds, activities, partnerships and staff, (the job description is attached as Appendix B).

The Consultation Process in Georgia

After securing funding and support for the Georgian Regions Project and with the *DAR* embedded within the intervention, we began consulting IA constituencies and organizations already working in Georgia to find and define the right local partnerships and to create a strategy for the design and implementation phases of the project. The first field trip to Georgia was made during April 2000 (and selected field notes are attached as Appendix C).

What follows in narrative form will give an impression of the scope of

¹¹ Ibid., pgs. 298-299.

consultations, the conflict analysis as it evolved and both the *DAR* and *IAR* issues that began to take shape prior to actually designing the *IAR* activities.

The very first meeting in Tbilisi was with existing IA partners, to introduce them to the project and get their advice and impressions. I noted during the meeting that local partners who are already engaged in certain activities, such as training or monitoring, see a new project with financial resources as a possible opportunity to do more of whatever they are already doing and thereby access more financial or material resources for themselves. This means that partners engaged in various types of conflict handling training think the project could (should) have a training component, for example.¹² The relevant dissertation theme here is about ownership of the initiative. The other interesting note from the first meeting was the suggestion that a strategy for gaining acceptance for the project would be ultra-transparency. Partners talked about being 'completely transparent, publishing the framework, including journalists in the process, and promoting the project through some form of public relations'. My instinct to have something more confidential, along the lines of 'an Oslo process' was nicely challenged by their suggestions.¹³

In a meeting with our colleagues from DFID, their view of what sorts of 'minorities' existed in the regions was instructive. We talked about the Javakheti Armenians as a 'national' minority, of Ajaran Muslims as a religious minority, and the residents of Samegrelo who speak Mingrelian as a linguistic

¹² Georgian Regions Meeting Notes - Appendix C, pg. 316.

¹³ Ibid. pg. 306.

minority.¹⁴ Further into the conversation the highest ranking DFID person present gave us an insight into her expectations for the project. They were modest - DFID wanted 'a realistic description of the problems, and some credible indications of possible solutions'.¹⁵ I appreciated this candor and felt relieved to have expectations lowered and clarified.

We began our efforts to consult and collaborate with the other international NGOs and organizations working in Georgia at the NGO offices of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV). The one person with by far the most experience and access in the Javakheti region was a UNV 'community facilitator' with various development projects there. The important features of the region from her perspective were firstly, that the 'conflict' is never mentioned there, and that local people would likely deny or reject any assertion that the area is conflicted or at risk. Secondly, she spoke of the 'family - clan structures' there that are very powerful and protective of their turf.¹⁶ Dissertation themes here are conflict avoidance, and whether or not the powerful clan/turf people are a) some of the right people to engage and, if so, b) will they and how?

One of our first consultations with the Georgian Government began with the chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Civil Integration which deals with integrating ethnic minority populations into the Georgian polity. His perspective was that the international community and those representing the

¹⁴ Ibid., pg. 308.

¹⁵ Ibid., pg. 209.

¹⁶ Ibid., pg. 212.

West have an inadequate understanding of the complexities of Georgian politics, of the situation in Ajara, and about the Meskhetians, some of whom seek to return to Javakheti.¹⁷ He promised participation from his committee and support for the project.

A significant event in the consultation process was the presentation of the project to the Tbilisi-based group of intellectuals and peacebuilding local NGO leaders who together constituted what we came to refer to as IA's 'braintrust'. The meeting was difficult in many respects. At first, our colleagues were quite critical, some more constructively than others. They found our project summary document 'very general and abstract', and someone asked 'is this even a proposal?'¹⁸ There were several subtle bids for our proposed project to directly support their already existing work. This was related to the point made above that people already engaged in monitoring think that the project needs to have a monitoring component. Those with training designs think that more training would be purposeful. The focus group facilitators present suggested focus groups as the main methodology.

We made an all-too-brief attempt to present the Max-Neef matrix. One participant felt that the matrix 'does violence to reality'. The leader of the most well known Georgian social research institute opined that the Max-Neef matrix 'was not a tool for serious work'. With one or two exceptions, the gathered group was fairly unimpressed with both the needs framework and Max-Neef

¹⁷ Ibid., pg. 313.

¹⁸ Ibid., pg. 315.

matrix, leaving me to speculate in my notes about 'how committed are we to using this tool that clearly left our local partners confused and uncommitted?'¹⁹

As a dissertation theme, this dilemma is about whether or not, and how, to make the conceptual frameworks explicit in the intervention.

There was significant discussion of perceived risks for the project, particularly in Javakheti. People were very wary of addressing conflict resolution or prevention directly. We were advised to take the very word, 'conflict' out of any project documents or materials. We pointed out that International Alert can't easily hide the fact that we are concerned primarily with 'conflict transformation', that it says so on our visit cards, and that our project was funded as a conflict prevention project. Nevertheless, our gathered experts suggested a 'cover story' to use to explain the intentions of the project. We were also warned that as 'outsiders' we are known to bring various types of resources with us to the region and that the participants in any intervention process will simply answer all inquiries according to their perceptions of how best to get something for themselves out of what we are bringing by way of money, opportunity, or advantage.²⁰ The dissertation theme that this point indicated was about motivation and how to get the right people participating in the intervention for the right reasons.

The amount of concern expressed during the meeting about provoking conflict by 'naming it' became the subtext for a later dialogue within the Eurasia team staff about our institutional role. On the one hand, do we have a

¹⁹ Ibid., pg. 316.

²⁰ Ibid.

responsibility to 'surface conflict' in order to avoid risks and problems associated with conflict avoidance? What responsibility do we have to our local partners to acknowledge and respect their disinclination to be risk takers?²¹

A conflict analysis that was shaped from the meeting regarding the necessary conditions for conflict prevention in Georgia included at least: 1) support of civil society; 2) democratization and the creation of 'federalism', by which some people mean support of local autonomies; 3) integration of underdeveloped elements (identity groups) into the society.²²

The most awkward issue of the meeting had to do with the ownership of the project, and a related impression that we were somehow negotiating the methodology. To the credit of IA's Eurasia Programme, the local network and partners were well steeped in Alert's Code of Conduct and accustomed to a highly interactive process of negotiating roles and responsibilities. This project was somewhat unique in the sense that it came with a much more explicit and specific theoretical foundation than much of IA's work. There was a sense that our process of consultation was perceived, at least by some of those gathered in the meeting, as conferring a measure of ownership and an opportunity for initiative taking. While on the one hand, our design process was still to follow, I was in any case committed to the elements of the project central to the *DAR* - needs theory, the Max-Neef framework, and the *IAR* problem solving workshops as an intervention strategy. At the time, we were

²¹ Ibid., pg. 317.

²² Ibid.

not planning on having local institutional partners for the Regions Project.

This probably reflects on my own 'ownership' aspirations with respect to the *DAR*, and maybe my relative lack of experience with IA's existing institutional commitment to local partners in the Caucasus. As will become clear, this was shortsighted on my part, and the ethical dimension of the ownership issue would become more clear and critical to me as the project progressed. In my notes I wrote a rhetorical question about why were we negotiating our process and methodology that later reminded me of the frustrating nature of this particular consultation meeting.

Still in the braintrust meeting, we began drawing a diagram through a brainstorming process that included the labels 'mandate', 'risks', 'strategies', 'contributions', 'responsibilities', 'accountability', and 'consequences', and posed the question (without having a time or process for answering it), 'who is giving a mandate to whom, to carry out what strategies, accept what risks, agree to certain responsibilities, agree to be accountable, and which other groups will make what other types of contributions to the project?'²³

There was an aborted discussion of the 'Catch-22' whereby the current conflict resolution strategies clearly continue to fail, but most of the gathered group was reluctant to try any new methodologies because of the perceived risks. It became clear to me that our braintrust consisted of relative 'insiders', but that these were stakeholders who have an aversion to risk and unfamiliar frameworks or methods. This is one element of the risk taking and conflict

²³ Ibid., pg. 319.

avoidance theme.²⁴

We next met with the Chairman of the Parliamentary subcommittee for Legal and Administrative reforms. His most interesting perception was that the government would indeed appreciate a dialogue-based process of institutional reform with interest groups in the regions, but that 'there are no resources in the regions that would allow anybody to participate or even prepare themselves for such a dialogue. It isn't always clear who the government would dialogue with or how they would get a mandate to be in such a dialogue.' He asked, 'in places where there are no phones or electricity . . . who can have a dialogue?'²⁵ As a planning issue, one has to ask, who are the right people (in the region) if one party to the conflict (the central government) isn't clear about whom they would dialogue with or who would have a mandate to engage in problem solving.

In one of the last meetings of the first consultation trip we met with the DFID local representative who would be responsible for monitoring our project. She confessed that she, like most of her DFID colleagues, didn't feel that she knew much at all about conflict resolution and that she had some scepticism about the project when she first read the proposal. In any case, she had a high interest in hosting a collaborative meeting of the principles of three conflict mitigation or good governance projects for which she was responsible. It is worth noting that in more than two years we never managed to convene these three projects together with DFID even one time. This is

²⁴ Ibid., pg. 319.

²⁵ Ibid., pg. 320.

related to a *DAR* theme about the impact of limited time and resources.

The interesting dissertation themes emerging from the first round of consultations included: the perceived risks of creating conflict by working to prevent it, and the resulting conflict avoidance attitudes; the perceptions of ownership and methodological stakeholding by various local partners; scepticism of the human needs framework and Max-Neef's matrix; concerns about how to identify and motivate the right people for the intervention; and the need for 'strategies' to even enter into some of the regions and begin networking.

Consultations Round Two - June 2000

The consultation and project initiation process continued in Tbilisi and with field trips out into some of the regions during June 2000. (Selected field notes attached as Appendix D.) The emerging strategy for getting into Javakheti and beginning to build contacts there was to piggyback onto the access of the UNV projects by doing a joint training activity with them. This would fall under the capacity-confidence building stream of the Regions Project. The UNV staff wanted to do some 'Alternatives to Violence Project' training (known as AVP), and we decided that this could be well combined with 'Negotiation as a Life Skill' training - a version of the principled negotiation 'Getting to Yes' framework.

We next met with the director of another DFID-funded project focussed on 'good governance' in the Samtske-Javakheti, and Kvemo Kartli regions which was called GOCISP.²⁶ Although the methodology of the endeavor was

²⁴ Georgia Governance and Civil Society Project. GOCISP.

quite different from the Georgian Regions Project the purposes were similar. The aim was to improve local governance by creating a 'partnership board' made up of local NGOs/CBOs (community-based organizations), media representatives and officials from the Georgian elected bodies, the *sakrebulo*s. There was also representation from the State Chancellery. The purpose was to improve or create accountability structures in order to create a sense of ownership over local governance processes, and to improve the ability of local structures to negotiate with the central government. Our discussion touched on the idea that their partnership boards were an example of exactly the type of structural or institutional creation that our problem solving approaches were meant to invent and implement. This was interesting since it suggested a similar outcome pursued through an entirely different process. The GOCISP process was much more akin to advocacy, with little direct analysis, and no acknowledgment of potential or existing conflict. We also brainstormed that if the partnership board developed successfully it might represent an ideal constituency for our action research problem solving activities, thus creating a synergy between the two DFID-funded initiatives.²⁷

Another interesting insight came in an informal evening consultation with two local IA consultants. I began to understand the nature of the conflict between the local appointed officials and the local elected officials. This epitomized a key conflict in local governance, perhaps the flashpoint of governance conflict between regions and center, especially in Javakheti. As briefly described in Chapter Two, the *gamgebeli* is the title of the person who

²⁷ Georgian Regions Meeting Notes, Appendix D, pg. 325.

is the mayor of a municipality and his offices and staff are known as the *gamgeoba*. The *gamgebeli* is appointed by the Georgian president and in Javakheti is generally an ethnic Georgian. The *sakrebulo* is a city or town council, elected in a local election, and in Javakheti *sakrebulo* members are mostly ethnic Armenians. The crux of the structural conflict between them was that, as of mid-2000, the legislation that would define their respective roles and responsibilities had not yet been created by the Georgian Parliament. Issues about who has tax-collecting authority, spending authority, reporting responsibilities and all manner of administrative functionality were substantially undefined at the time.²⁸ This created the context for perceived corruption, non- transparency and contested power.

A second interesting strand of the conversation illuminated the conflict of interest and distrust between government officials and local NGOs. Many Georgian government employees have extremely low-paying (sometimes non-paying for long periods of time) and non-productive jobs and therefore depend on a shadow economy and/or petty corruption for economic survival. Participation in shadow economic activities or petty corruption necessarily precludes transparency and probably constrains job satisfaction for many people. The NGO staffs, by contrast, have 'real' jobs that pay credible salaries (by Georgian standards), involving legitimate activities and often hectic agendas. They have a broad mandate to promote transparency. The transparency agendas of the NGOs and those who would develop civil society can be perceived as a threat to the economic survival strategies of many of

²⁸ Ibid., pg. 326.

the people employed unproductively in bureaucratic government structures.²⁹

In a consultation meeting with two academics who had been unable to attend the braintrust meeting held in April, some recurring issues were raised and started to come into focus. The first was that working in Ajara was going to be problematic and no one had much of a guess about what might constitute an appropriate strategy for gaining entry there. The situation with Aslan Abashidze was detailed in Chapter Two. The claim was that Ajara had no civil society of any substance and that Abashidze has no interest in the development of such a thing. (In my notes the question was: 'what is civil society a satisfier for? It's a syncretic satisfier for participation, understanding...anything else?')³⁰

It was emphasized by the two academics that the three regions are very different, and that it would be difficult to explain to any Georgian why these three regions rather than any others were chosen for this project, especially if the project goals were related to 'ethnic conflict' for example. We tried to make the case that choosing different regions was relevant from a research standpoint, so as to compare our process in one region with 'ethnic' distinctions, as against another region where the perceived problem is underdevelopment, and another region where the local authorities deny the existence of any problems at all.³¹ These two contrasting perceptions were perhaps both slightly disingenuous in that these individuals were again

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., pg. 327.

³¹ Ibid.

avoiding or denying the potential for conflict in Samegrelo, while our reply was a rationalization that covered for our position that the conflicts were more similar than was being acknowledged, and that the problem solving process would be appropriate and credible across the three regions.

Our next meetings were in western Georgia, in the towns of Poti and Zugdidi. The port of Poti is doing reasonably well economically compared with other Georgian locales. Their story was that they would like to negotiate some sort of special economic arrangement with the Central government to prevent locally generated revenue from leaving their region and disappearing into the Center where it might be hard to know what happened to it. They talked about being a 'donor community' arguing that if they could keep local revenues they would not only be able to facilitate development in Poti but also contribute to the improvement of other nearby towns and villages, and support vulnerable populations.³² In my notes from the meeting, I asked myself the question, 'do they have a structural conflict, or are they looking for an opportunity for principled negotiation with the Central government? If we decided the latter was the case, then we would want to separate Poti from Zugdidi in terms of the intervention and perhaps not include them in the problem solving research workshops. If the former was more accurate, then we would definitely include them with the Zugdidi contingent. In the event, Poti participated in the workshops, and we also conducted a separate training event in negotiation skills locally in Poti, after the workshops were concluded.

The story the next day up in Zugdidi was interesting in that they had

³² Ibid., pg. 329.

exactly the opposite perspective on the relationship between their region and the Center. Because the Zugdidi economy is up against the dead end of the (de-facto) border with Abkhazia, and because of the high number of IDPs living in Zugdidi, the city has limited economic prospects and significant social pressures. They are concerned that if various regions (Ajara being the obvious example) manage to achieve and maintain versions of local financial autonomy (which is what the Poti representatives were hoping for), that significant revenues will never flow to the Center, and then there won't be anything for the Center to redistribute back to Zugdidi by way of development assistance, relief for IDPs, or other financial aid. They recognize their dependence on the Center and fear that other regions' relative economic independence or autonomy will further aggravate their own situation.³³

The Zugdidi discussion revealed local perceptions about the difference between 'federalism' and 'asymmetrical federalism'. The federalist argument is to 'deconstruct' the current Georgia and rebuild it along strictly federalist lines, eliminating any special considerations or autonomy arrangements. The viewpoint in support of asymmetrical federalism is to begin working locally first, building strong local self-governance structures wherever possible, and remodel the country based on successful experiences working from the ground up.³⁴

One attitude that was expressed was that the Ajaran de facto autonomy

³³ Ibid., pg. 330.

³⁴ Ibid., pg. 331. There were contrasting viewpoints about this issue expressed during the meeting. The asymmetrical federalism view is more in line with the Poti groups vision, as well as the autonomy of Ajara, and, theoretically, the autonomies that might pertain to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, within a sovereign Georgia, if those conflicts were resolved in a way that preserves Georgia's 'territorial integrity'.

represents a 'future conflict' and that the current arrangement is unsustainable.³⁵ The conversation about the role of *sakrebulo*s, as an example of 'decentralization' of political process and power concluded that decentralization can be dangerous and might create instabilities.

With regard to the Georgia - Abkhazia conflict the Zugdidi perspective was interesting and new for us. They felt that the Samegrelo region is the 'key' to resolving the conflict and they were frustrated about feeling left out of all the existing conflict resolution activities. They believe their role or relevance has never been acknowledged and that the traditional links between Samegrelo and Abkhazia should not be forgotten. They talked about a 'buried bomb', meaning their exclusion from the resolution of the conflict.³⁶

In both the Poti and Zugdidi meetings we proposed an additional consultation step, where we could come back to each community or to a joint meeting with both of them together, and hold a half-day workshop on the methodology of the Georgian Regions Project, followed by a half-day working meeting with local organizing partners to establish the logistics of the local research events. People from both meetings were enthusiastic about this idea and we proposed returning in September to conduct these events. This was an early strategy to improve our chances of recruiting the right people and to begin the process of presenting the conceptual frameworks of the project.

These meetings in Samegrelo were really my first venture out into the

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid. This was the first time, but certainly not the last that people would refer to 'detonator issues' or 'landmines' that remain buried in the social environment, either 'too painful' or too dangerous to talk about openly. The issue comes up later during the problem solving research workshops.

regions of Georgia and they were fascinating. The polar-opposite views of the relationship between community and Center, from Poti where a credible economic base existed, to Zugdidi where the economics were much more problematic, raised the question of whether we should have one set of joint workshops in the region or two separate initiatives. The high intellectual level of dialogue about political and structural issues, governance models, social change processes, and the energy available for discussing these topics was impressive. We also were able to engage the Poti Youth Alliance (PYA) as our local NGO organizing partner for Poti, and the Public Interest Protection League (PIPL) in Zugdidi as our NGO partner there. This was an important organizational step for the project.

Final Consultations October - December 2000

During the final quarter of 2000 we spent extensive time in the Georgian regions to conclude the process of consulting, informing and recruiting people to the Georgian Regions Project and laying the groundwork for activities in both of the project streams. (Field notes are attached as Appendix E)

After analyzing the different perspectives of representatives of Poti and Zugdidi in western Georgia we might have planned to have separate one - day seminars there, one in each community. The plan for these seminars mentioned above was to introduce the human needs and action research frameworks, and to then to have time for consulting and planning with local partners about when we could schedule activities, with what participants, venues, time frames, etc. We decided that budget and time limitations

required us to combine Poti and Zugdidi and therefore we invited the Poti delegation to join us in Zugdidi in October.

The issue of who are the right people and how to get them participating in an intervention is a common challenge for NGO interventions in grassroots communities. Different purposes and methodologies suggest varying types of criteria, and in any case it is not always possible to have control or even strong influence over the actual selection process or criteria, if local partners are used to recruit and confirm participation. We planned to invite about twenty-five people to the Zugdidi meeting, guessing that this would bring us the 'right number', which would be about fifteen (in the sense of group dynamics and discussion of the conceptual frameworks). From these we hoped that ten would be the right people. Our desired right people would include individuals representing local governance structures with the motivation and capacity to engage in the problem solving process, and representation from civil society of individuals willing and able to engage constructively with local authorities and representatives from the center when we would bring them together. But local meetings and events seldom happen just as we plan them. Instead of twenty-five people, we only had eight attend. The Poti delegation was a no show, and maybe there were three of the 'right people', all of them being people with whom we had already met, and all from the civil society realm. While the turnout was disappointing, our discussions on the day went pretty much according to our plan.

One local opinion that found voice during the meeting was that the problems of the Georgian - Abkhazian conflict are of a somewhat higher

priority than the Region - Center relationships. This was described as a need for 'normalizing relationships locally to allow for economic activity and maybe reconciliation across the divided region.'³⁷ This demonstrated that the economic dimension of conflict was the priority of the Zugdidi population.

Some of the participants made it clear that they had already done their own analysis, had already fully considered the issues under discussion, and had long since determined their preferred outcomes. They were willing to imagine that the needs framework might be a legitimate way of describing the existing realities but they did not necessarily see it as a tool for discovering new information, creating new perspectives, or doing new analysis.³⁸ They put a new spin on the recurring challenge to the IA rationale for choosing 'these' three regions (Samegrelo, Javakheti, and Ajara). This implied some point of comparison between the regions. They definitely saw their situation as profoundly different from the situation in Javakheti. They wanted to know then, did we maybe 'believe what you read in the media (controlled by the government) about potential conflict in Samegrelo'? The unspoken question was, 'could you be so naive?' The message was, 'there is no conflict like 'that' (in Javakheti) here'. My notes however, relate that by the end of the day and after the formal session there were people willing to acknowledge that there are tensions, very sensitive issues, and potential conflict in Samegrelo that is 'too scary' to think about. The conflict avoidance theme is relevant when

³⁷ Georgian Regions Meeting Notes, Appendix E, pg. 334.

³⁸ Ibid.

people clearly don't feel very safe to talk about some issues.³⁹ There is also an issue of the credibility of interveners, outsiders, to the local population.

In the end we did not learn exactly why the Poti delegation had failed to participate although they had a story about transportation problems. We realized that we were a little unclear ourselves about whom we were talking to from that community and whether or not we had done enough consultation there.

Back in Tbilisi there were two meetings on Javakheti. During September we had the joint IA - UNV capacity and confidence building training on AVP and negotiation skills. This event gave us some local contacts in Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda, the two most significant towns in Javakheti. Our local contact in Ninotsminda explained that his community was relatively de-politicized compared with Akhalkalaki (site of the Russian military base). NGO activities in Ninotsminda were mainly development focussed. Throughout the Javakheti region however, the local belief about any funds made available for development from the Central government is that they are usually 'eaten' by local authorities, and very little ever gets through to the community.⁴⁰ After several conversations we began to understand the psychological element of security that the Armenian population feels they realize from the local Russian military who would defend them from any threat originating in nearby Turkey.

The Ninotsminda coordinator was willing to be our local point of contact

³⁹ Ibid., pg. 335.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pg. 336.

and to do some organizing. However, we realized that he was simultaneously the local coordinator for UNV activities and fully employed by the other DFID-funded local governance project (GOCISP, also as the local coordinator). This drawback reflects firstly on the scant local capacity for absorbing too much international attention and focus on a small and remote region. Secondly, uncoordinated and ambitious international interventions risk overextending particular individuals who, by virtue of language skills or organizational acumen manage to corner the market on providing their services to the foreigners. We decided to try to diversify our use of local coordinators in order to a) spread the benefits more widely, and b) try not to contribute to the rate of 'burn out' experienced by gifted but fairly unique resource people in small communities.

In order to share information and attempt to coordinate our efforts with other international organizations we participated in a Tbilisi roundtable discussion on Javakheti in December 2000. The participants included the OSCE, the US Embassy, Mercy Corp, the Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD), USAID, National Democratic Institute (NDI), UNV, and others. The agenda of the meeting was networking and information sharing. There was discussion of the Russian military base, Meskhetian return, the politics of providing electricity from Armenia in Javakheti, teaching of the Georgian language in the region, and the generally shared perception that the idea of 'ethnic tensions' in the region was somewhat exaggerated.⁴¹ All of these issues would be relevant in our

⁴¹ Ibid., pgs. 339-340.

subsequent Regions Project research workshops with participants from the region.

We met with a team from the Foundation for Development of Human Resources (FDHR) led by Dr. Nodar Sarjveladze. How our relationship to FDHR evolved is described immediately below. During this meeting, we heard about the framework that FDHR was using for 'needs assessment focus groups'. This framework was:

- 1) What are your needs?
- 2) What is your long-term goal / vision?
- 3) What is your short-term goal / vision?
- 4) What can you do to resolve problems and achieve goals?

Our conversation with FDHR also covered possible strategies for initiating work in Ajara. To this point in the project, we had not found a credible way to approach the Ajaran officials nor had we discovered any potential local partners there.

We made a return visit to Ninotsminda to follow up on our capacity building workshop from September. We discovered that as a result of the workshop one young soldier who had participated in the AVP and negotiation skills training was now playing a low-key role trying to 'build peace' between local youth gangs. He asked us for more training and we promised to try and network him into the ongoing activities of the Caucasus NGO Forum or other training opportunities. We learned about rumors that were prevalent in Javakheti at the time. The rumors were about the Russians pulling out of their local base and the Georgian government replacing them with NATO aligned troops. As Turkey was the nearest NATO country, the rumor was that the Georgians intended to replace the Russians with Turks. Obviously this would

provoke extreme anxiety in the Javakheti Armenian population. While people we spoke with understood that this was, in all likelihood, a baseless rumor, we could not find anyone with any way of imagining how such a rumor could be convincingly quashed.⁴²

Next, we had a series of meetings with NGO representatives and then local governance officials in Akhalkalaki and Akhaltsikhe. Akhalkalaki is the political center of Javakheti, the subregion. Akhaltsikhe is the capital of the Samtskhe - Javakheti region (one of the seven large regions of Georgia). We had an energized and animated conversation with the political NGOs in Akhalkalaki, where it was explained to us that there had been six *gamgebelis* appointed by the state president in seven years. They had each allegedly been corrupt and their administrations unsustainable. They were invariably Georgians and they had 'ten times' more political power than the *sakrebulo*, whose mandate was unclear, (unlegislated), and that had no financial resources to speak of. The *gamgebeli* was accountable not in the community but to the state president. The position of the local Armenians was that local governance officials including the *gamgebeli* must be locally elected.⁴³

Meeting with the Deputy Chairman of the *sakrebulo* for Akhalkalaki, a member of the opposition National Democratic Party, he voiced the opinion that 'Georgia still has a totalitarian regime, so opposition political parties are disempowered.' Despite legislation requiring the *gamgebeli* to 'report to the *sakrebulo*' annually, they have never received a report from the *gamgebeli*.

⁴² Ibid., pg. 342.

⁴³ Ibid., pg. 343.

The argument went on that the 'groups supporting the *gamgebeli* are 'mafiosos and clans', and that they abuse the non-transparent budget and local structures to enrich themselves'. Through the course of a fairly serious round of storytelling and venting during which the local politician sounded much like a potential 'separatist', he in any case denied the existence of any real separatist organizing in the region, claiming that it is all Tbilisi-based propaganda. He said, 'we just want our basic needs'.⁴⁴

The Javakheti population, including the people in both Ninotsminda and Akhalkalaki, is about 90% Armenian or more. The population of Akhaltsikhe is closer to 50% Georgian and 50% Armenian, and the larger region somewhat more ethnically diverse than anywhere else in Georgia with the exception of Tbilisi. The view from people in Akhaltsikhe is that tensions in Javakheti are mostly about social issues and the economics of the Russian base and very little about identity politics, security issues, or separatist sentiments. They think that the region has always been multinational in culture and atmosphere and that there are rich traditions of cooperation and tolerance. There was a common view that the solution to social problems lies in the legislative process, whereby the Georgian Parliament would create new laws in order to define the appropriate solutions to most problems, especially those concerning local governance.⁴⁵

A second animated meeting dominated by storytelling happened in Akhaltsikhe with the chair of the regional *sakrebulo*. While my notes are brief

⁴⁴ Ibid., pg. 344.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pg. 345.

on the meeting, there was a vivid snapshot moment that remained with me through the duration of the project. The *sakrebulo* chair declared that 'we want to draw a line between 'us' (Armenians) and 'the Center' (the Georgians) . . . to protect ourselves from (Georgian) corruption'.⁴⁶ This seemed to us at the time to be the strongest statement of what really constituted a version of Armenian separatist sentiments. The inclination was not so much about politically or violently seceding from Georgia and integrating with Armenia, but about protecting the Armenian population from domination and exploitation by a corrupt political and economic system dominated and maintained by the Georgians.

We finally returned to Poti later in December to try to figure out our local relationships and determine what exactly were our opportunities there. In a meeting with members of the Poti *sakrebulo*, we heard that after a period of negotiations and problem solving, the local *gamgebeli* and *sakrebulo* have developed a successful relationship. In western Georgia all the officials, elected or appointed, are Georgians so the suspicions of ethnic bias are absent. The *gamgebeli* gets his local legitimacy by virtue of the existing local governance legislation. The *sakrebulo* gets its legitimacy by virtue of having been elected. The *sakrebulo* has nine committees, four chaired by members of 'opposition' political parties, and five chaired by the majority political party.

Towards the end of the meeting we started to hear a version of the analysis of the weaknesses of *sakrebulos* and the need for appointed officials. In this account, the appointed representatives are a necessary step in the

⁴⁶ Ibid., pg. 346.

development of a democratic culture that has not existed previously in Georgia. The *sakrebulo*s as elected local structures are an 'unknown quantity', and not necessarily 'ready to govern'.⁴⁷

A meeting with a member of the Zugdidi *sakrebulo* deepened this line of analysis. 'The *sakrebulo*s were a stillborn child', she said. They were an artificial creation, intended to create local governance legitimacy, but without experience, resources, or defined competencies.⁴⁸ 'They couldn't really be trusted, they weren't ready to 'govern', and therefore the appointed officials were also necessary. They were an experiment - part of the evolution of devolution'.⁴⁹ She went on to suggest that she hoped the situation vis a vis *sakrebulo*s was improving.

A conversation back in Tbilisi with one of the founders of the Georgian Institute for Public Administration (GIPA) provided a further insight, or version, of the structural problem of the *sakrebulo*s. He agreed that the *sakrebulo*s were 'born dead'. He disagreed that their situation was improving. And he blamed the 'West' for the creation of the problem. The story from his perspective was that the Europeans and the USA forced the young Georgian state to create structures for decentralizing political power, in this case structures for local self-governance. Georgian society had no experience of this and there were no resources to facilitate the transformation. The Westerners promised financial support for the initiative - for training, capacity

⁴⁷ Ibid., pg. 347.

⁴⁸ In the Georgian context, the word competencies is used to mean roles and responsibilities.

⁴⁹ Ibid. pg. 349.

building, operational support, etc. Development funding and other financial aid were contingent on the creation of these structures. But once the structures were in place, albeit with insufficient legislative definition, the West failed, in any case, to come through with the resources it had committed and the *sakrebulo*s were left to wither.⁵⁰

The final consultation meeting in Zugdidi in December 2000, was a little sobering as a reality check about whether our local coordinators were with us and ready to collaborate meaningfully. The meeting was with the three people we considered our core working group in Zugdidi, including the local PIPL coordinator. They would advise us on the practicalities of organizing the problem solving research workshops for the Samegrelo region including Poti. In my previous experience, one of the interesting differences between communities, societies, cultures and conflicts are the local logistics and practicalities that determine how workshops can be successfully organized. Do they happen on weekdays or weekends? Are they within the community or away from it? Do people attend day by day, or are they residential? Do invitations go to individuals or organizations? All of these factors can vary according to local culture and conditions. In Zugdidi we worked out that four day workshops seemed too long, that two days was too short, that three days seemed about right. We couldn't take both of the days of a weekend, so the idea would be Thursday - Saturday, or Wednesday evening through Saturday midday. The workshops could be residential and out of Zugdidi, but not too far away. People usually have Saturday commitments, such as weddings, so

⁵⁰ Ibid., pg. 351.

we could keep them until midday and feed them lunch (always feed them before they leave), then they should be able to get back from the workshop for those social or cultural commitments. Our planning meeting went smoothly and we felt the workshops really taking shape.

Then the other shoe dropped. Despite our having spent a total of six or eight hours discussing the goals, objectives, frameworks and activities of the problem solving research workshops with these very individuals - who were the people promising to deliver 'the right people' to the initiative and support it locally, one of my coordinators asked, 'So, what exactly is the purpose of these workshops? What are we going to discuss?' His questioning evolved into a little bit of a rant, making a point of asking, 'what are the practical outcomes going to be?'

We were somewhat taken aback, and I remember hoping that maybe I was just tired, as it was the end of a long trip in the field. In a more private conversation after the meeting my PIPL coordinator suggested that the 'real problem' behind the questions was perhaps about funding, and people wanting to know whether their participation and investment of time and effort was going to bring with it any possibilities for funds to be applied to their own work and priorities locally.⁵¹ In any case, it was a good reminder that there are limitations of working through translation, of working with highly abstract conceptual frameworks, of time and energy, and that local partners no matter how genuine, interested and committed, also have their own agendas, needs and priorities. The dissertation theme that was provoked was about how

⁵¹ Ibid., pg. 350.

successful we would ever be in having key people internalize the conceptual frameworks of the project, and how best to offer it to them. All of these themes will be picked up later in the analysis.

By the end of nine months of consulting on the ground in Georgia, we felt that we had in place credible (if a little bit confused) local coordinators in Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, Poti, and Zugdidi, with local NGO affiliations and resources. We had commitments of participation from local governance structures, both *gamgeobas* (office of the *gamgebeli*), and *sakrebulo*s. We had support and commitment from one Parliamentarian and his parliamentary committee, and plans for approaching the State Chancellery. We had begun hearing the stories that would hopefully illuminate the conflict issues relevant to the project. What we didn't quite have yet was a significant Georgian NGO main partner.

Recruiting FDHR

In truth, we didn't originally plan a fifty-fifty partnership between IA and a Georgian NGO as a key element of the Regions Project methodology. In retrospect, it isn't clear why not. The plan was to have IA project staff with a local Georgian coordinator and the possible participation of local consultants.

The entire consultation period was conducted in this way, with the project team consisting of myself, a coordinator, a local consultant, and an interpreter. This team wasn't bad, but was proving difficult to sustain by the end of 2000. The consultant was getting other project work, some of it with IA, and other opportunities that would compete for time and attention with the Regions

Project. The coordinator brought some negative political baggage, and possibly had a personal agenda that was increasingly difficult to reconcile with IA's work in the broader Caucasus region. These things happen and are perfectly normal occurrences in the life of a project.

Dr. Nodar Sarjveladze of the Foundation for Development of Human Resources had attended the braintrust meeting in Tbilisi in April. He had taken a particular interest in the Max-Neef framework and I had provided him a copy of "Human Scale Development" and some other background materials. For this reason, he spent extra time and effort discussing the Regions Project with myself and the IA Eurasia programme manager. Meanwhile, he was active in other IA project work as a founding member of the Caucasus NGO Forum and an active participant in the IA's Georgia - Abkhazia project work.

As a part of the capacity and confidence building stream of the Regions Project we had agreed that FDHR would do some research to collect academic and media materials that could be made available to the public in a 'Regional Resource Center' that would be maintained in Tbilisi. FDHR was contracted to do the research and the partnership between the Regions Project and FDHR was born. This activity coincided with the other consultation process and the materials for the resource center had been prepared and presented by the end of 2000.

In this way we got to know each other and it became clear that the Regions Project would benefit from replacing its local staffing plan with a local NGO partnership and recasting the project as a collaboration of IA and FDHR. This arrangement initially offered us improved efficiency in terms of

communications and organizing in Georgia, and the added benefit of Dr. Sarjveladze's acute interest in the conceptual frameworks of the project. The partnership roles and responsibilities were defined on paper in a memorandum of understanding and by the beginning of 2001 we began jointly making project decisions and planning activities. This would lead directly to the next phase of the project, where the *IAR* would be designed as an activity of the *DAR*, in London. Chapter Five deals with the design process.

Summary

During the course of the consultations that initiated the Regions Project, and prior to the first formal *DAR* activity which would be the design workshop in London, several significant dissertation-relevant themes emerged or were taking shape based on our consultations.

One theme was conflict avoidance and the instincts of many Georgians to either deny that conflict or potential conflict existed. Others acknowledged that there was potential for conflict, but that by raising the topic or attempting to intervene one risked setting it off. A few Georgians were inclined to suspect that any outside interveners were unlikely to really understand the Georgian situation, and too likely to believe propaganda originating from various sources. At a more subtle level, some of the Georgian intellectuals who clearly understood the conflict realities were, however, suspicious of any conflict transformation methodologies that they were unfamiliar with and skeptical of any new analytical frameworks.

Another theme was about who would be the right people to engage in a workshop, and how best to motivate their genuine and constructive

participation. In an environment without previous experience of democratic social structures and dynamic civil society our assumptions that there would be responsible local authorities, and empowered, organized civil society representatives, who would be the right people to engage in problem solving would be challenged.

We were discovering that it might be difficult to engage people with the human needs and Max-Neef conceptual frameworks. Some people were skeptical. Others were seemingly uncomprehending, even after what seemed like fairly lengthy introductions and orientation exercises. One or two individuals who might have had intellectual and other investments in their own preferred frameworks were highly critical. In addition there was the challenge of having the facilitation team, and then project participants internalize the conceptual frameworks to a degree that they would be able to make use of them.

Finally, the philosophical issue of ownership of the intervention and the practical and methodological issues that would flow from it had been raised and left unanswered by our project proposal, IA's Code of Conduct, or my own experience and instincts.

Beyond these dissertation specific emergent themes, the consultation process was filled with fascinating issues, perspectives, perceptions and personalities. Some would fade through time and others would arise, all of them more or less symptomatic of the endemic nature of the structural conflicts in the regions, and/or related to the nature of our attempts to intervene.

We would begin addressing these themes and issues in terms of the *DAR* in London during the design workshop, as described in the next chapter.

Chapter Five

The intervention design process: Design informed by theory

The mark of a moderate man
is freedom from his own ideas.
Tolerant like the sky,
all-pervading like sunlight,
firm like a mountain,
supple like a tree in the wind,
he has no destination in view
and makes use of anything
life happens to bring his way.

The London Design Workshop Narrative

The activity of designing the *IAR* for the Georgian Regions Project was intended to be a key element of the *DAR*, whereby we would ‘consciously and reflectively make use of current theoretical frameworks during the workshop designing process’.¹ Colleagues from Georgia and from International Alert agreed to come together in a process that would inform both the intervention and the dissertation.

As described in Chapter Four, the Regions Project had by this point established an institutional partnership with FDHR in Georgia for the action research, problem solving stream of activities. As director of FDHR, Dr. Nodar Sarjveladze came to London to participate in the design seminar. International Alert colleagues who joined the work included Dr. Gevork Ter-Gabrielian the Eurasia Program manager, Bill Yates representing IA’s ‘Better Peace Practice’ project, and Martin Honeywell, IA’s Deputy Secretary

¹ From the two page design notes for the Design Seminar. This was described as the ‘theory objective’ of the workshop. The ‘practice objective’ was ‘to design the problem solving research workshops we will be conducting and facilitating in Georgia’.

General.²

The participants had been supplied with one page summaries of twenty-two frameworks relevant to the conduct of analytical problem solving workshops. The plan was to firstly review and discuss these frameworks as representative of the current state of theory in the field. We then intended to do the actual IAR design mindful of the field and what it offered, and to systematically be aware of when our design was, or was not, in accord with the existing theory, and why. (All twenty-two frameworks are attached as Appendix F.) I chose these frameworks from the existing literature on problem solving workshops, based on my previous experiences, dissertation interests and knowledge of the issues that would need to be considered in terms of the task of designing our *IAR*.

We were limited in terms of the time available to engage deeply with either the theoretical or the practical task. This was a problem that would run through all of our work on the project, especially with regard to the *DAR*, and would become a research theme based on ours and other experiences that have been referred to previously.³ We planned two full working days for the seminar, based on the availability and willingness of the IA colleagues to commit to the dissertation related aspect of the seminar.⁴ In other

² For simplicity, I will refer to Gevork, Bill, Nodar, and Martin by first name throughout this chapter.

³ Especially the interviews with Jonathan Cohen and Paula Garb regarding their intervention projects in the Caucasus.

⁴ Without the *DAR* agenda, if we were simply designing workshop activities, we probably would have had Gevork participating for a few hours, and have not benefited at all from Bill or Martin. The commitment from the entire group for two days was motivated by the *DAR*, but focused on the *IAR* task of designing the problem solving research workshops.

circumstances we might have planned more days for a simple design task without the *DAR* aspects, perhaps three or four.⁵ In this case, we would spend more time in Georgia further developing our designs and plans. What it meant in London was that we discussed only eight of the frameworks during our first day, and then moved on to workshop design on the second day.

Frameworks and Discussions

The first summary was presented to the design seminar under the heading, 'What are we doing?', to make explicit the labels that the field uses to describe analytical workshops (as presented in Chapter Three): controlled communication; interactive problem solving workshops; analytical problem solving workshops; collaborative analytical problem solving; third party consultation; facilitative problem solving workshops; and dialogue projects. There wasn't much discussion of this framework, except that Gevork thought it would be interesting to compare and contrast 1) principled negotiation, with 2) 'realpolitik interventions', with 3) problem solving workshops.

The second framework, also presented in Chapter Three, relates not specifically to problem solving workshops, but more broadly to any conflict intervention that might be contemplated. From Doob's work on "Intervention Guidelines: Ethics and Considerations",⁶ the team read these questions through a 'risk analysis' lens: what is the event or unresolved conflict; who initiates the intervention with whom; why is an intervention contemplated;

⁵ While working in South Africa, our workshop facilitation team generally committed 2 days of planning and preparation for a 3 day workshop, or 3 days for 4.

⁶ Appendix F, pg. 332.

when does the intervention begin; where and how do parties interact; should there be an intervention, must there be one? Bill and Gevorg discussed whether the framework carried with it an assumption that any intervention is either 'in support' of, or 'against' the concept of sovereignty. We concluded that it did not, at least because the questions could be applied to any IA intervention, for example, and our own institutional frameworks would not endorse either the 'for' or 'against' assumption. Our discussion broached the topic of the security of an intervention. The context for this concern was the diplomatic problem that one staff member from IA was having at the time with a government agency in a country where IA was active. In this case, our concern was not related so much to physical security of staff or participants in an intervention, but institutional and reputational issues. While it never became an issue during the Georgian Regions Project, there can be, of course, security concerns that are directly physical or life threatening for both interveners and parties to conflicts, and Doob's framework including rationale, timing, morality and reality anticipates that issue.

Bill asked whether the framework assumes a 'sufficient degree of invitation' by the parties to the conflict, to which I replied that I thought it did. With regard to the timing of an intervention we discussed some of the political and social activities that could impact our choices in Georgia, such as scheduled elections, and the harvest seasons in rural areas.

Our discussion began to warm up with the presentation of the third framework, again from Doob, about the attributes of interveners. The summary, as we discussed it, looks like this:

Attributes of Interveners - ...he or she must be 'a skilled knowledgeable scientist/practitioner whose background, attitudes, and behavior engender impartiality and whose understanding and expertise enable the facilitation of productive confrontation, that is the open and direct discussion of the contentious perceptions, attitudes, and issues separating the parties'.⁷

Confidence - An intervention (also) depends on the self-confidence attributed to them (interveners) by the principals.

Adaptability/Patience - The technique to be employed must be adjusted to the situation at hand.

Knowledge - The knowledge of interveners is more likely to be useful and effective when it is incorporated into a theoretical system. (Conceptual or theoretical frameworks).

Trust - Trust may not preexist but can be established immediately prior to and during an intervention.

Availability - An intervener should not approach parties to a conflict without being sure it is possible to stay with the intervention until the intervention is no longer needed.

Our group felt that 'knowledge' is directly linked to credibility, and conversely, that demonstrating a lack of knowledge usually results in a loss of credibility between interveners and conflicted parties. The issue of credibility led to a lengthy description of another intervention into the Georgian - Abkhazian conflict being conducted by Paula Garb. According to Nodar, Garb's intervention has excellent credibility, built through time, and based on the following attributes:

- 1) Kindness and empathy
- 2) Trustworthy
- 3) Time spent on the personal level with individuals and parties
- 4) Availability and collective time spent on the intervention
- 5) Garb's ability to 'be with people'

These are personal traits and capacities, and can perhaps be contrasted with 'professional' credibility, which is sometimes conferred based on credentials, institutional titles or positions, and documented experience. Nodar shared his perception that people feel they are 'privileged' to be invited

⁷ Quoted in Doob, from Fisher, Ron (1990). Appendix F, pg. 355.

to participate in her dialogue meetings, and that her behavior reinforces that. There was discussion of conceptualizing the link between the motivations of interveners and their attributes.

Bill asked Nodar about whether there has been any evaluation of Garb's project to date, which had been running more than three years at the time of the design seminar. Bill's question was whether 'any of the impacts are beginning to wear off'? Nodar's reply was that the impact does not seem to decrease, and that Paula Garb 'is engaged in our lives, as part of our conflict, and part of our lives.'⁸ Gevork commented on patience as an attribute, with respect to the (Caucasian) cultural tradition of offering up 'long monologues'.

Doob's final framework,⁹ when presented to the design team wasn't discussed directly, but rather provided the impetus for the team to turn towards the issue of presenting and representing the Georgian Regions Project for consultation in Georgia. In part, this reflected early on the desire of the design team to get on with the *IAR* activities, as they were less invested in the *DAR*, and in general somewhat less interested in 'theory' or the academic activity.

Gevork declared that with respect to the prevailing attitudes, perceptions, and recent history in the Caucasus, 'conflict is thought of as the prerogative of government'. His point was that the governments regard NGO interventions as subversive at best, and more likely risky or hindering. This perception

⁸ I only came to understand much later that Dr. Garb's methodology was action evaluation. It is interesting that this point wasn't obvious to Nodar when we were having this discussion, as he was active in her process.

⁹ See Appendix F, pg. 356.

would be born out in terms of our early relationship with the Georgian State Chancellery. We discussed a visit to IA's offices by a Georgian embassy official who pointedly told us an apparently widely known story about some young people from a conflict zone who went to a well-meaning European NGO for de-mining training, but were later caught in the act of laying mines back on their own territory. Just as de-mining training is 'also training in laying mines', the Georgian diplomat made the point to us that conflict resolution training might also be 'conflict training', and that our assumptions about the inherently benign or constructive nature of our endeavours were a little naive. It raised for us the issue, mentioned in Chapter Four, about whether the role of IA is to 'surface' conflicts, or whether we had an ethical duty to respect parties' instincts to avoid or deny conflict realities. To bring the discussion directly to Georgia, Nodar explained that any discussion of 'conflict', even the mention of the word, is associated with the recent civil wars in the minds of most Georgians and there remains until now a strong inclination to deny, avoid, escape, or resist any substantive discussion or initiative that assumes 'conflict' as the topic. So, conflict as a subject is loaded, risky, and 'painful' to the Georgians. As a matter of design, we began to make the decision that we would talk more about 'problems to be solved' in order for the project to be less threatening, and we would consciously avoid much mention of conflict, at least initially.

Designing the Intervention Action Research

After only a couple of hours, our design group began to turn their minds away from discussion of the theory frameworks and focus on the design of the

Georgian activities, despite our plan to only take up designing on the second day. This shift away from the *DAR* focus towards the *IAR* task seemed inescapable (because it was more interesting to them?), despite my own perceived need to stick with the *DAR* element of the seminar.

Framework number five came from Norbert Ropers' work on dialogue projects, and suggested the 'phases' of a problem solving dialogue:

Formulating differing points of view of the various parties as clearly as possible.

Reflection on the underlying needs and fears of the participating actors, their values, their experiences of conflict, and their hopes.

Identification of shared interests and similar needs and fears. Also, initiating practical cooperation on less controversial issues.

Securing understanding on the substantive issues in dispute, discussing approaches and ideas for resolution, imagining how these approaches might be implemented, and initiating practical measures.¹⁰

Our group discussion of this framework referred to the time frames and time lines assumed in most of the western models of conflict resolution, noting that problem solving orientations are almost always 'forward looking', while the experiences of parties who have suffered from violent conflict are usually 'backwards looking'. Ropers' framework deals with the need for parties to reflect on the past to the extent that they substantively deal with their fears (of repeating the past), and their 'experiences of conflict'.

The balance of the designing team's conversation about the twenty-two frameworks covered three frameworks summarised from Mitchell and Banks'

¹⁰ Ropers, Norbert, "From Resolution to Transformation: Assessing the Role and Impact of Dialogue Projects", 2000. Ropers' four phases could also be compared to the other versions of 1) definition, 2) analysis, 3) brainstorming, 4) action planning (the circle chart), as compared and contrasted in Chapter Three. Appendix F, pg. 357.

"Handbook of Conflict Resolution".¹¹ Three summaries were presented, the first dealing with 'principles of problem solving', the second about 'who are the right people', and the third was the Mitchell/Banks version of the phases of an analytical workshop.¹²

Bill Yates asked, regarding the frameworks, 'how many workshops are held, how long do they last?' None of the how-to prescriptions in the literature answer these questions. In the realm of 'international' conflict resolution - think Oslo process - factors that determine how many and how long seem to be related to at least: 1) availability of, and institutional capacities of the facilitation team, which can be affected by the fact that they are often affiliated with academic institutions and impacted by their institutional commitments such as teaching; 2) the relationship between the 'track two' problem solving process, and the links of the participants to 'track one' events; 3) the predictable and unpredictable rhythms of public conflict processes in the realpolitik arena, such as elections, political summit meetings, cease fire implementations or breakdowns, and the application of advocacy strategies such as economic sanctions.

At the level of 'community conflict' or when conflict handling workshops (which are usually training events or single constituency 'capacity building' events) are going to be held with participants from grassroots constituencies, the answer to the 'how long, how many, where do they happen' questions are more interestingly varied from society to society. In some places workshops

¹¹ Mitchell, Christopher, and Michael Banks, "Handbook of Conflict Resolution", 1996.

¹² Appendix F, pgs. 358-360.

are a weekend activity, taking place in addition to people's Monday-Friday workaday obligations. In some places, and under certain circumstances, people can be convinced to take five, to seven, to even ten days away for a significant workshop, but probably as a one-off (or perhaps an annual) event. This might be a Monday - Friday or Tuesday - Saturday opportunity. In some environments, the workshop must be held 'in the community', and in this instance, it is more likely that participants would come and go on a daily basis.

A problem solving workshop is more likely to take people out of their communities to a 'neutral' venue, or somewhere physically and psychologically removed from the pressures of the conflict zone. The point is that there is no standard or prescribed answer to the questions of 'how many workshops', and 'how long do they last'. Many initiatives begin without a commitment from the participants past the first meeting, and then build extended agendas if the participants find the dialogue or other activities useful, interesting, legitimate. An element of practitioner style choice is also involved. There will sometimes be financial considerations or constraints, regardless of the ethical prescriptions by Burton and others that interventions should only be initiated in the circumstance of adequate and available financial resources.

Who Are the Right People?

The group discussed criteria for who is invited to the workshops. Bill's principle is that he would choose to work with individuals, or 'small structures' that have 'convening power' with respect to a certain community, which could be a clan, tribe, or other constituency. Nodar's key criteria included, 'that

person who takes an interest, demonstrates desire'. Bill responded that you should take into account the 'functions' that people play, their roles. He noted that one side will want to see people with certain functions/roles coming from 'the other side'. The framework from Mitchell/Banks described the criteria for the 'right people' in this way:

It is practical to begin with 'what is visible' - organizations or groups that are politically active.

It is essential to include the 'grassroots' - the people whose interests, relationships, and interactions are most severely damaged by the conflict.

The principle is: start at the bottom social level and move upwards...legitimacy is the key to conflict resolution; no settlement can work unless it is acceptable to those affected by it, and it can become acceptable if they feel they are participating.

The process should not omit any group that might be able to damage or undermine the outcomes. The question is, 'who can prevent or undermine a resolution of this conflict?'

Have good representatives - start the process with influential private citizens, opinion leaders...participants whose distance from official positions enables them to think creatively, to speculate, and to engage in 'what if...' exchanges...flexibility is a key quality.

Burton's handbook, which assumes international conflict and large identity groups, makes no accommodation for dealing with grassroots constituencies. One main concern he has is the political pressures that public leaders are under in most situations of ongoing conflict:

Rule Eight: Parties should be invited to send participants who are not official representatives, but who have easy access to decision makers. - In the case of large groups, such as nations, the parties are invited to nominate representatives who are once-removed from decision makers, for example members of parliament, personal friends in whom there is confidence, and others. The possibility of failure will then be of less political concern and there cannot be complaints about talking with the enemy...Often scholars selected by leaders can represent a party well in initial meetings, because of the analytical nature of the process. An additional advantage of meetings of scholars is that the unofficial and research nature of the process is emphasized, and this is more acceptable to political

leaders.

Rule Nine: The participation of all factions within a party should be sought. - It is necessary for factions within parties to be represented to ensure successful reentry...Inevitably, including rival political party representatives on a team causes some difficulties since they are, especially in party parliamentary systems of government, often reluctant to help the governing party resolve a problem. This is a challenge to the sponsor and facilitator, but must not be avoided. The participation of oppositions within a ruling political party, or others whose support for agreed proposals would be required, is also important because hard-liners have to be convinced.¹³

Burton may be too theoretical here with not enough regard for certain practicalities. His assumption is that 'factions' need to be included in the process. In practice, this is very difficult to do. It is difficult enough to span the conflict lines, to get 'these' guys together with 'those' guys. It will usually be extremely problematic to not only bring together one side to meet the 'enemy', while also inviting them to bring their own critics and dissenters into the room or the process.

The experience of the Schlaining Process dialogue project is perhaps instructive regarding this point. During an interview with Jonathan Cohen (notes from the interview are attached as Appendix G), he related several interesting moments in the ongoing process of getting the right people to participate. Despite intensive efforts to select and recruit certain carefully chosen people, the process can be disrupted in any number of ways:

Every participant we invite goes through a long discussion between us, on the Georgian side Paata and me, on the other side Leanna and Manana and me. Who do we invite, why do we invite them? What are we trying to get out of this person to participate? What's their linkage within the political environment that makes them

¹³ Burton, John, "Conflict Resolution", (1996), pg. 56. Note: These two quotes are reorganized slightly from Burton's text to make them more clear. He preferred to put the rationale for a 'rule' prior to stating the rule. Here I have put the rules first, with the explanation following.

relevant? What's the contribution they might be able to make?

However, then this happens:

...but one of the conditions for him (Lakerbaia) supporting the process was he requested that we included two people from his staff, in the first meeting. One person from Sukhumi and one from Tbilisi. And I felt that well, it was a price that we had to pay. The people he sent were actually young women, in their mid-twenties, who didn't say much at all during the course of the week.

And this:

The Georgians arrived in the morning, and the Abkhaz were arriving in the evening, and it happened that the Georgian ambassador accompanied the Georgian participants from the airport, and they arrived and said to me, 'listen, we've got bad news, Lordkipanidze, the state minister, has come under attack from Nadarishvili, because he let the Abkhaz come to this meeting. And his response has been to buy a ticket for a guy called Napa Meskhia. Meskhia, was a member of the government in exile...So the Abkhaz arrived, and I went up to the deputy foreign minister, who was, in a sense, the key figure, and not the most senior, but the person responsible and who had been in the first Schlaining meeting with Martin in 1997. And I said, 'Giorgi, we have a problem', and I said, 'I can see this is difficult for you.' And he said, 'yes, we can't take part in a meeting with him.' 'And I said, I know. Let's see how we can address this problem.'

Our London design efforts concluded that our version of the 'right' people for the Georgian Regions Project workshops would include representatives of structures that we would assume had some responsibility for 'problem solving' and policy evolution vis a vis the conflict issues challenging the Region-Center relationships. This would include representation from the Georgian Parliament and from the State Chancellery.¹⁴ In the regions, at the local level it would include representation from local governance structures, both the *gamgeoba* and the *sakrebulo*. There would be representation from both national level and

¹⁴ The State Chancellery is an executive branch of the government, explicitly working for the State President, Shevardnadze. The Parliament includes members of Shevardnadze's political party and structures, but also opposition parties. Government ministries are organized within the Chancellery. In the highly politicized and fractious world of Georgian politics, there is a degree of competition and rivalry between the Parliament and Chancellery over many issues and governance processes.

local level NGOs and CBOs. We intended to explicitly involve people who had direct responsibility for resolving problems or representing specific constituencies in terms of policy and problem solving. Our attempts at actually getting these very people to participate in the workshops will be discussed in Chapter Six.

A Successful Workshop

The final framework that our design group discussed, exhausting their patience or interest after eight of the twenty-two prepared frameworks, dealt with the Mitchell - Banks framework for what 'success' would look like in a problem solving workshop.¹⁵ In outline form, their workshop looks like this:

- 1) Meeting opening, introductions, assurances and ground rules.
- 2) Participants explain, in turn, the nature and origins of the conflict, its present state, and key obstacles to solution, 'without interruption or debate'.
- 3) Facilitators introduce 'theory' perspectives, clarifying questions, comparison to other conflicts, in order to make 'theory' relevant as a tool for conflict analysis.
- 4) Analysis of options for problem solving. Facilitated discussion. Participants examine various options for change, using the relevant theory frameworks.
- 5) Analysis has revealed to participants the costs of maintaining a conflictual status quo, and any possible 'common ground' where problem solving should focus. Parties resolve to pursue options defined by that common ground.

Gevork kicked off the discussion of this outline to voice the opinion that 'storytelling' is very important when people have gone through a large violent conflict. We wondered whether this applied to the Regions Project. The

¹⁵ Appendix F, pg. 360.

citizens of Georgia on the whole have gone through the decade of conflict, but not necessarily in the context of the relationship between regions and center, and not all the people of Georgia, in fact. Both the Javakheti and Ajara regions were relatively uninvolved in any of the 1990s strife.

A dissertation question is whether theoretical frameworks are best used explicitly or implicitly, and how. We discussed the use of theory frameworks as 'tools'. One opinion was that they are 'helpful and empowering', while the contrasting description was 'distracting or dangerous'. In any case, they are often regarded as abstract, which is related to the fact that they are usually 'imported' or at least external to the experience of workshop participants. This leads to the interesting question of how you could elicitively develop analytical frameworks from the experience or context of workshop participants, rather than bringing them pre-designed to the analytical task. In practice, this would probably take more time than is usually afforded in a workshop design. We noted that frameworks are useful for 'organizing' or 'summarizing' information, or perhaps for simplifying it. And is simplifying analysis information desirable?

An issue that emerged from the discussion was whether or not frameworks act as 'filters' or 'lenses', metaphorically speaking, when applied to information as it is related or created. In this discussion it was held that lenses improve the 'focus' and bring clarity, or magnification, while filters 'cut out' information or data, reducing the complexity of the information available. To this end, frameworks should generally be designed as lenses to improve vision. Putting the frameworks to use as tools for bringing focus then becomes a design task and responsibility of the facilitators.

At this point our design team basically ended our review of and reflection on the theory frameworks. This was a frustration for me, as the discussion of the frameworks we did touch on was interesting and productive. However the team felt ready to move on to the less abstract task of building a design for the workshops. For the purposes of the *DAR* however, it is worth interrupting the narrative description of the design seminar in order to detail the salient elements here, because they go beyond the literature review and were, in any case, considered by me in terms of the dissertation.

Kelman's characterization of problem solving frameworks as action research was cited in Chapter Three. He sees problem solving workshops as a method of facilitating the micro-macro nexus:

The goal of interactive problem solving is promoting change in individuals - as a vehicle for change in larger social systems.

The core of the work of interactive problem solving is a particular microprocess...

This microprocess is intended to produce changes in the macroprocess, in the larger process of conflict resolution...¹⁶

The summary of Kelman's 'three components' of interactive problem solving demonstrates his psychological perspective, which can be contrasted with Burton's focus on social structures wherein human needs satisfaction may be frustrated:

The conflict is a problem shared by the parties, essentially a problem in the relationship.

Conflict resolution processes...address the underlying causes of conflict...the unfulfilled or threatened needs of both parties for security, identity, autonomy, justice, recognition...

¹⁶ Appendix F, pg. 361.

Problem solving is best achieved through direct interaction, in which the parties are able to share their differing perspectives.¹⁷

Mark Hoffman is mentioned in Chapter Three as having one of the few developed frameworks for evaluating the outcomes of problem solving workshops. He puts forward eight categories of potential constructive changes that could result from bringing parties together for an analytical experience:

Fostering interactional conflict analysis: emphasizing academic/analytical approach, reframing the conflict, identifying underlying needs and acceptable satisfiers;

Fostering improved relationship: building analytical empathy, developing co-operative interactions;

Fostering communication: overcoming stereotypes, face-to-face dialogue to deal with social-psychological features of protracted conflicts;

Education: introducing concepts, models and techniques for the resolution process, creating new knowledge 'owned' by the parties;

Pre-negotiation: to move to a stage where formal negotiations become possible;

Enhancing willingness to compromise: increasing mutual confidence, creating incentives for cooperation, costing the conflict status quo;

Assist the negotiation process: support official processes with unofficial, academic and analytical processes;

Implementation: assist and support transformational change activities, including the institutionalisation of problem solving processes¹⁸

Hoffman's framework does not explicitly refer to conflict prevention. However, it isn't a great conceptual leap to recognize that 'problem solving' is an obvious way to attempt to prevent social tensions from escalating. The Georgian Regions Project was conducted in a way that easily relates to

¹⁷ Appendix F, pg. 362.

¹⁸ Appendix F, pg. 363.

Hoffman's first four categories - interactional conflict analysis, improved relationships, supporting communication, and education.

For the design workshop, I adapted from Burton and Max-Neef a summary of what the phases of analytical problem solving would be, from a human needs theory perspective:

Deep-rooted conflict exists when human needs are not being satisfied because the existing social structures are dysfunctional for that purpose;

Therefore, parties jointly analyse their social structures, assisted by facilitation, to agree on what needs are unsatisfied, and what satisfiers would be appropriate in their respective social contexts;

Problem solving determines how to make changes or replace the existing social structures so that they exist for the purpose of satisfying human needs, and to develop action plans that will enact the required changes;

Problem solving workshops should be based on some sort of realism. Action plans that depend on external intervention, sponsorship or coercion, or that do not move people towards needs satisfaction and growing levels of self-reliance, will not resolve or transform conflicts.¹⁹

In Chapter Three, Kelman was cited, offering four phases in a problem solving process, a five-step workshop design through which he would achieve workshop objectives, and seven workshop 'ground rules':

Phases of problem solving:

- 1) Identification and analysis of the problem;
- 2) Joint shaping of ideas for solution;
- 3) Influencing the other side;
- 4) Creating a supportive political environment for negotiations.

Workshop Design (Agenda):

- 1) Informational exchange
- 2) Needs analysis
- 3) Joint thinking regarding solutions

¹⁹ Appendix F. pg. 364.

- 4) Discussion of constraints
- 5) Joint thinking regarding overcoming constraints²⁰

Workshop Ground Rules:

- 1) Privacy and Confidentiality
- 2) Focus on each other
- 3) Analytic discussions (non-polemical)
- 4) Problem-solving mode (non-adversarial)
- 5) No expectations of agreement
- 6) Equality in setting
- 7) Facilitative role of the third party ²¹

Although we didn't get to it in the design workshop, I had prepared a summary of Burton's framework for provention. It's probably fair to note that International Alert would be likely to shy away from promoting an intervention with such a strong ideological implication as 'conflict resolution as a political system', but through the course of the project, I certainly hoped that local partners and project participants would internalize and begin to adopt some of the basic vision that is assumed in Burton's most progressive thinking. As an exercise in conflict prevention the Regions Project was also definitely an experiment in provention:

Provention refers to the means by which a situation is anticipated and dealt with by removing the possible causes of conflict, with no reserve threat of force. It could mean secession, if parties sought this, far-reaching economic policies, or whatever combination of policies as might be required to make conflict irrelevant. In this sense provention could be a political philosophy, a general approach to government.

Another way to describe provention might be: institutionalized processes for fundamental social change, where social structures and institutions are created and evolve for the specific purpose of satisfying collective human needs such as security, identity,

²⁰ Appendix F, pg. 366.

²¹ Appendix F, pg. 367. These ground rules will be revisited in Chapter Six, and compared with the workshop guidelines that were developed through the Regions Project research workshops.

participation, recognition, and understanding.²²

There were several summaries prepared from Burton's conflict resolution handbook(s). The first outlined the basic features of his version of facilitated conflict resolution:

It differentiates between 'interests' which are negotiable, and needs and values which cannot be bargained or compromised away;

It is analytical;

It provides an opportunity for 'costing of the conflictual status quo;

It seeks to assist parties in deducing what alterations in social structures, institutions, or policies are required to enable needs satisfaction;

It seeks to assist the parties with communication and monitoring²³

The second Burton framework dealt with the facilitation panel and its functions:

The role of the panel is to facilitate analysis so that goals and tactics, interests, values and needs can be discussed and understood;

Panel members should be drawn from several key disciplines, have an adequate knowledge of conflict theories, and be experienced in the facilitation process;

The panel should not include persons who have made an exclusive specialty of the particular conflict being analysed, or of the region in which the dispute takes place;

The role of the panel is very active...Its role is to assist the participants in their analysis of the conflict;

Panel members must prepare and confer before and during the seminar...so that they are always acting together and with mutual understanding.²⁴

International Alert is committed to working with local partners, and it was

²² Appendix F, pg. 368.

²³ Appendix F, pg. 369.

²⁴ Appendix F, pg. 370.

decided that the Regions Project facilitation team would include two facilitators from FDHR, who, from Burton's perspective, would probably be considered relative experts on both the particular conflicts, and on the region. The importance that this decision played in the conduct of the workshops will be discussed further on, and in this case, we clearly decided to deviate from an existing theory prescription.

As noted in the literature review, Burton's handbooks were very specific in outlining certain aspects of his process, and therefore his description of workshop phases and activities is fairly detailed:

Workshops open with ground rules, facilitation roles, and the parties being invited to describe perceptions, values, goals, needs and fears;

Opening expositions are delivered without interruption;

There is no discussion of proposals or solutions until the analysis is complete;

Facilitators pose questions of clarification focussing on values, needs, goals, fears;

The panel prepares an interpretive summary, comparing and contrasting values and goals - and the participants will initially reject the analysis, which signals the point where 'real' analysis between the parties begins;

The panel contributes knowledge, conflict theory and behavioral frameworks;

Key issues emerge and become clarified. Facilitators prepare a list of agreed or shared propositions pointing towards resolution. 'The end goal of the first seminar can usually be no more than a short statement of propositions...a shared definition of the conflict'.

The next step, in later meetings, is to deduce from the agreed propositions those changes to structures and institutions that are required to move proposed agreements into effect;

Participants may not be ready to move into the future, there need to be transition processes;

The progression is from analysis, to a deduction of the required

political structures, to negotiation, then to policies and implementation.²⁵

Burton's suggestions about the behaviors of participants, for example that they will initially reject the analysis proffered by the facilitators and that they are often not ready to move into the future, are certainly based on his experiences in the field conducting and facilitating his version of problem solving workshops. While he does not go into many details in his writing, Burton had a fairly well attuned sense of the psychology, the group dynamics that can occur during a workshop, and the difficulties and challenges of having deeply conflicted individuals and groups together challenging one another's cultures, historical myths, and existential legitimacy.²⁶

The next framework relates to Hoffman's possible workshop outcomes, in that it suggests what would be the elements of a truly resolved conflict.

Mitchell offers seven conditions which would suggest resolution:

Completeness: Issues disappear;

Acceptability: Outcomes are acceptable to all parties and all social levels;

Self-supporting: No need for external sanctions to maintain agreement;

Satisfactory: All parties perceive the outcome as 'just';

Uncompromising: No 'half-a-loaf' compromises have been required;

Innovative: The solution establishes new, valued relationships;

²⁵ Appendix F, pg. 371.

²⁶ The basis for this opinion is personal experience garnered by sitting next to Burton on a facilitation panel during a 'simulated' problem solving workshop with Palestinian and Jewish students from the George Mason University student body. Despite explosive interpersonal and psychological dynamics during several very realistic meetings, Burton displayed complete mastery of the emotionally charged environment and context, including handling the jitters of the conflict resolution student panelists.

Un-coerced: No need for imposed solutions by outside parties²⁷

It has to be said that in the current realm of negotiated settlement of violent conflicts such as the Dayton Accords in the former Yugoslavia, in the cases of peacekeeping forces and international reconstruction efforts introduced into Rwanda, Kosovo, Angola, and in the examples of the frozen conflicts of the South Caucasus there is very little sign of resolved conflict in accord with Mitchell's proposed elements. There has been very little accomplished that could be described as complete, acceptable, self-supporting, uncompromising, or un-coerced. It can even be argued that the practices of modern peacekeeping, and the theories of conflict resolution, if Mitchell's formulation is an example, are working at cross-purposes.

The final framework that was prepared for the design workshop, although it wasn't discussed, dealt with some of the lines of criticism that have been made towards the various efforts and frameworks for problem solving approaches:

In practice, social scientists engage in social engineering, by manipulating the setting and structure of a workshop, by choosing the participants, and by controlling the conceptualizations of the conflict;

There is literature assessing third party interventions that dismisses interactive problem solving as inappropriate and ineffectual in dealing with protracted international conflict;

Where has it worked? Where has it succeeded? Which conflict has it actually resolved.²⁸

²⁷ Appendix F, pg. 373.

²⁸ Appendix F, pg. 374.

These twenty-two frameworks, which were drafted mainly from Burton, Mitchell and Banks, Kelman, Doob and Hoffman, were offered to the design team as representative of the 'state of the art' in analytical problem solving workshops. If the research task had been to derive propositions from these frameworks, and prove or disprove them experimentally, we would have spent our design time differently, and would have either not intervened in a real conflict at all, or in any case the project activities would have been quite different.

However, the design team was aware of and focussed on the real situation in Georgia and the need to design activities according to the needs of local communities and constituencies. Our activities needed to be relevant to the capacities and limitations of the partner organizations and their available human and financial resources. Therefore, on the second day of the design event, having at least been reminded of and given some consideration to the theories in the field, the team took up directly the task of designing the *IAR* activities of the Georgian Regions Project problem solving research workshops.

The Circle Chart and Facilitated Analysis - Return to the Narrative

As the story of the design seminar unfolds below, it may seem as though there isn't a crystal clear connection between the design discussions and emergent outlines, and the theory frameworks as presented above. On the one hand, of course we had our theoretical discussions in mind, and the prepared frameworks document in hand. However, the team, all of whom were senior in one way or another to the *DAR* researcher (me), was perhaps not sufficiently committed to the *DAR* to forego their own preferred frameworks, design and

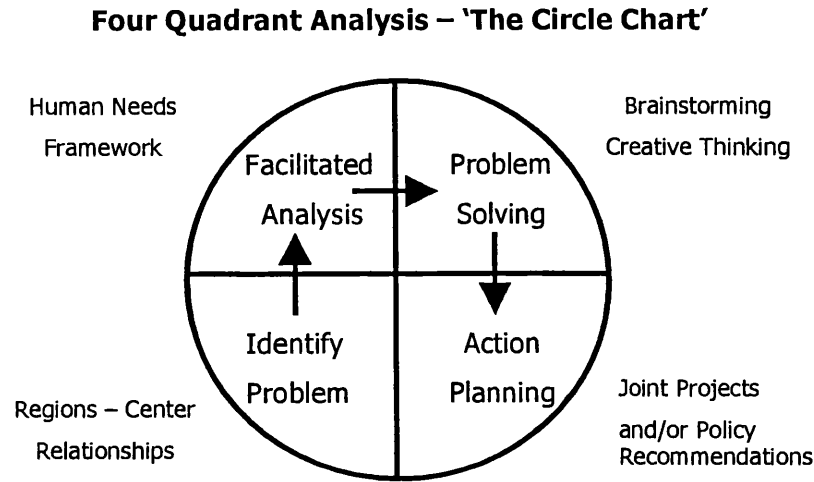
facilitation experiences, institutional priorities, and program responsibilities.

Our discussions were then informed by, but not seamlessly integrated with the *DAR* intention of basing the design work primarily in the existing theory.

The Fisher and Ury 'Circle Chart' (following page) was proposed to the design group as a broad outline for conceptualizing the range of activities that we wanted to cover in the problem solving research workshops. The Regions Project would bring the identified problem as the relationships between Region and Center. We would then have, in each region, a first workshop for 'analysis', a second workshop for 'problem solving', and a third workshop for 'action planning'. The human needs framework would be the conceptual tool for the analysis work. The problem solving would be a process of brainstorming and creative thinking. The outcomes of action planning would be joint projects and/or policy recommendations.

At the time of the design event, we had commitment from people to begin workshops in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Samegrelo, but not Ajara. While we fully intended to get into Ajara at some point, we limited our planning to preparing for work in the two regions.

Figure 8: Regions Project ‘Four Quadrant Analysis’²⁹



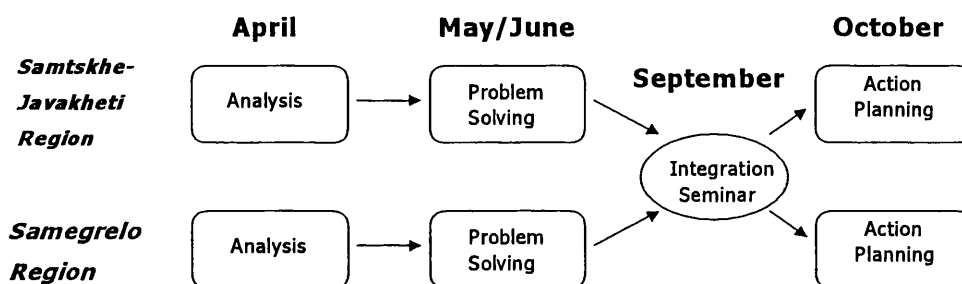
In addition to conducting separate workshops for each step in the circle chart, we also thought that we would be able to create an opportunity to bring people from the regions together with each other, and with a wider audience from the center if we brought them all to Tbilisi at some point. For this reason, we planned for an ‘integration’ event in between the second and third workshops. As shown in the diagram below (following page) we planned an analysis workshop in each region in April, and the problem solving workshops following on one month later in May and June. We then scheduled the integration event to bring people together in the center in September and then back to the regions for final workshops in October.

Having established these two models that illustrated the conceptual framework, scope, and time lines for the entire series of workshops, the design group decided that we would probably only accomplish a design for the analysis workshops. This was the task we then took up.

²⁹ Adapted from Fisher, Roger and William Ury, *Getting To Yes* (2nd Edition), Penguin Books, New York, 1991, pg. 68

Figure 9: Regions Project Workshop Schedule

Problem Solving Research Workshops



We began with some clarification of the overall aims of the entire project / intervention / workshops (including the non - action research streams):

- 1) Analysis of the problem(s)
- 2) Confidence building
- 3) Dialogue
- 4) Building ownership
- 5) Changing paradigms
- 6) the *DAR* agenda

We had some discussion about what metaphors would describe what we were trying to accomplish, for example whether we were accompanying people on a 'journey', or whether we were working on drawing a conflict 'map'. We concluded that it was definitely not a 'conflict mapping exercise', but that the journey metaphor was also not obvious. We didn't settle on one metaphor.

There was a discussion of what the products of the analysis workshop should be. We were agreed that there would be some sort of list of issues and that they should be ranked or prioritized in some way. This might also be

described or presented as a list of the 'problems to be solved'. We also agreed that the 'experience of being together' could be understood as an outcome or product of the workshop.

There was brainstorming about various kinds of activities, 'visioning' exercises; a 'storytelling day'; the creation of a metaphorical 'panoramic view'; we discussed how we could best introduce the Max-Neef matrix and there was discussion of doing this 'playfully', as against using a 'heavy form' of the matrix. The activities began to take shape in a linear order:

- 1) Introductions / Guidelines
- 2) Storytelling
- 3) Theory input - Max-Neef
- 4) 'Inputting' into the matrix - the analysis task
- 5) Synthesis of discussion and analysis
- 6) Facilitated discussion
- 7) Bridging - visioning (linking to the next event)
- 8) Feedback and evaluation

We discussed the 'roles' that we would offer to participants, by way of creating a safe space for dialogue, and in terms of the action research as an intervention strategy. Participants would be invited to see themselves simultaneously as 1) researchers, 2) experts, 3) representatives of constituencies.

To introduce the activity of storytelling, we proposed a set of questions that would present the research subjects:

- 1) Describe the existing relationships between your region and the Central government
- 2) Describe the issues that are difficult / contentious between your region and the Central government.
- 3) Describe frustrations or deficiencies within the structural relationships between your region and the Central government

We determined that by way of guidelines we would encourage participants to strive for an analysis that was 1) honest, 2) shared, 3) engaging, and 4) informed by the conceptual frameworks.

We did some predicting of what we thought the issues that would emerge from the first workshop in Samtskhe-Javakheti would be, based on our consultation visits and discussions with local partners:

- 1) Conflicted local governance relationships (*Gamgeoba* vs *Sakrebulo*)
- 2) Language issues (teaching of Georgian)
- 3) Russian military base at Akhalkalaki
- 4) Corruption
- 5) Lack of economic infrastructure
- 6) Armenian relations and cultural development
- 7) Meskhetian return

Finally, we did a brief evaluation of our own two-day design seminar. Nodar said that he had found the work useful and enriching. He said that he could now envision the workshop, and that the nature of our work was now more clear to him. He particularly appreciated the inputs from Bill Yates. Gevork forced us to define the title of the workshops, and we had a discussion about the use of the word 'conflict'. We determined to avoid the word, and avoid referring to 'conflict prevention'. Gevork was pleased that we now had a workshop 'script', and a facilitation scenario, although in fact we worked out the script later in Tbilisi, nearer the time of the first actual workshop. Gevork also appreciated Bill's contribution.

Bill's reflection was that the two days had been captivating and rich. He felt 'reassured' by Nodar, who impressed him as a professional local partner. Bill was interested in the potential contributions of the theory frameworks, and the DAR possibilities, and he said that he was personally satisfied by the two

days participation.

Summary

In the moment, the design seminar and process seemed to me a rather inauspicious start for the *DAR*. I was frustrated with my inability to control the activity in such a way that the *DAR* tasks, as I had imagined them, were taken up and exhausted by my team. This would anticipate the ownership theme which ran through both the *DAR*, but more critically the *IAR*, during the workshops and the wider intervention. The facilitation team did not always agree on how best to accomplish certain tasks, or even what the right tasks might be in a given circumstance. I felt as though the intervention should 'belong' to the Georgian partners, although this could be problematic for the *DAR*. However, in instances of disagreement or tension I would want to 'give' the decisions to my local partners and trust their insider judgement and deeper knowledge of the culture, society and conflicts.

The work that I had done preparing the frameworks was useful to me especially, and deeply related to the *DAR* process, and we did try to make use of the concept of designing with specific reference to the existing literature. At this point, we were ready to commence with the problem solving research workshops, having recognized and considered a number of *DAR* themes:

1) Conflict risk and avoidance: On the advice of many Georgians, we would initially avoid most direct references to conflict prevention or resolution. There is no corresponding advice in the literature. The concern of some Georgians that the intervention might be risky and provocative is anticipated in

the literature, especially by Doob.

2) Intervention ownership: There is nothing in the literature that anticipates organizing problem solving workshops on an equal basis with local partners. To the extent that locals, in this case FDHR, would be considered experts specifically on the conflict and culture by Burton, then partnering with them would go against his theoretical prescription. Those practitioners however, whose experience calls for ownership by the 'participants' of an intervention would recognize our model as a variation, in that FDHR were facilitators, but also Georgians and therefore representative of stakeholders to the conflicts we were dealing with. We also intended to promote a sense of ownership on the part of workshop participants through the participant/researcher roles that we would offer, and the work ethic of shared responsibility for facilitation, process and outcomes.

3) Internalizing the conceptual frameworks: Presumably, the panel of a problem solving workshop of the Burton or Mitchell/Banks model would have extensive knowledge and experience working with the relevant theoretical and conceptual frameworks to be employed, and therefore introducing the frameworks to the facilitators would not be an issue. Our intervention depended on the ability of the FDHR team to understand and then integrate several frameworks that were previously unfamiliar to them. Our intervention would also have to accommodate working in several languages, which probably happens in many interventions and workshops, but is not addressed in the literature as a theoretical issue.

4) Framework credibility and use: We decided to make explicit use of

human needs theory, particularly the Max-Neef matrix as an analytical tool.

We planned to adapt the methodology offered by Max-Neef for using the matrix and the concept of positive and negative satisfiers. During the consultation process, I became somewhat frustrated about my seeming inability to represent the main frameworks in a way that inspired interest and confidence in the theory. However, Nodar had become very enthusiastic and intellectually committed to the approach, and it became clear that the initial credibility of the needs approach and the Max-Neef matrix would come through the respect and existing relationships that FDHR had with various Georgians, and through their ability to explain and promote the conceptual frameworks. Without the Georgian partners, the explicit use of the frameworks, as I had initially envisioned it, probably would have failed.

5) None of the existing frameworks in the literature that indicate 'who are the right people' were directly relevant to our intervention. Rather than limiting ourselves to Lederach's 'middle level leadership' for example, our stakeholders spanned social levels from grassroots to parliamentary, from local to national, and across a number of ethnic, linguistic, and economic fault lines. There may not be any examples in the literature of bringing together high governmental representatives, with youth association NGOs from rural communities, with junior representatives of the military, with local politicians - into a joint process for analytical problem solving. Although we were confident that we understood who the right people were in the abstract, speaking in terms of institutions and structures, we would discover that those people may not always exist in the real environment.

6) Time limitations: From the outset, we would be challenged by limitations on our time and resources that would impact our opportunities for academic and theoretical thoroughness, reflection, innovation, and understanding.

In the end, the design event was most useful for beginning our specific *IAR* planning tasks, and for building a sense of teamwork between myself and Nodar, which would be important in the broader development of the project and the facilitation team.

Chapter Six

The Problem Solving Research Workshops: Activities and Outcomes

If you want to shrink something,
you must first allow it to expand.
If you want to get rid of something,
you must first allow it to flourish.
If you want to take something,
you must first allow it to be given.
This is called the subtle perception
of the way things are.

The soft overcomes the hard.
The slow overcome the fast.
Let your workings remain a mystery.
Just show people the results.

Step One: The Analysis Workshops

This chapter will be the most directly narrative section of the dissertation, relating specifically the activities and progression of the problem solving research workshops - seven meetings held between April and October 2001.

On Wednesday evening 18 April 2001, we opened the first problem solving research workshop of the Georgian Regions Project at what was once Stalin's summer place in Georgia, a beautiful retreat center called Likani. Fifteen fairly serious but visibly uncertain workshop participants sat in a circle, without tables,¹ as we introduced the workshop facilitation team and then asked

¹ Workshop design and dynamics can depend on seemingly small details, such as seating arrangements. In London, we debated whether people would sit behind tables, which allows for a certain 'working environment' context wherein people spread papers and take notes, or in a circle without benefit of table or desks, which is believed to promote openness and eventually trust within the group. I was in the minority, in London, opting for tables or desks. Once we got to the task of setting up the room however, the one facilitator (Jana Javakhishvili) not present in London looked at the circle of chairs, dwarfed in a very large meeting room, and declared that the participants could not 'feel safe'. Jana thought however, that if we took the available tables and arranged them *behind* the participants, in an open horseshoe, framing the circle, then this would provide the necessary feel or security. One participant from the parliament, nevertheless, declined at first to sit in the circle, placing one chair for himself behind a desk and separate from the other participants. He was eventually coaxed out from behind the desk and into the circle. However, he participated in only one

them to introduce themselves to one another. The evening's plan was for us to introduce ourselves, the project, the design of the four planned workshop events, and the action research themes, along with our approach for the analysis activities that would follow for the next three days.

In a condensed version, our facilitation outline for the workshop can be summarized as:

- 1) Various introductions - team, participants, project, analysis task
- 2) 'Storytelling' exercise to open discussion of region / center relationships
- 3) Summarising and clarifying the stories, and opening discussion
- 4) Introduce a simple version of the Max-Neef matrix of needs and satisfiers
- 5) Working groups to translate stories into matrix related analysis
- 6) Exercise on negative satisfiers in Georgian communities and regions
- 7) Facilitated discussion - clarification of analytical framework and data
- 8) Vision exercise - transforming negative into positive satisfiers
- 9) Workshop evaluation

We had gathered three representatives from the State Chancellery and one from the Parliament, making four from 'the Center'. We were missing one MP who would, in fact, never arrive at a workshop, despite repeated assurances that he would.² We had one representative from the office of the Special Representative of the State President in the Region (basically a regional Governor), only a couple of representatives from local governance structures, and the balance from local NGO and civil society structures in three Samtskhe-Javakheti communities: Akhaltsikhe, the regional capital, Akhalkalaki, and Ninotsminda, the two significant towns in Javakheti. This was more or less our designed and desired contingent. (The complete list of all the

workshop and was not seen or heard from again.

² The Chairperson of the Parliamentary committee on Civil Integration, who did send as his representative a staff member of the committee who became the only participant who was present at every workshop event in both regions.

individuals who participated in the Georgian Regions Project at some point is attached as Appendix H). We asked people to see themselves in four complementary roles during the workshop:

- 1) As 'the researchers'
- 2) As the 'experts' on the Region - Center relationships and challenges
- 3) As representatives of their respective constituencies
- 4) As 'students of life', to bring intellectual curiosity and honesty to the work

After a little more than an hour, we recessed the structured proceedings and provided a more informal socializing opportunity, including food and drink.

On Thursday morning,³ Dr. Sarjveladze (Nodar) led the participants through an exercise to share some of their expectations for the workshop. Comments included a desire for 'information sharing', 'understanding', 'dialogue', and 'finding common language' for discussing problems. At least two participants were eager to jump (somewhat preemptively) into their own story telling. The common language theme was mentioned by several people, and my process notes contained the following question: "What is 'common language' a satisfier for? Understanding? Affection? Participation?"

Nodar proceeded into our plan to motivate story telling. Although we were ostensibly engaged in research, with the participants in the role of experts and researchers, we nevertheless were sure, based on our various experiences working in similar settings, that 'analysis' carried out at the level of civil society, rather than in a more academic setting with intellectuals or elites, is best done initially through a process of people sharing their own personal experiences. The first step was negotiation with participants to create some

³ Our first morning without hot water, but not our last!

communication guidelines.⁴ Later in the project we would come to a consistent and more holistic set of guidelines, but our first elicited version emerged as:

- 1) One speaker at a time
- 2) Respectful listening
- 3) Respectful disagreement
- 4) No smoking in plenary (or drinking)
- 5) Be honest, be open
- 6) Shared responsibility for facilitating, process, and outcomes

It didn't take long on the first substantive morning of work for the critical issues in the region to become manifest. The Javakheti population speaks Russian or Armenian primarily, and many people in the region do not, in fact, speak any Georgian.⁵ One participant from the Center asked whether we could maybe conduct an 'experiment'. Her suggestion was that since Georgian is the official state language, perhaps we could spend some time working in Georgian, rather than in Russian, which was intended to be the language of the workshop. The facilitators chose to work around her idea and go forward in Russian, but encouraged everyone to feel free to express themselves in the language they were most comfortable with, and that we would make do through interpretation.

Once we were finally ready to move into the analytical work, Nodar led the session, asking the participants to give us opinions, perspectives, concerns about any of these five topics - always within the overall context of the relationships between the Center and the Region.

⁴ I have a personal preference for guidelines rather than 'ground rules', as I think that guidelines feel positive and less formal, where ground rules seem inhibiting and more formal.

⁵ My interpreter professed strong resentment of some of the Javakheti representatives on our drive back to Tbilisi, believing that while they claim to not be able to speak Georgian during the working sessions, they in fact are able and willing during the informal or social time. She perceived the insistence of working in the Russian language as an indication of disloyalty to Georgia on the part of the ethnic Armenians.

- 1) Needs of people in regions
- 2) Interests of different groups, communities, constituencies
- 3) Relationships between Center - Region
- 4) Personal experiences and frustrations
- 5) Historical perspectives

For the following several hours, we heard a variety of stories, at least one soliloquy, all manner of opinions and perceptions, and even the occasional question. We heard that Javakheti is a 'fragile region'. There are 'detonator issues'. The Russian military base is an example of 'Russian imperialism'. There was a seemingly well-known case of the hiring of several Georgian language teachers in a programme funded from the Center. But the money was 'eaten',⁶ and the teachers turned out not to be able to speak any Georgian. It transpires that real Georgian teachers don't want to come to Javakheti, as it is too far away, too backwards, and too damn cold in the winter. The Meskhetians were mentioned. Economic infrastructure has been destroyed. The visa regime with Russia is burdensome. Youth are leaving. There is economic, physical, psychological and political isolation from Georgia. There is no Georgian language mass media, which contributes to the isolation. We heard about ethnic bias, corruption, poor roads. Most of the issues were raised through specific examples (the stories) about factory closings, diseased animals, police harassment on the road to Tbilisi, family members leaving to work in Russia or Armenia.

Some of the story telling came out in the form of 'venting' about various well-known and legitimate frustrations from the representatives of the regional population. At other points, there were some interesting and challenging

⁶ Disappeared through corruption.

questions put back to them from the Center. For example, the representative from the Parliament asked, at one point, “Back in the Parliament, and in the Center, we have the impression of Javakheti as ‘fragile’ and ‘ready to blow’. Is that accurate? Who thinks so? Blow in what way? How fragile?”

The first day was taken almost entirely with these expositions and personal experiences. At the end of the afternoon we had a little bit of evaluatory discussion about the problems that were being identified and the analysis as it was shaping. One participant suggested that some of the issues being raised were just false, or that they were really only the presenting problems, and that the real problems or root causes were not yet being exposed. Another participant wanted to know if we could identify one specific problem, and go through the entire problem solving cycle, to experience it and thereby ‘learn how to do it’. One person admitted that it was a little overwhelming to see five pages of flipchart paper filled with serious problems, but acknowledged that this was a true reflection of the complex realities.

The project team, Nodar, Jana, and myself,⁷ had not facilitated together previously and were establishing our own team guidelines, trust, dialogue and working patterns. We established the obvious practice of debriefing and reviewing every workshop day,⁸ and we were all agreed that the first day’s work was successful and fascinating. We discussed the participation style of some individuals. We noted that some of the representatives from the Region might be avoiding certain difficult topics, not quite feeling free yet to say what they

⁷ Actually, the ‘team’ included 3 facilitators, 1 interpreter, 1 coordinator, and later in the project, an additional IA project staff person as process observer.

⁸ Always over a ritual glass of whisky.

really thought in front of the representatives from the Center. Nodar thought that the language used by the regional participants tended to be 'more integrative', while the style of the central government representatives tended to reinforce gaps, distance, or identify differences. Finally, we discussed our individual inclinations about the relatively 'active' or 'passive' style of our own facilitation and to what degree the role of facilitator is appropriately 'interventionist'.

Working from my process notes of the day, I was able to consolidate the five pages of issues, perhaps more than one hundred total, into thirty-seven concrete 'problems to be solved', that we could work from the next day to introduce the Max-Neef matrix and the framework of negative and positive satisfiers. As presented by the participants, the issues could be organized in categories such as: issues related to the Russian military base; issues of Georgian citizenship; information and communication issues; economic issues and challenges; local governance issues; education issues; ethnic and national identity issues; problems of corruption; health concerns. (The complete list of 37 issues and problems is attached as Appendix I.)

On Friday we introduced the participants to the Max-Neef matrix, and the framework for talking about satisfiers of basic human needs. As a way to illustrate the framework, we presented the list of 37 issues from the previous day, organized with respect to unsatisfied security, identity, understanding, participation, and economic/development needs (The complete list is attached as Appendix J.) For example:

The security needs of people in the Region (and the entire Georgian state, in some instances) are not always satisfied, because of these structural problems:

- 1) Criminalized economic activity
- 2) Lack of confidence in security forces
- 3) Lack of knowledge of human and legal rights
- 4) Rumours and fears
- 5) Informational isolation
- 6) Unemployment
- 7) Geographic (and ethnic) isolation
- 8) Meskhetians
- 9) Lack of ethnic / national understanding and tolerance
- 10) Corruption
- 11) Lack of adequate health care
- 12) Environmental concerns

The identity needs of people in the region go unsatisfied because of:

- 1) Informational and geographic isolation
- 2) Economic and educational migration
- 3) Local governance frustrations
- 4) Ethnic / national policies (Meskhetians)
- 5) Language policies
- 6) Lack of ethnic / national understanding and tolerance
- 7) Corruption

The satisfaction of understanding needs of people in the region is challenged by:

- 1) Lack of resources and successful policies for learning state language
- 2) Lack of mass media resources
- 3) Inadequate information for problem solving
- 4) Non-transparency in local governance
- 5) Inadequate management skills
- 6) Lack of educational resources and materials

Working with this framework and the information generated on Thursday, participants spent most of the day in small working groups. We had simplified and adapted the Max-Neef Matrix at this point, using five existential needs and two of the axiological needs, based on the 37 issues as we presented them above. This was done to simplify the task and as a means of prioritizing the problems to solve and making the framework more concrete for the participants. In the working groups people talked about what Georgians would need to 'have' and what they could 'do' to better satisfy security, identity,

understanding, participation and 'economic development' needs.⁹ The exercise was well suited to demonstrate the process of analyzing issues and reframing specific problems as symptoms of dysfunctional social structures.

While the analytical exercise proceeded apace, the working group experience and informal time (lunches, breaks) also allowed for participants to begin building relationships and enough confidence in the event, the facilitators, and each other that interesting dialogue and exchanges of opinions were beginning to take place. One of the most fascinating exchanges between 'Center' and 'Region' came while the topic of Meskhetians was being discussed in plenary. One of the representatives from the State Chancellery took it upon himself (a little imperiously some people thought) to reassure the Armenians from Javakheti about the Meskhetians by attempting to dismiss the basis of their fears, and proffering the opinion that the Meskhs are 'really just Georgians'. He was somewhat surprised then, when a young community leader (also a member of the Georgian Border Guards) from Ninotsminda, someone who had probably never shared a dialogue or debate with Chancellery staffers before, took him on squarely and said, "Look, you need to know something. If you take away the Russian military base, and at the same time force the return of the Meskhetians into our region - you're going to have a problem!" The moment was followed by quite a pregnant silence. It was not lost on anyone in the room that this was a unique opportunity for some open dialogue and sharing of perspectives between people who had rarely, if ever,

⁹ Max-Neef's matrix is designed for the overarching purpose of representing 'development' as the meta process. Adding 'economic development' as a need, in response to the issues as they were presented by the participants was one way that we adapted the matrix for our conflict resolution and problem solving purposes.

had a similar opportunity. To his credit, Mr. Chancellery responded at the end of the workshop by conceding that he had heard some new things and had been challenged to take important information back to his colleagues in Tbilisi, which he said he would do.

On Friday night, as would become the culture of the project, we held a Georgian 'supra' or banquet. It is worth taking note of a few points about this common feature of much conflict resolution intervention and training - the informal social element of bringing people together for eating, drinking and making toasts. Firstly, there is a criticism that people attend some of these western style workshops or training events, especially in poverty ridden societies, motivated by the benefits gained from travel, eating and socializing, payment of per diems and other expenses, or for any other personal gain that can be realized, rather than for genuine participation or interest in whatever conflict resolution agenda is on offer. Some of this undoubtedly happens, and although we did not pay per diems to participants in the Georgian Regions Project, we did have a problem with one participant (in the Samegrelo region workshops) who was clearly not a 'right person', and was more interested in the social opportunity than the substantive work.

Secondly, Gevork Ter-Gabrielian, IA Eurasia Programme Manager, has been known to claim, not completely facetiously, that the 'real' facilitation and peacebuilding happens almost completely during the informal and unstructured time, and usually over drinking in the Caucasian culture. He tends towards disinterest in, or even distrust of the structured workshop and training activities, and focuses his energy and attention on the interpersonal interactions that

happen away from the plenary or workshop venue. Whether his conviction is more a matter of personal style, or whether it represents a conceptual and theoretical bias is a matter of conjecture.

The dissertation is not taking up the merits or other issues attached to the relative amount of food, drink, travel, per diem, free time, sightseeing, and other inducements that can be offered up to encourage full participation in problem solving or other sorts of workshops. However, the interpersonal relationships and trust that are an intended outcome of the process clearly benefitted from significant time given to the informal and social elements of bringing people together. The Georgian Regions Project fully covered direct travel, accommodation, and subsistence expenses for participants. Per diems were not paid. Accommodation was arranged with regard to the proximity of the workshop participants, budget limitations, and appropriateness of the facilities. We did take people out of their communities where we could hopefully have their relatively undivided attention. We did provide support for the expenses of bringing people together socially every evening of a workshop, and there was a substantial supra in the Caucasian tradition to conclude every event.¹⁰

Our first workshop ended on Saturday with a translation exercise that usually works well, whereby the participants are asked to take the key terms from a conceptual framework, in this case the Max-Neef existential and

¹⁰ Despite being handicapped by my lack of language skills, my relative inexperience in the Caucasus, a general scepticism about Americans, and my frequent inability to refrain from telling stories about conflicts and resolutions in Africa, I nevertheless gained some small measure of credibility and respect in the culture by developing a knack for delivering a well received supra toast in the Georgian style.

axiological needs, and debate the various options for directly translating them into Georgian, Russian, and Armenian. It's a simple way of reinforcing and making concrete the terms and concepts. We also had an evaluation conversation with the participants, where some comments were offered, such as: "There was much food for thought"; "I appreciated the methodology"; "How do we make sure our work doesn't end up, 'on the shelf?"; "The biggest achievement was to get to know one another."

The facilitation team was well satisfied with the first workshop, and felt confident that we had deepened the commitment of these participants to patiently work through four workshops over seven months. The project design and conceptual frameworks had been accepted, and the analytical materials produced were credible, complex, and engaging.

A week later we began in Samegrelo, again on Wednesday evening in the Soviet-era sanatorium Tskhaltubo, near Kutaisi. We had one person who had been present in Likani, the representative of the Parliamentary civil integration committee, new representatives from the Chancellery, civil society representatives from Poti and Zugdidi, and some representation from local authorities in Zugdidi, a total of 13 participants.

The work in Samegrelo region was conducted in Georgian instead of Russian. We were a little more efficient with our time and went through the expectations and guideline setting exercises fairly quickly. The guidelines offered up by participants were not dissimilar to those agreed in Likani:

- 1) Don't wait for people who are late
- 2) Respect time
- 3) Stay with the topic
- 4) Be tolerant, not 'personal'
- 5) One person speaking at a time

- 6) Shared responsibility for facilitation and results
- 7) Be open
- 8) Turn off mobiles, no smoking

We had the same plans for instigating story telling and it happened easily and interestingly. Many people spoke about various types of economic poverty. The nearby 'border' with Abkhazia and the resultant pressures of the IDP population were mooted. Inefficient local authorities and corruption figured in the discussion. This group was a little more analytical in the sense that they shared less in the way of personal experiences and adopted the expert and research roles more easily. Some were concerned about the lack of a 'national ideology', which they experienced as a lack of unity or any sense of nation building. This was related to the problem of territorial integrity. At least one participant who did share his personal experiences was torn by a divided family, his mother being Abkhaz and his father Georgian.

At this point the facilitation team had planned to do some experimenting with the exercises that would lead to more analytical discussion. Nodar proposed and led a role-playing exercise wherein the group imagined itself 'in the Center' and attempted to rank or prioritize the problematic issues that were being identified. This was related to our London design workshop discussion, and the decision taken there that prioritizing issues is a common step used in planning or analysis exercises. Having brainstormed and listed many issues, participants then 'voted' in order to organize the issues from most to least important or challenging. In my process notes, I was concerned about the way that the exercise unfolded spontaneously, rather than from our agreed design, and that we negotiated the exercise with the participants as a group process.

'Very elicitive', I thought, and very confusing. There would be many times, through the course of the workshops, when the facilitation team would 'trust the process', and allow one team member or another to take the work in a particular direction. From the perspective of the *DAR* I often felt this was a drawback, as it invariably moved our work away from the original or carefully scripted design. However, I concluded that this was an inherent tension between the *DAR* and *IAR*. My choice was to a) trust the team; b) 'give' them the decision or moment, because it's 'their' (Georgian) intervention and conflict; c) allow the *IAR* to take precedence over the *DAR* if necessary, as a matter of ethical priority. I also came to the conclusion that when these spontaneous elements cropped up, it generally indicated a deficit in our planning, which I almost always attributed to time limitations or pressures.

There need to be some compromises made in methodology as the entire facilitation team internalizes the conceptual framework - human needs and problem solving. Before the framework is fully understood and familiar to the entire team, which takes time, team members may be facilitating from somewhat different starting points or experiences, and with an unequal or out-of-sync sense of group dynamics. As time went on, the methodological variations and facilitation deviations came fewer and further between.

The Max-Neef matrix was introduced and accepted by the participants in Samegrelo. Small working groups used the matrix with a set of analysis or

discussion questions¹¹ to categorize the issues and problems according to

needs and satisfiers, with these results:

Symptoms indicating that Security needs are not being satisfied:

- 1) Crime
- 2) Militias
- 3) Georgia / Abkhazia conflict
- 4) 'Unity' issues
- 5) Lack of national ideology
- 6) IDPs

Symptoms from or causes for Subsistence needs not being satisfied

- 1) Poverty
- 2) Lack of jobs
- 3) Lack of economic infrastructure
- 4) IDPs,
- 5) Agricultural deficit

Symptoms indicating that Participation needs are not satisfied:

- 1) Inadequate local governance
- 2) Undefined competencies for local authorities
- 3) Inadequate training for local authorities
- 4) Lack of legislation defining roles and responsibilities for local authorities
- 5) Inadequate communication between authorities and civil society
- 6) Lack of infrastructure for public participation

Symptoms indicating that Understanding needs are not being satisfied:

- 1) Lack of resources for education
- 2) Lack of resources for public information and communication, mass media

Symptoms indicating that Identity needs are unsatisfied:

- 1) Lack of national ideology
- 2) IDPs have no rights, protections, representation
- 3) Territorial integrity issues unresolved

¹¹ In Tskhaltubo, we used these questions to discuss the list of issues and problems: What isn't working? Why not? What is missing? What went wrong? What is preventing the (structure, institution) from satisfying needs as it is supposed to? What don't we know? The Samegrelo group worked from these discussion questions more than from storytelling because they seemed more sophisticated, and had more experience of workshop processes.

Comparing these issues with those from Samtskhe-Javakheti, there are clear similarities and some obvious differences. Crime in both regions threatens security needs satisfaction, but Javakheti has the issue of Meskhetian return whereas Samegrelo has IDPs. Identity needs are threatened by 'isolation' in Javakheti, while 'lack of national ideology' frustrated some in Samegrelo. What we termed a need for 'economic development' in Javakheti was expressed in Samegrelo such that we could relate the symptoms with Max-Neef's 'subsistence' needs category.

While the workshop activities were generally as positive as the work done with the Samtskhe-Javakheti participants, we didn't have the right representation from local authorities. One of the key *DAR* themes is to learn something about getting the right people to the table, and the Zugdidi local authorities presented a particularly difficult problem for us in this regard. The representative of the Zugdidi *gamgeoba* who arrived in Tskhaltubo found billiards and beer more to his taste during the working day than he did small working groups. His evenings were devoted to drinking bottles rather than glasses of IA-sponsored vodka.

This presented a problem for the facilitation team. By the end of the first workshop, I proposed that we diplomatically but firmly make it clear that he was unwelcome for the next event. The Georgian facilitators understood my position, but were concerned that this would be 'very un-Georgian', and quite difficult to do. My argument was that his lack of participation and commitment while we accommodated him and he sated his various appetites demonstrated a willingness on our part to reward, or at least tolerate a kind of corruption. I

was adamant that he be discharged. During the course of the project, this may have been the only, or one of the very few times that I was unyielding to the Georgian 'majority' or viewpoint within the team and tried to exert some authority as the leader of the project.

One element of the project design that impacted on our ability to get the right people participating was the reliance on local coordinators to recruit, contact and motivate local participants. In Zugdidi, we recruited and compensated (paid) a local NGO to play the community coordinating role, depending on their confidence that they would be able to bring the local authorities to the project. In the end, this proved difficult for them to do. In each community, it was difficult for local coordinators to motivate participants until they had a clear understanding of the aspirations of the project, by which time it was sometimes too late.

Each analysis workshop generated a four-page report that was translated into Russian and Georgian and circulated to the participants prior to the second set of workshops which were scheduled for June. These reports summarized the analytical information that had been created, reinforced the needs framework, and suggested preparation for the upcoming workshops. For example:

From the Samtskhe-Javakheti workshop, reframing the analysis in terms of human needs: People have 'participation' and 'understanding' needs. Those needs are sometimes satisfied through transparent and open local governance structures, where people participate directly, or through legitimate representatives. They require information that is timely, credible, accessible, affordable, and relevant. Receiving this information requires social structures for communicating back and forth between the sources of quality information, and its users. The existing structures, institutions, or processes for communicating relevant quality information between Samtskhe-Javakheti and the State are either

missing, or not operating successfully at this point in time. Therefore, the participation and understanding needs at both ends of the metaphorical 'information highway' are unsatisfied. This situation contributes to instability and fragility.

From the Samegrelo workshop, 'looking towards problem solving': At the next workshop, starting June 6th, we will work to imagine and create scenarios that would address some of the problems that have been analysed. We will be looking for new ideas and new ways that subsistence, security, development, participation, and understanding needs can be satisfied in the region. For example:

1) Can we imagine a structure or process for improving the consistency and the quality of communication and cooperation between NGOs and the local authorities?

2) Could there be regional initiatives that contribute to managing the conflict with Abkhazia, and reduce local insecurities?

3) What negotiation process could be created to improve the financial transactions between the region and the State, so that less funds are lost through inefficiency or corruption, and more funds are available for development and social welfare.

(These two reports are included in their entirety as Appendix K).

Step Two: The Problem Solving Workshops

The analytical workshops benefitted from time we spent in London during the design workshop, because we had done significant planning for the analysis activities. In order to design the problem solving workshops we had an entire working day in Tbilisi but then lost Nodar to a previous commitment.¹² As Jana and I tried to create a script and timetable from the design draft we lost confidence that we had a common vision and set of assumptions for what

¹² IA, and presumably other interveners sometimes risk relying too heavily on a limited number of local partners and participants. Dr. Sarjveladze was involved in two other International Alert projects in the Caucasus, and this sometimes meant competition for his time. I sometimes felt it necessary to 'protect' his role in the Regions Project and chastise my IA colleagues for requesting or committing him to other priorities. This is not so much an issue for problem solving methodology, as it is a broader issue of ethics and intervention capacity for international NGOs intervening in local and/or regional conflicts.

approaches we should take. As a result, although Nodar joined us in time for travel to Likani, we arrived there without a firm workshop plan.

From the beginning of the second Likani event, my workshop process notes depicted tension (at least inside me) and it lasted through the entire workshop. I wrote that 'by lunch, we had mostly confused the participants with competing versions of what we wanted them to do'; 'What we've done is all quite mechanical. The voting exercise (ranking) was awkward.'; 'We hadn't discussed - and I forgot to plan for putting up the refined / improved workshop guidelines'; 'The team had discussed a 'template', a guideline for doing the brainstorming, but we never managed to produce it.'

Despite some process tension and an unclear facilitation plan, the team was able to trust one another and hold the process together, probably with the help of the participants who remained motivated despite our internal confusion. More or less secure in our overall vision and teamwork, we pressed on to derive the framework that did become clear during the course of the event:

- 1) Our identity/security/participation (and the other) needs are not being satisfied. We can see the list of symptoms, and some of the causes.
- 2) There are some 'false satisfiers' out there, such as the security supposedly provided by the Russian military base. What are some of the other false satisfiers?
- 3) The task then, is to brainstorm and think creatively about new and different satisfiers for our basic needs, to replace the negative or missing satisfiers.

Interestingly, while our analysis work had supposedly been completed, new issues continued to crop up and several were identified as 'detonator' issues, that people had been reluctant to discuss or identify during the first

workshop. We heard about controversy over where the capital of the region should be, Akhaltsikhe being considered by some as too far away from the population centers of Javakheti. We heard about the 'nationality' information that is included in Georgian passports. Another issue described as 'painful' was about certain religious monuments that are claimed by some groups to be Georgian, and Armenian by others. The word painful to describe certain issues seemed to also be a code word to indicate the so-called detonator issues. These were deemed possibly too risky or dangerous to discuss, let alone undertake for problem solving.

We struggled to get the brainstorming process going. In my notes, I speculated about whether or not it was failing because we had not taken the time to 'teach' brainstorming as a skill before trying to facilitate it. We had promised the participants that we weren't having a training workshop, and we assumed that our facilitation would be skilled enough to finesse this. But our facilitation was confused or confusing, and the extra burden of my facilitation going through the interpreter wasn't making it any easier.

At about this point, I began to reflect on what I call 'workshop behavior'. This is an issue for me when participants seem to be doing tasks in a mechanical way meant more for the facilitators than for their own benefit or learning. I would prefer to facilitate problem solving workshops in such a way that they don't provoke or sustain workshop behavior. What is it? When small group tasks get completed conveniently ten minutes before a scheduled coffee/tea break; when brainstorming stops at the bottom of a page of flipchart paper out of convenience rather than intellectual depletion; when no one in a

working group wants to volunteer to give the (ritual) group report-back; you begin to recognize that there may be a lack of purpose, commitment, ownership or value in the work. The fault can lie with the facilitation or the design, with inadequate preparation of the participants or unrealistic assumptions from them, or when you simply have the wrong people working on the wrong task. My bias would be that mechanical tasks, highly structured and linear, tend to bring out workshop behavior. My workshop notes had the following concern, obviously pertinent to the *DAR*:

“Reframing according to the needs-based lists hasn’t helped much so far . . . is the framework a distraction? It’s important to the facilitators, but not really engaging for the participants. People are not really working to the matrix, although we kind of think we are... And we’re basically doing regular old style workshopping, not anything qualitatively different.”

We discussed my concerns during the team debriefing. We agreed that we were looking for, or waiting for, the ‘aha’ moment, the conceptual enlightenment. In a training setting we often engineer the ‘aha’ moment.¹³ I confessed to being frustrated that maybe the framework wasn’t ‘working’ in the sense that it is supposed to be the means for provoking the ‘aha’ realization, or for initiating the paradigm shift. I questioned whether or not we were creating any ‘new information’, because my assumption would be that the new information depends on people doing their work within the new paradigm after having realized an ‘aha’ moment.

¹³ My process notes recall however that in the South African work in Meadlowlands and Tembisa, when we were similarly adapting problem solving workshops to our community work, our critical ‘aha’ moments were spontaneous rather than scripted or engineered.

We discussed another doubt-inspiring moment during the workshop. Participants were talking about planting trees in Javakheti as a satisfier for 'identity needs'. I had challenged the group, in plenary, to explain what planting trees had to do with satisfying identity needs. And they had an answer. The story they told was about the population of the region identifying with forests that had once been abundant, and a particular type of tree that was important to the people in Javakheti. They told the story convincingly enough that I was reminded of the famous oak tree of the Basque people that is preserved and venerated in the town of Guernica, where it is clearly a symbolic satisfier for Basque identity.¹⁴ My process notes also reflected on the process of flipcharting workshop information. My observation was that it creates workshop behavior. I'm sure that Burton would never use flipcharts in his problem solving workshops.¹⁵

Despite my anxieties about our process and the relevance or success of the Max-Neef / human needs framework, the participants worked in small groups to create nearly two hundred brainstormed ideas that 'if actualized' would better contribute to needs satisfaction, problem solving, and conflict prevention between the Region and the Center. We were further able to characterize the ideas as:

¹⁴ In the bar that evening, facilitated by vodka, we engaged in some much more satisfying brainstorming by talking metaphorically about planting trees to replace mines/detonators, on the disputed church grounds, leading to reconciliation.

¹⁵ If a quantitatively minded researcher would one day design an experiment to determine how much information is lost as stories, speeches and fully formed ideas get recorded onto flipcharts; as brainstorming is curtailed when one or two flipchart sheets are filled; and as flipcharts are then summarized 'back at the office' after an event...I would want to participate.

- 1) Ideas that were 'stimulators' in the brainstorming process
- 2) Ideas that some participants and organizations might want to take up immediately
- 3) Ideas that are 'too big' for this group, which could represent recommendations to other policy makers or other actors
- 4) Ideas that this working group might take up
- 5) Ideas that need more development (or perhaps more analysis)
- 6) Ideas that somebody else has already thought of
- 7) Ideas that probably aren't that good

An important project moment happened on the final Saturday morning in Likani. The top official from the State Chancellery¹⁶ who had approved the participation of his staff in the workshops, but who had not previously participated, arrived for the final working and evaluation sessions. This manager had taken the decision to have his staff participate in the project despite some professional risk. As he surveyed the pages and pages of flipcharted brainstorming ideas that covered the workshop venue walls, and as he listened to the evaluation conversation that we had, he was clearly pleasantly surprised by the depth and creativity of the thinking and by the energy between the participants in the workshop, especially including his own enthusiastic staff members. From that point forward, our relationship with the State Chancellery deepened considerably, and they became our most significant governmental partners and collaborators.

Another important project development came from Nodar's inspiration, as he was thinking about the 200 brainstorming ideas and our characterisation of them. We knew that there were worthwhile ideas there, but that our project and partners would not be in a position to take first responsibility for actualizing

¹⁶ Mr. Sandro Svanishvili, from the President's Regional Politics and Management Service. Notes from my *DAR* interview with Mr. Svanishvili are in Appendix M.

those proposals. The idea that emerged was a 'Project Bank' where we would list and perhaps publicize ideas as potential projects in the hope that other organizations would find resources and motivation to take them up.

Evaluation comments on the Saturday morning included: 'I can start to see that there are realistic, implementable ideas'; 'There has been an impact on my work between the first and second meetings . . . it's nice to have the people from the Center here'; 'I wasn't going to come to this second meeting, but somewhat to my surprise, I'm starting to see the success of the process'; 'In the first meeting we planted a tree. Now it has leaves. We have to care for it now, so that it will bear fruit for us to eat'.

One week later, we reconvened in Tskhaltubo with the Samegrelo region participants. We had 11 returning participants, 17 in total, and I was astounded when my banished *gamgeoba* billiard-playing vodka-guzzling local official didn't take 'no' for an answer and talked his way onto the participant transportation from Zugdidi. He insisted on joining the second workshop and promised to be on his best behavior. My Georgian colleagues let him stay.

As it happened in the analytical workshops our team was more together for the second problem solving workshop, and the Samegrelo group continued to function at a somewhat higher intellectual level, so our process was a little more efficient and effective. As in Likani, we revisited the analysis and did some additional work on it. Participants pointed out to us that we had added 'identity' as a need to work with, though it hadn't been on their own list from the first workshop. This led to a line of discussion about the degree to which some Georgians in the regions don't feel 'respected' by the State, by the Center. The

identity at play here is 'Georgian citizen', as opposed to the ethnic identity of the Armenians in Javakheti. The participants settled for describing 'recognition and respect' as the satisfiers of identity needs in Western Georgia. There was resistance to any suggestion that differentiating 'Mingrelian' from Georgian was relevant in analyzing the region's problems.

It was during the second workshop in Tskhaltubo that we were confronted for the first time, but not the last, by events in the real world intruding into our carefully scripted working scenarios. Our workshop venues were generally well insulated from diversions such as the internet or newspapers, although we never fully escaped the cell phone syndrome. However someone found a television during the lunch break on Thursday, and discovered that the entire Georgian Parliament had resigned in response to some political intrigues that were being played out in Tbilisi at the time. When not all of the facilitation team and almost no participants returned after lunch, we waited for a few minutes, and then searched out our colleagues, only to find them all hypnotized around a television in the residence hall, while equal measures of political theater and political chaos played out on the tube. It was satisfying that despite some genuine drama and uncertainty about the import of events in the Center the workshop participants themselves decided, after about an hour, to return to the work at hand and to focus their attention on the opportunity that we were creating with them to impact on Georgia's options for the future.

The Samegrelo workshop did not fail to provoke some *DAR* anxieties for me. My process notes read:

"We seem stuck to me. Who is stuck, them or us? Nodar's version is that the 'identity issue' is 'deeper' and therefore taking more time. I say maybe we're stuck . . . One way I think we're stuck . . . is that

we're not willing as facilitators to separate identity, security, etc. No investment in the framework, just different ways to recategorize the information over and over. But maybe the problem is with the framework. Are we having a different process than in Likani because of, a) lack of planning; b) flexible design; c) spontaneous facilitation; d) open space (meaning, whatever happens is the only thing that could have...)?

We weren't really so badly stuck. As it happened in Likani, the participants took to the brainstorming task with intent and focus. One individual in particular made a significant contribution to the task by assuming 'shared responsibility for the facilitation, process, and outcomes'. He played a strong leadership role which the facilitation team fully appreciated. Small working groups each took one 'need' and brainstormed ideas, to solve problems, to better satisfy needs, to prevent conflict. Where the Likani participants had proposed 199 ideas (as we counted them), the Tskhaltubo group spontaneously created 200.¹⁷

To a somewhat higher degree than in Likani, the Samegrelo region workshop was focussed on socioeconomic problems that they believe would be solved through long-term economic development. I was somewhat frustrated by the extent to which the project tended towards 'development' themes, and failed to motivate much interest in 'conflict resolution'. This may be in part a reflection on the degree to which civil society in Georgia remains a new and nebulous concept, and that 'problems' and conflicts are viewed as being the responsibility of the state to handle. It is also related to the dissertation theme of conflict avoidance.

¹⁷ I counted them myself, without trying to rig the total!

As in Likani, the increasing sense of trust in the project allowed for new and interesting stories to be put forward, but there were also limits or boundaries. We heard about local 'street authorities', an informal (and surely illegal) defense and justice structure that people can turn to in Zugdidi to resolve disputes locally or pursue claims against others. There was a brief and inconclusive discussion about whether or not these street authorities were a 'false satisfier' for security. There is likely a connection between these street committees and local mafias with other criminal agendas, and the topic faded during the workshop. Similarly, the working group brainstorming about security needs failed entirely to address problems with armed militias known as partisans, or the problems associated with the CIS and UN peacekeeping missions. This group simply didn't see those problems as within our purview, or within their comfort zone to consider.

When the workshop moved on to evaluation and planning for the next event, which would be the 'integration' seminar in Tbilisi, there was a surprising degree of reticence about coming together with the Samtskhe-Javakheti project participants. The Georgians from Samegrelo were nervous about meeting the Armenians from Javakheti, having had very little previous experience of or exposure to them. The facilitation team was somewhat surprised but we were able to convince them that the meeting was legitimate in terms of the methodology of the project, and that there would be much to gain from comparing and contrasting the analysis and problem solving work done so far in the two different regions. Some participants remained skeptical - but not unwilling to attend in Tbilisi.

We finished the problem solving phase of the project in the middle of June 2001. Participants in both regions were engaged and committed to the entire problem solving cycle and anticipating with interest, and some trepidation, coming together with the 'other' region in Tbilisi in September.

During this time, we had not yet given up on finding a way to establish the project in the region of Adjara. We had carefully tried out a couple of strategies for creating openings into the region. At one point, the British Ambassador herself was planning to broker a meeting for us and to introduce the project to Adjarian leader Aslan Abashidze. But her own opportunity to go to Batumi (the capital of Adjara) fell through because of the delicate and difficult nature of relationships with the regime there, and that option was closed for us. By the end of the workshop process in 2001, we had relegated any consideration of approaching Adjara to the possibility of renewed funding and ongoing Regions Project work, which would have fallen outside of the *DAR*.

Step Three: The Integration Seminar

On the morning of 11 September 2001, the Regions Project team, including Nodar and Jana visiting from Tbilisi, and several IA colleagues, met in London to plan for the upcoming project events, particularly the Integration Seminar. During lunch we became aware of the unfolding tragedy in New York and Washington as airplanes were crashed into the World Trade Center and Pentagon. I relate it here only for the fact that it was a sobering and challenging moment for my task of leading the Regions Project design work. While my Caucasian colleagues were less distracted during that afternoon because they were less familiar with the significance of the targets and the

magnitude of the story, I finally lost my ability to concentrate or facilitate the work at hand, and we ultimately gave up our meeting and surrendered to CNN.

During the night, I determined for myself that our work was important, that our time was always limited, and that I had to find some way to block out the news and give my team a chance to accomplish our tasks. Whether or not I would have been able to do that, by the following morning the import of events had become clear to the Georgians, who could already imagine ways in which these events would touch Georgia and impact on its relationships in the region and with Russia.

We did our best to stick to the task at hand and we did devise an event design for the integration seminar. Nevertheless, September 11 and the Georgian Regions Project will always be connected in my own mind for those two days of distraction and the reflection they precipitated on 'conflict prevention' and our field of endeavor. After the resignation of the Georgian Parliament while we were in Tskhaltubo, this was the second time when we were unable to insulate our work from the impact of external events. (By this time the Georgian Parliament had been reinstated in its entirety.)

The objectives of the integration event were as follows:

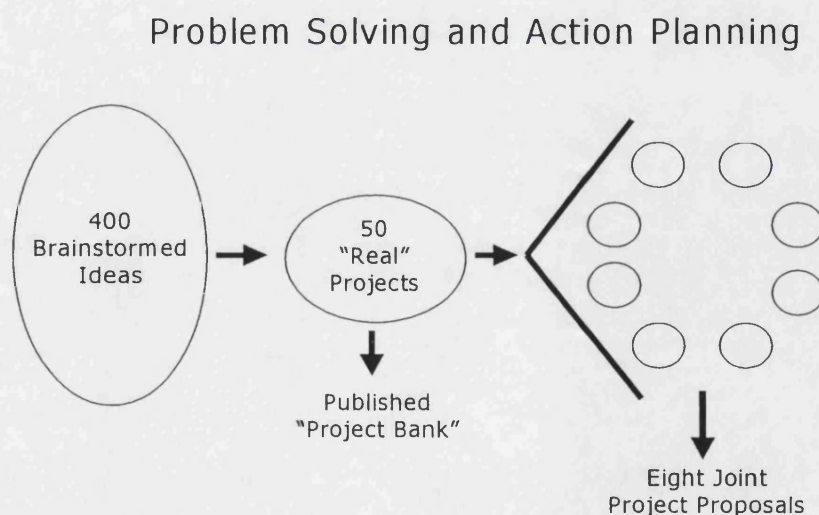
- 1) Relationship building between the regions
- 2) Information sharing
- 3) Compare and contrast the regional experiences of the project
- 4) Reinforce conceptual frameworks
- 5) Process and prioritise the results of the problem solving workshops
- 6) Bring in and receive feedback from a wider 'Center' audience
- 7) Project coordination
- 8) Evaluation

We would spend time first reviewing our process and presenting the results of the analysis and problem solving workshops. The main task was to

take the four hundred brainstormed ideas and work with them in such a way as to make 'action planning' a useful and clear task during the third set of workshops that would be held back in each region.

We would have people work in groups by region, and the task was to narrow down their two hundred ideas, first to about twenty-five ideas, and then to four. The twenty-five ideas would be among those that had originally been characterized as good ideas that some organization should take up, or that could form the basis for policy recommendations, but that were otherwise too large or complex for our working groups to take first responsibility for. The four ideas would be ideas that the participants would want to develop specific action plans for, and that we felt we would be the right people to take first responsibility for design and implementation. Combining the two regions then, we hoped for a result that would look like this:

Figure 10: Results of Problem Solving and Action Planning Activities



Nearly 50 people gathered in Tbilisi on 3 October 2001 for the Integration Seminar. It was by far the largest meeting that the Regions Project had attempted by this time. Our donors made an appearance, there were new faces from center-based Georgian NGOs,¹⁸ and the project team had grown by now to include a fourth facilitator from the IA staff.

Because we place so much faith in the power and legitimacy of storytelling we let the participants from each region share their experiences of the project with the others through a process of selected participants relating some of their personal experiences of the project so far. As we revealed the analysis data, there were small 'aha' moments as people compared the identified problems and analysis region by region. For example, the Armenians were surprised to learn that Georgians pay roughly the same amount in small 'fines' to roadside policemen when traveling to and from Tbilisi. The Armenians had always assumed that they pay more, as a matter of ethnic prejudice against them.

The informal and social time was well used to break down any resistances that had been brought to the event, and the common experience of the Regions Project quickly drew people together from their two disparate regions. Small coincidences, like one hundred and ninety-nine ideas brainstormed in Likani and the two hundred from Tskhaltubo contributed to a sense of shared purpose, and as facilitators we did all we could to foster this.

When it came time to begin the process of winnowing four hundred ideas down to fifty, and then to eight, we introduced a set of criteria that the working

¹⁸ In particular the Georgian Young Lawyers Association, and the NGO Multi-National Georgia.

groups could apply to determine genuine and credible opportunities for concrete joint conflict prevention activities. Our criteria looked like this:

1) Is it concrete? Can we name it?

- a) a joint activity
- b) an event
- c) an NGO or government project
- d) a coordinated action plan or strategy

2) Is it urgent?

- a) does it solve a specific problem
- b) will it help prevent conflict

3) Are 'we' the right people? Our resources are . . .

- a) our institutions and organizations
- b) our relationships
- c) the information we have created
- d) IA and FDHR as facilitators

4) Will we be able to create a credible, explicit plan of action (at the action planning workshop?)

Because this event included both new participants and more of them, our working group time and tasks could have been more complicated and difficult. However, it was at this point that our concept of 'shared commitment' to facilitation, process and outcomes really began to become an increasingly satisfying processual result of the intervention. Several of those participants who were experienced with the project facilitated the integration of those less familiar with the work that had gone before. As people began to perceive the potential real progress on solving specific problems, and feel some success in influencing policy discussions and considerations through their contact with the Chancellery, they transcended the inclination towards workshop behavior, and

became highly motivated, effective and efficient in their group tasks and outcomes.

Our facilitation was very light during the integration seminar, as the participants worked through the process of deriving fifty projects from the four hundred, and selecting eight projects from the fifty according to the criteria that had been proposed. These eight projects (four in each region) would then go through to the action planning workshops to be held back in the regions within a few weeks.

The Integration Seminar was, in some ways, a high point of the project. There was full participation from the Regions, and from the Center. The participants were surprised by the extent to which they formed a bond between the two regions, and a small but rich network of interpersonal relationships developed. The project began taking a 'three-sided' shape, rather than two marginally disconnected bilateral processes. And the participants were looking forward with anticipation to the action planning workshops, when they would take responsibility for creating joint projects or proposals and concrete work plans. All of our objectives for this event were successfully addressed: through the 'story telling' which served to share information and compare the regional experiences; as relationships were built during working groups and informal social time; as the working groups processed the information that had been created thus far, keeping the conceptual frameworks in hand; through the participation and feedback that came from new participants based in the Center. If only all workshops could be so easy.

Step Four: The Action Planning Workshops

By the time we reconvened the Samtskhe-Javakheti workshop participants in Likani, at the end of October 2001, we had received an offer from the donor, DFID, and the British Embassy, to help us organize a 'mini-donor meeting' where the results of our action planning could be presented to a range of international donor organizations. This was an excellent opportunity for project participants. It did however serve to reinforce a trend that the project had precipitated, that I felt was unfortunate from the theoretical aspect of problem solving workshops. Our participants clearly conceived of the potential 'concrete outcomes' of our work almost completely in terms of envisioned NGO civil society projects that would require (provide to them) new international funding. There was very little sense that we were working in a way such that two or more parties to complex conflicts could derive an action plan for solving some problems through dialogue, joint action, negotiation, or cooperation. One possible, partial explanation for this came from an informal facilitating team discussion about 'post-Soviet mentality'. The argument was that under the Soviet system, very few people ever had to take any real responsibility for the 'community' or the affairs and circumstances of anyone outside of their own immediate circle of family and close friends. In post-Soviet Georgia then, there remained a disinclination on the part of most people to accept responsibility for solving problems or taking an active role in public issues and policy implementation. Obviously, our criteria for including the 'right people' would assume individuals who would be able and willing to overcome this reluctant attitude and mentality. But the instincts to understand and pursue

projects that promised some return on self-interested motivations was understandably stronger, to a degree, than the unfamiliar prospect of turning responsibility taking into an opportunity for community building and conflict prevention.

In any case, the action planning task was clear in Likani: to outline and create action plans for joint projects that could be implemented, if funded, and would contribute to needs satisfaction and reduce the likelihood of conflict between Region and Center.

Within the facilitation team, we had a somewhat significant difference of opinion about how to motivate the participants for the task, and in accordance with the principle (that the Georgian instincts would take precedence), Nodar proposed to them an elaborate role play, in which some of them would play the role of 'donors', and the others would create project outlines and present them to the donors in the form of a competition. The donors would then rank and give feedback to these proposals. FDHR provided some excellent guidelines for the construction of funding proposals, and in working groups the participants created several small project outlines with action plans for completing entire funding proposals. I think my concern here was firstly, that this would reinforce the impression that problem solving equates with creating development projects that require donors. Secondly, that the role play activity creates workshop behavior. Finally, that we would have perceived 'winners' and 'losers' in terms of the funding competition, even though it was done in the form of a game. I thought this could de-motivate some of the participants.

At this point, I was also eager to put forward a proposal and action plan that would illustrate 1) a conflict resolution initiative, and 2) an action plan that did not depend on creating a new project and acquiring funding. We put a proposal forward to intervene in a specific conflict in one of the project communities, between the elected (*sakrebulo*) and appointed (*gamgebelli*) officials. The proposal was for the Chancellery to act as conveners,¹⁹ with IA and FDHR mediating or facilitating between the factions.

Nodar was right in that the role play was effective and energizing, and the work of the various teams fairly intense. Each joint project, as conceived, involved partnership between Region and Center, each project was derived directly from the analysis and problem solving activities, each project was subjected to the criteria proposed during the Integration Seminar, and each project was 'approved' by the role-playing donors, after constructively critical feedback. The Samtskhe-Javakheti participants elaborated three significant project outlines, and gave shape to some 25 more for purposes of developing the Project Bank. It was agreed that the IA proposed intervention project would be presented to the Chancellery after the workshop.

The workshop in Tskhaltubo went in much the same fashion. Three region-specific joint projects with the Center were elaborated and one project that would link the Center and both regions emerged. There was a difference in Samegrelo in that the existing NGO base there had always been more

¹⁹ The plan to have the Chancellery act as conveners was born from the realization that our initial process of consultation and invitation of these same local authorities had basically failed. We needed a new strategy for getting the right people to participate, and our Chancellery partners seemed quite confident that they had the relationships and moral authority to successfully invite the disputing parties. In the end however, they also failed to get the same people that we thought were the 'right people' to resolve the particular conflict.

substantial, and the projects that they developed were, on the one hand, directly derived from our process work, but also reflected long standing interests and existing capacities for some of the individuals and their institutions from that side. To an extent, the Regions Project became a vehicle for blending existing ideas and needs with an advanced methodology to distill new projects with improved chances for funding and institutional development, particularly in Zugdidi.

Summary

That's how it went. Seven events in two regions, held over about twenty-five days of workshopping during a seven-month period. Some things we planned worked, and some plans went awry. Some things happened that we didn't plan. There were pleasant, and unpleasant surprises. The work was sometimes exhausting, but usually created positive energy. Our facilitation team became very close.

There was an alternative workshopping framework, one that would seem to be in contrast to the entire premise of the DAR, if taken too seriously. I included it here as part of the narrative mainly to illustrate one way for a facilitation team to be flexible, patient, and to keep some perspective on perceived successes and failures (and not as a theoretical construct). The principle of 'open space' was originated by an American consultant who spent his Peace Corps years in Africa, and he says he learned about how the

marketplace is related to how we organized ourselves to do group work and joint tasks. The four first principles of 'open space technology' are:²⁰

- 1) Whoever comes are the right people.
- 2) Whenever it starts is the right time.
- 3) Whatever happens, is the only thing that could have.
- 4) When it's over, it's over.

These principles sometimes helped us maintain our composure and commitment in those moments when things just are not going quite as planned, for example when the MP who has promised to arrive doesn't, but the Zugdidi town council official vodka taster who has been banned from the workshop does. When we appear to veer away from conflict resolution and needs theory, and we're talking about planting trees as a satisfier for identity needs, it helps to know that there will be something interesting to reflect on, that the participants are enjoying a high degree of ownership in the project, and that before the workshop is over, someone might credibly explain why trees are related to identity.

At each action planning workshop, we asked the participants to answer an evaluation questionnaire about the Regions Project. From the *DAR* perspective, the 'research' ended with these workshops, although we now had several other activities planned, including the donor 'conference', a Human Needs seminar in Tbilisi, and the Javakheti intervention being proposed with the Chancellery as partners. These activities are described and summarized in Chapter Nine. Most of Chapter Seven is given to reviewing the evaluation of the problem solving workshops, and discussing the *DAR* issues raised there.

²⁰ Harrison Owen is an 'organizational consultant' and his open-space concept has been described as a form of conferencing. He was in South Africa at some point, sharing (selling...) his methodology and experiences.

Chapter Seven

Reflections on the Problem Solving Research Workshops and Dissertation Themes

If you don't trust the people,
you make them untrustworthy.

The Master doesn't talk, he acts.
When his work is done,
the people say, "Amazing:
we did it all by ourselves!"

What Was It We Were Trying to Learn?

The purpose of this chapter is to reflect on the Georgian Regions Project activities presented so far, especially on the problem solving research workshops, in order to begin analyzing our experiences in terms of the research themes that were proposed in Chapter One. By way of review, the research goal and principal themes were:

To explore the utility of human needs theory as a conceptual framework; action research as a methodology and intervention strategy; and analytical problem solving as a method, in situations where the satisfaction of fundamental human needs is being systematically or institutionally frustrated, resulting in social conflict and/or persistent underdevelopment.

More specifically:

What can be learned about options for and methods of conducting analytical problem solving workshops?

What can be learned about new ways of using human needs theory in the design and conduct of conflict prevention and resolution interventions?

What can be learned about action research as a conflict intervention strategy?

During the course of our consultations and the workshop proceedings a longer list of questions evolved as the dissertation ‘themes’ I have referred to in previous chapters. The evolved dissertation themes stated as questions are:

- 1) Who are the right people to involve in the problem solving research workshops, how do we get them to participate and motivate them appropriately?
- 2) Who has ‘ownership’ of the intervention, and what is the relationship between insiders, outsiders, facilitation team membership, and ownership? Are there ethical considerations?
- 3) How is action research framed as an intervention strategy, in terms of creating safe spaces for dialogue, and how is this perceived by participants? What are some of the implications of conflict avoidance?
- 4) How best do we help partners and participants internalize conceptual frameworks, such as human needs theory? What are some constraints? Do we want to make frameworks explicit or not, teach them as theory, employ them as tools, extol them as ideology?
- 5) What are some of the impacts of time pressures and limitations on intervention processes?

These themes represent (at least my own) gaps between theory and practice, where I hope to have acquired new experience for myself and to make a contribution to ‘theory in practice, theory from practice’ and new practice from theory’.¹ In this chapter, I will refer to interviews with my co-facilitators, Nodar Sarjveladze and Jana Javakhishvili (interview summaries are attached as Appendix L), and with two State Chancellery colleagues, Sandro Svanishvili and Irakli Brachuli (interview summaries are attached as Appendix M). I will also reference the questionnaire that we administered to all of the Regions Project participants as part of the evaluation process at the conclusion of the

¹ Beth Ann Franklin, cited in Chapter Three.

action planning workshops (attached as Appendix N). In Chapter Eight, I will try to integrate, compare, and contrast all the sources of data including the existing theory literature, our discussion during the London design workshop, the perspectives offered in this chapter from my colleagues and participants, and my own opinions on these dissertation themes and the research objectives.

Who Are the Right People?

Our assumption was that certain constituencies were necessary for any problem solving process that would address the structural relationships between Region and Center. The Center must be represented by its decision makers in government, which would be from the Parliament and the State Chancellery. To be honest, I didn't fully understand the role of the Chancellery in Georgia until well into the project, and was focussed on gaining the participation of appropriate people from the Georgian Parliament. Then, the local authorities in a region must be represented, and this would mean participation from the *sakrebulo*s and *gamgeobas*. When we began consulting, I was relatively unaware of the structural weakness of the *sakrebulo*s. It became obvious early on however, that the conflicts and poor relationships between these two structures of local governance were key Region - Center issues. Finally, civil society should be represented by local and national level NGOs. In our ideal workshop scenario, there were two representatives from the Parliament, two representatives from the Chancellery, two from each *gamgeoba* (Akhaltzikhe, Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda for example), two from each *sakrebulo*, and three or four NGO representatives from each community,

supported by one or two representatives of a national NGO such as the Georgian Young Lawyers Association, for example.

During the consultation process, we had credible opportunities to meet with these very people in each community in both regions. IA's existing Georgian partners introduced us to relevant Parliamentarians. FDHR was able to access the State Chancellery. Local NGO partners introduced us to local authorities from most of the relevant local authority structures. In Zugdidi, where we didn't have face-to-face meetings with local authorities the local NGO partners assured us that they would be able to invite appropriate participation. Those local authorities with whom we met assured us of their support and promised their participation.

In reality an intervention will almost never enjoy the theoretically ideal collection of workshop participants, and neither did we. The Civil Integration Committee of the Georgian Parliament sent the same staff member to all seven workshops, and she was, in fact, the only participant present in every event. While she ably represented her committee, our facilitation team constantly debated the quality of her intellectual contribution. The parliamentarian who chaired the committee and delegated her to the project promised repeatedly to attend an event but never did. The State Chancellery representatives, with one early exception, were consistent, reliable, engaged workshop participants, and became key project partners. FDHR should receive the credit for involving them in the project. We had good representation from civil society in each region - mostly genuine NGO representatives who were interested and interesting and who proved to be credible and reliable stakeholders. We had

less consistent participation from the national NGOs, but they were generally a positive influence when they were present.

We did not successfully involve local authorities consistently or constructively. One or two individuals with roles in local governance were either consistent in their participation, or well intentioned in their more occasional contributions to the process. We were left however, with the reality that in some communities local authorities promised their support and participation but then did not fulfill those commitments, and in some other communities there simply may not have been any credible or willing local authority representation. The *gamgeoba* of Zugdidi was particularly problematic.

Nodar has the strong sense that events after our workshops have demonstrated that we had the 'right' NGO people. In November 2003, Eduard Shevardnadze was dramatically replaced as the head of the Georgian government in a peaceful coup that became known as the 'Rose Revolution'. Several of our workshop participants are actively participating in post 'rose revolution' activities with links to the new government. Others have had success funding and implementing various NGO projects that were influenced by but not directly related to our intervention.² He also agrees that our Chancellery partners were excellent. About the local authorities, he hopes that with new legislation and the passage of time, it might now be more possible to get appropriate representation from those structures, but agrees

² We were unsuccessful in finding funding for the projects that were developed during the Regions Project, as related in Chapter Nine.

that maybe there weren't really many or any of those right people when we started.³

For Jana, the issue of how to get the right people was reflected in the disagreement our facilitation team sometimes had about how to motivate these people to participate. My position was always that by definition, the right people are those who share some responsibility for solving the relevant problems, and this alone should be the appropriate motivation. The right people shouldn't need to be enticed with extra pay, sponsored days and nights in idyllic locations, or opportunities to feed their egos and professional profiles. Jana would agree in the abstract, but believes this does reflect the present situation in Georgia. She goes so far as to say that it is 'naive' to think that the people who occupy positions of authority in the present are motivated by their supposed responsibilities. Although maybe they should be, in fact 'even Shevardnadze was selfish while he ran the country', and nearly all of these authorities are engaged primarily in pursuing their own personal gains. Furthermore, to the extent that a local authority accepts his own level of basic corruption, he is then disinclined to participate in public or transparent processes. 'Why should he show himself, when he's really trying to be invisible?'

Jana hopes that the situation is changing in Georgia through time, and that more people occupying governance roles are doing so with a sense of genuine responsibility. Still, she thinks that it is more likely that we need a more influential 'convener' for the process, that even genuine officials will more

³ Appendix L, pgs. 409-410.

likely be motivated through personal relationships,⁴ since we choose not to motivate them materially (through money or other tangible benefits). It has to be said that the idea of people being motivated through their personal relationships has a very 'Georgian' sound, and persuasiveness. Based on this perception, we changed our method of recruiting through a) consultation, and b) local NGOs, after the original workshops. In order to more successfully convene local authorities we instead relied on the assurances of the State Chancellery officials that they had the interpersonal relationships necessary to successfully invite local governance authorities from Akhalkalaki to a newly convened research workshop. Unfortunately, they also failed to get the 'right people' as we had identified them to participate in the new activity.

In our evaluation questionnaire⁵ we asked the following question: "The Regions Project has the assumption that the 'right people' for solving the relationship problems between the Center and the Region are: 1) representatives from the Center, including the State Chancellery and Parliament; 2) representatives from local governing authorities including *gamgeoba* and *sakrebulo*; 3) NGOs and other representatives of civil society. Has this assumption been validated during the work of the project?"

The participants were in agreement that these are the right people, but from the Samegrelo region there were six responses that 'those might be the

⁴ Ibid., pg. 415.

⁵ Appendix N.

right people, but we didn't have the right individuals with us'.⁶ Our local partners in Zugdidi assured us that they would be able to deliver representation from the local authorities, but they weren't. Local partners anywhere, not only in Zugdidi, find it very difficult to tell you that they can't accomplish a key task, as they don't want to lose access to the benefits or resources that you bring to them. The responses to the questionnaire make it clear that the participants understood the problem and how it impacted our work:

These are the right people, but it would be better if the attendance of the local governance structures representatives had been more stable. (Samtskhe-Javakheti)

The approach Center - Region - NGOs seems to be correct.

Those are the right people, but we didn't have them in the meetings. It would have been better to have more people from the local self-governance structures. (Samegrelo)

The influential persons from the local governance structures did not come, they just sent their representatives, who do not have any weight here.

In my conversation with Jana, I concluded - 'So, you think that with more time, and by trial and error, we would have had more luck at (finally) getting the right people. That's going to be difficult to explain to donors, and difficult to design for. You can't get the right people through trial and error, inviting different people until some stay and some go and eventually you end up with some of the right people.'

⁶ Twenty-four individuals, twelve from each region participated in the questionnaire. Sometimes not every person registered a reply for every question. The questionnaire was intended to be analyzed qualitatively rather than quantitatively.

Whose Intervention Is It?

If the Regions Project had not had this dissertation research embedded in it, the question would have been simpler in some ways. However, the question is ultimately a philosophical one, which I'm not sure is answerable. One might argue that it is the donor's intervention. DFID agreed to sponsor a program of activity based on its perceived self-interest in preventing conflict in Georgia. International Alert agreed to be held accountable for spending the money and conducting the intervention as we proposed it to them.

You could make the case that it was International Alert's intervention. The Regions Project was integrated into a Eurasia Programme strategy with several other initiatives and constituencies. The Project had to be seen as coherent with IA's Code of Conduct, which does not make any explicit references to intervention ownership (which must be a metaphor, in any case), but definitely refers to working in partnership with local constituencies, and sometimes in support of them. It is interesting to compare the evolution of the Caucasus NGO Forum perhaps, to the Regions Project. The Forum began as a DFID sponsored, International Alert facilitated intervention, and in its early phases was highly dependent on IA for administration, logistics, financial stability, guidance and leadership. Through the course of several years however, the Forum deliberately developed into an independent NGO of which IA became one member, rather than the prime motivator. Ownership was clearly vested in the Caucasian peacebuilding constituencies themselves, and this has been a positive and successful element of the Forum's life. The

Georgian Regions Project was never envisioned or designed to emulate this model.

I could argue that from the perspective of intellectual property or intellectual investment, the intervention was mine. In this view, IA and DFID as donors were the vehicle made available to me to attempt some theory-building conflict resolution work, based on my own preferences for working in a Burtonian framework and experimenting with problem solving processes. The *DAR* element of the Regions Project made this inclination more substantial since I clearly 'own' the dissertation writing processes of research and theoretical reflection. As mentioned in Chapter Four, the *DAR* was not initially 'participative' action research in the sense that I did not choose to share the decision making processes or design responsibilities with participants, partners, or sponsors. It became more participative at the point where FDHR collaborated in the design seminar, and perhaps to the extent that I compromised the *DAR* agenda for the *IAR* agenda on those occasions when I decided to let Georgian instincts and preferences take precedence over my own perceived priorities.

It was sometimes challenging, especially early in the consultation process, when IA partners and others in Georgia questioned the validity of the needs framework, or were sceptical of the problem solving workshop methodology. To the extent that we remained committed to those elements of the intervention as I had originally proposed them, I would conclude that with respect to the *DAR*, I did retain whatever it is that ownership refers to here. I think that my IA colleagues, Georgian partners, and DFID sponsors are all supportive of that.

With respect to ownership of the *IAR*, the conversations with both Nodar and Jana were about how the FDHR team came to share a sense of ownership over the process. Nodar recalls that his FDHR colleagues were initially reluctant to make a large commitment to the Project because they lacked an understanding of its purposes and processes. People limited their commitment to 'roles' that they understood.⁷ Jana agreed, contributing the perception that, "The process of ownership was dynamic...Ownership increased both within the facilitation team, and then with participants as, first, an understanding of the process, and then a sense of purpose and role was developed. In the beginning, both understanding and commitment - purpose and role - was lacking for everyone. But as these things increased then ownership developed."⁸ The formulation then is that 'ownership = understanding (purpose) + contribution (role)'. Jana speculated that the Samtskhe-Javakheti participants were more outcome and product oriented, while the Samegrelo participants were more process oriented, and that to the extent that this was true, then ownership developed more fully and naturally with the Samegrelo participants. This might reflect the fact that in Samegrelo there has been much more international presence, much of it in the form of various types of training and capacity building workshops. Those participants then felt more comfortable taking up the shared responsibility for process and facilitation and consciously impacting the workshop processes.

⁷ Ibid., pg. 407.

⁸ Ibid., pg. 412.

The question that we put to the Regions Project workshop participants was a little vague, but related to the perception of their own sense of commitment to the project: "Have you felt involved so far, and do you feel committed in the future to the project?" Twenty participants responded that they felt 'very involved' and 'committed in the future'. One person was 'not very involved' and 'not committed'. One person was 'not sure'. Some comments:

I participated in all stages of project implementation for Samtskhe-Javakheti region and I felt myself responsible for the final results of the project - on their fruitfulness and sustainability.

Working as a team was very interesting for me, after each meeting I felt myself more and more committed.

I feel myself so committed that I skipped a very important training in financial management in Tbilisi to participate in the last Tskhaltubo meeting. So, you can judge how committed I am.

It is worth saying something here about how the evaluation questionnaire given to participants was constructed, although I have to admit that it was not a high methodological moment for the *DAR*. What I wish had happened is that we had taken the evaluation frameworks discussed in Chapter Three, especially Hoffman, and built the questionnaire so that it would relate directly, at least in some parts. What happened instead was that due to time pressures and stressed team processes, we built the questionnaire according to the *IAR* dynamics, and in a hurried (or was it harried) manner. As we were processing the information in the questionnaire, I was aware that I had not been able to give enough thought to my *DAR* intent to design based in the existing theory. The result is that some of the evaluation responses clearly speak to some of Hoffman's criteria, and this is noted where relevant. We unfortunately missed

the opportunity to relate the evaluation process to the *DAR* in a more structured way.

Is Action Research a Safe Space?

I felt throughout the life of the Project that we were constantly challenged by what I refer to as conflict avoidance. My FDHR colleagues basically disagree. During the research workshops, we frequently heard that certain issues were 'painful' or represented hidden conflicts that could be dangerous to uncover - 'detonator issues'. Nodar said: "I don't agree about this. We had conversations about detonator issues throughout the project...we talked about the military bases. We had conversations about difficult issues. I do remember that sometimes during the workshops we agreed with participants that maybe it was better to avoid discussion of painful issues...but I also recall that there were 'acute' conversations between some people during some of the small working group sessions."⁹ When I asked him whether the scepticism and criticism voiced during the braintrust consultation meeting was related in some way to conflict avoidance, Nodar replied: "You somehow challenged the intellectuals with something that they weren't familiar with, or they thought that you were trying to get something from them."

I asked Jana whether it was 'realistic or unrealistic to expect to transcend the conflict avoidance instinct during the workshop?' Was it a flawed assumption of the project that the action research context would provide a credible safe space where people would feel free to analyze? Jana replied: "I

⁹ Ibid., pg. 409.

think it was about time. If we had more time we could have had time to address 'detonator issues'. It would have been impossible to work on all the detonator issues that we touched on, and it could be dangerous to raise them and then not work through them. Maybe four workshops should be devoted to any single difficult issue, such as the Russian military base."¹⁰

Most interesting was the discussion with the head of the Chancellery's Regional Politics and Management Service, Sandro Svanishvili, who took the responsibility for involving his Chancellery team in our workshops and a subsequent additional pair of research workshops. There had been an amazing moment in the Project when I was called, with FDHR, to the State Chancellery to meet a high official, a Mr. Khadidze, who I was told had serious reservations about the project proposal as he had seen it. We put on ties and waited for Khadidze in Sandro's office. I was nervous. At the last minute, Khadidze was called off to Shevardnadze's residence urgently so he stopped in the office doorway just long enough to say, "I understand that you have a very risky project...do not go out and create any conflict in the regions! This man (pointing to Sandro) will be held responsible." I put it to Sandro that, 'I know you had very low expectations when we came to you the first time, and some concerns...what was your view of the project and what were you thinking the first time we tried to explain it to you?'

Sandro: You are absolutely correct. Not only low expectations, but I had strong worries that there was a chance you could create conflict. You chose two regions, Samegrelo and Samtskhe-Javakheti, which were two conflicted regions. It's natural that we were very cautious about your proposition, because even a little mistake in these two regions could cause big problems.

¹⁰ Ibid., pg. 414.

Davin: Then why did we do it? If it was risky, and if it didn't sound like the project made too much sense, and if even a small mistake...why take the risk?

Sandro: We choose to participate, and by participating to prevent any possible problems, instead of not participating and letting things go as they go. So it's more of a risk not to participate than to participate. (When my colleagues came back from the first workshop...) I asked the question, 'is it going destructively', or something like this, because I had a concern that it could be something dangerous'. But Both Irakli and Alexandro told me that everything was going on properly.¹¹

Based on any initial impressions participants had of the project, the idea of problem solving research workshops did not guarantee a safe space for dialogue or analysis, and many participants were initially cautious. There were some low expectations all around, and not only because of the perceived risk factor. To the question, "What expectations did you have for the Regions Project, and have they been met?", eleven people confessed low expectations. Fifteen people said that their expectations went up as the project went on. One participant wrote, "At the beginning of the project I had a fear that instead of regulating the conflict the project would escalate it. With the process of implementation this attitude has naturally changed."¹²

Do the Frameworks Satisfy Our Understanding Needs?

Although my human needs theory spiel is fairly well rehearsed, I never thought it was going to be easy to sell analytical problem solving as a workshop methodology, thereby spawning a new class of Caucasian converts to the church of Burton. I was heartened when Gevork Ter-Gabrielian the Eurasia

¹¹ Appendix M, pg. 421.

¹² Appendix N, pg. 438.

Programme manager of IA said that he thought the Regions Project was the most theoretically sophisticated project going at Alert. He even told an in-house meeting that the goal of the Eurasia team's work in the Caucasus was 'helping change social structures so that human needs are being satisfied'. That was a satisfying moment. But on the ground in Georgia and during the workshops, it was somewhat more challenging to have partners and participants internalize the conceptual frameworks to the degree that they would assist and motivate our work.

Without doubt the fact that Nodar Sarjveladze was personally attracted to the Max-Neef framework and the needs satisfaction matrix was a critical turning point in the Regions Project. The FDHR facilitators, known in the Georgian intellectual community as highly professional psychologists and consistently constructive critical thinkers gave the theory frameworks all of their initial credibility with workshop participants.

Nevertheless, Nodar recognizes that our success in really inculcating the participants with the theory was relative. He said:

Perhaps, in the end, we didn't spend enough time with it. We really presented it to the workshop in just a couple of hours, and then asked people to work with the framework. Max-Neef's workshop methodology might be more successful as it is more focussed, and conducted over a longer time. Next time we should do a special workshop on needs theory, or some explicit needs theory education...The November seminar was a good example of presenting the framework differently. We had two entire days, and the work was very successful. This could be a model for future work with the framework.¹³

I pointed out that half the people in the seminar, and probably the ones that played a leading role in the seminar working groups were in fact people

¹³ Appendix L, pg. 410.

from the problem solving workshops who by this time were well rehearsed in the needs framework and matrix. With Jana, I asked whether she thought it was a language issue, or simply a problem of not enough time? Perhaps we needed more theory materials presented in Georgian and Russian? Maybe we should not have simplified the matrix, or simplified it more? Jana's saw it like this:

Information has to come to people in waves. It has to come over and over again, and each time a little more stays or sticks. The people will never really understand the project after one presentation or two meetings. Our orientation process was not 'experiential learning'. The workshops themselves were, even if they weren't designed as training. Whenever you are starting to experience something, you understand it. If you just have information about it, then it's just 'about', it's not understanding...I think we learned that people can understand it, and that people can share this framework and operate inside of it...There will always be people who do not understand. There will always be a percentage...Maybe if we would repeat the message in each workshop, then it would be more clear. It always makes sense to repeat. The language issue wasn't a problem. We just needed more repetition.¹⁴

We asked the participants the following two questions: "The Regions Project has the assumption that the 'Human Needs Theory' would be helpful for analysing the situation in Georgia and structuring the problem solving activities. Do you think that the human needs framework was helpful and appropriate?" There were two sets of replies offered to the question - need theory was helpful, or not; and needs theory was clear, or not. The responses to this question were among the most intriguing. All twenty people who answered the question replied that the needs theory was helpful. But only eleven responded that the needs theory was clear. Four said it was confusing. What people said included:

¹⁴ Ibid., pgs. 412-413.

I think it was helpful, because the beneficiaries of every single project are ordinary human beings with their human needs, so taking into consideration these needs will create possibilities and a framework for each project to work properly on their satisfaction.

The needs theory stimulated us to look in a different way at the problems of the region.

The needs theory was helpful, but confusing.

Although it helped us, many things were confusing there. Some points which I thought were necessary then became ambiguous. It caused the re-evaluation of some values. It was interesting to me.¹⁵

If the framework is used as a tool, then for what? What is the desired product resulting from application of the tool? In the case of analytical problem solving, it should be new information - a new analysis of the conflict or problem that didn't exist before because the parties hadn't had adequate or facilitated opportunity to do the analytical work jointly, and/or they had used insufficient analytical frameworks. We asked the workshop participants this question: "The Regions Project assumes that in this series of research workshops we would create new information by working together as action researchers. Do you feel that new information was created, and did you personally learn anything new?"

The point of the question was that each constituency has different information available to it, and if we simply facilitate information sharing then each side will gain some information new to them, but nothing genuinely new will be created. Again, responses to the question were divided and interesting. Eleven people replied that 'yes, we created new information'. Ten people answered that 'no, we shared existing information'. Nineteen people said that they learned new things, and no one said that they didn't learn much that was

¹⁵ Appendix N, pg. 436.

new. At the least then, we can conclude that information sharing did happen. I can guess that if the acquisition of new information depended on the new framework for analysis, and if that framework was confusing for some or unhelpful, then those people who left confused by the framework may have felt that they did not gain new knowledge or insights through the use of the conceptual framework. While I'm personally confident that we did, in fact, create information by reframing issues and creating new dialogue processes with the help of the conceptual frameworks, the direct feedback from participants was mixed and might cast doubt on the success of this element of the project. One or two positive comments here are fairly well tempered by the less affirmative ones:

The group produced a new analysis, new qualitative information on the region. On my personal level, it was a new method of analysis, interesting to influence the subject and object of the analysis at the same time, for the purpose of developing their personal resources.

I gained new information about the region and gained the knowledge about conflictology and the use of this particular approach.

As about new information, we did not elaborate it. What we did was comparing and grouping already existing information.

It's possible that we elaborated new information, but it was so little and general that I don't think I would say that.

I learned about how to build relationships with people.

I think I'm informed enough about this region.¹⁶

Fortunately, Dr. Irakli Brachuli from the State Chancellery was one of the 'right people' that we did motivate, and his perception of the success of the needs theory frameworks was more positive:

¹⁶ Appendix N, pg. 437.

...All of these people became interested in the needs theory, and adaptable to it. It was the main result of the work. Some of them consciously, some of them unconsciously, but all of them became adaptable to the needs theory...I think that it's credible, or maybe very effective, in ethnic conflicts. So, I learned that when it is ethnic conflict, all ethnic conflicts have a similar structure. If the sides in these ethnic conflicts would understand that they are similar, that they have similar needs to each other, then they would keep distance between each other. I'm not interested in the conversation about religion, ethnical, cultural, historical issues. Let's think about fundamental human needs and it will be quite more effective...I was in Gali two weeks ago and I had a meeting with a famous Abkhaz combatant who is the governor of the Gali region. For me, he's the criminal who did ethnic cleansing, so he's a typical war criminal to me...So we were sitting there next to each other and we didn't know what to talk about. About the country, the history? We talked about human needs and it was friendly then. We left the conversation as though we were kind of friends with each other. We could include him in our seminars, he would be a perfect participant. It's an idea...¹⁷

In Chapter Nine, the postscript to the problem solving workshops will be related. One measure of 'success', continuation funding, was denied to us and the Regions Project came to an end. The participants and local partners however, undeniably felt a sense of accomplishment regarding the amount of learning that took place. All of the most enthusiastic participants, including Dr. Brachuli above, felt that they had learned valuable new perspectives and methods for addressing problem solving. There is irony in this, as the methodology is offered to participants with the assurance that we are not engaging in training or with an overtly educational agenda.

Timing Is Everything but if Time Is a Scarce Resource?

Many of the reflections quoted above make reference to our constant battle to find enough time to do the work. Other practitioners share this

¹⁷ Appendix M, pg. 427-429.

dilemma, which will be addressed again in Chapter Eight. From the comments above, we could have used more time for preparing theory and conceptual materials in the local languages. We could have used more time to address some specific conflict issues, such as the Russian military base. We needed more time for team preparation and team reflection. There is a problem with the assumption that we can engage the people who bear responsibility for resolving problems, but for only a small fraction of their professional time, and with a significant amount of their personal time. Twelve to fifteen workshop days is, on the one hand, a significant amount of time to ask people to leave their daily routines, families and familiar surroundings. Few of the participants were willing to make unqualified initial commitment to this amount of time as long as they remained unclear about the processes and purposes. And yet, any of the significant conflicts we hoped to resolve, problems we hoped to address and structural changes we wanted to initiate would reasonably demand much more time and commitment from people engaged on a full time basis in some professional or institutional capacity. Despite our workshop guideline encouraging us as a group to 'work with time, not against it', our efforts were always circumscribed by the relative lack of time to address the deficiencies in our assumptions, theories, frameworks, processes, planning and reflections.

Summary

The point of Chapter Seven has been to share the reflections from partners and participants on the dissertation themes that became most salient through the course of our work. The five questions above could easily have been six, or eight, or twelve, but I integrated some of the substance in order to

better relate it with the type of feedback people gave through our participant questionnaire and subsequent interviews. In Chapter Eight, I will try to draw together all the inputs from theory, our own processes, and other relevant experiences in the Caucasus, and come to some conclusions.

Chapter Eight

Practice springs from theory as theory spawns practice.

Thus it is said:

The path into the light seems dark,
the path forward seems to go back,
the direct path seems long,
true power seems weak,
true purity seems tarnished,
true steadfastness seems changeable,
true clarity seems obscure,
the greatest art seems unsophisticated,
the greatest love seems indifferent,
the greatest wisdom seems childish.

Somewhere to Finish

The goal of Chapter Eight is to synthesize from what has gone before - from the theory as it was reviewed and the work that we did with it. The chapter begins with some comments about the lack of explicit or extensive reference to the concepts or terms 'power' and 'gender' throughout the conduct of the Georgian Regions Project. What follows is the synthesizing, from our experiences and reflections in the field as they have been narrated here, and from the expertise of colleagues doing similar work in similar environments. I then finally propose some conclusions based on these efforts to 'explore the utility of human needs theory as a conceptual framework, analytical problem solving as a methodology, and action research as an intervention strategy, in situations where the satisfaction of fundamental human needs is being systematically or institutionally frustrated, resulting in social conflict and/or persistent underdevelopment.' The chapter concludes with some introspection about how my personal and professional values and motivations have been shaped through the DAR experience and process.

Power and Gender

Every conflict intervention has various elements of interpersonal and structural relationships that can be specified for particular attention and comment. The elements of 'power' and 'gender' are two that are most common to isolate and examine specifically, and worthy of some examination with respect to the Regions Project.

As a practitioner deeply attached to the Burtonian view of problem solving, the power issue is challenging for me because I am steeped in the Burton bias that 'power' is basically irrelevant to the processes of conflict resolution. This was mentioned in Chapter Three, but exploring the philosophical meaning of the claim isn't necessary here. The practical result of my basic agreement with this perspective is that I manage to generally avoid using the word or debating the concept in the course of my work. Rather than confusing issues and complicating conceptual frameworks with the evocative and nearly impossible to define word, I have found it possible and preferable to leave 'power' out of the development and conduct of most interventions, and this proved possible as well in the DAR and IAR of the Regions Project.

During the course of the problem solving workshops, the analysis derived by the participants was seldom, if ever, cast in terms of power struggles, power competition, power deficit, or expressions of a 'need' for power. We probably paid lip service at some point to the notion of 'empowerment' as that word is closely linked to most discussions of development. I can speculate that since the fundamental nature of the conflicts between the Center and the Regions is based on the weaknesses of the state and corresponding weaknesses of local

authority and governance structures, and that even the civil society structures are weakly developed, it is relatively easier for Georgians to analyse their situation in terms of weaknesses and voids, rather than competition for power. That doesn't mean that here aren't power struggles and power political agendas inherent in the Georgian society, there are. But the needs theory framework, used as a tool for reframing issues and reforming perceptions, also allows us to rechannel discussions or debate away from difficult to contain arguments about 'power', if they do come up, and into other more productive frameworks.

In terms of the DAR and the institutional relationships between International Alert, as a Western and 'outsider' element in the intervention, and FDHR, the Georgian and 'insider' element, we similarly didn't experience 'power' as a defining, constraining, or distracting element of our working relationships. Further in this chapter, I will discuss as an element of intervention ethics the few situations in which I might have felt compelled to 'use' whatever power I had as the project budget holder and initiator for resolving disputes and differences of opinion that sometimes arose within the facilitation team. Here I can simply reiterate the point from above that in my own constitution I am always disinclined and well practised in avoiding the power framework in terms of solving problems, and therefore it usually doesn't come into play.

With regard to gender issues, my reflection is similar in terms of 'gender' not being prevalent in our analytical discussions, but for different reasons. I wouldn't want to imagine that as a practitioner I avoid or discount the import of

gender, nor do the frameworks I bring to the work. I've long wondered about how we might do research to explore the idea that the 'satisfiers' of universal human needs might often be different according to gender criteria and considerations. International Alert as an organization places a high priority on awareness of gender issues and proactively promotes participation of women in all of its initiatives. The Regions Project was no exception, and we were quite successful in including women, both qualitatively and quantitatively in the project activities. At full strength, half of the facilitation team were women. Female participants included the Parliament's Civil Integration staff member, the chief advisor to the President's Representative in Akhaltsikhe, the head of the Chancellery's Department of Relations with Political Parties and NGOs, and leadership from no less than five NGOs from both Samtskhe-Javakheti, and Samegrelo. We never had a situation where anyone questioned the representation or the constructive engagement of the women in the problem solving workshops and other events.

That having been said, our analysis did not focus at any point on issues from a specifically or explicitly gendered perspective. Our workshopped lists of 'problems to be solved' as they were elicited in the storytelling exercises and subsequent discussions simply never raised gender specific issues. At no point did the Georgian women, or any of the men for that matter, interject into the proceedings any concern that we were avoiding, suppressing, or simply missing important aspects of Georgia's with respect to gender issues.

I can only speculate that in some post-Soviet societies, and particularly in Georgia, a certain level of social equality and intellectual respect accorded to

women during the Soviet period has survived the otherwise difficult transition, and that the high level of participation that we enjoyed in the Regions Project reflects a situation wherein Georgia's problems are not perceived, by Georgians, as fraught with disempowering or destructive gender relations.

The Right People and What Motivates Them

There were three theoretical perspectives available, maybe four, about who are the people to involve in a problem solving workshop intervention or dialogue project. Burton proposed that analytical problem solving in cases of international or intergroup conflict is best done by people who can represent the leadership of conflicted parties. Because he dealt with nations and political parties and identity groups, these individuals who were 'not official representatives, but who have easy access to decision makers'¹ would generally be members of the intellectual or political elite, in any case.

Workshop participants might not themselves be politicians, but they must be affiliated to them and probably have a mandate from them to participate. If they happen to be academically inclined and equipped, all the better. Presumably, Burton's prescription was most relevant to those processes he personally participated in or organized which were parallel to Track One and aimed at elite decision makers. Our assumptions, in the abstract, about who were the right people to invite were in accord with Burton if one accepts NGOs in marginalized communities as credible and empowered representatives of the population as a whole, and if that population regards itself as a party in a

¹ Burton, 1996, pg. 56.

specific conflict. However, it is not clear that this was the case on the ground in the Samtskhe-Javakheti or Samegrelo regions. The legacy of the Soviet period may have pre-empted that kind of political awareness.

We are also not at odds with Mitchell and Banks who suggest it is 'practical to begin with what is visible...organizations or groups that are politically active...(and) essential the problem-solving exercises should incorporate the grass-roots...the principle is...to start at the bottom social level and move upwards.'² In the sense that we were working from the bottom social level right through to the top, and also willing to try and incorporate social institutions who were less than perfectly visible, our assumptions about who should participate might have seemed a little more sophisticated than the Mitchell and Banks recipe, at least to us at the time.

The third existing theory angle on whom to include was the International Alert Code of Conduct version. Alert works with 'individuals, organisations, governments and other institutions which can contribute to the prevention and resolution of conflict.'³ Most often, and particularly within the Eurasia Programme, these constituencies have already identified themselves as would-be peacebuilding organizations, usually working in the NGO sector. This is in line with Paula Garb's participant selection criteria, which her paper describes as 'selected from a pool of individuals who were most active in other citizen peacebuilding efforts in the region'. In conversation, Garb acknowledges that finding the right group and number of participants is difficult and much more of a

² Mitchell and Banks, 1996, pg. 32.

³ International Alert, 1998, pg. 4.

trial and error process. She describes their process as: 1) starting with Lederach's 'middle level' individuals and decision makers and then; 2) finding people 'most ready for cross-conflict dialogue, starting with the easy ones rather than the 'hard-liners'. Opinion makers who wrote and spoke...journalists, academics and NGOs; 3) Then, finding people who were compatible with each other, who didn't dismiss the idea of dialogue out of hand. There was negotiation among local partners about who should participate and something of a consensus process. That evolutionary and experimental process has worked for her through time, and this contradicts my argument with Jana Javakhishvili, recounted in Chapter Seven, when I said to her that we couldn't really go about selecting the right people by experiment or by trial and error over the course of the project.

It is worth recalling here the Lederach version of whom to engage in conflict transformation, mentioned in Chapter Three, since it was raised in the conversation with Paula. Lederach describes a society divided into three parts: the elite decision makers who are a minority, the majority of the people living at the grassroots in their communities, and a middle sector where some individuals and social structures are able to have vertical influence both above and below, both with elites above, and down into the community. In the Regions Project, we looked for decision makers and persons with responsibility for social change processes, regardless of whether or not they came from the top, middle, or base of the triangle. Interestingly, Paula Garb said that testing the proposition that it would be effective to engage the middle group so as to influence the two other social strata was an explicit goal of her research, and

that they have not, in fact, been able to confirm much influence 'trickling out' from the specific intervention processes and into the wider society.

The Regions Project set out to convene relevant and credible representation from the central government, from local governance structures, and from civil society at both levels. These should be the people who see themselves as responsible for solving the problems that need to be solved. We would motivate them by providing new resources and methodologies for accomplishing tasks that they already understood as being within their remit. This scenario represents a synthesis of the theoretical perspectives above, albeit an unsophisticated one. The challenge was still, how best to recruit them.

I could characterize what Garb and Cohen do as 'whatever works, as long as we end up with either a) self-selected citizen peacebuilders who want to come together (Garb), or b) politically strategic individuals mooted by our key local partners who will not intentionally derail the Track One negotiation processes (Cohen). Jonathan's long list of ways and means for bringing people together complements his conviction that it is this element of design that he gives the most time and attention to.

I'm also willing to be patient, flexible and do what works, but I think we learned more about what didn't work than what did. What didn't work for us included:

- 1) Existing IA partners made suggestions and brokered introductions to people they thought could contribute or should be included, but this didn't fully work. What failed here was at least that the partners had an inadequate understanding of exactly what we were trying to accomplish.

2) Face-to-face introductory meetings with local authorities didn't work. We were invariably promised support and participation, but for the most part the local authorities with whom we met did not in fact represent themselves in the workshops once they were scheduled. What failed here was perhaps a) our ability to briefly or convincingly explain our intentions and methodology, and b) local authorities didn't see themselves needing to be accountable, consistent or transparent with respect to our invitations and their initial assurances of support.

3) Depending on local NGO partners based on their assurances that they would be able to bring local authorities to the process didn't work. What failed was a) local partners will almost always say that they 'can do it', whatever 'it' is. They need the projects and partnerships that bring them resources and opportunities, and b) they didn't really have an adequate understanding of what we were hoping to do that they could communicate to prospective participants. They usually delivered people, but not the 'right' people.

4) Shifting the responsibility for inviting or convening to local authorities, in this case the State Chancellery staff, didn't work. When we tried to convene a specific set of new workshops targeting one community, the Chancellery was confident that they had the interpersonal contacts and moral authority to bring specific constituencies 'to the table'. It didn't happen.

5) Evolving our workshop participant roster through time, trial and error. The project simply wasn't set up to allow for years worth of selecting, rejecting, replacing, responding. We needed to have a credible core group from the beginning.

Where the existing theory falls short is in the assumption that there are representatives of conflicted constituencies available who want to work on resolving the conflicts or solving the problems. In post-Soviet Georgia, a country with no previous experience of decentralized political power, transparent democratic social structures or active civil society, this may be an inadequate assumption. Some of the central government authorities whom we approached might have been motivated to participate in processes that would have benefited their own interpersonal networks of influence and opportunity, but they were uninterested in our more inclusive and egalitarian approach. Some of the local authorities we approached perhaps understood clearly what

we were trying to accomplish and decided that their own interests would not be well served through their participation or our success. Or, if they didn't understand what was on offer, then they knew of no reason to waste time trying to figure it out.

We were extremely fortunate with some of the NGO representatives who participated in the workshops and with the State Chancellery team. We did manage to attract and nurture some people who are trying by all means to make a positive contribution to the development of a successful Georgian society, and who appreciated the human needs framework and the vision that it offers for Georgia. The interpersonal networks and professional demeanor of my FDHR colleagues contributed the most to this success.

Despite the frustrations we suffered with respect to finding the 'right people', I remain disinclined to change my ethos regarding motivating people by enticing them with material benefits, sumptuous repasts, relaxing seaside retreats, or ego-boosting opportunities to display their own political prowess and rhetorical dexterity. My future efforts at problem solving will still rely on attempting to bring together those people who see themselves as willing to share responsibility for solving a set of problems, and who are willing and able to work in collaboration with other stakeholders while acknowledging that there will be significant challenges and obstacles - to the extent that they can be identified.

The existing theory has only a little bit to say about who are the right facilitators. Burton excludes 'persons who have made an exclusive specialty of the particular conflict being analysed or of the region in which the dispute takes

place.’⁴ Mitchell and Banks say, ‘...we have found it appropriate to confine our choice of consultants and facilitators for the workshop panel to social scientists who specialize in theory, and to exclude experts on the region or country in which the conflict occurs, although local scholars can play a useful advisory or ‘checking’ role at later stages in a problem-solving exercise.’⁵

I’m more inclined to value Cohen’s simpler criteria. Facilitators have to be patient, persistent, and personable. In South Africa, we talked about the skill or attitude of being able to ‘be with people’. Garb’s paper notes that a significant influence on the effectiveness of the meetings and conferences was ‘the influence of the project director. Although American born, she was a 20-year resident of the region, was fluent in Russian...and personally and professionally committed to the people involved’.⁶ Facilitators who work in societies where they don’t speak a relevant language can be acceptable and effective, assuming they can develop skills for working through interpretation, and are sensitive to the many challenges that this presents.

My experience with FDHR as full partners in the design and facilitation of the problem solving research workshops supports the Cohen and Garb prescription. Sarjveladze and Javakhishvili, because of their backgrounds in psychology, are clearly well able to be with people. The credibility they brought to the project, mentioned repeatedly by participants in the questionnaire was via their professionalism, and also their knowledge of the society and its

⁴ Appendix F, pg. 370.

⁵ Mitchell and Banks, 1996, pg. 33.

⁶ Crandall and Garb, unpublished, pg. 20.

contexts. When I write a how-to book or put together the next facilitation team, the qualities I will propose for the facilitation team will be patience, persistence professionalism and personability.⁷ My FDHR colleagues were the right people to facilitate our workshops, and we had a good team.

Ownership and Ethics

This issue of ownership over the processes and outcomes of an intervention is scarcely addressed directly in the theory, although most of our work is based in the assumption that if the participants in a process of conflict resolution don't feel a sense of ownership over at least the outcomes, then they are less liable to be committed to the result. The underlying assumption of all things 'participatory', including most versions of action research and action evaluation, is that participation = ownership = improved chances of success. I don't disagree with any of that.

The vehicle for promoting ownership in Garb's Georgia-Abkhaz intervention is specifically the action evaluation methodology. She cites Rothman, writing that, "One of the key patterns that leading conflict transformation professionals observe is the necessity of grassroots ownership in any successful conflict intervention. No matter how well thought-out, or technically sound a solution is, if it is imposed in a top-down manner, without

⁷ And in the meantime, I should work on my own ability to be patient.

involving the people who experience the tension and consequences of the conflict on a day-to-day basis, the solution will not be effective or long-lasting.”⁸

The vehicle we had during the Regions Project workshops that was most helpful in creating a sense of ownership among the participants was our set of guidelines that we offer, rather than ground rules. Specifically:

Facilitators and participants share responsibility for facilitating.

Facilitators and participants share responsibility for process.

Facilitators and participants share responsibility for outcomes.

The degree to which participants professed commitment to the project, as cited in the last chapter, was one measure of their sense of shared responsibility. There were also many examples during the course of the work, where individual participants were willing to assume various responsibilities that involved them in indirect facilitation (sometimes we talk about facilitative behavior), in making suggestions and interventions regarding workshop process and in contributing to goal setting and decision making that directly impacted outcomes.

These three guidelines also contribute to reinforcing Jana Javakhishvili's contribution that 'ownership = understanding (purpose) + contribution (role)'. By sharing responsibility for facilitation, process, and outcomes, the participants have a more clear understanding of what we are doing, and their roles are made more clear through the explicit invitation to contribute.

⁸ My experience of the South African Peace Accord process would support this claim. While the Peace Accord was a marvel of design and structure, on the ground it was perceived as having been imposed or delivered, without due process, and on that basis was extremely difficult to implement in some communities. In general, communities wracked by violence were impervious to the influence of Peace Accord structures, while communities that had little or no violence were able to create Peace Accord structures for preventing it.

The more challenging ownership issues were partly based in the complexification of the Regions Project by the dissertation agenda, and the need to try and synthesize the *DAR* and *IAR* in a meaningful way. Since the workshop participants were not much involved in the *DAR* relevant design processes or reflections, the tension was experienced among the facilitation team, and symbolically between our institutions, IA and FDHR. In this context, ownership has something to do with who has the last word in decision making, particularly if there is disagreement about methods, meaning, priorities, principles, or roles and responsibilities. We certainly had some of those disagreements.

I can say that the facilitation team generally dealt with our disagreements professionally, keeping them intellectual rather than allowing them to become interpersonal or attitudinal. Secondly, I think we managed the institutional arrangements regarding project administration, money, communications, and the other project team members - interpreters, coordinators and drivers, successfully and professionally, with a minimum of misunderstanding or confusion. These things are not insignificant, as Ropers has pointed out.

However, despite a high degree of interpersonal compatibility between the facilitation team members, we didn't always agree about what to do, how to do it, or why. Of course we didn't. More often than not, the root of our disagreements or divergent opinions was directly related to my perceived *DAR* needs and biases, as against the culturally relative experiences, perceptions, and instincts of my Georgian colleagues.

I don't want to overstate the problem. We generally thrashed out our differences over the aforementioned ritual glass of whisky, or the next few. But the principle that evolved, based on my own experience and ethical instincts, was that the overall project, the *IAR* and its supporting activities ultimately belonged to the Georgians. Not only did it seem prudent to learn to trust their instincts and interpretations, but also it was 'right' to recognize my status as an outsider in their country, their conflicts and their culture by giving control and final say over important methodological decisions to the Georgians, conveying to them the ownership of our joint efforts. In practice, this meant that decisions in favor of the *IAR* took precedence over the *DAR*, and that the judgement of the Georgian facilitators was primary. This was despite my deeper experience with and intellectual investment in the conceptual frameworks.

The impact that this had on the *DAR* in the long run, was that it made the entire process a little less 'systematic'. Our workshop methods were flexible, and we tried to decide what would work best according to our perception of group dynamics, time management, participants' energy and focus, and the contextual dynamics.

If the management structures of International Alert or the DFID bureaucracy felt any need to demonstrate ownership or supervisory control over our efforts, we barely noticed. The Regions Project benefited from a high degree of independence, as well as flexible and professional communication and interaction with our IA and DFID colleagues. To the extent that I supported my Georgian colleagues by giving over ownership rights and power to them, our donors and my supervisors were similarly supportive, as they should be.

It was interesting to ask Jana if her own sense of ownership of the project was personal, institutional, or 'as a Georgian'. She thought that all three things played a part in her enthusiasm and commitment to the project. She also said that " I think you were always willing to compromise or find a common point, and to let the ownership be with us as the local partners."⁹

In conclusion, I feel that we ran the project in accordance with the values that most conflict resolution professionals hold in terms of giving ownership to the parties, fully sharing roles and responsibilities, and drawing ethical boundaries or guidelines that are clear and contribute to decision making and dispute handling. Where most practitioners describe the ground rules they use with participants, I will stay with guidelines that are designed to help us create ownership and shared responsibility for the work, rather than constraining or controlling behavior.

Action Research as a Strategy

The idea of using action research as an intervention strategy that would bring otherwise reluctant parties to the table and provide a different version of a safe space for dialogue may be the most unique or novel idea in the dissertation, and the place where I have some chance to offer a genuinely new theoretical perspective. It makes sense to me to break the proposal into two parts. First, does the action research invitation bring people to the intervention? Second, once there, does it function as a context for a safe space, legitimate analysis, and the creating of new information that didn't exist before?

⁹ Appendix L, pg. 413.

The attraction of a 'research project' and the claim that people would interact differently in that context was successful and persuasive at International Alert, and with the DFID donors. To that extent, the premise helped us initiate the project. With the IA braintrust intellectuals on the ground in Tbilisi, the research agenda was credible, and it certainly made some of them feel safe to offer their criticisms of our assumptions, priorities and plans. Fair enough.

But as I've acknowledged above, I'm not satisfied that we succeeded in bringing the right people together. Number six on the list of things that didn't work must be the invitation to come together as experts (on their own conflicts and societies) and 'researchers' to analyse the conflicts complicating Region - Center relationships. Few, if any of the participants had a clear understanding that this was either our purpose or pretext when they arrived at the first workshop. The facilitation team was also still in the process of internalizing this approach.

In the introduction, I claimed that this was exactly the approach that allowed fighting factions to sit together in the same venue in South Africa, and I still think that was the case. I might struggle to prove it, as I was not a key person in the consultations and recruiting discussions that preceded those workshops. In any case, we certainly didn't prove through the Regions Project that the promise of a research environment and context was immediately recognized by our target participants as a safe space for dialogue.

Did it become one anyway? Irakli Brachuli remembered his initial impressions at the first workshop this way (interview notes from Brachuli and Svanishvili are attached as Appendix M):

From the very beginning, I had very uncertain expectations, because I was uncertain what was going on. Also, the participants were very diverse...For me, of course the frame was a research frame, but I was the Chancellery's representative, so I was affected by my position. It was confusing to me, this double role...And another problem was the representation of an American person, or a foreigner. I had a suspicion that (the approach) would be unrealistic.¹⁰

Certainly, the workshop participants felt that the workshop atmosphere became comfortable and conducive to serious work through the course of the seven workshops and seminar events. To the extent that the research framework was most relevant to the first analysis workshops, I would conclude that our intention of having the participants see themselves as experts and researchers was partially but not wholly successful. Some found the idea simply confusing. Others didn't have a way to internalize the notion of themselves as researchers.

As I said above, the research premise initially failed us in the sense of using it to invite or attract participants to the work. However, at the conclusion of the final workshop, we had the one intervention proposal from IA to intervene into the very potent problem existing between the *sakrebulo* and *gamgeoba* of Akhalkalaki. We proposed to Sandro Svanishvili that a mediation team could be formed with certain participants in the Regions Project, including FDHR and IA, and that the Chancellery could act as conveners to bring the parties 'to the

¹⁰ Appendix M, pg. 426.

table'. His reply was that a 'mediation' would sound too dangerous to those parties, and he doubted that they would participate, and that this would then create a problem between those structures and the Chancellery, which he didn't want to have. However, he said, 'Why don't you have another set of research workshops? That strategy worked with us, and brought us into this very interesting and useful process. We had concerns, but regarded the research activity as legitimate and safe. Let's replicate your methodology, and the Chancellery will recommend to the parties that they participate in the renewed research. You could invite another one or two communities along, to make the pretext more credible to them.' This feedback from the highest ranking governmental authority who had permitted his staff to participate in the Regions Project supports my premise that action research could be regarded as a safe space for dialogue and a method for bringing conflicted parties together. I'm not sure how to regard, however, the failure then of the Chancellery to succeed in bringing together the protagonists. I'm sure that they did not explain the research scenario in their attempts to invite the local authorities from Akhalkalaki.

Did we create new information? The divided opinion of the participants notwithstanding, I would argue that our needs analysis of Georgian problems and issues was in fact new, unique, and a constructive contribution to conflict resolution there (as illustrated in Appendix J), based both on the replies of key project participants, and on the positive response we experienced when we presented the project results during the Human Needs Seminar in Tbilisi. FDHR is taking first responsibility to publish the results of the Needs Seminar in

a Georgian publication on the relevance of needs theory in Georgia, which will be ready in 2004. For a small but earnest group of individuals, we did demonstrate the possibilities of reframing issues, using analytical frameworks, and creating a joint analysis that could serve as the basis for further problem solving work.

If the Regions Project had received further funding and some of the joint projects that Project participants created had been implemented, then I would much more confidently claim that the action research methodology was a key element in our strategy for bringing together people who previously had not collaborated, to do problem solving they didn't know how to do, or sometimes why they would do it. In the event, the strategy was not an unqualified success. I remain confident however that the idea has merit and deserves further attention.

Making Use of the Conceptual Frameworks

If human needs theory, Max-Neef's matrix, and the 'circle chart' version of a problem solving framework were not perfectly convincing for inviting people to the workshops and creating informed expectations on the part of those who would participate, in any case they served us well during the workshops.

We chose to make the Max-Neef matrix of needs and satisfiers explicit but to simplify it. We did not have an audience fully prepared or expecting an academic or intellectual exercise which the full Max-Neef methodology might require. Instead of starting with the matrix and fitting our analysis into it, we began with the 'stories' of participants and their discussion of issues, and then simplified the matrix to correspond to the data, and in order to make it more

practical to use. While we had more than three days to work with the tool in the initial analysis workshops, this still proved to be a short time. Nevertheless, the framework was central to creating the context for fulfilling the problem solving tasks as we designed and facilitated them. By the end of the project our participants, and also the attendees in our Tbilisi Human Needs Seminar, were easily and convincingly 'talking the talk' by framing conflict and its resolution in terms of structural social change and needs satisfaction. From my perspective, this was deeply satisfying.

The circle chart as a representation of problem solving methodology seemed quite novel to some participants at first. Those, however, who perceive the success of the project in terms of their own acquisition of new life skills and knowledge were well served by this framework. Of the several versions of the steps in a problem solving process that have been detailed in the thesis, the circle chart is consistent with the theory as such, and powerful because it is simple and clear.

Amongst many practitioners there exists real ambivalence to the explicit use of theory through conceptual frameworks such as the Max-Neef matrix. For this reason, some interveners avoid using theoretical constructs by name, or sharing them with the conflict parties as part of the design of an intervention. From the side of the parties, their fear is that the academics will come with their theoretically bound preconceptions, and naively believe that the theory could actually explain what is really happening in a complex community or society suffering from endemic social conflict. So the Georgians don't want me to think

that Georgia's problems will all be easily solved by filling in the empty spaces in the Max-Neef matrix.

Jonathan Cohen makes the point nicely that the theoretical constructs and conceptual frameworks are best used as tools for communication. They are simplifications or symbolic renderings of complex theories, useful to the extent that they help us process information, share ideas and speculations, reframe issues or create a small non-threatening dose of cognitive dissonance at the right moment.

This, I think, reflects my bias regarding the role of theory, and the reason why it is more important to me to develop theory for its utility, rather than its prove-ability. Theories make up part of the resource base that I bring to an intervention partnership, and conceptual frameworks are then the 'tools' for giving those theories their utility. To the extent that as academics or practitioners we share responsibility in an intervention with the conflicted parties and representatives of the society or community, then theories and frameworks are what I bring to the effort.

I probably need to learn from this and reform my facilitation style so that conceptual frameworks are more consistently understood as tools, for example a lens that helps bring focus to information and purpose to communication. I suspect that I could be justifiably criticized for trying to use the conceptual frameworks as a means of promoting the ideology - of selling prevention, fundamental structural social change, human needs satisfaction and the entire package in my passion to support people through the work we do. When working in a team, through interpretation, in a new culture, before long-term

working relationships are confidently established, I might create more confusion than clarity in my enthusiasm to make sure that the conceptual frameworks bring the theory alive. Max-Neef's focus on making the theory operational is pertinent and meaningful in this context.

In conclusion, the frameworks we used were useful to the workshop participants, and legitimate in two ways at least. They did help us ground our work in known theory, and they did provide focus, support, direction, and a context for interesting communication, analysis, and creative problem solving.

Time As a Limited Resource

The practitioners I interviewed for the dissertation and our own experience in the conduct of the Regions Project suggest that the gap between theory and practice exists at least in part as a function of the insolvable dilemma of time as a precious but always limited resource. This would be interesting to research further. In the course of interviews and conversations with other practitioners (mainly Cohen and Garb), we all professed a desire to get together to compare and contrast our efforts, perhaps to draw another list of 'lessons learned' through the various interventions in the Caucasus. The issue of how we prioritise and make decisions about what we don't find time to do, and whether or not we slight theory building as one of the first things that gets left out, has been suggested in all my discussions.

Paula Garb feels that her process lacked the time and resources to translate all their information from Russian to English, which then made it more difficult to share the learnings with the conflict resolution field. The intervention

itself was stable through time, but the impact of the work remained narrowly with the participants and wasn't shared more widely.

Jonathan Cohen's concern is similar, that their intervention consistently lacks the time for structured reflection and any discourse among the interveners that would let them compare and contrast their intervention with theory, or with other initiatives. Our interventions require so much time devoted to fund raising, administration, logistics and institutional commitments, that everyone feels it a frustrating challenge to be reflective practitioners in a consistent and structured way.

All of us who facilitated during the Regions Project felt the lack of time in a number of ways. Both Nodar and Jana mentioned above, in relation to the point about conflict avoidance, that to safely and credibly take on any one of the very difficult conflict issues that were raised but then sometimes avoided or dismissed as 'too painful to talk about', we would have needed significantly more time to devote to workshopping. My own sense was that because of time limitations we fell short in preparation, which impacted on our ability to be more structured, which was a pressure on the *DAR*. When we fell short of planning time, we naturally fell back on tried and tested methods of workshopping, which would then be less *DAR* relevant, and less innovative.

We fell short of time to reflect in a structured way. The energy consumption of a team of facilitators in an intense workshop environment is such that only so much work can usefully be done away from the participants and the plenary venue. What time was available was seldom adequate to deal

with even the *IAR* priorities and needs, and left us wanting for extra time to then shift gears and discuss the dissertation and theoretical *DAR* issues.

The conclusion for me, based on both our Regions Project experience and the way other colleagues describe the things that they don't find time for, is that the lowest priority we usually have for using scarce time is theory development or reflective practice. When something has to be excluded or compromised, it is generally the opportunity to either benefit from theory in evaluating our current work in a structured way, or to contribute to new theory by drawing it from our ongoing experiences.

Again, I don't want to overstate the problem with regard to the Regions Project. Relative to most other interventions, the *DAR* did give us a very valuable opportunity to spend some time in that theory-practice gap and draw elements towards the middle from both sides. My project partners and IA colleagues participated in that willingly and productively with the time they could make available.

Some Theory Relevant Conclusions

As I said in the introductory chapter, I did not set out to prove or disprove any explicit hypotheses. I wanted to learn more about how we do problem solving workshops, and to try out some methods, frameworks, and ideas. I wanted to work with needs theory to find more effective ways to make it useful in conflict prevention and resolution. I wanted to share what we might learn with the field through the dissertation writing process.

Getting the parties to the table remains a significant challenge in terms of having useful theory about how it happens. The Georgians are famous for

their tradition of the 'supra', which means Georgian table, so metaphorically it should have been easier to bring them to it. But the supra as metaphor is not a place for 'research' to happen. We might have learned that people are reluctant to come to a process (intervention), or they come without a firm commitment, if they don't fully understand what is going to happen there.

With that in mind, we learned that it is much more difficult to create expectations or communicate a vision of what will happen during the intervention process, in a short time, or through simple descriptive informational presentation or consultation. As Jana explained, the conceptual frameworks have to be experienced before they can be understood and then 'owned'. Once Sandro Svanishvili had some experience with action research as the convening context, he was willing to endorse it as strategy. But before that experience was gained, the theoretical constructs were not, in themselves, enough to persuade people to participate, or to give them confidence and a sense of security about what would happen once the intervention began.

Max-Neef's matrix remains for me a powerful analytical tool. However, while I can understand the complex methodology he describes in his book for workshopping the matrix, I have a hard time imagining how to run such a complex process with groups as diverse as we were bringing together in Georgia. And he is working in a development context, rather than conflict resolution or prevention. Here, I think we made a useful adaptation. By simplifying the concept to talk about positive, negative, and false satisfiers, people naturally understand that negative and false satisfiers give rise to conflict situations. Positive satisfiers lead towards conflict prevention or

resolution. Those Georgian partners and project participants who were able to internalize the framework found it motivating, relevant, and useful in the Georgian context, and were prepared to take the concept forward and promote it more widely in Georgia, which we did in a large seminar in Tbilisi as the originally funded project was drawing to a close.

Turning to Hoffman's list of potential outcomes from a problem solving workshop intervention as the last framework to reflect on the Regions Project it is possible to make the following points:

Did we 'foster interactional conflict analysis'? We definitely were able to bring together people who otherwise hadn't been and didn't expect to have dialogue about the problems to solve, between two Georgian regions and the central government, and they engaged in interactional conflict analysis.

Did we 'foster improved relationships'? In the questionnaire there was a question about whether or not people had changed their attitudes about the 'others' through the course of the project. Sixteen people who answered the question replied that their attitude about the other side had improved. No one answered that they felt less positive about the other side after the work together. A typical comment was: "I represent the Centre. Now I understand more about the potency of the NGOs, and about their possibilities in the regions. I now have a more positive attitude regarding them."¹¹

Did we 'foster communication'? We did this in several ways. By bringing the authorities out to the Regions from the Center, repeatedly, we gave the possibility for deeper relationships to form between NGOs in the region, and

¹¹ Appendix N, pg. 439.

the Center representatives. By having them collaborate on the creation of joint project proposals, they were communicating and working together long after the original workshops were finished. By bringing the two regions, Samegrelo and Samtskhe-Javakheti together in the integration seminar, we helped establish a networking opportunity that had never been previously envisioned.

Was there 'education'? The interesting point here is that while we promised a project that was not designed to be educational, and didn't have a training element, people clearly found by the end that they had received an educational benefit, and this was one of the substantive elements of 'success' in the minds of the project participants, particularly when we then didn't receive continuation funding to implement the joint projects. Of course, any intervention that has a strong experiential component designed into the activities should have an educational benefit.

There was no 'pre-negotiation' relevance in the Regions project, nor ongoing 'negotiation process' that we would have assisted. Did we contribute to 'enhancing willingness to compromise'? I think we probably did. There was extensive good will expressed by the project participants, and we are aware that there is ongoing collaboration between many of these people more than a year after the end of the project, and after the recent changes in the Georgian government.

Finally, did we facilitate 'Implementation: (did we) assist and support transitional and transformational change activities, including the institutionalization of problem solving processes.'? Sadly, this did not happen. It could have. The end of the problem solving research workshops was

technically the end of the *DAR*, but it was not the end of the project. So the question about implementation leads to Chapter Nine, where the end of the story will be told.

Some Personally Relevant Reflections and Conclusions

Above in this chapter, I have put forward some views about certain ethical decisions that I thought I made during the course of the project, and some values and motivations that were inherent in the work. At this point it seems worth reinforcing those points and making some further observations about what I learned personally during the course of the dissertation.

The most fundamental decision that I seemed to need to reach, in terms of the ethics of intervention, came with respect to the tension between the *IAR*, which was the intervention we might have designed without my dissertation aspirations, and the *DAR* agenda. The ethical position as I stated it above was that the intervention 'belonged to the Georgians' with respect to determining ultimate priorities and coming to final decisions in the face of fundamental disagreements. I simply chose to accept that this made the *DAR* tasks sometimes more difficult or less focussed, and trust that this perspective was beneficial in the long run to the success of the intervention. And I believe that this was in fact the case.

I stated above that we ran the project in accordance with conflict resolution values, in terms of giving ownership to the parties, fully sharing roles and responsibilities with them, and drawing clear ethical boundaries. I can state here that I personally hold those values, and that they have been

reinforced through the conduct of the project, especially with respect to the *IAR* and the broader intervention.

My values and motivations have been somewhat less clear with respect to the entire *DAR* enterprise throughout. In terms of being a reflective practitioner, I have truly appreciated the intensity and thoroughness required by the Ph.D. endeavor. There has however, been that tension between the *DAR* design, and the conduct of the *IAR* and while the programmatic and practice dilemmas can be dealt with via the intervention ethics route, my own intellectual ambivalence about the academic exercise will remain at least partially unresolved. One instrument I have used in order to accommodate my feelings towards the tension, which must be one expression of the originally mooted 'gap' between theory and practice from my personal perspective, has been the sometimes cryptic Taoist quotes that head each chapter. As the thesis writing task unfolded, I would begin each chapter by looking for a quote that in some way indicated my feelings or encompass my own internal tensions with respect to the material to be presented in the chapter. Some quotes did not indicate any dire internal angst, hence 'a good scientist has feed himself of concepts and keeps his mind open to what is' (Chapter One), benignly indicates the beginning of the journey, while alluding to my disinclination to invest in hypotheses. Suggesting the post-Soviet times in Georgia were akin to 'all this is robbery and chaos' (Chapter Two) was similarly obvious.

For the literature review chapter, the quote remarked that 'true words aren't eloquent; eloquent words aren't true', which related to my own perceived weakness with respect to knowing and embodying the existing literature and

uncertain ability to really put it to use. In the end, I don't think that our efforts to design based on the existing literature were a strength of the project, with the exception of our use of Max-Neef's framework. I may have learned that my engagement with the theory of our field, as it is reflected in the literature is a relative weakness of my own professional persona. I remain however, unbowed in my assertion that proving or disproving hypotheses - 'wise men don't need to prove their point; men who need to prove their point aren't wise', is not central to my own understanding of the academic exercise, the methodology of action research, or the value I do place in being a reflective practitioner.

The narrative of the initial phases of the project, in Chapter Four relates a period during the project when our activities seemed to take a very long time, and weren't always as successful or progressive as we imagined they would be. While this is common in an intervention project or cycle, it is still difficult as it happens and requires practice and experience to tolerate. 'Rushing into action, you fail. Trying to grasp things, you lose them. Forcing a project to completion, you ruin what was almost ripe.'

In Chapter Five as the London Design Workshop foundered on the tensions between the *DAR* and *IAR* from the perspective of my colleagues and their time constraints, it became necessary to let go of the *DAR* intentions and some rigor, though not the integrity. So I was reminded that, 'The mark of a moderate man is freedom from his own ideas. Tolerant like the sky...he has no destination in view and makes use of anything life happens to bring his way.'

This thinking makes the dissertation activity a journey rather than a result, which makes more sense to me.

The workshops and problem solving unfold in predictable and unpredictable ways. This has always been my experience, and was certainly also true during the Regions Project. Some facilitators are deeply patient and profoundly committed to the elicitive process. Others find their own efficiencies and esteem through less risky or more prescriptive methods. My own inclinations lie in the middle, and were mentioned above when I confessed my tendency to shade conceptual frameworks towards my own ideological bent. But my own ideal facilitation style, and my goals for the evolution of my own skills and techniques are in the direction of the patient and open ended, and the headline quote serves as a reminder that, 'the soft overcomes the hard. The slow overcomes the fast (Chapter Six).

Our determination to share responsibility with the workshop participants, in terms of facilitation, process, and outcomes is illustrated by, 'If you don't trust the people, you make them untrustworthy...When (the) work is done, the people say, "Amazing: we did it all by ourselves!" (Chapter Seven). Surely this is what the values we hold in favor of empowerment and ownership are about, and my quote simply summarizes the degree to which I feel our project successfully embodied those values.

In this Chapter, 'the direct path seems long...true clarity seems obscure...the greatest wisdom seems childish'. Just to say that what we learned, and what I learned through a long and involved process has been modest rather than dramatic, and some of it vague rather than crystal clear. I

don't feel as though an paradigm shaking work has been accomplished, although that is the Burtonian path I still might think I'm on. And the final Chapter ends somewhat obviously with, 'The master does his job and then stops.'

Again, I wouldn't want to overemphasize the meaningfulness of these quotes and what they indicate by way of reflection on the project and dissertation. As inserted into the dissertation chapters, they were originally mostly a motivational and expressive tool for lubricating my writing process. Used in this chapter as the framework for reflection on what I've learned, or not learned, and they don't serve to express any deep learnings in any obscure or surreptitious way. They do connect me symbolically with my inner 'eastern' worldview, which does contribute to my academic and professional motivational and values frameworks. Those facets of my philosophical and intellectual makeup were relevant to all the processes and outcomes of this work.

Chapter Last

The End of the Story

The master does his job
and then stops.
He understands that the universe
is forever out of control,
and that trying to dominate events
goes against the current of the Tao.
Because he believes in himself,
he doesn't try to convince others.
Because he is content with himself,
he doesn't need others' approval.
Because he accepts himself,
the whole world accepts him.

The Georgian Regions Project generated a wide range of activities beyond the problem solving research workshops, in the confidence/capacity building stream, and based on the outcomes of our workshop activities. The *DAR* was focussed entirely on the problem solving workshops, and the analysis for the purposes of this thesis was performed in the previous two chapters. But obviously, there is an unfinished narrative, and the purpose of this short final chapter is to tell the end of the story.

Creating Options to Implement the Joint Projects

The most concrete outcomes of the problem solving research workshops, in the sense that the participants intended, were the outlines for seven joint project proposals, each of which would involve cooperation and partnership between Region and Center, and each of which was intended to contribute to needs satisfaction and therefore problem solving and conflict prevention. One in particular, if implemented, would have created a new structure with the specific purpose of focussing on joint problem solving in the regions:

Project Name: Co-operation of Government and Public Institutions for Mutual Development

Brief Description: This project envisions the creation of a special agency dedicated to improving communication, information sharing, and problem solving through co-ordinated activities between the Central government, local governance structures, and representatives of civil society.

The other joint project proposal titles were:

Intensive Courses in Georgian Language for Teachers and Public Servants in Samtskhe-Javakheti

Creation of a Business Centre in Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda (Javakheti)

Legal Assistance and Legal Rights in Samtskhe-Javakheti

Civil Education and Information Center (in Samegrelo)

Strengthening of Local Self-Governance Systems in Zugdidi

Establishment of a Samegrelo Region Business Center

(A complete summary of all seven projects is attached as Appendix O)

When we shared these proposals with the DFID representative in Tbilisi, she was encouraging and helpful. She offered that perhaps the British Embassy could host a 'mini donor conference' where these specific proposals could be put forward to a gathered group of donors. This seemed like a great idea.

FDHR then invited project participants to come to Tbilisi over several months and facilitated the creation of full project proposals from the outlines that were finished at the action planning workshops.

The donor conference came together in December 2001, and the British Ambassador was kind enough to appear and open the proceedings for us. Unfortunately, we were again victimized by external events that were tragic and

distracting. An official of the European Commission, an individual well known and liked by most of the individuals representing the donors who we had gathered, had been murdered just the previous evening in Tbilisi. Some people only heard this news from the Ambassador as she made her opening remarks. This tragedy unsettled our meeting and dominated the informal social conversations that might otherwise have been used for building relationships between our project participants and these donors.

The Regions Project participants presented summaries of all the project proposals. We explained the problem solving research workshops and the process through which the proposals had been created. We facilitated a general discussion of the relationships between Regions and Center, and other initiatives and developments that would add to the context within which these projects would work, if funded. The day ended with expressions of appreciation from the donor organizations, but not too much in the way of likely commitments from any specific donors towards any of the projects. Although our participants and FDHR followed through on the contacts that were made at the meeting, in fact none of the projects found independent funding based on our 2001 donor meeting.

The Akhalkalaki Research Workshops

As a direct outcome of the problem solving workshops, IA and FDHR agreed to partner with the State Chancellery and attempt to replicate the research methodology as a way to start an intervention into the dysfunctional relationships between the appointed and elected officials in Akhalkalaki. As related above, our idea to attempt to 'mediate' was transformed at the

suggestion of the Chancellery into a proposed new series of workshops, where they would act as the conveners. At that time, I was thinking that we'd learned something about how not to bring the parties to the table, and that using the Chancellery as conveners would be a test of a new strategy. They were quite confident that they would be able to bring the protagonists to a research opportunity, which we would structure to include two other nearby communities from the Javakheti region.

We faced a timing challenge, in that there were local elections scheduled, and the summer vacation season was about to commence. (This was April 2002. A full schedule of all the Georgian Regions Project events is attached as Appendix P.) Rather than scheduling a full series of three workshops and going through the entire problem solving cycle as we had, we planned to try and initially convene two somewhat shorter workshops in Likani.

Our first event brought together some of our previous participants and some new faces from Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki, as well as a new community, Aspindza. Unfortunately, the key actors in the local conflict still eluded our strategies to get them face-to-face. The workshop dialogue was somewhat distracted by the election buildup, and the first meeting was not particularly well focussed or inspiring.

Curiously, one strong individual from Akhalkalaki began to take a very active role in the proceedings, and expressed his own growing determination to find a way to 'mediate' between the Akhalkalaki factions. Without knowing too much about the details of the problem on the ground, we came to understand that there was competition between different clans over who would control

power and politics in the community, and that those clan-based structures were disinclined to expose their struggle to any process so transparent as either a mediation, or a research project.

Our second and final meeting in Likani with the Akhalkalaki intervention participants happened in May, 2002. Our enthusiastic Akhalkalaki participant described above, provided two astonishing moments that left me somewhat puzzled and a little concerned about our entire initiative. Firstly, he reported back that inspired by our 'mediation training', which was somehow his understanding of the nature of the first meeting, he had gone back to Akhalkalaki and called together a meeting of the clans, in order to impress on them the importance of resolving their differences and to offer himself as a potential mediator. Though they apparently had not taken up his offer, he professed confidence that he would be able to bring the situation right in the near future. I was less sure.

His other amazing moment came when the conversation turned to the Meskhetian return issue. Our recently converted peacebuilder suffered a regression in terms of his newly found conflict resolution role. From his perspective, the Meskhetians would never be allowed to return to Javakheti, and the locals were ready to use force or resist by whatever means any attempt to reconcile, reintegrate or otherwise promote any return. He had stories to tell from his youth about the crimes perpetrated by 'Turks' in his village. He was not interested in mediation, conflict resolution, or satisfying any needs the Meskhetians might have.

Summer was nigh, elections were coming, future funding was uncertain, and the Akhalkalaki intervention with IA, FDHR and the State Chancellery faded away.

A Tbilisi Needs Seminar

When the project was initially funded, the budget included a project ending conference to be held in London, and DFID had increased the budget to cover this idea. We decided that it would be more useful to hold a seminar in Tbilisi and perhaps initiate a process of promoting the needs theory framework among a wider network of Georgians. We organized and conducted the seminar, 'Basic Human Needs and Institutional Development in Georgia', in November of 2002, with forty participants attending for two days.

We presented the Regions Project and the information that had been created during our workshops. We made presentations on needs theory and Max-Neef. We began discussing what shape a needs analysis on the whole of Georgia would take, and how it might be arrived at. We did some small group work with the matrix, where our original participants acted as facilitators. By the second afternoon, the room was full of Georgians talking the talk and satisfying their participation and understanding needs. If we had found support for the continued funding of the project, this meeting could have been a significant moment in development of movement to promote needs theory (and human scale development) in Georgia.

End of the Georgian Regions Project

If the donor meeting had helped us garner funds for even some of the joint projects, I think I would have been inclined to wrap up the Regions Project by the end of 2002, write the dissertation, and get out of town. However, the funding didn't seem to be coming, and our Tbilisi DFID representative was still keen on finding a way to 'institutionalize' our results. After some conversation and encouragement from her, we decided to put together a funding proposal for continuing the Regions Project, including funding the entire package of joint proposals and implementing them in a coordinated and holistic way, as well as expanding the project into other Georgian Regions.

Our proposal was ready in mid 2002, to be put to the newly created Global Conflict Prevention Pool, a new initiative of the British Government that included DFID, the Foreign Office (FCO), and the Ministry of Defence (MOD), and administered funds previously allocated by DFID. For strategic, internal and institutional reasons we decided at IA to take our proposal out of consideration for the first GCPP meeting cycle (to present a different IA proposal that was more urgent), and resubmit the Regions project proposal in the fall of 2002.

The continuation funding proposal for the Georgian Regions Project was finally considered by the Global Pool only in February of 2003. By that point, the British government was in a process of re-evaluating their policies on Georgia. The proposal was turned down for funding. By this point, most of our local partners had gone on to do other things, many of them based on some of the project proposals that we had worked on. Most of our participants were

active and fully engaged in various NGO efforts in their regions and communities. By this time the research workshops were a year in the past, and the proposals were dated in some ways. We decided at IA not to resuscitate the project, as another funding strategy might have taken months to develop. The Georgian Regions Project came to a close as of December 2002.

In Chapter Four, the Regions Project funding proposal was cited, describing what we would consider 'minimum' or 'maximum' success. Maximum success was described as, 'modest but demonstrable contribution to a real problem solving and conflict prevention effort between the Georgian state and authorities in the three regions, accompanied by some theory development and indications of replicable processes that would inform ongoing conflict in the wider Caucasus region.' Had we funded and implemented the seven projects described above, especially the creation of an institution specifically created to facilitate problem solving between regions and the center, then I think we could have credibly claimed significant success. Acceptance of this dissertation as a modest contribution to theory development would increase the satisfaction. I regret that the Regions Project was not allowed to continue with the implementation of the projects we derived through the problem solving research workshops.

Minimum success 'would be a contribution to further networking and some additional capacity for conflict handling among NGO and civil society structures in the Georgian regions'. I think that we surpassed this measure significantly. Predictably then, our end results fall somewhere between the minimum and maximum measures we proposed to the donors.

When It's Over, It's Over

In December 2003, Eduard Shevardnadze resigned the presidency of Georgia in the face of the so-called 'Rose Revolution' promulgated by Michael Saakashvili and his progressive political cohort of Georgian reformers.

Saakashvili has initiated an ambitious, some would say reckless, plan for fundamental structural social change in Georgia, attacking first and foremost the political and economic corruption that has plagued the country.

Saakashvili, like us, also had trouble getting into Ajara, and even as the President of Georgia was initially denied access to the territory, including the firing of warning shots over his motorcade.¹ There is no way to predict at this point whether the process for social change and conflict prevention that the new Georgian government is attempting will make the relations between Georgia's central government and its distant regions more or less stable.

Through the Georgian Regions Project intervention, and the problem solving research workshops that were central to this thesis, we attempted to demonstrate that needs theory and a problem solving approach could be employed in the Georgian context to support and facilitate conflict resolution and prevention processes. Everyone learned a lot in the process, and I have tried to fairly represent some of that here in a way that will benefit other 'conflictologists' (as they are called in the former Soviet Union spaces). As an intervention, it was somewhat disappointing that we failed to find resources to carry through on our action plans, especially the proposal to create an agency

¹ During the latest stage of the writing of the dissertation, the Rose Revolution came to Ajara, and Aslan Abashidze left Georgia for political exile in Russia. South Ossetia appears to be Saakashvili's next target, and tensions are increasing there on a daily basis.

to do problem solving in the regions. That would have been an unquestionably positive contribution in Georgia.

The dissertation process has been satisfying to me intellectually and professionally. I will try to put what I have gained into practice, and in my future work put what I practice back into our theory. Provention remains a powerful philosophical ideal for me personally. And, I clearly still have something to learn about how to get the parties to the table. Maybe that's the part of what we do that is more art than science.

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Appendix A

Georgian Regions Project Funding Proposal Submitted to DFID

November 1999

INTERNATIONAL ALERT

A Programme of Conflict Prevention and Confidence Building in The Regions of Georgia

To: Department for International Development

From: International Alert
Eurasia Programme

Date: 17th November 1999

A Programme of Conflict Prevention and Confidence Building in The Regions of Georgia

1) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 International Alert is proposing a funding and programmatic partnership with the Department for International Development, in a programme of conflict prevention and confidence building in the ethnic/territorial regions of Ajaria, Javakhetia, and Mingrelia, in the Republic of Georgia.

1.2 The programme has two streams. The first is designed as institutional capacity building, confidence building, and contributing to the development of peace constituencies within NGOs and other structures of civil society in the regions. These activities build on IA's ongoing confidence building activities in the Caucasus, and benefit from well established partnerships between IA's Eurasia Programme and significant NGOs in both Georgia and Abkhazia.

1.3 The second stream will be a focused conflict prevention intervention, using specific conflict resolution theory and methodology frameworks, with the aim of addressing the identity, security, and recognition needs and aspirations of the ethnic groups and regions, within the context of the stability of the Georgian state. This stream will be conducted as an action research initiative, and benefits from IA's relationship with George Mason University in the United States.

1.4 The envisaged partnership assumes frequent and comprehensive co-operation and consultation between IA and DfID, a dialogue which has already begun, and which has usefully informed the development of this document. The projected programme budget for a two year programme is £249,408. Activities should begin in January, 2000 or before.

1.5 This proposal is submitted on behalf of International Alert by the Eurasia Programme Manager Gevork Ter-Gabrielian, and Davin Bremner of the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR) at George Mason University.

2 LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 A logical Framework for the project is attached as Annex 1.

3. PROJECT RATIONALE

3.1 International Alert has been working in the Caucasus region for several years, and specifically engaged in conflict transformation in Georgia through the "Georgian-Abkhazian Confidence Building Programme," funded by TACIS (hereafter referred to as the TACIS programme), and initiated in 1997. While the successful TACIS project is expanding and moving into a Phase II (assuming continued funding), IA seeks to act on current opportunities to engage in a programme of conflict prevention and problem-solving in several minority regions of Georgia, with the goal of preventing violent conflict, encouraging confidence building, and exploring forms of structural social change between the Georgian state and peoples living in Ajaria, Javakhetia, and Mingrelia.

3.2 Historical Background: During the years of perestroika and after the collapse of the USSR, Georgia was one of the leading republics in the movement for independence. However, its first democratically elected President, Zviad Gamsakhurdia's extreme nationalistic policies did not accommodate the rising demands of South Ossetian and Abkhazian minorities. In addition, Gamsakhurdia alienated himself from many political circles in Georgia. As a result, he was ousted from office via a violent struggle which was characterised as civil war, and eventually Eduard Shevardnadze became President. Shevardnadze could not or did not want to accommodate the demands of the Abkhaz, so another war, in addition to the Georgia-South Ossetia conflict, was started. As a result, Abkhazia became defacto independent, supported overtly by ethnic kin from North Caucasus in the Russian Federation and, according to some opinions, through the direction of some Russian authorities.

3.3 Gamsakhurdia himself was Mingrelian, and even today in Mingrelia, which borders Abkhazia, there are guerrilla organisations which support him despite the crackdown on all his supporters that Shevardnadze organised during the 1990s.

3.4 Shevardnadze tried to tighten his rule and simultaneously keep good relations with the Western countries, and therefore he had to allow the elements of democracy to develop in Georgia. But this brought about a situation where other ethnic minorities, like the Ajar, Armenians in Javakhetia, in addition to the Mingrelians, South Ossetians and the Abkhaz, started to increase their demands for additional autonomy or self determination. Moreover, a tough political struggle developed between him and the formidable leader of Ajaria--Aslan Abashidze. While not demanding secession, Abashidze is actually seeking something more--the throne of Georgia itself.

3.5 The Armenians living in Javakhetia tried to start a national movement similar to that in Nagorny Karabakh. However, its legitimacy might not have felt as deep as in Karabakh, therefore, it did not result in demands for secession. In addition, the Armenian and Georgian governments co-ordinated on several measures to prevent that from happening. However, the nationalist movement among the Armenians is very much present today, and in Georgia there are certain circles which by their nationalistic calls instigate Armenian replies.

3.6 Shevardnadze accepted the Russian troops stationed in Ajaria and Javakhetia, along the border with Turkey. These troops are the main economic engine for the area, and the Armenian population is economically very much dependent on their being there. Also, the troops are sometimes recruited from the Armenians. If these troops are removed (and the decision has been taken, but no hard evidence is available to us yet), this will exacerbate the tensions in Ajaria and Javakhetia.

3.7 The perception that there is now a window of opportunity wherein progress might be made, takes into account the recent parliamentary election results, and the upcoming Georgian presidential elections. While the political situation in Georgia is evolving, and events require constant evaluation, the existing conditions affecting the relations between the centre and the regions remain critical in terms of conflict prevention.

3.8 As Georgia is now a member of the Council of Europe it is a priority to facilitate

Georgia's democratisation and help it with overcoming its war-torn past. For that, co-ordinated and combined activities should be developed to address the needs of citizens of both majority and minority nationalities and sub-ethnic groups.

3.9 Analysis of the Current Situation: Through the activities of the Caucasus NGO Forum, and especially as a result of IA's extensive networking and consultations, an analysis of the current situation in Georgia and the wider Caucasus is emerging. IA's Eurasia programme team, and others, believe that the following points have become clear:

- **an often unspoken impediment to finding a political solution for Georgia and Abkhazia is the situation with Georgia's administrative-territorial structure.**
- **the central authorities in Georgia have difficulty developing appropriate and viable institutions which would define their relations with other territorial, ethnic-territorial, and sub-ethnic regions. In terms of conflict prevention, Ajaria, Javakhetia, and Mingrelia are of major importance.**
- **the conflict with Abkhazia affects Georgian state relations with these entities, while relations with these entities affect the conflict with Abkhazia.**

4. POLICIES

4.1 In July 1999 the House of Commons Select Committee on Foreign Affairs published its Sixth Report, including extensive discussion of the current situation in the Caucasus region. Testimony given before the committee included expert opinion that:

“conflict resolution remains the central problem for the region (the Caucasus) and should be given the highest priority in British policy...the Government could make a substantial contribution to conflict resolution efforts through promoting NGO and academic initiatives in confidence-building work and public education projects on the reconciliation of principles of territorial integrity and self-determination.”

4.2 The report concluded that, “The United Kingdom has an interest in the resolution of the conflicts which already exist in the South Caucasus and Central Asia, and as great an interest in helping to prevent further conflicts from arising.”

4.3 The second point of our analysis (above), regarding viable institutions that define the relations between the Georgian state and the ethnic regions, corresponds to the Select Committee mention of reconciliation of principles of territorial integrity and self-determination. What this means is that the “problem to be solved”, or conflict to be addressed, in the regions is the problem of designing appropriate social structures and institutionalising political processes that satisfy the identity (and other basic) needs, and autonomy aspirations of ethnic, sub-ethnic, regional or other identity groups, without further threatening the security of the Georgian state. From this perspective, a programme of

capacity building for structures of civil-society and local governance, coupled with a focused analytical initiative to address the autonomy, identity, sovereignty and security issues, is called for.

4.4 The interests of the Department for International Development in promoting good governance, pluralistic democracy, and appropriate structuring of public administration and civil service fit squarely with the concerns noted above by the Select Committee. That is, without conflict resolution in the Caucasus, without some successful conflict prevention, and specifically if there are no constructive approaches to the issues of autonomy, sovereignty, and the maintenance of working relationships between national and local governing structures, there will continue to be poor governance, inadequate or dysfunctional democracy, and a recurrence or even expansion of violent conflict.

4.5 For these reasons, International Alert is proposing a partnership with DfID, for a programme of conflict prevention, capacity building, developing peace constituencies, and problem-solving in the regions of Georgia.

5. PROJECT APPROACH

5.1 **The goal of this project is to prevent violent ethnic or political conflict from breaking out between the Georgian state and any of the regions of Ajaria, Javakhetia, or Mingrelia.** This will require work between local authorities and decision makers and Georgian state authorities, and also representatives of civil society, to analyse their current relationships and then co-operatively develop appropriate and viable institutions, social structures, and constitutional arrangements that define relations between central government and the regions.

5.2 The project will benefit from International Alert's growing relationship with ICAR at George Mason University in the United States. This relationship increases our capacity for engaging in "action research", a powerful framework for specific conflict resolution approaches. One aspect of the proposed programme is to employ an action research methodology, based on the analytical problem-solving approach and human needs theory, to the issue identified in the Select Committee report - of reconciliation of principles of territorial integrity and self-determination. We believe that such an initiative has not been adequately attempted in the Caucasus, particularly from a conflict prevention perspective, and that if the effort is successful, there will be important and replicable lessons learned, and therefore added value to the realisation of genuine problem solving on the ground.

5.3 The human needs theoretical framework and problem solving processes inherent to this project join theory and practice, becoming "action research", which is an innovative approach to conflict prevention, and a component of what is currently becoming known as "best practice". While the specific outcomes of the project are impossible to predict, we firmly believe that there will be lessons learned and replicable results, in addition to empowering the conflicted parties to engage in their own conflict analysis and problem solving, and beginning to find new models of social organisation that might address autonomy, identity, sovereignty and security conflicts.

5.4 International Alert's process oriented methodology is fully described in the attached Code of Conduct. The key principles upon which all our work is based include: primacy of people in transforming conflicts; humanitarian concern; human rights and humanitarian law and principles; respect for gender and cultural diversity; impartiality; independence; accountability; confidentiality; partnerships; and institutional learning. IA believes in long-term engagement, in working with key sectors of society, and usually in using a regional approach to conflict areas.

5.5 There are two broad process streams envisaged. Firstly, a programme of developing peace constituencies and assisting in the conflict handling capacity of NGOs and civil society actors in the regions, whereby they can have increasing confidence in their abilities to address conflict non-violently and participate in solving difficult political and social problems. This project stream is related to our TACIS process. The second stream will be an action research, conflict resolution intervention, specifically designed to bring into dialogue representatives of local government and other leaders from the regions with representatives of the Georgian state, in a facilitated problem-solving process. However, in recognition of the changing circumstances of the Georgian political landscape this project is designed to be flexible enough to accommodate these changes.

5.6 We will be working on determining the institutional and skills based peacebuilding capacities of local non-governmental partners. After helping them build on these capacities we will move toward organising workshops with them and local authorities, based on human needs methodology, to achieve the mapping of the region's position toward the centre. We will not be looking, at first, for the designs of federal relations, but for the particular opportunities to develop projects and activities which will have details of possible future designs embedded in them. It is reasonable to expect that some of the people with whom we work will be ready to talk the political language of federal relations; we will not, however, encourage or prohibit these talks. Rather, we will encourage concrete doable activities or action plans of co-operation between the centre and the region, ethnic groups, etc. from which possible future principles of federal relations can be generalised. It may be expected, also, that certain activities will be devoted to studying and discussing the existing types of federal relations in Georgia --a knowledge gap that is felt very strongly today by our partners in Georgia.

5.7 However, it should be clear that we do not commit ourselves to facilitating the design of a new political structure for the Georgian regions. We rather commit ourselves to facilitating the development of an environment conducive to the development of new political relations between the ethnic and/or subethnic groups, on one hand, and between the centre and the regions, on the other. Appropriate agendas, and criteria of positive progress, will be determined by the local people themselves whom we will meet and with whom we will start working.

5.8 It has been suggested in the region, through many consultations and in dialogue with project partners, that successfully addressing tensions between the Georgian state and the regions would have an indirect, or at some level perhaps a direct positive impact on the currently stalled political/diplomatic negotiation processes between Georgia and Abkhazia, and South Ossetia. This then becomes a complementary purpose underlying the primary project goals.

5.9 Key Stakeholders, Institutional Partnerships, and Consultations: The TACIS programme of activities and partnerships have helped create the context for this proposed programme of action. IA's main partners in the Caucasus are the International Centre on Conflict and Negotiation (ICCN) in Tbilisi, and Civic Initiative - Person of the Future Foundation, in Sukhumi. Consultations on the ideas shaping this proposal have already begun, with both the TACIS partners and other actors in the field. Critical to the project is access to authorities working for the Georgian central state, who will have both the inclination and opportunity to think analytically and act creatively to find solutions to the relevant constitutional and social issues.

5.10 However, the project implementation group should establish good working relations with both governmental and non-governmental sectors of Georgia, and credible independence should be preserved to allow the implementers the latitude of options concerning partners and not to influence the final outcome of the project by political pragmatism.

5.11 Unofficial conversations have been held with the Members of the last Parliament of Georgia concerning this project, including public figures and experts on law and governance. One of the important individuals supporting it is Mr. Paata Zakareishvili, who is a specialist in popular diplomacy and a key non-governmental negotiator with the Abkhaz. Mr. Ramaz Sakvarelidze, MP, Deputy Chair of the Media Sub-commission of the Parliament, was quite engaged by the conceptual framework of the project and has promised his support even when he is out of the office. Mr. Malkhaz Chemia, from an NGO called Domus Mobilis, has access to the highest level of the top political elite of Georgia (former Parliament and State Chancellery) and has offered to secure co-operation for IA. A visit will be made to certain political figures, possibly Zurab Jvania and Irakly Machavariani (who are aware of the concept paper) only in the first stage, when the project starts.

5.12 IA work usually proceeds by notifying a government rather than requesting their approval, since official sanction sometimes requires much more commitment from a government than they are ready to provide, given the sensitive nature of conflict resolution projects as compared to other developmental projects. In Georgia, we benefit from our partner NGOs who are quite independent in their approaches, and have their own networks of connections with government branches. Working with and through them is usually sufficient to ensure positive governmental attitudes towards our work. So far, in terms of our TACIS project, we have enjoyed the unspoken and unofficial collaboration of the Georgian government and we expect the same for this project. Our main partner for the last project, George Khutsishvili from the International Centre on Conflict and Negotiation, is also well-connected to the executive structures, and will be co-operating with us for this project. Finally, Sopiko Shubladze, the leader of Partners-Georgia, an NGO with a lot of experience in training young people in conflict resolution skills in the regions of Georgia, is also on board. These are only the closest partners, there are certainly others, like Dr. Ghia Nodia, Dr. Tarkhan-Muravi, etc., who will be contacted as needs arise.

5.13 Above-mentioned partners from Tbilisi will be asked to help in certain areas. For instance, Khutsishvili will provide access to Zugdidi, communities of Mingrelians and IDPs from Abkhazia, and returnees to the Gali region, because his organisation has worked there successfully with the Norwegian Refugee Council. Shubladze has done some work in Ajaria

and South Ossetia. In South Ossetia, we also enjoy the co-operation of the NRC and well-known NGO figures (close to local government) Dina Alborova and Alan Parastaev, members of the Caucasus Forum of NGOs.

5.14 Access Issues: As DfID noted in its proposal guidelines, the circumstances of conflict in the region differ. Ajaria, Javakhetia, and Mingrelia have different relationships with the Georgian state, and different conflict processes are at play.

5.15 Access to Ajaria should be achieved via careful work possibly via meeting with Aslan Abashidze himself, contacting the Ajars in Tbilisi, and through some Russian NGOs (like Glasnost) which have done some work there.

5.16 Access to Samtse-Javakhetia will be achieved first of all via the United Nations Volunteers office, who have been working there for a long time now.

5.17 In terms of co-operation with other international agencies. OSCE (Klaus Rasmussen), EC Delegation (David Geer), UNV (Amy Stafford), and NRC (Patrick Daru--not local staff) are aware of this project and ready to help us with their contacts and connections. They also expect, in the case of success of this project, to build upon its results. We regularly communicate with Jonathan Cohen of Conciliation Resources.

5.18 The project obviously will proceed at different paces in different regions. It will be easier to start work in Zugdidi and Akhalkalaki than in Batumi. Thanks to our Georgia-Abkhazia project, we have been promised favourable access to South Ossetia.

5.19 We will be working with civil society representatives in the region to develop independent partnerships. These will be teachers, journalists, lawyers and other representatives of intelligentsia, in general, opinion-makers in their communities. Partnership with these people and their organisations is desirable for confidence-building, affirming that our project has a non-governmental character, and resolving project management issues in the regions. It will be with these local partners, as well as with, perhaps, some of our Tbilisi partners, that we will visit the local authorities' offices, and determine the group of people to be involved in our workshops from local administration and government. We do not yet have any specific partners or organisations from Ajaria, Samtse-Javakhetia, and the region of Zugdidi. Our above-mentioned partners in Tbilisi have their suggestions in this respect. We will be relying, in part, on them. It had seemed inappropriate to us to start talks and meetings with these possible future partners and raise their expectations before the first stage of the project started, a situation that has previously proven difficult for us and others.

6. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

First Phase: Consultation and Needs Assessment

6.1 The first phase of the project, when it is funded and initiated, will be crucial to the intervention design. Field trips will be made to all three regions, as well as Tbilisi, for the purposes of:

- Building relationship and assessing the capacity and institutional needs of NGOs that can play a role in the development of peace constituencies in the regions, briefing them on the TACIS process, and introducing the action-research, needs theory frameworks; (with reference to the DfID proposal guidelines, this activity follows from the design of the first TACIS programme, and accords with “building up local NGO capacity through, for example, institutional strengthening...”)
- Establishing relationships with local authorities and leaders who have the mandate to resolve conflict and engage in problem solving, and consult with them on the action-research and needs theory frameworks; (this activity anticipates “the need for local experts to be given full recognition and empowerment within projects; and the need to marry comparative international expertise, external funds and local knowledge, insights and credibility together...”)
- Gathering data and jointly (with local expertise) drafting a post-election analysis, based on a needs theory framework, that will frame the evolution of the project design, and motivate the commitment of appropriate project partners to the conflict prevention stream. The analysis will also be used to inform ongoing discussion between IA and DfID on directions, design, and implementation of the project.

6.2 The needs assessment teams will include IA staff, representation from Caucasus NGO partners, and a researcher affiliated with ICAR. Some local partners and constituencies in Tbilisi have already been identified, contacted, and prepared. This process should take 3-4 months.

6.3 Each conflict can be described in the abstract as having to do with “identity, security, and recognition” needs, but perceptions will differ on the ground. It will only be clear after extensive consultation and analysis whether or not all three regions can be approached with the proposed framework, and the degree to which a single intervention, or three connected efforts, or some other configuration will be necessary. This will mean that the project partnership, between IA and DfID, as well as international partnerships with local organisations will require high degrees of flexibility, communication and co-operation, and a commitment to evolving project design and support. The discussions so far with DfID staff indicate their willingness to engage with IA on this basis.

6.4 The initial phase of consultation, needs assessment, and analysis will take 3-4 months from project inception.

6.5 Phase I Outputs: Some of the outputs that will begin to emerge during the first phase include: strengthened capacity of civil society peacebuilding structures in the regions; improving confidence in the possibilities of peacebuilding activities and networks; endorsement and commitments to participate in the conflict prevention problem-solving process.

Second Phase: Capacity Building and Analytical Problem Solving

6.6 The second stage involves beginning confidence building activities, similar to the TACIS programme, in the regions. This is the first stream of activity. IA will respond to the needs assessment, working with local partners to build peace constituencies and local NGO conflict handling capacities. This may involve any of the activities or means of support that were employed in the TACIS programme, including local training, assisting partners to acquire communications and networking equipment and knowledge, and helping partners build co-operative relationships across the regions and between regional and Georgian state actors. **As relationships and capacity develop, confidence builds, and as a result a thin but effective layer of civic organisation, and the appearance of a peace constituency will emerge in the regions.**

6.7 Simultaneously, the problem-solving action research workshops will be designed and conducted in consultation with partners on the ground. The conflict prevention workshops will be held for a few days at a time, over 6-8 months, facilitated by IA staff, consultants, and researchers. There may be an initial workshop involving several regions and types of actors, but generally the activity will be bi-lateral. The activities will be modelled on problem-solving workshops that have contributed to peacemaking breakthroughs in Northern Ireland; that have been facilitated by various academics working in the Middle East; and the so called Oslo process, conducted by Norwegian facilitators, which lead to the signing of the Oslo Accords. Problem-solving workshops are generally described as “Track Two” or unofficial activities, and they sometimes run parallel with Track One, official, governmental negotiation processes. They are usually conducted as an exercise in joint, facilitated, conflict analysis. In Georgia, the workshops will be adapted specifically for the current situation, with an emphasis on conflict prevention. The second phase is proposed as 8-9 months.

6.8 The activity of “analytical problem solving” has two main steps, the analysis, followed by the problem solving. Analysis is an activity that benefits from facilitation, where conflict resolution theories and frameworks are tools to assist in framing analysis and constructing common language, and third parties provide “safe spaces” for reflection. As joint analysis happens through time, trusting relationships are built between parties, and adversarial attitudes can shift towards co-operation.

6.9 **Phase II Outputs:** Outputs that will result from the second phase include: developing peace constituencies and relationships in the regions, and networking beyond the regions; conduct of problem solving workshops.

Third Phase: Conflict Prevention and Confidence Building

6.10 In the third phase, the two streams come together. **NGOs and civil society structures from the regions will have the chance to be in contact and develop joint peacebuilding projects with similar NGOs in Georgia, including those based in Tbilisi.** They should have the opportunity to begin participating in various ways with the ongoing Georgian peace initiatives, and thereby make a concrete contribution to the resolution of the Georgia and Abkhazia, and South Ossetian conflicts. They will be included in the wider

Caucasus NGO Forum activities, as their capacity to do so develops through time.

6.11 The conflict prevention workshops will evolve, from the analytical/academic exercise, into forums for doing the problem solving activity and drawing up plans of action for implementing solutions and creating new structures. **The method is to propose the satisfaction of basic human needs, such as identity, security, and recognition, as the underlying organising principle for designing social structures, and to apply that conceptual framework to the task of creating functional institutions designed by representatives of the Georgian state and members of the regions, working together.** It is likely that a series of pilot projects will be initiated, to begin implementing consensual strategies for reforming and inventing new social institutions designed for needs satisfaction and management of their local-national, inter-group relations.

6.12 The third phase will be conducted over 8-9 months. Project evaluation will be designed and conducted in a variety of ways, including the production of a PhD dissertation specifically written as a reflection on the project design and implementation process, and the uses of needs theory and analytical problem solving.

6.13 **Third Phase Outputs:** The third phase activities will produce some of these outputs: information and agreements on “needs” and “satisfiers” in the regions and for the state; models and pilot projects designed to mediate relationships between the regions and the state; action plans for problem solving; networking and established relationships between region peacebuilding structures, and wider Caucasus processes; evaluation of the project.

7. Opportunities and Risks

7.1 When we imagine what can be accomplished, and what some of the risks are, the range of possibilities include:

- Minimum success would be a contribution to further networking and some additional capacity for conflict handling among NGO and civil society structures in the Georgian regions.
- Maximum success would be a modest but demonstrable contribution to a real problem solving and conflict prevention effort between the Georgian state and authorities in the three regions, accompanied by some theory development and indications of replicable processes that would inform ongoing conflicts in the wider Caucasus region.
- In the worst case, there is the risk that political and social circumstances beyond the control of IA, of our local partners, and of other would be peacebuilders will prevent any movement towards conflict prevention or resolution, and that violent conflict in the region could increase. In this situation we will try to sustain the network through these periods, without putting the safety of our partners at risk.
- There is a risk that has been discussed with our DfID partners, of raising project participants expectations of change, and then failing to find ways to take concrete projects and action plans forward. We acknowledge this concern, and are absolutely committed to designing a process that assumes carrying through on the “problem solving” part of analytical problem solving, as opposed to stopping short after accomplishing the analytical tasks. Additionally, we believe it will be important and

possible to create a climate of shared responsibility, meaning that project partners and participants fully share with us responsibility for outcomes, including shortcomings (and there will be some), while fully owning positive project successes and accomplishments.

7.2 Monitoring and Evaluation: As action research, this project will benefit from a wider than normal range of evaluatory techniques and processes, as well as from an especially thorough documentation process. In addition, we appreciate having DfID as project partners, for several reasons. We have sometimes been in the situation that after a certain activity a swift follow-up is necessary but the donors are far away, if not unreachable. We want to have in this project the opposite opportunity: donors deeply interested, having a clear stake in the result. They will contribute the legitimacy of this project, sometimes its security, give us access to their partners and other implementing organisations, compare and contrast this project with others in Georgia and in other areas, and contribute with intellectual and strategic input. However, since DfID are a governmental fund, we have to be clear about relative independence of this project from governmental agendas--for both the interest of NGO community and of the British Government. Therefore, co-operation and liaising will require effort and skill. What is important for us is not to be perceived as an outlet of the British government but rather as an open independent NGO which facilitates contacts between local actors and between local actors and the international community.

8. Budget

8.1 Using a target of £250,000, the programme budget has been worked several times, with varying levels of specificity according to the need for contingency planning and an evolving project design. Major expenses such as staff salaries can be calculated exactly with explicit assumptions, and certain administrative costs are fixed by institutional formulas. Other expenses, especially those connected to conducting an unknown number of workshops that will be designed with respect to consultations with local partners and situational analysis can be estimated and represented with rounder numbers and broad assumptions. The Eurasia team staff is confident that the budget presented here is realistic, flexible, and appropriate.

Staffing Requirements

Eurasia Programme Manager	(1/4 time x 2 years)	£ 17,052
Project Officer	(1/2 time x 2 years)	18,661
Research Officer/Project Co-ordinator	(Full time x 2 years)	63,336
Local Co-ordinator	(Part time x 2 years)	5,846
IA and/or external Consultants	Weekly x 10 weeks)	10,000
Finance Officer	(Monthly x 2 months)	<u>4,400</u>
Total Staffing / Salaries costs		£ 119,295

Field Work and Consultations

2 x 10 day field trips, 3 IA and 1 Local person teams / per year / 4 total	
IA International Travel	£ 4,800
Team Local Travel	9,600
Team Accommodation and Subsistence	<u>5,600</u>
Estimated Field Work / Consultation costs	£ 20,000

Workshops - Community Based Events

Six “events”, averaging £10,000 / per, including all costs	£ 60,000
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Institutional and Capital Costs

IA UK Communications: Phone, Fax, Email, other (£100/month)	£ 2,400
Local capacity building subsidy (rent, communications, materials)	22,400
IA UK Project computer	700
Local computer	700
International mobile phone	140
Visas and travel administration costs	800
Production of project reports	<u>300</u>
Total Institutional, Capital, and Capacity Building Costs	£27,440

Project overhead and contingency (at 10% of total budget)	<u>22,673</u>
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Projected Programme Budget	£249,408
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9. Concluding Remarks

9.1 Comment on the DfID Proposal Guidelines: The Eurasia team's analysis of current circumstances, and the drafting of the concept paper that led to this programme proposal preceded our receipt of the DfID proposal guidelines. But we are impressed and encouraged by the complementarity between the guidelines and our programme aspirations. In particular, we agree with the awareness that different circumstances describe the various conflicts in the region, and at the same time believe that conflict resolution theory can be usefully applied to varying situations and projects. We think that the link between stabilising the Georgian ethnic/territorial regions and progress on the Georgia - Abkhazia conflict that we anticipate here, is in agreement with the point that different approaches and activities will be necessary. We think that one type of "expertise" that we bring to interactions between locals and outside agencies is the "process" expertise of conflict resolution theory and practice, and we agree that local experts have all the necessary content, context, environmental, political and social expertise and knowledge that will be necessary for people to own their own conflicts and problem solving efforts. We agree with the goal of building local NGO conflict handling capacity, and feel that our TACIS programme has demonstrated IA's commitment and acceptability to local partners in this respect. We think that our two year proposal is relatively "long-term", but only in the sense of current project and funding cycles. This proposal is possible because of IA's relationships and commitment to the Caucasus region over more than five years, and we believe that if successful, the conflict prevention focus will lead naturally towards activities that can be described as conflict transformation and a situation of positive peace in the south Caucasus. By directly addressing the critical issue of self-determination for ethnic groups versus state sovereignty, and introducing analytical and collaborative problem solving frameworks, we feel we are engaging government at various levels, civil society, and other leadership structures proactively.

9.2 Conclusion: The methodology International Alert has developed and applied to its work with the Caucasus NGO Forum partners is having a positive effect, building a civil society peace constituency, while supporting the political conflict resolution processes in Georgia. IA has a broad base of local partnerships, and credibility on the ground in the Caucasus. This project will create a new dynamic, by explicitly bringing conflict prevention, action research, and problem-solving into the process. The possibility of simultaneously contributing to an environment wherein positive peace can be negotiated between Georgia, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia, while preventing additional violent conflict with other regions is critical and credible. Developing a new process model for handling complex issues of autonomy, identity, sovereignty and security would be a powerful contribution to the ongoing work of building stable societies in the former Soviet Union. International Alert would welcome the support of the Department for International Development in moving forward with these efforts and creating a dynamic project partnership.

Appendix B

Job Description

Georgian Regions Project Research Officer

March 2000

JOB DESCRIPTION

RESEARCH OFFICER/PROJECT COORDINATOR EURASIA PROGRAMME

Background

The Eurasia Programme has developed a project of conflict prevention and confidence building in Georgia, and agreed funding for two years with the Department for International Development (DfID) of the British government. The project proposal identifies a Research Officer/Project Coordinator who will focus on the action research element of the conflict prevention stream, and also share responsibility for overall coordination of all project activities. Integral to the project is the conduct of PhD dissertation research, in affiliation with George Mason University's Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, as a component of the design, facilitation and evaluation processes. The Research Officer will be the principle researcher.

Responsible To: Eurasia Programme Manager

Responsible For: Responsible for support and coordination of project officers, local coordinators, and/or project interns.

Main Duties and Responsibilities:

- 1) Take the lead role in managing project design, facilitation, and evaluation activities.
- 2) Manage and coordinate project relationships, to include project partners in Georgia, institutional partnerships with international organizations, and relationships with funders.
- 3) Support and coordinate activities of a project officer, local coordinator, and/or project interns.
- 4) Conduct action research activities, including project reporting, documentation, and evaluation.
- 5) Produce project and research documentation required by the PhD research component of the project, to satisfy academic requirements, as supervised by Kevin Clements, IA Secretary General, and GMU/ICAR faculty member.

Person Specification

- The person must have direct experience managing, coordinating, and conducting action research activities in situations of serious, latent, deep-rooted social or ethnic conflict.
- The person must be qualified to conduct the PhD Dissertation element associated with the position and research.
- The person will have facilitation skills and experience, and the diplomatic and personal skills required to interact with community leaders and government officials formally and informally.
- The person must be qualified to manage, support, and coordinate project staff, and participate in creating a constructive environment for a team-based approach to all project activities.
- The person must have excellent communication and writing skills.
- The person must have financial, accounting, and fund raising experience and skills.

Appendix C

Selected Field Notes from the first Consultation Trip to Georgia

14-25 May 2000

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes
Tbilisi Field Trip - 5/14 - 5/25 2000

Sunday 5/14 - pm

Meeting held at ICCN - George Khutshishvili, Paata Zakareishvili, Manana Dardjania, Malkhaz Chemia, (Ilyo Darjania - interpreter) and Davin Bremner

1) I gave an overview, brief introduction of the project, as George and Manana had not actually heard my version yet.

2) Early in the conversation, there was discussion of changing the name of the project, to something like "Interests Research". Later, I made it clear that we are aware of the sensitivities to the term conflict resolution, or conflict whatever...but that IA is a CT organization, and we can't completely hide the CR/CP intentions...

3) Manana brought up the topic of "monitoring". This seems to be a priority here at ICCN...after thinking, I figured that monitoring has to do w/ "stream 1"...an activity of the capacity building stream...which seemed to satisfy.

4) George had mentioned something about having a training component. He has a strong sense that this is a "different" kind of a project, that has not had the same level of development...and there is anxiety about having the directions, missions statement, responsibilities clear.

5) There is also anxiety about being clear about the connection between this project and the Forum. I tried to describe the directions and phases...that Stream 1 is a replication of IA's confidence building process...not an additional project or responsibility of the Forum, but that will complement it when groups are ready. GK made the point that the Forum is "not so accepted" in Georgia...so he wouldn't want this project to be negatively burdened with an association with the Forum...etc. I said the direction will go the other way.

6) We talked awhile about the nature of the analysis to be done. Malkhaz easily falls into analyzing (at length). There was some awkward looking around for a direction...

7) GK and maybe Paata suggested (fascinating...) that the way to gain acceptance for this project would be to...

be completely transparent

"publish the framework"

include journalists in the process, in order to

have a public relations initiative...to promote the project

So...I guess that an Oslo process is out... Anyway, this is so completely 180% from my instincts that it must be an idea worth thinking about. I tried to give the counter example, but made it clear that I like thinking about the idea...

8) We were still searching for the right point of departure...I tried giving the simplified version of the matrix...which I thought engaged everybody except George. He came back with a diagram...he was interested in a "mission statement", and org chart, a flow diagram, etc... I demurred...

9) There was discussion of sensitivities of how to present the project and to whom...

10) On Monday morning, again there was word from George that people are a little confused about the project and our discussions...mainly because the project development has been a little different, and there isn't clarity on "ownership" I think...

11) The personal relationships part went pretty well, I think.

Interesting themes:

The idea of publishing the methodology, and a PR campaign!!

The issue of ownership - IA methodologies, investment, etc.

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes

Tbilisi Field Trip - 5/14 - 5/25 2000

Sunday 5/14 - pm

DFID Meeting - Stefan Mniszko, Steve , Annie Feltham, Mary Keith, Garth, Lila; Davin, Malkhaz, (Ilya)

1) The collegial beer w/ Steve and Stefan went away, in favor of full delegations, the DFID management, and Malkhaz as project partner.

I gave an overview of the project to the DFID folks.

Malkhaz contributed w/ support for IA, and motivation for the needs of the region and region(s). In particular, we talked about economic needs and development, and Malkhaz suggested that the conflict is not only about how economic development can happen, but the negotiated sharing of resources, taxes, etc.

(It occurs to me that needs theory helps us establish the principles, and PN the tool for the specific negotiating.)

2) The group talked about the different types of "minorities"...

Javakhetia has Armenians, a national minority

Ajaria has Georgians who are Muslim, a religious minority

Mingrelia has Georgians, but they are a language minority

Again, according to Malkhaz the problem solving tasks then are promoting tolerance, establishing "rights"...and the structures to support rights, tolerance, cultural security

3) Garth brought the question, that...politicians and civil servants have their own (necessarily self serving) agendas. The NGOs, civil society, and outsiders, have their "rational" solutions to problems and processes. Why do we think that our project can close that gap?

Malkhaz replied without much focus...assuring that we had a level of consultation and support at the political level...fairly far ahead of what we have actually claimed or established.

My answer to Garth's question was about engaging the right people in a qualitatively different type of dialogue, based on the conceptual framework and the problem solving methodology.

4) Annie Feltham, expressed that she was "not entirely convinced" by the "needs" perspective. I have the feeling she is referring to "needs analysis", and the old

development type of "basic needs". She wants the project to be "realistic and practical", not to make over ambitious claims.

She asked Malkhaz (directly, as opposed to me)...about what "success" would mean to him (us). Malkhaz' answer was somewhat hard to follow...a big picture answer. So Annie tried again, w/ "well, what surprises do you suspect (expect)...as you go through the project?

Again, they missed, w/ Malkhaz not really having a direct answer to that question...he rather attempted to give an "accurate" "up-to-date" picture.

AF concluded by coming back fairly friendly, asserting that what DFID wants is a realistic description of the problems (analysis), and some credible indications of possible solutions.

Side business - Stefan says that their idea for a June consultation session in London is probably moved back to the fall.

We're invited to the DFID reception on Tuesday night. (Which we attended).

Stefan later assured that this meeting had been a big success, that having Malkhaz there was important, etc. So he was glad.

The key thing from the meeting was AF's statement of DFID expectations, and Malkhaz demonstration of local partner's commitment.

Interesting themes: The perception of funders/partners of what "needs" are/are not...and the scepticism. Also funders perception of what is possible/desirable as outcomes, and time frames.

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes

Tbilisi Field Trip - 5/14 - 5/25 2000

Sunday 5/14 - pm

Meeting w/ Paata Jincharadze (link to ICCN)

1) Paata has coordinated some research into early warning in the Georgian regions. The research has a specific methodology, and is statistical. It has been published.

2) He has read the short public version. He has two questions: 1) how do we plan to put the "results" of the research forward to the Georgian govt; and 2) which regions are we thinking about (because he reads that we may change).

3) I talked about involving the right gov't folks in the research itself, as the answer to question #1, and asked him about his opinions on which regions to address.

4) He has a strong opinion about Javakhetia, which he is sure the locals don't think (admit) that they have a conflict, and don't much want to hear about conflict prevention or resolution, and are especially suspicious of any "westerners" who would come w/ that agenda "to solve your problems for you". He even said they were "irritated" by any reference to CR.

He thinks that Samegrelo (Mingrelia) is already considered a conflict zone...the conflicts are about IDPs, refugees, and economics. In any case, handling conflict will make sense to constituencies there, and there can be access.

He thinks that Ajaria is problematic, because of politics. Abashidze simply controls anything that happens there, and is not much interested. Everything there is about the competition between political parties.

Paata thinks that the Pankisi region...is a place where a conflict prevention/resolution approach would be important...there are ethnic Chechens (less than 10,000) who have been there. Then there are Chechen refugees (less than 10,000), who are making it hard for the other Chechens...then some of those refugees are Wahabis...and finally there is the Chechen border. So...conflict prevention here might be fruitful (this has to do w/ Paata's interests, his contacts, his prior monitoring etc...note there are less than 20,000 Chechens involved. (community conflict).

5) He feels strongly that monitoring should be an element of the project...that's his interest. (He's looking for a job too...)

6) We talked about "autonomy", and what it is or isn't. He says if you ask 5 guys who all claim autonomy aspirations, they will have 5 different answers.

7) There is a Javahk movement in Javakheti...that is advocating autonomy...and the issue is always about "status" -- mostly political/economic "status".

8) There are currency issues. The military bases in Javakheti and Ajaria are the source of potential conflict. The stability of the Russian rouble is an issue. On the Russian bases, they pay out roubles, but they don't accept them in payment.

So banking structures are an issue.

9) Of the regions we are talking about...Ajaria is Ajaria, administratively, but the other "regions" cross around existing municipalities.

10) People have existing analytical frameworks and methodologies...but this also means that they respect them. He does think that a "research" approach has a good chance of succeeding.

11) Another issue in Javakheti is the Meshketian Turks..

The issue in Meshketi is that the Armenians there are distrustful of the Turks (the genocide), and therefore distrustful of the West...and therefore feel a reliance on the Russian base for security, as well as economy. You can't consider closing the base, and have the Turks returning, all at the same time, w/out a "process".

Interesting themes:

Research as a way to the table.

The conflict analysis.

People's attachment to their own analytical frameworks and methodologies.

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes
Tbilisi Field Trip - 5/14 - 5/25 2000

Wednesday 5/17 - pm

Amy Stafford, Albertine Smit - United Nations Volunteers, w/ Gevork

- 1) UNV staff are "community facilitators"...who do whatever they can to facilitate civil society activities. Amy in particular is working mostly in Abkhazia, and they've played a strong role in the dialogue processes. UNV is also active in Zugdidi (Mingrelia), and Javkhetia - where Albertine does most of her work.
- 2) She says that the UN (UNHCR?) who?...is focussing on "conflict prevention" in Javkhetia, that this has become quite popular...and the guy to contact is Dara Shekoh Ahmed (UNHCR) who is heading this...along w/ Angelina??
- 3) Amy is supportive and interested.
- 4) Albertine has been in Javakhetia for several years.
- 5) The people there are isolated, and they have "isolated thinking, isolated world view, (she talks about communistic thinking).
- 6) The "family - clan structures" in the region are powerful, and can frustrate anything they don't like or that feel threatening. They are local authorities. Albertine has a strong feeling that they only barely tolerate her. That they might rather that she simply wasn't there doing what she does. She earned her credibility by coming back and back over two years, rather than promising and then never returning (as others did).
- 7) She has conducted a variety of trainings, including "alternative to violence", and other conflict transformation stuff. She has worked with youth groups. There is slowly a growing civil society. But she never talks about conflict resolution or even conflict. It's all about developing civil society.
- 8) They have a May 31st conference on the region...w/ lots of invited VIPs. There's a waiting list.
- 9) She talks alot about people in the region feeling "threatened". What threatens them? Outsiders. The "west". Turks. Insecurity, especially economic.
- 10) She shares the perception that people in the region would simply respond that there is "no conflict", if faced by outsiders who come w/ a conflict resolution agenda.
- 11) So in Javakhetia, we're talking security, and economic development structures.
- 12) Albertine has been in the place 2 years, in order to build up trust.
- 13) She's going there from June 5-10 or so. I could go along. It's probably a priority.

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes
Tbilisi Field Trip - 5/14 - 5/25 2000

Thursday 5/18 - pm

W/ Gela Kvaratskhelia, Chair - Committee on Civil Integration, Gevork, Paata Z, Davin, Ilya

1) Gevork gave a background introduction to IA, and I gave a description of the project. We gave him IA CoC, and the 3 pager on the project (gave him both in both languages.)

2) His question: Is your project conflict "prevention", or is it conflict "management". Answer...that it is different in different regions, depending on people's perceptions of their needs.

3) Gela says he likes the project, that in his opinion, Georgia is lacking in "glasnost", in looking internationally for ideas and relationships. He doesn't think that international people get a very good idea of Georgia, an in-depth understanding. He thinks that if our project does some good work, then we'll find a lot of things that other international folks don't realize...

He is eager to contribute, participate, and receive our "expert" recommendations and findings (he has an expectation of "research"...)

4) Talking about Ajaria...he thinks that the international community can misunderstand, when they think that the "majority" is always oppressing the "minority"...but the reality can be more complicated.

5) Clearly one of the challenges in Georgia is the movements of people due to conflicts, the unplanned stresses of having large numbers of people moving back and forth and into places where there are not resources to support them. The desire for people to always return to the places they came from is an important conflict dynamic here. He thinks there is international misunderstanding of the Turkish Meskhetians.

6) He endorsed our analytical efforts, and will welcome our recommendations if they are based on good analysis. He is eager to be in good contact.

7) An aspect of conflict prevention will be sensitizing people (this is Gevork), in Abkhazia for example, to the problems of IDP, and of re-integration.

8) Gela thinks that we haven't had enough assistance and recognition from the West, to influence the situation and make international values and standards more influential in resolving the problems, and he wonders why there is a double standard.

9) He says that his committee has the (human?) resources to contribute to the project...his committee can give papers, orientation, on any region ... they will be able to help lobby in parliament, and they would like to participate in our meetings and activities.

10) He says that there are Georgian problem-solving structures and resources, but without the financial resources to function or fulfill their purposes. There are local people who will be interested in our project work.

11) He suggests that it would be possible to take a committee member along on regional field trips...

12) There is some talk of the Red Bridge, (zone of peace) project/opportunity. (I wonder how this would compare w/ the Mano River Bridge context?)

13) Gevork responded to some of this cooperation and enthusiasm, by tempering expectations, and assuring him that we won't be able to do so much...

14) Again (a theme...) is this idea of keeping the work very public, very transparent...

15) There was some discussion of Chechens in Pankisi region.

During the mtng -- I had a very strong deja vu experience...

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes

Tbilisi Field Trip - 5/14 - 5/25 2000

Friday 5/19 - Braintrust workshop

Participants: Nodar Sardjveladze, Foundation for Development of Human Resources, (FDHR) (I promised him Max-Neefs book or some version...); Gia Uridia, Institute of Law by the Academy of Sciences of Georgia (Federalism academic); Gia Tarkham-Mouravi; Ramaz Sakhvarelidze (former parliamentarian); Iuliane Khaindraque, Republican Party; Paata Zakareishvili; Malkhaz Chemia; Gia Nodia, CPIDD; Julia Kharashvili, UNV; Paata Jincharadze (monitoring); Manana Dardjania (ICCN), George Khutshishvili (ICCN); Volker Jacoby (OSCE).

The interesting and key folks here are: Nodar Sardjveladze, Ramaz Sakhvarelidze, Paata Zakareishvili, Julia Kharashvili, George Khutshishvili

1) A welcome from George K.

2) Gevork...very little intro (including -- no intro to "brainstorming"...simply...you've read the document, what comments, ideas, suggestions, questions do you have for us, and we're going to record them. (The brainstorming...)

3) Comments and questions included:

- The proposal is very general and abstract...too general
- Is this even a "proposal"?
 - Is Tbilisi a region in the proposal...are the activities going to be in the regions or in Tbilisi?
- How many regions and which ones?

4) At some point, I had the feeling that this was a version of an "expectations" session, in workshopping terms...and w/ the usual unrealisticness of "creating expectations"...?

5) I wondered, "why are we negotiating" the methodology. We've settled on one.

6) Did the timing of the afternoon go the way Gevork intended? We didn't design according to some time frames exactly...So the presentation on needs came after more than an hour. The time in the middle was used by each person...not really for brainstorming, but speechifying...(more by some than others)...and in the end we didn't complete the task as we had seen it. So Gevork's lack of concern about time kicked in.

7) Anyway, I have the needs theory input. I didn't manage to present enough before the matrix...the version of how needs theory become a theory of conflict...my presentation wasn't well prepared enough. People got caught in

Maslow, which they may or may not know, but in any case don't relate much to conflict resolution. The matrix presentation didn't engage many of them. On the one hand, people were polite, in saying that it could be interesting and somewhat helpful, but most felt it was an inadequate framework.

8) So the question remains -- how best to engage people in the framework? Explicitly or implicitly...w/ how much "transparency" -- related to how much "ownership"... Each of these people has an interest in applying the frameworks that they understand or have an investment in.

9) One comment -- "the matrix does violence to reality". It is a general tool, an indicator, rather than an in-depth tool.

10) Pep's did not understand the second version, w/ some satisfiers filled in. I don't know if this was lost in the translation, or what.

11) What would the "exercise" have looked like? Would that have engaged people?

12) (How committed am I/we to forcing the tool, now that the "partners" are not much interested in it? How to put that question to the IA team?

13) There was much discussion of how to engage people in the region. There is talk of what appropriate "legend" or "cover story" to use, so as not to talk about "conflict resolution or prevention"... It was pointed out that as outsiders, we bring resources to the region, and people will simply answer all inquiries in the field according to their perceptions of what we want to "hear", in their attempts to get access to whatever resources we might be bringing.

14) Gia Nodia pointed out that nobody starts from point "0", especially in Javakhetia. There has been an "invasion" there. (We need to map this, before I go.)

15) There were many brainstorming ideas that were put out...

- We need to change/develop the "legend" -- according to political sensitivities

- we want to address/research "models of administration" - which has something to do w/ "autonomous functionality".

- we could use "focus groups"

- the purpose of the project should be "recommendations"

- it will be proper to do our planning, begging from "step 1"

16) I made the observation that everybody wants to use their favorite methodologies...therefore, the trainers want to do training, the monitors want to do monitoring, the focus groupers want to do focus groups...etc. (And so do we...) I think this is somewhat related to people wanting to get a piece of the action.

17) Comment - it was suggested that a root cause of the conflict (s) is a

"segmented" or "fragmented" society. (no shit)

18) Gevork has a document in mind. Will that channel and absorb the energy of this group, and produce a useful end product...what is the outline and action plan for this? (I have it in my other notes...??)

19) Julia -- was interestingly sceptical -- her questions clearly based on experience going into the field...and she made a point about "who are the beneficiaries of this project?..."

20) The question about "legends"...at what level do we be perfectly transparent? Where does the legend process kick in.

21) People are quite concerned about provoking the conflict by naming it. So the question between Gevork and I about surfacing conflicts, as a question of strategy...is relevant, and hits a point with these guys...and they are not much interested in being risk takers...

22) A big picture analysis: the prevention of conflicts in the Georgia regions means at least these things: 1) support of civil society; 2) democratization/creation of federalism, by which some mean support of local autonomy; 3) integration of underdeveloped (elements in?) society.

23) We talked a little bit about local administrations...and their roles?

24) The meeting proceeds in some ways as though we didn't have an analysis from which to work.

25) Suggestion that we need research about local administration capacities.

26) There is a question about whether or not the matrix is relevant for "groups" of people (presumably identity groups? or is a "community" a group...is "community" necessarily an identity...)

27) There was talk about other "tools" or instruments. Focus groups, "other tools", integrating our "results" w/ other work...it was mentioned that there have been other pilot projects (first mention of pilot projects)...and that there wasn't much success, as there was not much interest from local administration structures.

28) One person (Gia Nodia?)...said the matrix was not a tool for serious work.

29) I had some notes about the inadequacy of the needs presentation.

30) The question of "measuring" needs satisfaction...which relates to the dissertation, and also reflects the positivist orientation.

31) A comment about instead of satisfying needs...rather transforming conflicts into constructive social change processes...(but how?)

32) I offered positive and negative satisfiers...and the question came...how do you identify or decide that a satisfier is "pos" or "neg"?

33) So...the question for engaging partners and being transparent, is whether or not you make a strategic choice to have your theory base be explicit or implicit. (The legend...).

34) Pep's aren't convinced that the matrix is adaptable to "reality".

35) What is the relationship between the matrix, and the "methodology".

36) We need the complete map of Javakhetia interventions. (Is Susan's paper relevant to this?...what about sharing it around w/ the Javakhetia orgs?...would this be a "contribution"..... what version does Susan have for sharing.)

37) Did Brown University do something on Adjara?...a comparison between when/why did conflict happen, not happen?

38) Paata - after elections (when, which elections)... "committees" are going to work w/ the European (what) processes) -- on how to do local elections, and build democratic structures in regions. Is this process going to "satisfy" some needs (for everyone)...how would we analyze this. Probably a key process... there is going to be political activism in the regions. (Africa??)

39) The Turkish Meshketians were mentioned.

40) On the document...it needs a bibliography; needs a collection of the most recent contributions; needs a set of recommendations (as an end product?);

41) Claim - there are local NGO projects working on the IDP issues in Zugdidi...

42) So are we going to "commission" the coordination of the document?

43) The group suggests that we take "conflict" out of any version of what we're doing. We want, instead, to talk about "research", and "interests", and "integration (?).

A little later in the afternoon, there was a de-briefing group (of a sort): Gevork, Romaz, Manana, Tina, Paata J, George K.

44) This group reiterated their perception that the task was abstract.

45) But...nobody said that we shouldn't move forward (good sign). Rather, they think that the question is "technical" = how to do it, rather than ideological (whether to do it).

- 46) Our question about the "theory" being explicit or implicit seemed relevant.
- 47) There was talk (George K) of the "advanced workplan".
- 48) I have an ongoing issue with our need (is it IAs methodology?) to negotiate our process.
- 49) There was a nice vote of confidence from OSCE Volker, who said that despite his criticisms...he was quite impressed by the framework, and the potential of the project.
- 50) There continues to be an expectation of a set of "recommendations" to come from the project. It isn't clear yet, from whom; in what format; to whom.
- 51) I get the strong idea that people all want to advance their own methodologies and projects, that are frustrated by the lack of resources.
- 52) There was talk of "risks". George talked about a model of the "dynamics" in the regions...even before you go into a region...otherwise the approach would be "dangerous".
- 53) I put some works on the board...Mandate, Risks, Strategies, Contributions, Responsibilities, Accountability...and said something like...we need a diagram, or picture, of who is giving a mandate to whom, to carry out what strategies, accept what risks, agree to certain responsibilities, agree to be accountable -- some other people will make contributions... and Gevork added "consequences"...and drew a feedback loop arrow...
- 54) It occurred to me that everyone in the room are insiders...parties, and they are unwilling to be risk takers, try unproven methodologies and theories, because of their insider perspective on the risks.
- 55) We (tried to) talk about a Catch-22...their own methodologies haven't led anywhere, but they are unwilling to try new ones, because of perceived risks.
- 56) Anyway, I decided that the picture from above could be organized by thinking about first responsibilities, shared responsibility, etc. contributors, participants, constituencies. All this can be related to accountability and risks.
- 57) Finally, the discussion about risks and paradigms...relates to comfort zones and transparency. How to relate transparency and "legends" to perceived risks...?

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes
Tbilisi Field Trip - 5/14 - 5/25 2000

Monday 5/22 pm

Meeting w/ Zurab Adeishvili - Chairman, Sub-Committee for Legal and Administrative Reforms

Gevork, Paata, Davin, Ilya

- 1) This young lawyer is in charge of the committee that perhaps is key to our Stream 2 agenda. We talked in english. He seemed quite interested, and maybe ready to be engaged (though he was quiet).
- 2) He says that government agencies have done some research, but there is not yet any official "concept" of how regional status is going to be handled in the constitution. They have an unofficial concept paper that has been published in different places...did we ever find a way to get a copy?
- 3) He talked about the existing Raions (regions in Russian)...which he says are too small to function properly for some functions, and too big to be municipalities. It isn't clear what kind of "power" are appropriate for them.
- 4) He said very clearly that the government would want to be in dialogue processes with representation from regions...that this would be an idea way to build consensus on what the status of regions would be.
- 5) His perception is that there are no resources in the regions that would allow anybody to participate, or even prepare themselves for such a dialogue. It isn't always clear who the gov't would dialogue w/, or how they would get a mandate to be in such a dialogue. (In places where there aren't even phones or electricity...who can have "dialogue"?)
- 6) He said that there are regional "traditions" that could form the basis of some of that dialogue, but no existing "institutions" based on those traditions.
- 7) He seemed quite positive to the idea that we could play a role in initiating some form or another of dialogue, and that the gov't would readily participate. I figure that his committee may be a key player for our Stream 2 agenda.

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes
Tbilisi Field Trip - 5/14 - 5/25 2000

Tuesday 5/23 am

Meeting w/ Julia Kharashvili at UNV - Julia, Davin

- 1) Julia is primarily working in Zugdidi (Samegrelo) w/ IDPs. Like Albertine, she seems quite connected and completely engaged w/ grassroots constituencies.
- 2) Julia is quite frank and open, asking excellent "tough" questions from her knowledge of grassroots realities. She will be an excellent project partner and resource.
- 3) We talked about Pankisi region for a while. Her opinion is that Pankisi simply isn't part of Georgia at this point. An issue there is that between the two groups of Chechens...the longtime locals and the recent refugees...humanitarian aid is dividing the communities, when the aid for refugees actually makes them better off than the locals, who also have less than zero. This is creating tensions. She describes the problem as one of giving "too much" attention or assistance to one particular population, w/in the realities of an entirely "at risk" community.
- 4) She doesn't think that "outsiders" of almost any kind...including "outsider" Chechens (Laman Az)...can make much of a contribution, w/out necessarily bringing resources that aggravate the problem above. It's a very difficult situation.
- 5) Regarding Samegrelo IDPs...UNV has helped w/ the issue of psycho-rehabilitation. The area now has some strong local NGOs.
- 6) For our second stream agenda...she thinks finding the right people is clearly the key challenge. She suggests that a newly registered NGO, the "Association of Heads of Sakrebulo", might be the right regional people. They represent the newly elected structures. She can put us in touch w/ them. They are a group w/ some potential, but they feel that their terms of reference are unclear (as Sakrebulo)...
- 7) We talked about conflicts between IDPs and local people. UNV has facilitated some "self-reflection groups" and had community meetings for them, or seminars, where there has been "dialogue" investigating "common needs".
- 8) We talked about "reconciliation seminars"...which UNV would like to do more of, and which may or may not fit w/in the scheme of this project.
- 9) I suggested to her that I was getting the feeling, same as w/ Albertine, that UNV is clearly doing the credible grassroots, peacebuilding work in the area, and that we should see how supportive we can be w/out being confusing, to partner in whatever credible ways, as our initial Stream 1 strategy.

10) She has a list of things that people in their common needs dialogues had identified as activities and projects, including for example, "negotiation skills". Julia thinks she would be excited to participate w/ us on negotiation skills workshops for some of her constituencies. (some one or two day grassroots 7 elements training could be really fun in the Caucasus.)

11) We ended up talking about people that it turns out we both know, including Andre Odendaal from SAfrica. Julia has a dream of having some SAfricans come and do an exchange about their reconciliation experiences, and I promised her that SAfricans would be possible to get, and we talked about jointly developing a proposal for an exchange. This "small world" talk seemed to make us quite close, and I felt by the time we were done that Julia is eager to work w/ us.

Appendix D

Selected Field Notes from the second Consultation Trip to Georgia

14-25 June 2000

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes

Tbilisi Field Trip - 6/12 - 6/20 2000

Monday 6/12 - am

w/ Albertine Smit, UNV, Davin, (and Tamuna Kvaratskhelia - interpreter)

1) Albertine spent some time explaining how many people, and who, are all wanting to do development, good governance, and other work in Javakheti. They all want to go through her, and she has mixed feelings about that. It makes sense to her, but it is also going to be difficult and problematic.

2) I assured her that we only want to work in Javakheti if it can be done so as not to make that problem worse, more complicated, confusing on the ground, etc. She seems willing to accept that, and to work w/ us.

3) The meeting on the 31st was interesting, she thought. "Official" types, and NGO types who normally don't get to sit together did, and it was positive. Some people complained that certain groups or people weren't invited, but that's usual complaints. Albertine gave me a draft report from the event, which looks interesting.

4) Our conversation moved towards what could we do jointly, and what could IA bring to the mix. She thinks that the conversation that Julia and I had about constituencies who want "negotiation as a life skill..." training was credible/correct, and she would like some of that for her constituencies. It probably would complement her AVP training. (Alternatives to Violence Program) So we began talking about a joint 4 day event, 2 days AVP, 2 days Negotiation Skills. And the plan emerged.

5) By the end, we talked about meeting in September (late) (or end August) to design an October event, that would be jointly designed, and conducted. Youth, local leaders, NGO folks, women were all potential constituencies. Local trainers (ICCN) could be the IA team, w/ Davin. Julia K. would be interested, and if our 4 day event was "successful" then maybe we could redo the training in her region, w/ Albertine team/trainers assisting, etc. The whole thing falls together quite nicely. We sponsor the event w/ our money.

6) I offered to write a one -pager summarizing the idea, to circulate back to Albertine, and then more widely. The next step must be checking w/ ICCN on who might co-train, and look at their training materials in Russian. Maybe Nina and I, or Maya and I, or George and I could be the IA "team". (Note: get the ICCN report on their training stuff, models, etc.)

7) Albertine asked about the ICCN monitoring document she had a copy of. With the mathematics and formulas, and models, it didn't seem very practical to her.

8) Next steps...one pager, circulate back to Albertine, sound out ICCN, draft a design, (WFC training manual?)...look for the Georgian "Ugly Orange" scenario. (Maybe Tamuna can help w/ it.)...and open dialogue (in July) w/ Julia about the big idea.

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes
Tbilisi Field Trip: 6/10 - 6/20, 2000

Monday 6/12 pm

Meeting w/: Kate Whyte GOCISP project, Davin, Tumuna

1) Kate will (probably) have DFID funding for a project on Good Governance, in two Georgian regions, Samtskhe-Javakheti, and Shidakartli (Kvemo Kartli?)

2) I gave her the background and history of our projects, and she was interested and asked a few questions.

3) We discussed our versions of "strategies", Adjara, Javakheti, etc. She isn't quite as sure (as Albertine) that there is so much going on in Javakheti, and not room for more work and development. She thinks that lots of people are going there, but not necessarily doing so much.

4) Regarding Adjara, she figures that there is really no avoiding visiting w/ Abashidze, and getting his blessing/permission, or whatever, (or not).

5) Her project is three sided...the two regions, and the "state chancellor". The activity is creating, in each region, a "partnership board", made up of representatives from local NGOs/CBOs, media, and Sakrebulo. These partnership boards then should be engaged in dialogue w/ the central government - state chancellor reps/structures.

6) The effort is both to create accountability structures, between the regions and the state, and to create a sense of ownership and expectation, from the community side, as regards their attitudes to the state. Partly, training up the Sakrebulo to be accountable.

7) An idea emerged, that if they successfully create one of these partnership boards, in Samtskhe-Javakheti, then that might be exactly the structure that could be interested in participating in problem solving workshops, in dialogue with the chancellor reps. (I need to know more about who are the chancellor reps...or who else might be included). In any case, we created a scenario, where during the next few months (6) she will be working to create the partnership boards, and by then we might come and present the idea/opportunity for some workshops, which the board could then consider, participate, accept (reject), etc. Kate liked the idea, and it seemed like an excellent process for collaborating.

8) I volunteered to draft the one-pager describing our idea...and share it w/ her, before circulating it to DFID, for example.

9) The meeting was successful, interesting, encouraging.

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes

Tbilisi Two Field Trip: 6/10 - 6/20 2000

Monday 6/12 - evening

W/ Malkaz Chemia, Paata Zakareishvili, Davin

1) The purpose of the long conversation was to lay out, mostly for Paata, the emerging strategies.

2) There was all manner of conversation and speculation about project strategies, and concerns. A significant piece of the conversation was related to concerns about Gevorg's Armenianness...and IA commitment to be aware of that, but principled in modelling our transparency, good work, and successful peacebuilding relationships, etc.

3) There was a nice point about the conflict (of interest) between the Sakrebulo, and the appointed authorities (governors?, appointed Gamgelas?...representatives of the State Chancellery?...who exactly?)

The point of the conflict of interest, seems to be, at least, unclear mandates, authority, accountability, and responsibility.

As regards this (type) of conflict...does it bring us to "conflict resolution as a political system"? (Dissertation)

4) There was some conversation, mostly from Malkhaz, about the personalization of politics, and therefore the insecurity, based on suspicious, vulnerable individual actors. The insecurity leads to lack of transparency.

5) An insight...the government guys don't like the NGO guys, because gov't guys have non-paying, non-productive jobs, and therefore depend on a gray economy (corruption) for economic survival, which necessarily precludes transparency. NGOs are a threat, because they have "real" jobs, that do pay, that are active and credible, and promote transparency. So the transparency agenda of the NGOs threatens the survival strategies of the gov't folks. (How is this related to the IA discussion w/ Martin, about our insecurity...and survival strategies, etc.?)

6) There was discussion about the need for IA to "register" or get "accreditation" before the project goes much further. Who and how does that happen? I probably need to figure it out.

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes
Tbilisi Two Trip: 6/10- 6/20 2000

Thursday 6/15 pm

Meeting w/ David Berdenishvili and Dato Darchiashvili, w/ Davin, and Gevork, Martin.

- 11) We presented them a short version of the project, summarizing what happened in the brainstorming meeting from the first field trip.
- 12) David Berdenishvili is a researcher, who has written about possible models for federal structures, and also is informed on Ajaria.
- 13) The topic that is current w/ him and others is the issue of "delineation of competencies"...which is basically who is best suited for what roles in government, administrations, and society, and supported by what types of structures?
- 14) David is taking an active political role, chairing the Republican Party.
- 15) Dato is a professor at the university, and a CIPDD researcher.
- 7) As we started to talk about the project, DB suggested that he's sceptical of finding a way to work in Ajaria. They suggested that the problem for Javakhetia, is how to let the Armenians feel themselves "citizens" of Georgia.
- 8) They said that there is almost no civil society in Ajaria...(prompting the thought...what is "civil society" a satisfier for?...let's see, a syncretistic satisfier for participation, understanding, what else?)
- 9) There was mention of "Mingrelian separatism, a sentiment felt by some of those who were aligned with Gamsakhurdia.
- 10) In Samegrelo, there is the language issue...which they claim can lead to some Mingrelians feeling themselves "better" Georgians, (they have two languages...).
- 11) There was an interesting discussion that if the project gets any publicity, and the regions are "compared"...then any description of the project is then problematic, if it's about "ethnic conflict", for example, or any version of "conflict" since the situation in each region is quite different.
- 12) In terms of the research methodology...the point would be to work in one region where ethnicity is the issue, one where it is development, and one where it is something else...(what?)

- 13) It was related that at the May 31 (Fewer and East West Institute) meeting, "conflict prevention" was rejected as a concept by participants, because of the problematic nature of referring to conflicts that aren't perceived as such, and the risks of surfacing them.
- 14) So...we are considering how to "revise" the proposal...so as not to invite the regional comparisons/criticisms.
- 15) Late in the conversation, we fell into a storytelling mode, always a sign that there was a good question or provoking thought. The story became the history of our national identity...which revolved in some ways around the things that have confused our national identity (negative identity satisfiers...but what were they?)
- 16) The storytelling creates energy. There was talk about passports, and how they are/aren't creating stress about identity and recognition.
- 17) The long story focussed on things that don't work as satisfiers...about why people's identity needs remain unsatisfied.

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes
Tbilisi Two Trip: 6-10 - 6/20
Sunday 6/18pm

Poti - With Levan Sulaberidze, and other representatives of the Poti Youth Alliance.

- 2) The engaged guy was Levan, who has an NGO Poti Youth Alliance, Soros funded...also working w/ Partners for Democratic Georgia...they've had a computer project, and a coordination centre, and a conflict project...etc...they are young but engaged .
- 3) They've had help w/ Eurasia Foundation...and have workshopped local NGOs on fundraising, transparency and local gov't stuff...etc.
- 4) They aren't shy at all about thinking in terms of conflict between themselves and the center. They're interested in some form of economic special arrangement, autonomy, for the city (port) of Poti, where they have a stronger economy, and some opportunity to develop...if allowed.
- 5) They're afraid that the CG will take all the resources and income that they generate, leaving them w/out the opportunity to invest in themselves. They talk about being able to be a "donor city", and that they would be able to do more on behalf of their local IDPs etc., if they could have more control over their own resource base.
- 6) The "naive" question...are they looking for the same autonomy that Ajara has, w/out the politics...and the answer was no, since Ajara's autonomy is artificial, w/ much too much special stuff that isn't required, and doesn't make sense.
- 7) They have a local NGO sector, fairly new, and eager to develop. It seems like these folks also have political...agendas, if not ambitions.
- 8) It seems there is a local constituency for a research workshop...so the idea emerged...of a 5-6 hour day, where half would be a "seminar" activity, designed to introduce the research framework (needs theory)...and the second half to "design" the local research workshops...answering the who, where, when questions, and moving forward if it makes sense. There was big enthusiasm.
- 9) We talked about time frames, and I proposed such a day for Sep/Oct. All present agreed. The question is whether they represent a broad (Poti) constituency, or special interest group...and to what degree Poti can be a "region". Interestingly, they talked about conflict at several levels...between Poti the "port" and the city itself, between the city and the regional gov't structures, between the regional and national structures, etc. They seem to see themselves negotiating a special local arrangement, between the city and the CG.
- 10) Do they have a structural conflict or an opportunity for principled negotiation?

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes

Tbilisi Two Trip: 6-10 - 6/20

Monday 6/19 pm

Meeting w/ Khatuna Murgulia (PIPL); Emzhar and ...and the other two guys - get their names...

1) A little meeting weirdness...I asked Malkhaz to simply (briefly) explain how we had ended up talking w/ these folks...and he launched into the long version, explaining all about Alert, the project, the two streams...not too sure where it came from, unless it was about my confessing to being a little tired. Anyway, no harm done. He was typically over the top...

2) These folks were interested and serious...they don't seem too connected w/ the Gia Xasia agenda, which seemed puzzling. They are on about the links between civil society and the development of local government.

3) The discussion became political very quickly, in a fascinating discussion about their preferences for "federalism" as against "asymmetrical federalism". There were two (interestingly) different views...one to deconstruct the current Georgia and rebuild it along strictly federalist lines, eliminating any special considerations, (Ajara, and presumably S.Ossetia, etc.)...the other to begin working locally first, and to build strong local self-government structures that work well, and remodel from that. The work locally guy was very, very serious and intellectual.

4) They voice the view that "if anybody was going to get autonomy, it should be Samegrelo and Abkhazia"...and that the Ajarian autonomy represents a future conflict, and an arrangement that is not sustainable.

5) We talked about the Sakrebulo as an example of the "decentralization" of political power, which they are in favor of. There was recognition that the processes of decentralization can be dangerous, and create instabilities...which opened the CR view that models may be less important, and processes more important. (Which leads to CR as a political system...as always...)

6) Question...does the coming "election" of Sakrebulo represent decentralization?

7) There was talk about security structures, which represent a coming set of conflicts, and the issue was accountability, and how security structures, and Sakrebulo are to be made accountable.

8) We talked about the risks of "irritating" the CG, or powerful people at the centre, and the question was put to us about how do we see the risks of causing conflict w/ the centre, and what would we do to avoid that risk?

9) These folks have the perception that the CG is ready to “give” autonomy out to anyone, and that this is a problem...that Samegrelo (the region’s) interest is in equality w/ all other Georgian regions (because they see themselves at a competitive disadvantage?...w/ more problems that need addressing???)

10) Provoked by ever more theoretical questions....the story telling happened, in the form of a recitation of the situation under the Soviet system. Story telling happens....

11) Serious guy’s plan is to start at the local level, develop accountabilities, educate local government along the lines of the western models and western experiences, w/ the help of western experts (etc.)...and the model is the western govts that are decentralised...

12) I suggested that his methods were about advocacy...he was quite focussed on the model that makes sense to him, and not much interested in process.

13) Question: If advocacy is model based/biased (principle based), and CR is process based/biased...then are they complementary? Or contrasting.

14) Then, another interesting perception, that the key to the G/A conflict is the Samegrelo region, which has never been acknowledged or exploited. The claim is that there are important traditional links between the two regions that shouldn’t be forgotten or ignored. The claim is that there is a “buried bomb” is excluding this aspect of the Abkhazia issues...and that the relationships between SM and ABK are much closer than either region to eastern Georgia.

15) The same one day event...seminar/prelim design...was offered, and enthusiastically accepted.

16) In both Samegrelo meetings, people professed an eagerness for any and all training, interaction, attention, etc. No reluctance to engage w/ the west...(think about this...)

17) Again the Sep/Oct time frame was discussed and accepted.

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes
Tbilisi Field Trip - 5/14 - 5/25 2000

Wednesday 5/24am

Meeting w/ Lali Meskhi - DFID – Davin, Lali,

1) We had this meeting to further establish our personal relationship and to relay the results of our field trip. Lali made it clear that she is just as keen as Steve and Stefan to be closely in touch and coordinating w/ us.

2) Lali was quite frank in describing some initial concerns that she had had when she first received parts of our proposal from London DFID. Her concerns were about the use of "ethnic conflict" language for those regions where it isn't, and being unclear about exactly what we hope to do. I explained about some of the proposal development constraints, and that we appreciated her concerns. I may have alleviated some of them.

3) She explained that just as everyone else in DFID, she doesn't feel she knows that much about conflict resolution, as it is a new field, and that she is excited about it. She says her International Alert folder is the thinnest one she has, and I promised to give her more info and keep her well informed.

4) Lali is responsible for monitoring the three or four DFID projects, and working for coordination and cooperation. Ours, and a good governance project being run by Kate Whyte, and then Jonathan's... she gave me contact information for Kate Whyte, and we talked about getting everyone together in the DFID offices in Tbilisi at some point for coordination etc.

5) She should be invited to the Forum office opening.

6) We had a good conversation. I think she is knowledgeable, and we'll do well to work closely w/ her.

Appendix E

Selected Field Notes from October - December Consultations in Georgia

24 October - 9 December 2000

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes October - December 2000

Zugdidi Meeting - 24 October 2000

1) The meeting was organized for us by Khatuna Murghulia, of PIPL, who acted as IA's partner for the event. She did an excellent job with organizing - and the only question was whether or not the low attendance was related to some issue that Zugdidi folks have w/ PIPL that we are not aware of. We can't find any direct evidence that this is the problem.

2) In any case, the meeting went pretty well, except that there were 8 people rather than 20-25. 20 or so were invited. 15 was the right number. From 15 we wanted 10 of the 'right' people. Instead there were 3 of the 'right' people, more or less.

3) The day went according to a script that worked out pretty well. Story telling happened. People engaged with the needs framework and matrix. Alert was 'tested' on our principles and biases. We were encouraged to keep moving forward with the project.

4) What didn't happen was investment from the meeting in the design process - so there isn't any real sense of ownership or commitment yet. Just encouragement that we do our thing.

5) Existing biases from the participants found voice - firstly that the local priority is really the G/A conflict, or maybe more importantly normalizing relationships locally to allow for economic activity and maybe reconciliation - that this is somehow more pervasive or higher priority than the relationship to the Georgian CG. From another individual - talk about 'full decentralization' but through a process of stages ... federal structures that devolve ... in some negotiated transition.

6) It's important to realize that the individuals in the meeting who engaged are convinced that they have already considered these issues at length, and have preferred outcomes. They are willing to imagine that the needs framework is a legitimate way of describing the existing realities, but they do not necessarily think that it is a tool for discovering new information, or creating new perspectives, or doing new analysis. They figure they have done their analysis for the most part.

7) There were representatives from local structures present, including someone from the gamgeoba, and a local sacrebulo. They seemed interested enough, but didn't engage in dialogue for the most part.

8) An interesting version of the challenge that participants put to Alert - the bit about why did we choose the three regions we did, and does that choice imply some comparison between the situations in Samegrelo and Javakheti? The assumption being tested is..do we 'believe' what we read in the press, controlled

by the gov't, about potential conflict? Could we be that naive? Followed by, 'there is no conflict like 'that' here... One level of trust and relationship building then requires assuring those w/ this concern that we don't in fact believe what we read, and aren't influenced by the available, biased, media (media w/agenda). However, by the end of the day, certain people are willing to admit that there are tensions, and very sensitive issues, in this case Zviadist 'stuff' ... and that it is actually scary and doesn't feel safe to talk about it. (As though even talking about it could bring it on or out...).

This repeats the feeling about Javakheti ... that first there is a denial of any conflict, and the challenge about our level of sophistication. Then at a point there is a genuine reluctance to acknowledge the reality of potential conflict, because the spaces don't (yet) feel safe for doing so.

9) The other mystery about the Zugdidi meeting was the non appearance of the Poti contingent, who had confirmed repeatedly, and right up until the evening before. We speculated on several scenarios... but in the end came to at least one conclusion: that we weren't sure who we were talking to, after our first visit in Poti - that between myself and Malkhaz and Julia, we weren't sure enough of which individuals we were engaging with, and that this was basically our fault. So the strategy that emerges is a) find out who we're talking to, b) try to learn how/why they didn't appear, c) plan to make a face to face visit before December, and then, if appropriate, hold a similar one day meeting in Poti, in December.

10) So the meeting was just successful enough, and the 'script' had been useful, and there is room for engagement. We need to do some face to face meeting, and some more structured analysis of who/how to engage w/ the 'right' people to create a constituency for a workshop series.

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes

October - December 2000 Georgia Trip

30 October 2000

Meeting w/ Norik Ginosyan

1) Norik was Albertine's lead person for the Javakheti workshop, whose father has been Albertine's contact in Ninostminda until he passed away. (Norik's sister was also in the workshop, and brother is on an exchange program in Granite Falls, Washington). Norik is also Kate Whyte's coordinator in the region... so he's a pretty key guy for Ninostminda.

2) Our conversation agenda was: 1) feedback on training; 2) about Kate and her project;

3) There were/n't 'Georgians' at the workshop - to what extent were we doing confidence bldg?; 4) talk about training events/relationships; 5) talk about regional - central gov't relationships...

4) Norik feels that Ninostminda is basically a disempowered, depoliticized, community, while Alhalkalaki is much more politicized. Ninostminda NGO activity is basically development oriented.

5) If we did more training and it was residential, Norik thinks that could work.

6) Norik sees as one of the key aspects of the Gocisp project, improving the relationships between local NGOs and local authorities. (A place for confidence bldg?)

7) He describes a conflict for locals ... that the assumption is that any money for development that does come from the CG ... gets eaten by local administrators, and never get to the community. The community doesn't imagine any possibility of accountability, or even any value in organizing for interacting w/ the state. He doesn't see this as a local problem for 'ethnic' regions, but a problem throughout Georgia.

8) Again... the local Armenia population just doesn't regard the Georgian authorities in any way... they are profoundly disempowered... which puts them in a psychologically weak position vis a vis the local Georgians.

9) Norik himself confessed to being 'not much connected' to politics, especially Georgian politics.

10) The two workshop participants from Alhalkalaki - who are political or politicised, and who might be able to connect us to the politics of the region were: Levan Levanian, and Ararat Esoian, in Alhalkalaki.

11) We talked a little bit about the Russian military base - and the economic perceptions, the ethnic perceptions... Russians allied w/ Armenians, against Turks, etc.

12) Norik and I struck up a pretty good rapport, which should serve the project well, but it's seems true that he's not very political.

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes October - December 2000

Meeting w/ Kate Whyte - 30 October 2000

- 1) Her partnership board is formed, and functioning. Where I thought they had two partnership boards, there is actually one for the entire project. It includes two representatives from central government, one from the Parliament (Roman Kusiani), and one from the State Chancellery (Sandro Svanishvili). Then, reps from Gori, Kareli, Khasuri, Borjomi, Ninotsminda, Akhaltsikhe, and also Lali Meskhi from the Brit embassy.
- 2) They are considering the idea of having 'mini-boards' in each region. She is cautious about letting the board over-commit, or over-extend...in their enthusiasm.
- 3) The boards will meet something like once every 3 months. Their next meeting is on Nov 10th.
- 4) Our activity is still a possibility - that is offering problem-solving workshops to the partnership board, or to a sub-group, or a mini-board. The trick is to devise an activity that doesn't overwhelm them or confuse them.
- 5) They meet on Nov. 10th, and I promised to send through a proposal, something that she wouldn't necessarily discuss on the agenda, but that she would have in mind. Maybe we could be on the Feb/March agenda (maybe we could be present...)
- 6) I'm impressed with her capacity - as she has several people locally coordinating, which gives her organizing capacity x 4 people x full time.
- 7) Norik Ginosyan is both Kate's Ninostminda organizer, and also Albertine's contact in the place.
- 8) Kate is in favor of Lali Meskhi's idea of having a coordinating group, but suggests that maybe it could include all of DFID's projects, not just the 'external' ones (Ours, hers, Jonathan's, Albertine's...)

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes

October - December 2000

Meeting w/ Gela Khvaratskhelia, Parliament - 1 December 2000

(Chair, Committee on Civil Integration)

- 1) We gave Gela an extended update on the project activities, since our May visit, which he appreciated, and he commented on our 'serious work'.
- 2) He spent some time talking about the international misperceptions and unhelpful interventions into the issue of repatriation of Meshketians. He is critical of international organizations that have an 'agenda' of resettling the Meshketians.
- 3) He thinks that our work is 'corresponding' with his own interests and priorities. His committee wants to put on a 'serious conference' about 'integrational politics', and integration issues. He would want the conference to result in some regional working groups, he would want representation from every region in the conference. He would like to have different people from different regions, listening to each others problems. He would like working groups to take up 'subjective, and objective' problems.
- 4) He talked about 'individual regional problems' (the Russian base in Akhalkalaki), and 'collective regional problems' ... problems which every region shares.
- 5) His time frame is 'probably next year', and he wants his committee to organize, but not to be the only organizers...he wants to avoid any perception that 'local governments' or regional interest groups, feel that they would be 'reporting to the CG'. So he wants the CG as participant and host, rather than sole agent and organizer.
- 6) Then he talked about it being held by international and local NGOs, w/ his Committee being 'invited'.
- 7) Integrational issues are the main theme, and he recognizes that there is a task in developed local NGO capacities for participating (or is that an outcome?)
- 8) He also sees a task in having local authorities learn about 'how' to work w/ local communities, through NGOs.
- 9) He'd like to have Abkhazian (and I suppose Ossetian) participation in the conference.
- 10) Some of these integrational issues include: state language(s); ethnic minorities; post - 'communism'; IDPs; principles of territorial administration; economics.
- 11) He wants to cooperate with us. He would perhaps like to personally participate in certain activities, including coming to the regions (maybe).

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes October - December 2000

1 December 2000

OSCE Roundtable on Javakheti

International organizations present included: OSCE, US Embassy, UNV, GOCISP, Ghia Nodia (CIPDD), USAID, MercyCorp, NDI, others... (see Volker Jacoby's notes)

1) The agenda of the meeting was 1) Networking; 2) Discussion of the region and information sharing.

2) Albertine talked a little bit about the electricity issues, and the politics of buying electricity from Armenia. She also mentioned the radio project she is involved w/, which will broadcast in Russian, Georgian, Armenian, and BBC. The point of the radio project is information dissemination ... there is a \$15,000 project (including salaries... isn't that a little low!!)

3) The OSCE High Commission on Minorities, is including Javakheti in a project they have on. There was discussion of this being 'not monitoring' ... sensitivities about spying and info gathering, etc. But they will have a network of 'correspondents'. They distributed the FEWER report of Javakheti.

4) There was mention of Meshketians, who have been given Georgian citizenship, by being willing to speak Georgian and take Georgian surnames. (And the politics of the Meshketian issues...)

5) We talked about what research might indicate how much \$\$ is involved in the economics of the military base, meaning... what needs to be 'replaced' through time. The more interesting question is how to design a process for managing the transition from the current non-sustainable dependency on the base.

6) The internationals gathered, seem to think that the idea of a NATO base replacing the Russian base, is not credible in the foreseeable future.

7) There was mention of a governmental 'working draft' on the plan for returning the Meshketians ... that is being circulated for comment. (How would we get a copy of that? - Nodar?)

8) One version, opinion (was it a question), was that the Council of Europe was 'softening' on the issue, the return, so that it wouldn't be blamed for forcing the issue, and creating an ethnic conflict.

9) The point was made that 'ethnic tensions' seem exaggerated, in those regions where economic opportunities are smaller, and economic realities more difficult. (Not rocket science).

10) NDI woman, Lori, said that the 'problem to be solved' is Armenian access to laws which would protect them from corrupt administration locally, which benefits from Georgian language dominance.

In a few different meetings - it was popular for Georgians to make an example of the United States, and how people there deal with the 'official language' - English. The point was that no one seriously considers making other languages also 'official' in the United States. My response was that what actually happens is that people do choose to learn English to benefit their individual economic opportunities, but in the meantime, local authorities choose to spend money and resources providing services in certain other languages (Spanish), because that is required to solve certain social problems (satisfying some basic human needs...). Can I get a good example of this to share, to make the point...

11) There was a shared impression around the table that Armenians want to learn Georgian, and that the problem is not enough teachers or resources for this to happen. The claim was that there is no resistance to Georgian, and that learning Georgian wouldn't then exacerbate a problem of people leaving the region.

12) Kate made a point about empowering local voices / participation - as a way of putting communication on an 'equal level' between the regions and the centre.

13) There was talk about communication and information and the links to the information problem.

14) There are several new projects, and international actors that want to get into the region...

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes October - December 2000

2 December 2000

Meeting w/ Dr. Nodar Sarjveladze

1) Nodar and colleagues have brought together the research materials on the regions, for the 'regional resource centre' in the office.

They have media materials on Ajaria, they have maps, newspapers, etc.

2) The Ajaria strategy is emerging. They have made contact, in terms of getting some of the materials that they have gathered. There is a dialogue on us meeting with Ajaria representatives.

3) We talked a little about Nodar's 'focus groups needs assessment'. I've seen the outline. The 'methodology' is:

- 1) What are your 'needs'?
- 2) What is your long-term goal (vision)
- 3) What is your short-term goal (vision)
- 4) What can you do to resolve problems and achieve goals?

Is this a 'problem solving' methodology? Or what?

4) I was to send to Nodar the South African 'chapter' ... (of what?) and the dissertation proposal!

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes October - December 2000

3 December 2000

Home visit at Norik Ginosian

w/ Javakhetia workshop shop participants
(especially army Norik and Suren)

- 1) Remember to arrange for Army Norik for the p/s workshops
- 2) We talked about the Army base rumors / Nato... the worrying scenario
 - 1) the Russians leave
 - 2) Nato comes
 - 3) Turkish troops (nearest Nato) ...

So there are these rumors/fears ...

remember - Armenians side w/ Russia, and don't much care for Nato.

- 3) The question is ... if this is a completely unfounded fear/rumor, then what would be the process of quashing it?
- 4) They think that 800 - 1000 people would simply leave along w/ the Russian base, they are Armenians who are in the area only because they are directly employed by the base.
- 5) Suren has been playing a local role in building peace between youth groups, he says, based on the workshop. He wants more. We should get him into exchange w/ the other youth groups, and the forum, etc. Network him up. What does he need to expand what he's doing?

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes October - December 2000

4 December 2000

Meeting w/ Ararat Esoian and his political NGO in Alkhakalaki ...

- 1) There are existing 'laws' that govern the relationship between the Gamgebeli and the Sakrebulo. Because of how the structures were created, the Gamgebeli is x10 more powerful. The 'mandate' of the Sakrebulo (is what?) These guys position is that the Gamgebeli must be elected locally.
- 2) Their version of how conflicts would be resolved, between the structures, is that it depends on adequate (and perhaps local) laws.
- 3) The accountability problem with the gamgebeli is that he is accountable away from the community, and to the state president. Therefore he is perceived as not accountable.
- 4) Storytelling starts to kick in – Ararat (somewhat emotional...) ... the problem w/ the gamgebeli is that there have been 6 in the past 7 years. (Do we know how and why they have been replaced so often, or been short timers?) . Again, we want a direct election, and a fixed time of appt.

Some emotional venting happens ... the issues that are sensitive:

- 1) budgets (where does money come from, where does it go?)
 - 2) electricity
 - 3) security
 - 4) accountability (legitimacy?)
- 5) Malkhaz asked: how do they see the mechanism for implementing the interests of the CG, which might be different than local/regional interests. The answer is that the constitution must define the competencies.
- 6) My notes: 'these are the right guys' (for the workshop...) they are committed to their own interests, side, etc. and there are some hardliners.
- 7) Structures need to develop so that ... "building a consistent, accountable, constitutional picture, that allows people to feel free to develop"
- 8) At one point, Ararat gave basically a 'human needs' version, prioritizing local control and self-determination/self-reliance ...
- 9) The Meshketians never came up, why?
- 10) Some conversation about the Georgian population in Javakhetia ... that there always has been, that we've lived together peacefully through history, that locally, the Georgians didn't react/respond to the Gamsgahurdia 'screamers' ...

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes

October - December 2000

4 December 2000 - Meeting w/ National Democratic Party in Akhalkalaki - Deputy of the Sakrebulo

- 1) NDP is the opposition party.
- 2) The local NDP guy is the deputy of the Sakrebulo (elected). His version is that, "Georgia still has a totalitarian regime, so opposition politics are disempowered."
- 3) There was some highly politicized ranting... some of it storytelling...
- 4) These guys version is that ... according to the law, the gamgebeli must report to the Sakrebulo annually, but they say that they've never had that report. (In how long? How many Sakrebulo elections have there been?)
- 5) The argument goes...that the group supporting the gamgebeli are 'mafiosos' (and clans), that they abuse the not transparent budget and not accountable structures...
- 6) This deputy Sakrebulo guy is the local Javakh leader... the gov't has controlled and manipulated the registration of political parties, denying the Javakh party, and therefore they describe themselves as a national 'movement'. (Identity ... satisfier?)
- 7) As far as these guys are concerned, the interests of the CG, pursued through the gamgebeli, are: control of business, money, and corruption. If the assumption is that the social structures need to be hierarchical, then its about who's on top. Do the structures need to be hierarchical??? (Caucasian culture?)
- 8) At what social level(s) do laws get written? Only in the parliament, or are there 'local' laws, and local legislation?
- 9) Claim - that the laws are (deliberately) written in just such a way as to promote and allow the ongoing development of corruption.
- 10) People claim that they do want to learn Georgian, but that there are no mechanisms. Is it true?
- 11) 'Democracy' described as a satisfier of both participation, and security (from corruption).
- 12) The Armenians are much 'with' the Russians, they are interested in protecting themselves, in Georgia.
- 13) "Does it become a sell job? Is this guy the big separatist?" ... after venting, and protesting that there are no separatists, that its all Tbilisi based propaganda. "We just want our basic needs".

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes
October - December 2000

Wednesday 6 December
in Akhaltsikhe w/ Tsira, Mischa (related to Kate Whyte)

- 1) The view from Akhalsikhe is that tensions in Javakheti are mostly about social issues, and the economics of the Russian base, and very little about identity politics or 'separatist' sentiments.
- 2) 'Security' issues are exaggerated because of jobs and self interest.
- 3) They think that the 'historical perspective' is that most of this identity conflict has been artificially created ... in order to create advantages and opportunities for some, and confusion, so that the Georgian centric structures could dominate.
- 4) They see/say that the region has always been multi-national in culture and atmosphere.
- 5) They describe 'traditions' of cooperation, and there need to be social structures to sustain and maintain those traditions...
- 6) 'Aggression' (some of the vehement rhetoric we've heard, and some we haven't), comes from frustration related to social pressures.
- 7) They see Parliament as the structure where the local governance issues need to be remedied legally.
- 8) We talked about multiple identities, 1) ethnic identity, and 2) Georgian citizen identity ... having credible opportunities to learn Georgian would be a satisfier of Georgian citizen identity ... (and also an economic benefit)...
- 9) The association of Sakrebulo ... is a self-empowerment - lobbying structure.
- 10) For the Kate proposal ... a seminar to the partnership board - on the frameworks of the project.

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes October - December 2000

6 December 2000

in Akhaltsikhe w/ the Chair of the Sakrebulo (also local CUG chair?)

This was a great meeting...

1) "We want to draw a line between 'us' and 'the centre' ... to protect ourselves from (their) corruption"

This is a version of the motivation towards 'separatism' ... as protection from corruption... which leads further to opportunities to 'develop' our own resources.

2) Claim - "This region isn't poor" ... (storytelling was happening...)

3) The Sakrebulo has made 'recommendations' to CG for legislative reform, where can we find the documents?

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes October - December 2000

7 December 2000 Sakrebulo of Poti

- 1) We heard a long story of the successful cooperation between the Poti Sakrebulo and the gamgebeli. Of course, they're all Georgians...
- 2) So...if Poti has such a successful communication and relationship, do we need to do workshops there (probably not?)
- 3) (Storytelling happened...) ... The 'laws' that define the relationships between the local structures are working better here, after some time and some negotiations. (And they describe...analysing the problems and then solving them... analytical problem solving...)
- 4) So here's an idea...how about a commissioned 'case study' of the experience of Poti, in structuring the relationships between local structures, that we could use to inform the problem solving workshops?
- 5) 4 committees of the Sakrebulo are chaired by 'opposition' parties, and the other 5 chaired by the majority party.
- 6) They have positive personal relationships.
- 7) Again...in Poti, what they need to have are (ongoing) principled negotiations, rather than structural reform ... because it is working well enough for them now, with the constraints of money and other resources.
- 8) The mayor of Poti is accepted, and legitimate, to the degree that he is perceived as not influenced by corruption... (so they say...but there are the other stories that we've heard about the corruption of the mayor's office vis a vis the children...) So who believes that he is more/less corrupt? Perceptions?
- 9) Did we get a public relations version?
- 10) The mayor gets his legitimacy (mandate) from the legislation, the Sakrebulo gets its legitimacy (mandate) from having been democratically elected. (?)
- 11) Then...we just start to get the critical analysis of sakrebulo ... that 'appointed reps' are legitimate and necessary as a step in the development of democracy, and they are needed because the Sakrebulo is an 'unknown' quantity, not rooted in the culture or history, and not necessarily 'ready' to 'govern'.

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes October - December 2000

**8 December 2000
Zugdidi Sakrebulo**

1) We hear a long story about 1) it's not a 'separatist' thing here in Samegrelo;
2) as we talk about the status of regions, we should think about it with Abkhazi and Ossetia in mind (good point...); 3) but those are artificial conflicts, and we shouldn't think of the challenges in Samegrelo, from the perspective of those 'artificial conflicts'.

2) Zugdidi has its economic problems because it has become the 'dead end' up against the Abkhazia frontier. A completely random circumstance.

3) Our economy is damaged, because the road is 'blockaded'

4) Conflict prevention in Samegrelo is 'regulation' of the conflict w/ Abkhazia. The artificial political conflicts are exacerbated by economic insecurity.

5) The manipulation of the conflicts creates a 'psychological insecurity'.

6) Again, the point was made about the ROLE of Samegrelo, in the regulation of the G/A conflict. (Make this point to the G/A project...what can be done?)

7) These guys have an interest in G/A confidence building, which they think of as economic joint ventures. (Brainstorming).

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes
October - December 2000

8 December 2000

Zugdidi Sakrebulo woman / NOVIB ...

1) First, we heard the long story of the handicap accessibility work they are doing. Good stuff. Nice lady.

2) This woman is very sharp, and should be in the workshops.

3) When we get to the issues of local governance...

"The Sakrebulo were a stillborn child"....but she thinks the situation is improving. One root cause of the problems w/ the Sakrebulo, were how they were created, they were an artificial invention, meant to create local governance legitimacy, but w/out the competence, and therefore no clear competencies ... they couldn't really be trusted, they weren't ready to 'govern', and therefore the appointed officials were also necessary. They were an experiment ...'part of the evolution of devolution'.

4) Now, the first terms of the first Sakrebulo are expiring, and some people are going to be out, having never known what their job even was.

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes October - December 2000

8 December 2000

Zugdidi 'working group'

1) We started, by talking about having the workshops happen. I thought we were much more 'together' than it turned out we were.

2) Anyway...we discussed all sorts of combinations of days and times.

And concluded, that 4 days seems too long, that 2 days is too short, that 3 days seems about right, that we couldn't take both of the days of a weekend, so the idea would be Thurs - Sat, or Wed. night through Sat mid-day. Residential. (People usually have Saturday events, such as weddings, so keep them until mid-day.)

3) Emzhar was frustrated...wanting to know what is the 'practical outcome' ... We've done research before... blah blah...

4) There were some inputs that might be valuable ... sharing experiences from other countries, and including the participation of outside 'experts' (this was brainstorming).

5) Emzhar was being fairly problematic. I think he's out of the project...

6) Khatuna - the 'real problem' is funding.

7) So, there was a little bit of a shakeout at the end of this meeting. People have been going along, without the real commitment that I thought we had. But we do have a couple of people, a core from which to move forward? I think so.

Georgian Regions Meeting Notes October - December 2000

9 December 2000 conversation with Giorgi Margvelashvili

- 1) Very interesting conversation. Intellectual, frank, informed... also creating their own 'ngo' for Georgia, including Irakli.
- 2) His version of the Sakrebulo story:
 - 1) yes, they were born dead
 - 2) no, the situation hasn't improved
 - 3) ...it's the fault of the international community
- 3) The 'west' forced Georgia to 'Westernize', including an experiment in local governance, then they didn't support it as they promised they would.
- 4) The EU and US pressurized Georgia to create local governance structures. Georgia had 'no tradition' of local governance, and no capacity. So then the structure is like Madonna's ... about competencies, trust, inadequate training, lack of resources.
- 5) The West didn't live up to commitments made, around the 'experiment'. (Is this analysis understood, documented anywhere?)
- 6) This guy for the problem solving workshops. How about his 'ngo'?
- 7) His NGO is going to be the GIPA - Georgian Institute for Public Affairs

Appendix F

**Georgian Regions Project
London Workshop Design Seminar
April 9-11 2001**

Theory Frameworks and Summaries

Framework 1

What are we doing?

“Problem Solving Research Workshops”, have previously been described as:

- ☞ Controlled Communication Workshops (Burton)
- ☞ Interactive Problem Solving Workshops (Kelman)
- ☞ Analytical Problem Solving Workshops (Burton)
- ☞ (CAPS) Collaborative, Analytical Problem Solving (Mitchell)
- ☞ Third Party Consultation (Fisher)
- ☞ Facilitative Problem Solving Workshops (Hoffman)
- ☞ Dialogue Projects (Ropers)

Framework 2

Intervention Guidelines: Ethics and Considerations

Macro Framework

- FOREGROUND - After what event/unresolved conflict is there the possibility of an intervention?
- PARTICIPANTS - Who initiates the intervention with whom?
- RATIONALE - Why is an intervention contemplated?
- TIMING - When does or when must the intervention begin?
Why?
- METHOD - Where and how will the principals interact?
- MORALITY - May, must, or should there be an intervention?
Why?
- REALITY - What actually occurs during the intervention?
- EVALUATION - How is the outcome of the intervention subsequently viewed?

Note: The first six factors are relevant before the intervention. The last two during and after the intervention.

Source: Leonard W. Doob, "Intervention: Guides and Perils" (1993).

Framework 3

Intervention Guidelines: Ethics and Characteristics

Attributes of Interveners:

Claim: "...he or she must be 'a skilled knowledgeable scientist/practitioner whose background, attitudes, and behavior engender impartiality and whose understanding and expertise enable the facilitation of productive confrontation, that is the open and direct discussion of the contentious perceptions, attitudes, and issues separating the parties'.¹

- **CONFIDENCE** - An intervention depends (among other things) on the self-confidence attributed to the interveners by the principals.
- **ADAPTABILITY / PATIENCE** - The technique to be employed must be adjusted to the situation at hand.
- **KNOWLEDGE** - The knowledge of interveners is more likely to be useful and effective when it is incorporated into a theoretical system. (Conceptual or theoretical frameworks)
- **TRUST** - Trust may not preexist but can be established immediately prior to and during an intervention.
- **AVAILABILITY** - An intervener should not approach parties to a conflict without being sure it is possible to stay with the intervention until the intervention is no longer needed.²

Source: Doob.

1. Quoted in Doob from Ron Fisher (1990).

2. Paraphrased from Burton (1987).

Framework 4

Intervention Guidelines: Ethics and Characteristics

Reality and Evaluation

- ✓ **REALITY CHECK** - Under almost all circumstances ... surprises occur during the intervention. *What are they? How do they matter?*
- ✓ **TRANSFORMATION** - Inevitably some learning occurs during interventions, and hence both sets of participants change their approach or behavior in minor or major respects. **Are these positive changes, why?**
- ✓ **ACTIONS** - After the interaction, what happens? It is clear that the principals who are to take action must be specified. *(And what are the 'action' responsibilities of the interveners?)*
- ✓ **EVALUATION** - The intervention has ended, at least for the time being. One or more interveners have interacted with one or more principals. Appropriate action has or has not taken place. **Was the problem solved, or not?**

Is the outcome just or fair?

Have the principals had an adequate opportunity to present their viewpoints?

Who has made the decision regarding the outcome, and what role have the principals played?

Is the outcome in accord with the participants anticipation before and during the intervention?

Source: Doob.

Framework 5

Phases of a Problem Solving Dialogue

In Simplified Terms - Four Phases:

- ☛ *Formulating differing points of view* of the various parties as clearly as possible.
- ☛ *Reflection on the underlying needs and fears* of the participating actors, their values, their experiences of conflict and their hopes.
- ☛ *Identification of shared interests* and similar needs and fears. Also initiating practical cooperation on less controversial issues.
- ☛ *Securing understanding on the substantive issues* in dispute, discussing approaches and ideas for resolution, imagining how these approaches might be implemented, and initiating practical measures.

Source: Norbert Ropers, "From Resolution to Transformation: Assessing the Role and Impact of Dialogue Projects". (2000)

Framework 6

From Mitchell and Banks' 'How-To' Handbook

Principles of Problem Solving

- ◆ Representatives of the parties meet with a panel of 'consultants' who facilitate the exchange.
- ✧ Consultants should be fully competent and properly qualified in relevant disciplines and practical experience.
- ◆ The objective is to analyse the conflict in all aspects that the participants deem relevant, and examine options for moving the conflict towards an acceptable solution.
- ✧ Participation in a problem solving exercise should involve neither issues of formal recognition nor formal negotiation. It should be an academic analysis of situations, processes, and possibilities, nothing more.
- ◆ In a perfectly successful workshop or series of workshops:

The parties would emerge with a resolution of the conflict, in the sense of an outcome that satisfies their underlying interests and their goals.
- ✧ In a wholly unsuccessful workshop:

The parties would leave having lost nothing but the time of their representatives.

(Are there worse consequences or results possible?)

Source: Christopher Mitchell and Michael Banks, "Handbook of Conflict Resolution" (1996).

Framework 7

From Mitchell and Banks' 'How-To' Handbook

Who are the 'Right People'?

- ◆ It is *practical* to begin with 'what is visible' - organizations or groups that are politically active.
- ✧ It is *essential* to include the 'grassroots' - the people whose interests, relationships and interactions are most severely damaged by the conflict.
- ◆ The *principle* is start at the bottom social level and move upwards ... legitimacy is the key to conflict resolution; no settlement can work unless it is acceptable to those affected by it, and it can become acceptable if they feel they are participating.
- ✧ The *process should not omit* any group that might be able to damage or undermine the outcome. The question is, 'who can prevent or undermine a resolution of this conflict'?
- ◆ Have good representatives - start the process with influential private citizens, opinion leaders ... participants whose distance from official position enables them to think creatively, to speculate, and to engage in 'what if ...' exchanges ... flexibility is a key quality.

Source: Mitchell and Banks.

Framework 8

From Mitchell and Banks' 'How-To' Handbook

Phases of a 'Wholly Successful' Workshop

- ① Meeting opening, introductions, assurances that the process will be informal, confidential, and directed towards research. Presentation and discussion of guidelines or ground rules.
- ② Participants then explain, in turn and to the whole group, the nature and origins of the conflict, its present state, and what appear to be key obstacles to its solution. 'Without interruption or debate'. Until participants feel that they have 'told their story' in a way fully satisfactory to them, they will not be willing to move on to consider the present and the future. Premature closure of this process can be self-defeating.
- ③ Facilitators introduce 'theory' perspectives. There might be clarifying questions, a list of key issues, interpretation through theoretical frameworks, comparison to other conflicts. The facilitation task is to make 'theory' relevant as a tool for conflict analysis, done by the participants, with each other.
- ④ Analysis of options for problem solving. Through facilitated discussion, the participants examine various options for change, using the relevant theory frameworks. Typically, every single one of the prescriptions favoured by each party before arrival at the workshop is usually rejected.
- ⑤ Analysis has revealed to participants the costs of maintaining a conflictual status quo, and any possible 'common ground' where problem solving should focus. Conflicted parties resolve to pursue options defined by that common ground.

Source: Mitchell and Banks.

Framework 9

Action Research Workshops

Interactive Problem Solving Frameworks

“The scholar-practitioner model, in effect, enacts a form of action research, in which our direct involvement in an action program enables us to observe intense interaction between parties in conflict that would not normally be accessible to research.”

- The (social-psychological) goal of interactive problem solving is *promoting change in individuals - through face to face interaction in small groups* - as a vehicle for change in larger social systems.¹
- The core of the work of interactive problem solving is a particular *microprocess*, best exemplified by problem solving workshops.
- This microprocess is intended to produce changes in the *macroprocesses*, in the larger process of conflict resolution, including the official negotiations - in what is now commonly called the peace process.

Source: Herbert C. Kelman, “Experiences from 30 Years of Action Research on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” (1999).

1. Contrast with Mitchell and Banks: “two things do *not* happen in a workshop. Most importantly, each party’s basic attitudes towards the opponent are not changed. If they were, a workshop would be a brainwashing session...”

Framework 10

Action Research Workshops

Interactive Problem Solving Frameworks

The three components of interactive problem solving:

- 1) The conflict is a problem shared by the parties, essentially a problem in the relationship.¹
- 2) Conflict resolution processes need to search for a solution to the problem that addresses the underlying causes of the conflict...which means the unfulfilled or threatened needs of both parties - for security, identity, autonomy, justice, recognition. A solution that addresses these needs ultimately leads to transformation of the relationship between the parties.
- 3) Interactive, refers to the proposition that problem solving is best achieved through direct interaction, in which the parties are able to share their differing perspectives and learn how to influence each other...

Source: Kelman.

1. This perspective is particularly psychological, as contrasted with a Burtonian view that the 'problem to be solved' is institutionalized and therefore structural frustration of human needs satisfaction.

Problem Solving Workshops

Possible Outcomes of Problem Solving Workshops

- ◆ **Fostering interactional conflict analysis:** creating an environment that emphasizes academic/analytical approaches; assisting in reframing the conflict from a win-lose situation to a shared problem to be resolved; identification of each communities' underlying needs and acceptable satisfiers.
- ❖ **Fostering improved relationships:** building relational and analytical empathy; development of cooperative social interaction.
- ◆ **Fostering communication:** developing conditions for effective communication, including overcoming stereotypes; highlight that face-to-face dialogue is essential for dealing with the social-psychological features of protracted conflicts.
- ❖ **Education:** to introduce concepts, models and techniques that may be useful in the resolution process; to create new knowledge 'owned' by the parties and transferable into the political decision-making process.
- ◆ **Pre-negotiation:** helping parties move to the stage where formal negotiations become possible.
- ❖ **Enhancing willingness to compromise:** increase mutual confidence in the short-term and build constructive, meaningful relationships over the long-term; generating confidence building measures; create incentives for future cooperation, and heighten the perceptions of the high cost of maintaining the conflict status quo.
- ◆ **Assist the negotiation process:** support official processes with unofficial, academic and analytical processes; provide frameworks for negotiating preparations
- ❖ **Implementation:** assist and support transitional and transformational change activities, including the institutionalization of problem solving processes.

Source: Mark Hoffman, "Defining and Evaluating Success: Facilitative Problem Solving Workshops in an Interconnected Context", (1995).

Framework 12

Problem Solving from a Human Needs Perspective

The Phases of Analytical Problem Solving

- By definition, a serious deep-rooted conflict exists when a community or society's fundamental human needs are not being satisfied because the existing social structures and institutions are dysfunctional for that purpose.
- The analysis task therefore, is for the conflicted parties working together, assisted by facilitation, to jointly analyse their social structures, to agree on what needs are unsatisfied, what destructive or false satisfiers exist and their sources, and to determine what positive or synergistic satisfiers would be contextually, culturally appropriate for satisfying human needs...especially identity, security, recognition, participation, understanding.
- The problem solving task is to determine how to change, reform, reinvent, or create new social structures, institutions, and policies that exist explicitly for the satisfaction of fundamental human needs. Furthermore, to then develop action plans that will result in the required fundamental structural social change.
- Analytical problem solving workshops should "be exercises in realism, not in wishful thinking".¹ Action plans that depend on external intervention or sponsorship, or that do not move peoples towards "the satisfaction of fundamental human needs, (and) on the generation of growing levels of self-reliance..."² will not resolve or transform conflicts.

Source: An interpretation of Burtonian and Max-Neef frameworks.

1. Christopher Mitchell and Michael Banks, "Handbook of Conflict Resolution" (1996).
2. Manfred Max-Neef, "Human Scale Development" (1991).

Framework 13

Action Research Workshops

Interactive Problem Solving Frameworks

The four components of a macro Conflict Resolution Process:

- Identification and analysis of the problem
- Joint shaping of ideas for solution
- Influencing the other side
- Creating a supportive political environment

Source: Kelman.

Framework 14

Action Research Workshops

Interactive Problem Solving Frameworks

Workshop Agenda

- ❶ Information exchange
- ❷ Needs analysis
- ❸ Joint thinking regarding solutions
- ❹ Discussion of constraints
- ❺ Joint thinking regarding overcoming constraints

Source: Kelman.

Interactive Problem Solving Frameworks

Workshop 'Ground Rules'

- ① Privacy and confidentiality**
- ② Focus on each other (not constituencies, audience, third parties)**
- ③ Analytic discussion (non-polemical)**
- ④ Problem solving (non-adversarial mode)**
- ⑤ No expectations of agreement**
- ⑥ Equality in setting**
- ⑦ Facilitative role of the third party**

Source: Kelman.

Burton's Little Red Book

Burton's Macro Framework: Provention

Provention refers to the means by which a situation is anticipated and dealt with by removing the possible causes of a conflict, with no reserve threat of force. It could mean secession, if parties sought this, far-reaching economic policies, or whatever combination of policies as might be required to make conflict irrelevant. *In this sense provention could be a political philosophy, a general approach to governance.*

Another way to describe provention might be: institutionalized processes for fundamental social change, where *social structures and institutions are created and evolve for the specific purpose of satisfying collective human needs* such as security, identity, participation, recognition and understanding.

Source: Burton.

Burton's Little Red Book

Features of Facilitated Conflict Resolution

- * It differentiates between 'interests' that are negotiable, and the underlying, basic motivations and values that cannot be bargained over or compromised away.
- * It is analytical - about motives and values, or perceptions of motives and values, and about confusions between interests, tactics, and goals.
- * It provides an opportunity to assess the costs of ignoring, suppressing or failing to promote revealed non-negotiable needs.
- * It seeks to assist parties in deducing what alterations in structures, institutions and policies are required to enable the fulfilment of needs. Such fulfilment applies equally to the needs of persons previously deprived and to those whose interests are threatened by potential change.
- * It seeks to assist the parties involved in monitoring events and communications perceptively.

Sources: John W. Burton, "Resolving Deep-Rooted Conflict" (1987); and "Conflict Resolution - It's Languages and Processes" (1996).

Burton's Little Red Book

The Facilitation Panel and Its Functions

- * The role of the panel is initially to facilitate analysis so that goals and tactics, interests, values and needs can be discussed, understood and clarified. Later the panel will help parties deduce possible outcomes on the basis of the analysis made.
- * Panel members should be drawn from several key disciplines...have an adequate knowledge of conflict theories, and be experienced in the facilitation process; it is necessary to have balanced viewpoints and perspectives represented on the panel, including gender, and where relevant, ethnic and class perspectives.
- * The panel should not include persons who have made an exclusive specialty of the particular conflict being analysed, or of the region in which the dispute takes place.
- * The role of the panel is a very active one. It supplies a great deal of input, but it is about conflictual relationships and not about the particular conflict under discussion. Through this input the panel can demonstrate neutrality, usefulness, sympathy and credibility. Its role is to assist the participants in their analysis of their conflict.
- * Panel members must prepare and confer before and during the seminar, even adjourning discussions for this purpose, so that they are always acting together and with mutual understanding.

Source: Burton.

Framework 19

Burton's Little Red Book

Workshop Phases and Activities

- ✓ Workshop opens with ground rules, facilitation roles, and invitation to parties to describe their perceptions of the conflict, focussing on values, goals, needs and fears.
- ✓ Opening expositions delivered without interruption. Questions of clarification only.
- ✓ There is no presentation or discussion of particular proposals or solutions until the analysis is complete and definitions agreed.
- ✓ Facilitators pose questions of clarification, especially focussing on values, needs, goals, fears.
- ✓ Panel prepares an interpretative summary of apparent shared and dissimilar values and goals, and presents this to participants. They will reject the analysis, and begin restating and revising their positions. At this point the 'real' analysis between the parties begins.
- ✓ Panel contributes relevant knowledge and frameworks, including other conflicts, research findings, behavioral theories.
- ✓ Key issues (identity, recognition, cultural values, existential fears) emerge and become clarified. Facilitators prepare a list of agreed or shared propositions that point towards resolution of these issues, and raise them for debate. The end goal of the first seminar can usually be no more than a short statement of propositions on values and goals, that is, a shared definition of the conflict.
- ✓ The next step - probably in subsequent gatherings, is for the participants, supported by the facilitators, to deduce from the agreed propositions those changes in structures, institutions and policies that are required to move proposed agreements into effect.
- ✓ Participants are usually not ready to move into the future, and there needs to be discussion of transition steps and processes.
- ✓ The progression is from analysis, to a deduction of the required political structures, to negotiation of the interests involved in making the required changes, and then to policies and implementation.

Source: Burton.

Evaluation of Problem Solving

Challenges for Evaluating Problem Solving

- Some have argued that the criteria for evaluating facilitative problem solving workshops are undefinable. It is more accurate to characterise the criteria as possibly unquantifiable.
- Careful and meaningful evaluation is desirable and necessary if past practice is meant to serve as a guide to good practice in the future.
- ‘We have a better conceptual understanding of these approaches than an understanding based on empirical studies’.¹
- Four possible evaluatory elements:²
 - 1) Subjective assessments: of third parties from their own descriptions of what they were attempting to do and what they achieved.
 - 2) Assessments by the parties in conflict: from their published comments, interviews, and unsolicited judgements.
 - 3) ‘External’ evidence of change: of attitudes of the parties towards each other.
 - 4) The length of time of access: and of retaining the confidence of the conflict parties.

Source: Hoffman.

1. Dan Druckman, “An analytical research agenda for conflict and conflict resolution”, in Sandole and van der Merwe, (1993).

2) Tom Pettigrew, “Quaker Mediation”, in Woodhouse (ed.) (1991).

Evaluation of Problem Solving

Elements of a Resolved Conflict

- **Completeness:** The issue(s) in conflict disappear or lose salience.
- ⇒ **Acceptability:** The outcome is acceptable to all parties in the conflict, all other stakeholders, and at all social levels.
- **Self-supporting:** There is no necessity for third-party sanctions to maintain the agreement.
- ⇒ **Satisfactory:** All parties perceive the outcome as 'just' according to their value systems.
- **Uncompromising:** In that no goals have been sacrificed in the form of 'half-a-loaf' solutions.
- ⇒ **Innovative:** The solution establishes new and positive relationships between the parties.
- **Un-coerced:** The adversaries freely arrive at the solution without imposition by outside authoritative agency.

Source: Christopher Mitchell: "Necessitous Man and Conflict Resolution: More Basic Questions about Basic Human Needs", in "Conflict: Human Needs Theory" (1990).

Lines of Criticism

What Some People Say About Problem Solving

- ✗ Social scientists are assumed to represent instrumental knowledge and rationality par excellence ... to be capable of social engineering within a problem solving framework. In practice, they engage in social engineering by manipulating the setting and structure of the workshop; by choosing the participants; by acting themselves as intermediaries; and by controlling the conceptualisations of the conflict.

- ✗ Most of the literature assessing third party intervention tends to either explicitly or implicitly dismiss interactive, facilitative problem solving approaches as being inappropriate ... (as) ineffectual in dealing with protracted international conflict ... the definition and measure of success or failure of third party interventions tends to be biased against interactive, facilitative problem solving initiatives.

- ✗ Those who advocate the desirability and efficacy of interactive problem solving approaches to conflict have not assisted their own cause particularly in providing answers to the inevitable questions: where has it worked? Where has it succeeded? Which conflict has it actually resolved?

Appendix G

Notes from Interviews with Jonathan Cohen on the Schlaining Dialogue Process and Paula Garb on Georgia - Abkhazia Citizen Peacebuilding

Interview w/ Jonathan Cohen on Dialogue Projects
The Schlaining Process between Georgians and Abkhazians
19/12/2002

Comments, Concepts, Questions (Notes...)

This concept note is based on an interview conducted with Jonathan Cohen, including Andy Carl, on the Schlaining Process dialogue workshops between Georgians and Abkhazians. The interview transcript runs more than 30 pgs., and therefore this document is a summary.

1) The most enjoyable part of the interview was Jonathan's inclination to tell his 'story', rather than be constrained by the questions I had drafted, or the formality of an 'interview'. As with the Georgian Regions Project (GRP) research workshops, storytelling is always a worthwhile activity.

2) The GRP was deliberately an action research activity. Paula Garb's intervention is considered, by her, to be action research. Jonathan is ambivalent about whether or not the SP is action research. He says, '... if you call action research doing things and learning from what you're doing, to inform better practice, then it's action research.' But more often he declines to describe their activities as action research, and therefore while he says he finds it an interesting strategy, he wouldn't be much interested in trying it.

3) Jonathan is very coherent on the place for this intervention among the wide range of other activities going on. Their intervention began with particular regard to what other's were and were not doing: "But all the time we were talking to our NGO partners, and it became clear to us through our discussions that Bruno was working with academics, and NGO people. Paula was working with this civic diplomacy project. IA was developing its confidence building project, it was going into the broader context, the Caucasian Forum context, and we were thinking that there was no point in duplicating any of that. But, our partners were saying to us that there was a real gap, in that there was no engagement between people at the official level. And that, if we could, that would be an area to try to develop some kind of contact and exploration of ideas".

More importantly, his theory of complementarity of initiatives, (and contingency theory, I assume) is summed up in these comments: " it's a cumulative process of everything, of many different interactions. We very firmly see what we're doing as part of a much wider process of engagement. And I wouldn't want to put a value on whether what we're doing is more important than what Paula does, or more important than what Bruno does, or more important than what the UN does, it all adds up together, to make a change. And it happens to be a particularly politically difficult conflict to change,"

4) The bulk of Jonathan's story is about how to get people 'to the table'. Based on consultations with local partners, and knowledge of the complex political

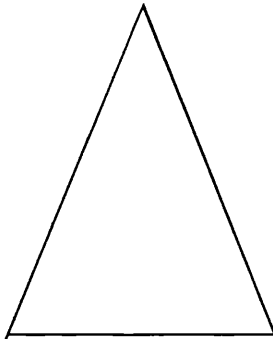
situation, the intervention has the initial assumptions that 1) dialogue is a useful process, 2) the people to engage were principally 'officials' from the two sides of the conflict, supported by other peace actors. Then it's about what will bring them together.

- 1) There were some pre-conditions, that there would not be direct bi-lateral dialogue (maybe it was a pre-condition, in any case it was a position, and it evolved through time particularly from the side of the Abkhaz);
- 2) There were several governments involved, and required to give permission;
- 3) There was the process of determining who to invite;
- 4) There were variations on the 'ruse' or 'cover story' (as it was termed in the GRP)...where inviting the representatives from Northern Ireland would 'take the edge off it', between the Georgians and Abkhazians. This was an initial strategy, which became known as the 'prism', and they saw that it had both its own legitimacy, and the broader purpose of helping to create the safe space.
- 5) There was constant, or at least consistent consultation with principle on-the-ground partners
- 6) There was diplomatic negotiation (about permission to travel, among other things)
- 7) There was lobbying
- 8) There were certain events and a 'timing' element
- 9) There was negotiation about 'who' were the right people to participate
- 10) There were compromises
- 11) There were last minute surprises

Once people arrived to participate (at the first real meeting), there was a need for more strategy to keep them in the process

- 1) There was flexible design and innovation
- 2) There was facilitation, brainstorming, problem solving
- 3) Participants were flexible and took risks, demonstrated commitment
- 4) There was some confidence building and informal diplomacy (unstructured time)
- 5) A useful (and safe presumably) 'environment' was created

5) Jonathan outlined a combination of conceptual frameworks. The first, which he attributes to Clem McCartney, was used to give to the participants, at some point, a picture of what they were doing, in the abstract. In the GRP, it is the equivalent of the circle chart problem-solving diagram. Clem used a pyramid:



Joint Action

Speculative Problem Solving

Exploration of Issues

Mutual Understanding

Contact

If we compare this to the circle chart (four quadrant analysis) ... then contact and mutual understanding are the processes by which the 'problem is identified'; exploration of issues is 'joint analysis'; speculative problem solving happens where 'brainstorming' or creative problem solving happens; and joint action is comparable to 'action planning'. I like the idea of 'speculative problem solving', and would like to know if it is in the literature anywhere. I should check with Clem. (A google search doesn't put those three words together in that order...) At the same time, the dissertation point I suggested was...'is it all analytical, and is it just problem solving?' ... this framework is resonant with Burton, Fisher and Ury, Kelman, and Rothman.

(Subsequent information: Clem McCartney says he first used the concept in a paper for the Standing Commission on Human Rights in 1984. It has been used and adapted, with acknowledgment, and I might look it up. Clem suggests the search phrase 'contact pyramid'.)

Jonathan made it clear that the process described here is not linear, but all these things happen throughout the process...or at least the bottom activities continue to happen as the top ones become more possible. There was a point later in the interview where he described the meeting where the speculative problem solving happened for the first time.

6) Jonathan talked about the team...and described a 'marriage' of Norbert's 'theoretical conception', his own 'intuitive sense', and Clem's 'experience'. So these are elements of a facilitation team, in this case study. He also talked about Clem being 'better without a framework', and Norbert being 'more rigid'. Facilitation styles.

7) Then we come to the 'prism' idea. Jonathan doesn't see it as based in theory, or integral to the conceptual framework above. It just meant that they would invite

parties from other conflicts/peace processes, to come and share their own experiences, by way of creating context and safe space for discussion. The participants then have a starting point for their own discussion of their own situation...wherein they can compare and contrast their circumstances with the story that they've heard. We talked a little bit about the metaphor of a prism...light going through the prism and being broken down into constituent parts.

Jonathan related that at some point, it was useful to make the 'prism' an issue, such as 'truth and reconciliation', rather than a place. Jonathan made the point that 'what worked' with prisms was a very personal story, not 'another academic analysis'.

8) Jonathan made a point about the limited time available for evaluation, reflection, planning...because of the extreme time demands of simply managing, organizing, maintaining contact with participants - as well as situating it within the wider programme that CR runs, which contributes to its credibility. In the GRP, we also realized the time constraints, for both the DAR and the IAR (dissertation/intervention action research).

9) Jonathan made some comments about the fundamental 'political' nature, as against 'academic' of what they are involved in. The participants know that it is not an 'academic exercise', but real political relationships and calculations that are relevant, although in an environment that is unofficial, and therefore 'non-committal'.

10) There was a point about the 'right people', how much attention goes into this, and whether the 'right people' are more critical the closer the activity is to 'track 1', whereas closer to 'track 2' the scope for less than the 'right people' may be wider.

11) Schlaining process ground rules evolved (as did GRP): 1) This is a dialogue meeting; 2) People participate in their personal capacity; 3) The languages are Russian and English, people are encouraged to clarify and ask questions; 4) Meetings are confidential; 5) Meetings are followed by press releases that are created by consensus - not a ground rule, but an evolved process...and the facilitators write the press releases which are then approved by consensus of the participants.

12) Are trust building and confidence building the same thing? Jonathan made a point about not doing trust building. His point boiled down to: trust is related to having faith in a person or party, but confidence is related to my ability to predict your behavior based on previous experience. It's something about pragmatism, and not assuming that the parties are willing to be transformed so dramatically that they are required to 'trust' each other. I guess it was all a little bit of semantics for me, but it's an important point for him and interesting enough.

(Jonathan disagrees that this is a matter of semantics. What is important for him

is that while parties may not be able or willing to 'trust' each other, they have to develop confidence in their own ability to predict and understand the behavior of the other...or in his words, 'they need to engage in patterns of behavior whereby the other side can develop confidence that they will behave in a predictable and trustworthy manner', especially with regard to security.)

13) Jonathan made the point several times that sustaining the process of 2-3 years is 'exhausting', and that the combination of time and energy spent comes with an opportunity cost of theory, evaluation, planning, reflection, preparation. These are where Jonathan sees his own shortfalls, but the team compensates by Norbert bringing his theoretical knowledge, and Clem bringing his experience based design instincts and facilitation skills, and flexibility. Evaluation is implicit, and based in trust in the team.

14) Jonathan's final conceptual framework was about the type of person needed to do the work, facilitator attributes. He termed it 'patient, persistent, personable'. He emphasises the personability...you have to be able to 'get on with people'. My version of that has always been about the ability to 'be with people'. Same story.

Conclusion: These were the interesting themes and issues that we spoke about during our interview, many of which directly relate to themes in my dissertation, and which I will take up there. Some of what Jonathan has offered here should be added at various points in what I have drafted so far, particularly in the literature review, and I will be doing that while editing the dissertation draft.

**Conversation with Paula Garb based on her paper
Action Evaluation and Citizen Peace-building in the Georgian-Abkhazia
Conflict: Ownership in Conflict Transformation (Vaughn Crandall and Paula
Garb). 2 April 2004**

The interview below is based on an email response I wrote to Paula Garb after reading the above paper. Our conversation covered not only the paper, but her ongoing Georgia - Abkhazia conflict intervention. This is not a transcript of the conversation, which took place by phone and was not recorded. I took notes and summarised from her comments, so the notes can be a little cryptic, and I take responsibility for any misunderstandings or mistakes.

Davin: I'm back from Tbilisi, and well into drafting new versions of my dissertation chapters. I found your article very interesting. It both answered many of the questions that I would have for you, and also stimulated new ones of course.

Most of my questions and thoughts below are framed from your paper, but based on themes in my dissertation. Some of them are more directly responses to the paper. I doubt that we'd try to discuss them all over the phone, some of them are interesting but less critical to my dissertation drafting.

1) The problem solving framework for the Georgian Regions Project is the 'circle chart' of Fisher/Ury, sometimes called a four-quadrant analysis. 1) What is the problem?; 2) What is the analysis of the problem?; 3) What are some possible solutions to the problem, based on the analysis? (a brainstorming exercise usually); 4) Create an action plan, based on the brainstorming, stemming from the analysis. (Identify, Analyze, Create Options, Create action plan.) We used human needs theory as the 'analytical framework': i.e. how are identity or security needs not being satisfied by the existing social structures and institutions that define the relationship between the Georgian government and the (Armenian) population in Javakheti? Jonathan's projects' framework is something like: 1) Contact; 2) Mutual Understanding; 3) Exploration of Issues; 4) Speculative problem solving; 5) Joint action. Your framework is What are your goals? Why are those important to you? How might you reach them? I find it really interesting to compare and contrast these frameworks. At first, I was wondering where in your framework is 'analysis'. But reading through the paper, it seems it comes through the dialogue process, as people reflect on their perceptions of the conflict situation, and how to impact on it. So of course, your participants are engaged in one way or another in 'analysis'. I just wonder whether you think of it that way, if they do, if you avoid the idea or label or explicit reference to analysis? (At some point I wrote, 'what is the relationship between dialogue and analysis?' and also what is the relationship between 'research (action research) and analysis?')

Paula: Conflict analysis: early, first two years...more action evaluation. Now we're in the 6th year. The what, why, how...isn't the whole project. The larger project is about analyzing aspects of the conflict...in the conferences...action

evaluation is the 'evaluation part'...and as time went on, we did less of it. The conferences are...where the analysis happens. It's the point. The conferences are about analyzing...what is happening in the conflict, what's going on.

Analytical Frameworks are inherent, internal...with people. They have their own.

When we come together - people have offered a paper topic...about the conflict, to present at the conference...and there are themes. 'Citizen diplomacy and it's role in transforming the conflict', for example. So people come w/ a paper that has it's own (their) framework for analysis.

Framework = soviet style of academic conference...presentation and debate. Culturally familiar style.

Most of the conferences proceedings...are online...w/ English summaries...
citizenpeacebuilding.org ... link to programs...Georgian Abkaz project link...click link to publications.

Davin: 2) A theme in my dissertation is about how to get the right people to participate. We struggled in the Regions Project. Jonathan identifies the issue as one of his most critical and time consuming and delicate challenges. Your paper identifies the right people as 'selected from a pool of individuals who were most active in other citizen peacebuilding efforts in the region'. So I had a couple of questions about that. 1) Was it that easy? (It seems you had more difficulty with too many people, or sometimes participation from some of the wrong people). 2) Was there a question of duplicating other initiatives, if your participants were already engaged in other citizen peacebuilding efforts? 3) Do we have any possibility of comparing and contrasting projects, if the same people were involved in projects with similar objectives? (The Regions Project had participants from the Georgian Chancellery who did participate in other projects, and they made some comparisons for me between our project and others with which they were familiar, which was interesting.)

Paula: Not really so easy. It was most important, who would come. In the beginning, not obvious that people would talk productively. There was already a track record of negative experiences. It was nervous.

Networking, people you know/trust ... and you meet someone through them...bringing like-minded people together...but it doesn't always work in real life. So...started on the Abkhaz with people I knew very well. Asked the Abkhaz that 'I wanted to work with' And there wasn't much communication or desire then...There came a list of Georgians...Georgians at Univ. of Maryland ... w/ some Abkhaz... Barry Sanders...(conflict resolution courses) ... Paula met those Georgians - one positive, one negative...then in Tbilisi the good guy introduced some other good Georgians...Paata...on the list of Abkhaz...personal contacts, personal recruiting...

Lederach's 'middle level' and decision makers...then the most 'ready' for cross-conflict dialogue...starting with the easy ones, rather than the hard-liners...opinion makers who wrote and spoke...journalists, academics, and NGOs. Second, then the compatible w/ each other people...who didn't resist on the face...

The process of consensus...negotiation...ownership issue.

Started small, 6-7 on each side...and grew. Core group. W/ the explicit intention of adding 1-2 each event...till we got to 12-14 on each side. 24 in the room. Got to be a little to big. So then instead of an upper limit, there will be rotation...so people are still involved, but quality control on the meeting/s processes...15 peeps.

Still some rotation. So the number is related to the 'research project'...but we're not inculturating any new people. And some people are now less in our orbit"...

Davin: 3) I like the scheme of shared goals, unique goals, contrasting goals. What we did was frame goals in terms of improving the possibilities for needs satisfaction...the creation of joint projects that would contribute to security, or participation, or understanding, etc.

Paula: This was an early process. To get things going.

Davin: 4) I looked for a 'storytelling' activity or element in your project. We designed it into the analysis phase of our workshops, and Jonathan depends on it by introducing other conflicts (Northern Ireland or South Africa) through what he refers to as a 'prism'...You referred at one point to people 'venting their frustrations and anger' in the safe environment of their own sides' meetings...I can imagine this as a storytelling moment...but does it happen much in your dialogues, and is it important? Do you encourage or discourage it?

Paula: Comes in the discussions after the papers are presented. She doesn't think and plan for it...it comes up naturally. It happens during discussion and during the informal social time.

Davin: 5) Does your action evaluator have any other functions? Is s/he sometimes also a facilitator? Is it a process observation role? Is this person somehow more 'neutral' in the process?

Paula: The action evaluator was Susan (Allen Nan), and she played all those roles. Additional role.

Davin: 6) I'm interested in the emphasis on personal values, and wonder about the relationship between values, and whatever it is that changes when people go through a paradigm shift. I think of much of our work as looking for the 'aha' moment when people reach a point of realization, and offering people process

through which they can change their perspectives and perceptions. So, to what degree is your process dependent on entrenching or protecting 'values'...as against challenging them? Burton has values as 'non-negotiable' ... which would agree w/ your framework, I suppose.

Paula: Attitude shift...'values'...what are these values...personal transformations ... stereotypes and view of the other...attitudes...what doesn't change is personal transformation (empowerment) to go back into communities and transfer the transformation.

Testing the theory of how effective to work w/ the middle level. How little trickle-out effect...hard to see or measure...linear, long time frame...

critical masses - violent conflicts - critical yeast

strategic who, doing strategic what...going against the mainstream...water running uphill...syphon...strategic people...leading...grains of yeast that makes rise...

Davin: 7) Do you draw a conclusion that for the field, we should move away from terms like 2nd track diplomacy or citizen diplomacy, because it is problematic for the 'real' (realpolitik that is) diplomats?

Paula: Maybe yes...we still have time to change the language and avoid that kind of problem...

Davin: 8) I struggled to understand the term formative monitoring. I understand the monitoring part, as an activity of reflecting on activities to see if they are actually transforming the conflict in the desired or anticipated ways. I just never quite understood what about it is formative.

Paula: Baseline data, then stability of the process, and approaches have been formed...summative...summary...

Davin: 9) You mentioned 'culturally relevant ground rules'. I have several examples of various practitioners ground rules in the dissertation. Are yours concrete and can you share them? In the Regions Project, a set of guidelines to shape group work evolved until it read: 1) Listen and speak respectfully; 2) Disagree respectfully; 3) Be honest, be open; 4) Work with time, not against it; 5) Facilitators and participants share responsibility for facilitating; 6) Facilitators and participants share responsibility for process; 7) Facilitators and participants share responsibility for outcomes. The final 3 points are an expression of the 'ownership' mechanism of the Regions Project, and we were well satisfied that many of our participants did in fact choose to share those responsibilities with us proactively and creatively.

(We didn't discuss this question on the phone)

Davin: 10) Do you conclude that 'learning' was the main tool for conflict transformation, and that 'reflective practice' was the main learning mechanism?

Paula: Intellectual feast at the conferences. So...it's a learning experience. That was exciting.

Davin: 11) You had an interesting claim about 'legitimate advocacy', but I wasn't sure what the phrase was referring to. I've been at odds with some in IA about the role of advocacy, and what I perceive as contradictions with conflict resolution theory...but advocacy can mean just about anything, so I'm interested in what you meant.

(We didn't discuss this question on the phone.)

12) You say that participants 'revised their actions to bring them more in line with their values'. Is this part of the framework, by design? Is it an assumption that underlies the methodology, about what type of change is desirable?

(We didn't discuss this question on the phone.)

13) I'm interested in the idea that the Abkhaz are clearly the less powerful of the two groups. Do the Georgians agree? Is this assumption debatable? (I used to challenge the assumption that the apartheid regime was 'more powerful' than the ANC and other black political structures...)

Paula: Being 'unrecognized'...makes them perceive themselves as the less powerful...Of course, it's a relative perception, not an objective reality, and the Georgians would see it differently.

Davin: 14) Your list of 7 lessons learned resonates very nicely with several of my dissertation themes, and will be interesting for me to refer to in the dissertation. I can tell you about how that goes, if we find time, or I could write you about it. (I'm feeling a little guilty about the length of my missive here.)

Appendix H

Complete List of Participants, Partners, Consultants & Colleagues Georgian Regions Project

2000-2002

Georgians and Internationals who participated or were consulted during the Georgian Regions Project

Georgian Government Partners and Participants

Sandro Svanishvili – Georgian State Chancellery – President’s Regional Politics and Management Service
Irakli Brachuli – Chancellery, Regional Politics and Management, head of investigations department
Vladimir Allelishvili – President’s Service for Regional Politics, Samtskhe – Javakheti
Valeri Ramishvili – Chancellery, Regional Politics and Management
Démur Jalagonia, Chancellery, Regional Politics and Management
Irma Chitaladze – Chancellery, President’s service of Regional Politics and Management
Alexander Movesian – Chancellery, Regional Politics and Management
Mamuka Shengelia – State Chancellery, Dept. of Relations with Political Parties and NGOs
Manana Tlashadze – State Chancellery, Dept. of Relations with Political Parties and NGOs
Asmat Lashkhia – Chancellery, Dept. of Relationships with Political Parties and NGOs
Besic Lagvilava – Georgian Parliament, current Chair, Civil Integration Committee
Gela Kvaratskhelia – Georgian Parliament, former Chair, Civil Integration Committee
Eka Abashishvili – Civil Integration Committee
Tina Narsia – Georgian Parliament, Research Department
Levan Abashidze – Georgian Parliament, Research Department
Paata Rekvava - Georgian Parliament
Nino Romashvili – Georgian Parliament, Law Committee
Zaal Gogsadze – Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Samtskhe – Javakhetia Region Partners and Participants

Tsira Meskhishvili – NGO Tolerance, Akhaltsikhe
Amiran Meskheli – Union of Democratic Meskhs, Akhaltsikhe
Marina Gachechiladze – Advisor to President’s Representative, Akhaltsikhe
Niko Inasaridze – Chair, Akhaltsikhe Sakrebulo
Bitzina Maisuradze – Deputy Gamgebeli, Akhaltsikhe
Michael Vardidze – Akhaltsikhe
Ucha Bluashvili – Regional Dept. of Education, Akhaltsikhe

Levon Levanian – Ombudsman’s representative, Akhalkalaki
Tengiz Okroadze – Akhalkalaki Gamgeoba
Azat Chipakchian – Akhalkalaki Gamgeoba
Garik Chipakchian – Akhalkalaki Gamgeoba
Eduard Arasarian – Akhalkalaki Gamgeoba
Dato Meliqidze – Akhalkalaki Gamgeoba
Alexsander Melikidze – Youth Affaris, Akhalkalaki Gamgeoba
Iuza Butskhrikidze – Chair, Aspindza Sakrebulo

Valiko Benidze – Secretary, Aspindza Sakrebulo
Tamaz Zedgenidze – Aspindza Gamgebeli

Zara Mgdesian – Students and Youth Union of Ninotsminda
Suzanna Bedoian – Students and Youth Union of Ninotsminda
Norik Mgdesian – Georgian Border Guard, Ninotsminda
Suren Martirosian – Georgian Border Guard, Ninotsminda
Armen Mgdesian - Ninotsminda
Oganes Bezoian – Ninotsminda Sakrebulo
Norik Ginosian - Ninotsminda
Armen Daruinian – NGO Consumers Union of Samtskhe – Javakheti

Samegrelo Regions Partners and Participants

Lali Kobalia – Public Interest Protection League (PIPL), Zugdidi
Levan Khubulava – PIPL, Zugdidi
Mzevi Jojua – PIPL, Zugdidi
Giorgi Qartania – PIPL, Zugdidi
Bachana Chakhaia – PIPL, Zugdidi
Khatuna Murghulia – PIPL, Zugdidi
Irma Kortua – Director, Vocational Training and Job Centre, (VTJC) Zugdidi
Jambul Nachkebia – Cultural-Educational Centre, and VTJC, Zugdidi
Lasha Kiuti – VTJC, Zugdidi
Beso Janjgava – VTJC, Zugdidi
Emzar Pazhava – NGO Euro-Caucasian Cooperation Association (ECCA),
Zugdidi
Otari Absnadze – Atinati, Zugdidi
Gocha Giorgidze – Deputy President Representative, Imereti
Nino Kakulia – Zugdidi Gamgeoba
Giorgi Chanturia – Zugdidi Gamgeoba
Gocha Kokaia – Association of Disabled Women and Mothers, Zugdidi
Zaza Partsvania – Zugdidi, President's Representative Service
Gogita Mamporia – Zugdidi Branch Georgian Young Lawyers Assoc.
Irakli Amanatidze – Zugdidi
Nino Gulua – Albioni Association – Zugdidi
Vakhtang Antia – Zugdidi District Sakrebulo
Temur Jgushia – Zugdidi Sakrebulo
Madonna Kharebava – Zugdidi Sakrebulo

Gocha Gadua – Poti Youth Alliance (PYA), Poti
Levan Sulaberidze – (PYA), Poti
Kote Topuria – PYA, Poti
Khatia Jalagania – PYA, Poti
Zviad Turkia – PYA, Poti
Nona Khukhua – NGO Dioskuria, Poti
Vano Kukulava – Union of Young IDPs, Poti
Manoni Basilaia – Poti
Goga Moistsrapishvili – Poti
Aleko Gvasalia – Poti Sakrebulo
Lela Kemularia – Poti Youth Department, Mayor's Office
Nona Khukhua – NGO Dioskuria, Poti
Vano Kukulava – Union of Young IDPs, Poti

Manoni Basilaia – Poti
Goga Moistsrapishvili – Poti
Aleko Gvasalia – Poti Sakrebulo
Zviad Turkia – PYA
Schorena Mirtzkhulava – Poti
Khatuna Tzomaia – Poti
Irakli Koridze – Young Lawyers Union, Poti
Berdia Burjandze – Assoc. of Lawyers of Poti
Irma Rurua – Assoc. of Lawyers of Poti
Nona Khukhua – Poti
Mamuka Todua – Poti
Irma Kishmareia – PYA
Akaki Dardjania – Mayor, Poti
Gotha Tugushi – Assistant Mayor, Poti
David Djgerenaia – Sakrebulo, Poti
Koba Tskhadaia – Sakrebulo, Poti
Gaioz Kiknadze – Sakrebulo, Poti
Temur Tzurtzurmia - Sakrebulo, Poti
Archil Kupreishvili – Sakrebulo, Poti
Tea Avalishvili – Poti

Georgian NGOs, Institutions and International NGO Partners and Participants

Tamuna Kvaratskhelia – Mercy Corps
Arnold Stepanian – Multinational Georgia
Guranda Chavchavadze – Multinational Georgia
Marina Pagava – Assist Yourself
Guram Odisharia – Caucasus Dialogue
Tsitsana Odisharia – Caucasus Dialogue
Alan Parastaev - Caucasus NGO Forum
Gia Anchabadze – Caucasus NGO Forum
Paata Zakareishvili – Caucasus NGO Forum
Gia Anchabadze – Caucasus NGO Forum
George Khutsishvili – International Centre for Conflict & Negotiation (ICCN)
Marina Elbakidze – Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development
Tamara Caldani – Young Lawyers Association
Sofiko Shubladze, Partners Georgia
Lia Meliqishvili – Caucasian Institute
Paata Gurgenidze – Caucasian Institute
Anna Tsvinaria – Caucasian House
Anna Abramishvili - Caucasian House
Iago Kachkachishvili - Tbilisi State University
Davit Charkviani - Institute of Psychology
Nino Kvariani – Association of Psychologists and Psychotherapists
Anna Abramishvili - Caucasian House
Giorgi Chkeidze – Young Lawyers Association, Tbilisi
David Berdzenishvili - Political analyst, Tbilisi
David Darchiashvili - Political analyst, Tbilisi
Iago Kachkachishvili - Tbilisi State University
Davit Charkviani - Institute of Psychology

Julia Jacoby – European Commission, (and originally consultant to the Regions Project)

Kate Whyte – Georgia Governance and Civil Society Project (GOCISP)
Patrick Nkugwa – UNV
Julia Kharashvili - UNV
Albertine Smit - UNV
Freya Groote – UNDP/UNV
Volker Jacoby – OSCE
Anna Westerholm – OCSE
Pascale Rouzzy – OSCE
Rexane Rasmussen – International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
Natia Kvitsiani - IOM
Vakhtang Kobaladze – Eurasia Foundation
David Magradze – IRIS
Kote Vardzelashvili – British Council
Manana Gabashvili – Norwegian Refugee Council
Kate Johnson – USAID
Dali Khomeriki – USA Embassy
Kirsten Weiss – FINCA
Gogi Matiashevili – FINCA
Nino Saakashvili – Horizonti Foundation

FDHR Partners, and other special consultants and participants

Nodar Sarjveladze – Foundation for Development of Human Resources (FDHR)
Jana Javakhishvili – FDHR
Amiran Dolidze - FDHR
Liana Sarjveladze – FDHR
Irakli Kakabadze – Peace Times Magazine and ICCN
Tina Asatiani - ICCN
Gogi Geguchadze – professional interpreter
Zviad Mirgatia – Georgian Parliament and professional interpreter

Ambassador Deborah Barnes-Jones, UK Ambassador to Georgia
Lali Meskhi – DFID representative in Georgia, supervising the Georgian Regions Project
Stefan Mnisko – DFID consultant in the Caucasus

Gevork Ter-Gabrielian - Eurasia Programme Manager, International Alert
Martin Honeywell - Deputy Secretary General, International Alert
Vanessa Muir-Smith - Project Officer, Eurasia Programme, International Alert
Davin Bremner - Georgian Regions Project Manager - International Alert

Appendix I

Problems to be solved

Samtskhe - Javakheti Analysis Workshop

April 2001

Georgian Regions Project
Samtskhe-Javakheti Problem Solving Research Workshops
Likani Workshop #1, April 2001

During the first analysis workshop in Likani, we identified many issues and problems that need to be addressed by leaders from the center and the region working together.

There are issues related to the future of the Russian base in Akhaltsikhe:

- 18) Sense of security for local population
- 19) Employment at the base
- 20) Other base-related economic activity
- 21) Currency issues - use of rubles and availability of laris
- 22) Criminalized economic activities

There are issues of Georgian citizenship:

- 23) State language policies
- 7) Provision of identity documents and other administrative issues
- 8) Concerns about security forces (police and Georgian army)

There are information and communication issues:

- 9) Lack of mass media - TV, radio, print media
- 10) Lack of knowledge of human, legal, and citizenship rights
- 11) Inadequate information for problem solving
- 12) Rumours and fears
- 13) Informational isolation
- 14) Inadequate NGO collaboration

There are economic issues and challenges:

- 15) Lack of economic infrastructure - roads and electricity
- 16) Unemployment
- 17) Lack of investment
- 18) Economic migration

There are local governance issues:

- 19) Non-transparent decision making
- 20) Questions about legitimacy of local representation
- 21) Lack of consultation in policy making
- 22) Uncertain and unclear election legislation
- 23) Undefined competencies
- 24) Inadequate management skills

There are education issues:

- 25) Lack of higher education opportunities
- 26) Lack of educational materials and resources
- 27) Education migration

There are issues of ethnic and national identity:

- 28) Physical, social, and psychological isolation
- 29) Future policies concerning Meskhetians
- 30) Language issues and policies
- 31) Lack of intergroup tolerance and understanding
- 32) Perceived economic and political bias

There are problems of corruption:

- 33) Security
- 34) Small, individual, daily life corruption
- 35) Large, criminal and structural corruption

There are health concerns:

- 36) Inadequate human health care
- 37) Environmental concerns

Appendix J

Needs Analysis

Samtskhe - Javakheti Analysis Workshop

April 2001

Georgian Regions Project
Samtskhe-Javakhetia Problem Solving Research Workshops
Likani Workshop #1, April 2001

During the first Likani workshop, we introduced the human needs analytical framework for organizing and thinking about problems and issues that impact the relationship between the region and the center.

We discussed 5 categories of human needs: security needs, identity needs, understanding needs, participation needs, and economic development needs. If we take all the issues and problems that were identified during the workshop, and group them according to these needs, we get these lists:

The security needs of people in the region (and the entire Georgian state, in some instances) are not always satisfied, because of these structural problems:

- 1) Criminalized economic activity
- 2) Lack of confidence in security forces
- 3) Lack of knowledge of human and legal rights
- 4) Rumours and fears
- 5) Informational isolation
- 6) Unemployment
- 7) Geographic (and ethnic) isolation
- 8) Meskhetians
- 9) Lack of ethnic / national understanding and tolerance
- 10) Corruption
- 11) Lack of adequate health care
- 12) Environmental concerns

The identity needs of people in the region go unsatisfied because of:

- 1) Informational and geographic isolation
- 2) Economic and educational migration
- 3) Local governance frustrations
- 4) Ethnic / national policies (Meskhetians)
- 5) Language policies
- 6) Lack of ethnic / national understanding and tolerance
- 7) Corruption

The satisfaction of understanding needs of people in the region is challenged by:

- 1) Lack of resources and successful policies for learning state language
- 2) Lack of mass media resources
- 3) Inadequate information for problem solving
- 4) Non-transparency in local governance
- 5) Inadequate management skills
- 6) Lack of educational resources and materials

7) Education migration

Participation needs sometimes go unsatisfied because of these issues:

- 1) Inefficiency of local administration
- 2) Lack of mass media
- 3) Lack of knowledge of human, legal, and citizenship rights
- 4) Inadequate information for problem solving
- 5) Lack of effective NGO cooperation
- 6) Inadequate consultation by local governance structures
- 7) Legitimacy issues in local representation
- 8) Non-transparency in local governance
- 9) Undefined competencies
- 10) Lack of higher education opportunities
- 11) Isolation
- 12) Perceived economic and political bias

Finally, the economic and development needs satisfaction are threatened:

- 1) Jobs and other economic opportunities depend on the Russian base
- 2) Monetary and currency availability and policies
- 3) Lack of economic infrastructure - roads and electricity
- 4) Unemployment
- 5) Lack of investment
- 6) Economic migration
- 7) Lack of education opportunities
- 8) Corruption

Appendix K

Regions Project Analysis Workshops Reports to Participants

May 2001

**Georgian Regions Project
Samtskhe - Javakheti Problem Solving Research Workshop
Report - Analysis Workshop - May 2001**

Introduction

The first Problem Solving Research Workshop for Samtskhe-Javakheti was held in Likani April 18-21. Participants represented NGOs, local authorities, the Georgian State Chancellery and Georgian Parliament.

The workshop was convened by the Georgian Regions Project of International Alert (IA), and the Foundation for Development of Human Resources (FDHR). The following week a similar workshop was held for the Samegrelo region. Each region will have a series of three workshops, and an 'integration' event in Tbilisi between the 2nd and 3rd events in the regions.

The Research Agenda

The workshop was designed to encourage the participants to act as both experts, and researchers. Rather than simply giving known information to external researchers, this 'action research' activity allows the participants to create new information, through dialogue.

The facilitators introduced 'human needs theory' as a conceptual framework for structuring the analysis and organizing the information. This framework asks researchers to consider whether or not certain human needs such as 'identity', 'security', and 'participation' are being satisfied or frustrated.

Experiences and Perspectives

A day was given to participants sharing their perspectives, opinions and experiences of problems and challenges facing the region. It seemed clear that it was a unique opportunity to have free and open dialogue between representatives from both the center, the regions, and both governmental and NGO structures. The second day's work used the needs concept and deepened the analysis.

Emerging Workshop Themes

As the workshop progressed, there were many, many issues identified. Some of them were clearly 'symptoms' of deeper problems, and some issues could be easily described as 'root causes'. Most of the issues that were raised could be related to one or more of several emerging themes:

Information and Communication Issues - People in the region experience frustration because of inadequate resources for gaining quality information about the activities, plans, and policies of the State. This is linked to a lack of regular, transparent, and constructive communication at many social levels.

Regional Isolation - Physical, economic, and psychological isolation of the region is both a cause and a result of poor information and communication. The lack of economic infrastructure, such as roads and electricity contribute to the sense of isolation from the center.

Painful Experiences - The relative isolation of the region is 'painful' for both the residents and the State. There are many other issues and specific experiences that workshop participants refer to as painful.

Unsuccessful solutions - The workshop heard several examples of unsuccessful, or 'short-cut' solutions to serious problems. A Georgian language learning program with teachers who could not speak Georgian was one example. The original creation (and elections) of Sakrebulo, as a structure of local governance has been described this way. It was noted that repeated experiences of unsuccessful problem solving undermines trust, legitimacy, and can even be considered 'provocative'.

Fragilities and Risks - Participants expressed concerns and fears about perceived 'fragility' of the region (and sometimes other regions as well), and there were often risky or dangerous metaphors expressed, such as the existence of 'detonators' in the political and social environment.

Rights and Responsibilities - Participants from the center often refer to the responsibilities of Georgian citizenship, particularly with reference to the use of the state language. Participants from the region often speak in terms of protection of their rights, particularly cultural and economic. It seems possible that if rights and responsibilities can be brought into balance, a framework for rights, responsibilities, and opportunities, could be established as the basis of a problem solving framework.

Common Language - In addition to the complexities of language policy, the participants expressed their desire for a metaphorical 'common language' to be used in problem solving. There are at least two possible options or frameworks. The first could be created from the rights - responsibilities - opportunities theme; the second comes from the human needs framework offered and used by the facilitators.

Needs Analysis

Expressing the themes above, and some of the specific problem issues discussed during the workshop, in terms of human needs creates the following

analysis:

People have 'participation' and 'understanding' needs. Those needs are sometimes satisfied through transparent and open local governance structures, where people participate directly, or through legitimate representatives. They require information that is timely, credible, accessible, affordable, and relevant. Receiving this information requires social structures for communicating back and forth between the sources of quality information, and its users. The existing structures, institutions, or processes for communicating relevant quality information between Samtskhe-Javakheti and the State are either missing, or not operating successfully at this point in time. Therefore, the participation and understanding needs at both ends of the metaphorical 'information highway' are unsatisfied. This situation contributes to instability and fragility.

People have identity needs, and these needs can be expressed at different levels. There are ethnic and cultural identities, on one hand, and State, or political identities on the other. The satisfiers of these different needs will be different, although the expressions can be complementary. In Samtskhe-Javakheti, the many forms of isolation mentioned above create various obstacles to the satisfaction of the 'Georgian citizen' identity. The lack of access to the national currency in some communities, the difficulty in obtaining ID documents, the lack of resources for learning the state language - these things may prevent people from satisfying their identity needs by embracing the political identity of Georgian citizens.

People have security and subsistence needs. People make a connection between protection of their rights, and their sense of security. When people experience the security forces of the state (police and military) as instruments of corruption or coercion, they feel insecure. If they cannot conduct even the most simple and basic economic transactions, their subsistence needs are at risk. In these circumstances people will develop their own strategies for security, which may be contrary to the laws or social norms of the society.

Without simplifying the complex problems and issues that confront the regions and the State, one way to analyse especially the root causes of problems, is to try to understand how existing social structures and institutions are not successfully helping people satisfy these basic needs. This method was discussed and used during the workshop.

Looking Towards Problem Solving

During the workshop, a diagram was used to indicate a step by step process for problem solving. The first phase is 'identifying the problems and issues'. The second step is 'analysis'. The third step is 'creating possible options for resolution', and the final step is 'action planning'.

At the upcoming workshop at Likani, starting on May 30th, we will work to imagine and create scenarios that would address some of the problems that have been analysed. We will be looking for new ideas and new ways that identity, security, subsistence, participation, and understanding needs can be satisfied in the regions, by having the State and the communities working together. For example:

1) Can we imagine a structure or a process for improving the consistency and the quality of communication and cooperation between the sakrebulo and the gamgebelis?

2) Can we create ideas for promoting interest and commitment to learning the state language, and plans or projects for responding to the growing interest?

3) What can the communities and the state do together, to reduce the impact of fears and fragilities, and perhaps to address some of the 'pain' of difficult issues?

4) Is there any way to make communities feel more secure, and less vulnerable to the problem of corruption, even while it is being addressed at the national level?

At the workshop, we will work from the analysis we've done, to create a set of questions like the ones above, and then begin 'brainstorming' about them. Just as we worked to be patient and thorough with the analysis task, we will try to not jump ahead to 'action planning', but instead do a complete and thorough job of being creative and collaborative, in discussing options and opportunities.

Participants can prepare for the workshop by reviewing their notes from the first event, and thinking carefully about the differences between the 'symptoms', and the 'root causes'. We need to have ideas about what issues can be addressed by those of us working together, and which issues are not appropriate or accessible for this working group. Finally, participants should share information about this process, and communicate with their colleagues and friends, and come prepared for another interesting and challenging three days of work.

**Georgian Regions Project
Samegrelo Problem Solving Research Workshop
Report - Analysis Workshop - May 2001**

Introduction

The first Problem Solving Research Workshop for Samegrelo was held in Kutaisi April 25-28. Participants represented NGOs and local authorities from Poti and Zugdidi, the Georgian State Chancellery and Georgian Parliament.

The workshop was convened by the Georgian Regions Project of International Alert (IA) and the Foundation for Development of Human Resources (FDHR). The previous week a similar workshop was held for the Samtskhe-Javakheti region. Each region will have a series of three workshops and an 'integration' event in Tbilisi between the 2nd and 3rd events in the regions.

The Research Agenda

The workshop was designed to encourage the participants to act as both experts and researchers. Rather than simply giving known information to external researchers, this 'action research' activity allows the participants to create new information through dialogue.

The facilitators introduced 'human needs theory' as a conceptual framework for structuring the analysis and organizing the information. This framework asks researchers to consider whether or not certain human needs such as 'identity', 'security', and 'participation' are being satisfied or frustrated.

Experiences and Perspectives

The first day was spent with participants sharing their perspectives, opinions and experiences of problems and challenges facing the region. This was a unique opportunity to have free and open dialogue between representatives from the center, the regions, and both governmental and NGO structures. The second day's work used the human needs concept to deepen the analysis.

Emerging Workshop Themes

As the workshop progressed many issues and problems were identified. Some of them were 'symptoms' of deeper problems. Other themes point to 'root causes'. Most of the specific issues that were raised are related to one or more of these emerging themes:

Economic concerns - Much of the region is deeply affected by poverty. The difficulties of having the border with Abkhazia, which creates an economic and

transportation 'dead end', and the problems of IDPs complicate the economic situation. There is no indication of how the State will be able to support or administer sustainable development, until the issues with Abkhazia are resolved. In addition, taxation structures are inadequate and financial corruption discourages investment.

Local Governance issues - It is difficult for the local authorities, both appointed and elected, to administer in the region effectively, because of the incomplete legislation on competencies and inadequate resources. This also makes it more difficult for NGOs and people to have and share information from the 'center'.

Security issues - The management of the conflict with Abkhazia has left the region with various security challenges. There is economic criminality, militia activities, lack of competent policing, and problems with the peacekeeping forces. Insecurity is physical, economic, and psychological. It is also a problem that the region does not play enough of a role in managing the conflict.

National 'unity' and 'ideology' - People in the region feel strongly the frustrating lack of progress in 'nation building' in the 10 years since independence. The frozen conflicts, the lack of 'vision' in economics, and progress in building successful, transparent, legitimate local governance structures contributes to the economic and security issues.

Needs Analysis

Discussing the themes above, and some of the specific problems and issues identified in the workshop in terms of human needs suggests the following analysis:

People have subsistence and development needs. Poverty and economic insecurity prevent meaningful participation in local governance or the project of nation building. Some will feel it necessary to engage in alternative, or criminal economic activities in order to survive. The existing education, economic, and social welfare structures in Samegrelo are not currently able to address the challenges of poverty, or the problems faced by specific groups, especially IDPs.

People have participation needs. Confusion over competencies and competition between authorities for power and influence prevent transparency and effective communication between people and local authorities. The many NGOs in the Samegrelo region are a positive resource for people, but the lack of coordination and communication between NGOs and local authorities prevents effective and satisfying participation. It is particularly difficult for some people that there are not enough local initiatives relevant to the management of the conflict with Abkhazia.

People have security needs. In order to fulfill their responsibilities as citizens, they need to feel that their human and civil rights are being protected. Without professional and accountable security forces, people may do whatever they can to secure themselves, physically and economically. This is a root cause of much of the corruption and criminality that frustrates the Samegrelo region.

People have understanding needs. Without adequate education, and without quality information coming from the center, people do not have enough understanding of the political and social situation that confronts them in the region. Again, the activities of NGOs contribute to wider understanding, but more needs to be done.

The first level of analysis is to identify all the complex issues and problems. The needs analysis goes to a deeper level, to understand how existing social structures are failing to satisfy these basic needs. Unsatisfied needs for security, understanding, and participation can be thought of as the 'root causes' of many of the existing problems.

Looking Towards Problem Solving

During the workshop, a diagram was used to indicate a step by step process for problem solving. The first phase is 'identifying the problems and issues'. The second step is 'analysis'. The third step is 'creating possible options for resolution', and the final step is 'action planning'.

At the next workshop, starting June 6th, we will work to imagine and create scenarios that would address some of the problems that have been analysed. We will be looking for new ideas and new ways that subsistence, security, development, participation, and understanding needs can be satisfied in the region. For example:

1) Can we imagine a structure or process for improving the consistency and the quality of communication and cooperation between NGOs and the local authorities?

2) Could there be regional initiatives that contribute to managing the conflict with Abkhazia, and reduce local insecurities?

3) What negotiation process could be created to improve the financial transactions between the region and the State, so that less funds are lost through inefficiency or corruption, and more funds are available for development and social welfare?

At the workshop, we will work from the analysis we've done, to create a set of questions like ones above, and then begin 'brainstorming' about them. Just as we worked to be patient and thorough with the analysis task, we will try to not jump

ahead to 'action planning', but instead to do a complete and thorough job of being creative and collaborative, in discussing options and opportunities.

Participants can prepare for the workshop by reviewing their notes from the first event, and thinking carefully about the differences between the 'symptoms' and the 'root causes'. We need to have ideas about what issues can be addressed by those of us working together, and which issues are not appropriate or accessible for this working group. Finally, participants should share information about this process and communicate with their colleagues and friends, and come prepared for another interesting and challenging three days of work.

Appendix L

**Interviews Summaries - FDHR Facilitation Team
Nodar Sarjveladze and Jana Javakhishvili
Reflections on the Research Workshops**

February 2004

Dissertation Interview Summary - with Nodar Sarjveladze
Problem Solving Research Workshops - Georgian Regions Project
Tbilisi - February 2004

This summary is not a transcription, but an account of the conversation I had with Nodar Sarjveladze about the Georgian Regions Project, and the themes that I will address in the dissertation.

We started by my asking Nodar to 'tell the story' about how IA and FDHR got together on the project, since that wasn't actually part of the original design, when the project was conceived and funded by DFID. I was interested in Nodar's motivation to participate in the project.

Nodar: Firstly there was the presentation of the project to IA's 'braintrust' in Tbilisi, in the spring of 2000, the so-called intellectuals meeting. I found the human needs methodology very interesting to me. After that, Gevorg recruited me and FDHR to work within the project to create the resource center. (Which was conceived of as part of the capacity / confidence bldg stream of activities, not as part of the problem solving research workshops - note by Davin)...

Creation of the information center was the first activity for FDHR in the Regions Project. This research over 3 months became good preparation for thinking about these regions, which was a new focus for FDHR. It was useful for us, as much of the information was previously unknown to me. During that time, you gave me the Max-Neef book, and we had our discussions that led to our collaboration.

At first, the entire FDHR team was unclear about the purpose of the project, and unfamiliar with the framework(s) ... needs theory and problem solving.

We did some initial designing...about how many workshops in each region, and the integration meeting, etc. Then, you invited me to London to participate in the designing event. This was an important phase in the project, because during the 3-4 days I spent in London, we really advanced, or elaborated the project. We made plans and agreements, we reached consensus on certain issues, about the style of the workshops, and facilitation. We created the plan about action researchers, and the problem solving framework. I returned back to Georgia, and explained the project to the FDHR team.

Nodar: I remember now the dynamics. Amiran defined his position as 'logistical' and 'nothing else'. Jana also defined her position, as just a facilitator and nothing else. Because people were feeling unclear about the project and the purpose. So people were limiting their commitments.

Davin: So, initially, there wasn't much sense of 'ownership' from the other FDHR team members.

Nodar: Yes. Until the first workshops with the Samtskhe-Javakheti people, with the introductions and story telling. I remember from the first workshop, when we

left the room, and you showed me the watch. It was very important to you that we were just on time, and I thought to myself, oh, 'time' is very important to Davin. But later, of course, this kind of timing was less important, but still the work was very structured.

Nodar: Initially, it was sometimes frustrating to Jana, the attempt to find her own role in the project. During the 'common language' exercise, she was frustrated by the recording role. Of course, later on she was completely involved in the facilitation process.

Davin: My conclusion from this part of the story is that we went through a team building and trust building process...and learned how to cooperate, and this was essential to the process of the FDHR team finding their sense of ownership in the project.

Nodar: The second workshop, in Samegrelo, had different dynamics. Because the participants brought some different perspectives, we decided to do the prioritization exercise into the process, that we hadn't used in Likani. You were resistant to this, and I remember being surprised by your reluctance to do this. I didn't understand what was wrong with the prioritization activity.

It was during this time that I went away to Gevork's event, and when I came back you and Jana had changed the design and taken the prioritization exercise out of the event, and I had a suspicion that you and Jana had agreed to take it out. (We're all laughing at this recollection.)

Davin: In the dissertation, the way I'm writing it now...my perception is that there were two reasons why we sometimes came to those points of disagreement. Firstly, that we never had enough time to fully prepare...for example, we lost time when you went off to Gevork's event. Secondly, I'll write about the 'ownership' of the project, because that point came when we disagreed; that I would 'give' the ownership to FDHR and the Georgians...so there was more than one time when I didn't want to do it the way you wanted to do it, but I think I usually gave in, and said that I trust your instinct, your judgement, your innovation...and it's 'yours' to decide.

Paula has a different way that she ensures the ownership, through the action evaluation methodology.

Nodar: The integration event was important and significant. I think that this event was the peak of our success, if we make a chart or diagram. There was important sharing and discussions. This 'inter-regional' direction was a critical moment. We could develop or redesign the project with an inter-regional focus.

It was an important experience for me, working with all the people, when we were developing the joint projects for donors. But, maybe when we met with the donors, we weren't working at the right level, or we needed some better public relations.

The presentations weren't really too good, and we needed more time to prepare for these.

Davin: Thanks for that story. Let's go back a little bit, to the original meeting with the intellectuals/braintrust. Some people in that meeting were very critical. Why do you think they were so critical? I remember that some people there were interested in some version of ownership, of maybe 'taking over' the project.

Nodar: The presentation was okay. Most of the people there were actively participating. But maybe the presentation wasn't so obvious. You somehow challenged the intellectuals with something that they weren't familiar with, or they thought that you were trying to get something from them. Some people also simply challenged the idea that you wanted to make an intervention into our country. Their attitude was that 'we are the experts, and fully understand all these issues, and you an outsider...what do you know about our society'.

Davin: So...was their attitude about conflict avoidance? What do you think about 'Georgian conflict avoidance'. Even in London we had to talk about denying the conflict in the regions...and only talk about problem solving. Jonathan's project as a 'cover story'. We were told we had to have a 'cover story'...Paula's project doesn't have a cover story. We did need to have a cover story. And you're saying that in that meeting, people were denying that there were problems, or that we could address them. I think there's been a lot of conflict avoidance in this project, but what do you think?

Nodar: I don't agree about this. We had conversations about detonator issues through this project.

Davin: And then we avoided them.

Nodar: No, we talked about the military bases. We had conversations about the difficult issues. I remember, that sometimes during the workshops, we agreed with participants that maybe it was better to avoid discussion of painful issues...but there were 'acute' discussions between some people in some of the small working groups.

Nodar feels that in general, we didn't really suffer from conflict avoidance.

(At this point the recording ended, with the machine full...and the conversation went on with me taking notes...)

Davin: So how about our struggles to get the 'right people'. Why was this so difficult.

Nodar: It's been demonstrated that we had the right NGO people. We can see now that many of our participants have moved on into important positions...Amiran, Emzhar, Levon, Tsira, Gocha...are all now working in their

communities, or even in the government. We did a good job of working with the right NGO people.

We also got the right people at the Chancellery, and that was demonstrated by the way in which they became partners with us, and worked diligently to support us.

We failed in the parliament, and we missed the local authorities, to get the right people. With the local authorities, the rules and legislation are changing now, the structures are changing, and maybe it would be more possible now to get the right people. Maybe there weren't really many or any of the right people when we began.

Davin: We still struggle with the basic CR assumption that the people want to solve the problem at hand. If they aren't motivated to solve the problem, then they either don't participate, or they don't support the project. So our problem getting the right people from local governance structures, or the centre, reflected on the existing dysfunctional structures.

I need to come to grips with the relationship between the 'right people' in the abstract, who represent particular structures, and the problem of what motivates the people w/in structures, if they don't really care about solving the problem, or even benefit from it. Then they are irrelevant, or symbolic of endemic corruption.

Davin: What do you think about how successfully we were able to internalize the human needs framework?

Nodar: Perhaps, in the end, we didn't spend enough time with it. We really presented it to the workshop in just a couple of hours, and then asked people to work with the framework. Max-Neef's workshop methodology might be more successful as it is more focussed, and conducted over a longer time. Next time we should do a special workshop on needs theory, or some explicit needs theory education.

The November needs seminar was a good example of presenting the framework differently. We had two entire days, and the work was very successful. This could be a model for future work with the framework.

Davin: Well, half the people at the seminar were participants from our workshops, who were now familiar with the framework.

Maybe a problem was that I confused people with the framework. Perhaps I confused the 'tool' for analysis, with the philosophy and my desire to have people realize a paradigm shift...(the 'aha').

If we are going to use the matrix as an analytical tool, then it should be presented as that, and there should be more in depth training.

Nodar: We would benefit from doing more education on the theory, and to incorporate more fully an acknowledged educational component. We could redesign the project with more activities in the style of the seminar. (Which Nodar characterised as 'business style'...)

(As I discussed a little bit with Jana however...this is not a motivation for the 'right people', who regard themselves as intellectuals, and are not interested in the training element of problem solving.)

Would this be problem solving without the 'workshop'?

About the sustainability of the project...Nodar agrees with me, and Jana, that our work was completely sustainable, but that we had bad luck with the donors. He makes the point that Paula's project has the concrete outcome of the published books, which are always then available to demonstrate to the donors the work that was accomplished. We lacked such as 'product'.

Davin: How successfully did people accept the 'action researcher' role?

Nodar: Some people did accept the role of researcher successfully and credibly. Some other people were more 'passive'.

Davin: So, would one way to define the 'right people', from the action research perspective, be then to select people able and willing to pickup the 'research role'?

In any case, the right people need to be those with the capacity to achieve full understanding of the frameworks.

Nodar: Maybe we would recruit by meeting each person separately. What failed was depending on other people to recruit for the project who clearly did not fully understand the project themselves. (Which relates back to limited time and resources).

Davin: We had a pretty positive team experience, and our team was a 'safe space'. How do you think we created that?

Nodar: There were several components. Firstly, because FDHR was also acting as project coordinators, which was a good role. Secondly, we had quality partnerships, institutionally. Thirdly, we developed a high degree of interpersonal compatibility, which was very important, maybe more important than the time we spent in formal planning. This gave us trust, and we managed to create a trusting, dynamic team culture (that benefited from our mutual fondness for whiskey.)

Our team 'culture' included 'emotional unity', enthusiasm, clear structures, quality planning process...

If we had a lack, it was that time limited our opportunities to be creative.

This was the end of our conversation. I thanked Nodar for all of his contributions and enthusiasm for the project and our partnership.

Interview Summary - with Jana Javakhishvili
Problem Solving Research Workshops - Georgian Regions Project
Tbilisi - February 2004

We started the conversation with me reviewing the 'themes' that I'm hoping to discuss in the dissertation: 1) right people; 2) making frameworks explicit; 3) facilitation teams - insiders/outside; 4) action research as an intervention strategy; 5) intervention sustainability; 6) time pressures and limitations; 7) 'open-space'; 8) conflict avoidance behavior; 9) grass roots work; 10) internalizing conceptual frameworks; 11) workshop behavior.

Having listed these themes, we then started discussing the project, with questions that I had drafted based more or less on those themes.

The first question we tackled directly was about 'ownership', and who did Jana feel had the ownership of the project.

Jana: The process of ownership was dynamic, and changed through time. Ownership increases both within the facilitation team, and then within participants, as 1) understanding of the process, and then a sense of purpose and 'role' is developed. In the beginning, both understanding and commitment (purpose and role) was lacking for everyone. But as these things increased, then ownership develops.

Our team meetings and process were helpful in developing the facilitation team's sense of ownership. Our structured 'reflection' on the process was important.

I asked about whether Jana's sense of ownership was personal, institutional, or national. She thinks that all these levels were relevant.

Jana thinks that the Samtskhe-Javakhetia group was more outcome/product oriented, and that the Samegrelo participants were more process oriented. So ownership was easier to develop in Samegrelo, because they were more comfortable with the process, and it was more difficult in Samtskhe-Javakhetia.

Ownership equals understanding + contribution (purpose and role). Those people who realize a greater opportunity to make a contribution have a greater sense of ownership. (Therefore, our guidelines about shared responsibility for process and outcome are a mechanism for creating/improving perceived ownership.)

At this point we talked about 'understanding' and how it happens, with me relating the frustration in Zugdidi with people understanding the project and its purposes. (The Emzhaar story).

Jana: Information has to come to people in 'waves'. It has to come over and over again, and each time a little more stays or sticks. The people will never really understand the project after one presentation or two meetings. Repetition. (Especially the western methodology, she says.) Our orientation process was not 'experiential learning'. The workshops themselves were...even if they weren't designed as training. Jana says: 'Whenever you are starting to experience something, you understand it'. If you just have information about it, then it's just 'about', it's not understanding.

Jana: The methodology was very experiential, and it was impossible to understand before you started it.

(Okay, but impossible to understand what it was going to be about? Conflict prevention? Center and regions?...)

Jana: For the Samtskhe-Javakhetia people, it was the action planning workshop (creating the project bank) that created the sense of ownership for them. On the chancellery team, Irakli was always interested. The institutionalization of our relationship with them, through one of the joint projects was important to them and fostered their sense of ownership.

Davin: In the dissertation, I'm going to claim that I 'gave' ownership to the FDHR team at certain moments, or with respect to differences of opinion, because I felt that you were the Georgians, and that the project belonged to you first. Do you believe that, can you remember a time, is that credible?

Jana: Yes, I think you were always willing to compromise or find a common point, and to let the ownership be with us as the local partners.

Davin: okay, moving on...about internalizing the human needs framework. How do you think it happened for the participants? Did it? If we did it again, would we continue to make it explicit, or would we keep it internally, inside us, in the background.

Jana: No, we should make it more explicit, and repeat it. I think we learned that people can understand, and that people can share this framework and operate inside of it. Especially after November's conference.

There will always be people who do not understand. There will always be a percentage.

Davin: what about language (english/interpretation); maybe the time was really too short? Not enough days. Not enough materials in their own language (handouts). Maybe we shouldn't have simplified the matrix? Or simplified it more?

Jana: My opinion is that maybe if we would repeat the message in each workshop, as I mentioned the repeated waves before, then it would be more clear. It always makes sense to repeat. Of course, handouts would be helpful...

Davin - so, through the course of the project, we created materials and gained experience that we could use next time.

Jana - Sure. We just didn't have time the first time.

Davin: so - repetition, waves, more time...the language isn't an issue?

Jana: No, language wasn't a problem. We needed more repetition.

Davin - So, it's one of the costs of not having enough time. With more time, we could have prepared more materials, we could have done more repetition. Now, our purpose was not supposed to be training. We told them it wouldn't be.

Since we didn't get the funds to continue the work, and the joint projects weren't realized, then maybe our significant outcome was in fact learning? People definitely feel that they learned during the project, and education is one outcome of problem solving workshops according to Mark Hoffman's evaluation framework.

Davin: Let's talk about conflict avoidance. The question I wrote was about 'Georgian conflict avoidance, and how did this affect our workshops and outcomes? Was it realistic / unrealistic to expect to transcend this? Was this a flawed initial assumption of the project? About painful issues, detonator issues, the risk of 'causing' conflict.

Jana: I think this was about time. If we had more time, we could have had time to address 'detonator issues'. It would have been impossible to work on all the detonator issues that we touched on, and it could be dangerous to raise them and then not work through them. Maybe 4 workshops should be devoted to any difficult issue, like the Russian military base.

We did address overcoming stereotypes, and addressing ethnic differences. But other issues would have taken more time.

Davin: my impression is that we let the participants deal with less conflictual issues, rather than the detonator issues, because that was their desire...but that this was also an expression of conflict avoidance. Sure, they also went towards the projects where they themselves could get an economic opportunity.

Jana: Maybe their perception is that economic issues should come first, before dealing with the more difficult issues.

Davin: Or, it's more about who they think are the right people that will actually resolve these larger more dangerous issues. They don't see themselves as relevant to those processes, which are more geopolitical.

Davin: Then, it takes us to the issue about who are the right people, and why is it so hard to get them to participate? (I read the list of several strategies we had...).

Claim: in the end, we didn't have the right people.

Jana: The main thing is to have 'influential' persons, right? (Davin - they don't come...) We were always talking about motivation.

Davin: But if they are the right people for solving the problems, if that's their responsibility, then shouldn't that be their motivation?

Jana: I don't think so. It should be. But, in the last 15 years in Georgia, the state hasn't had the right people who think about their official responsibilities first. The people in those positions have only been oriented towards their own benefits. That's been the 'style' in Georgia. So, if the basic assumption is that they 'should' be motivated by their responsibilities...this is 'naive'. Even Shevardnadze was selfish, while he ran the country, and his clan owned everything in the country.

We didn't find the right motivation for the right persons to participate. We need more brainstorming, to find a creative way to motivate the right persons.

These people who had positions (local authorities), who were not really responsible, but only interested in seeking their own benefits, prefer to be invisible. Why should they show themselves? If I am the gamgebelli of Akhaltsikhe, and if I am corrupt, and I'm making money from everything, making some illegal agreements...I try to be invisible.

Once the Chancellery guys became stakeholders (in the joint project), then they had some more success in convening the right people.

Davin: So, through 'evolution', and more time, and trial and error, we would have had more luck at (finally) getting the right people. That's going to be difficult to explain to donors, and difficult to design for. You can't get the right people through trial and error, inviting different people until some stay and some go and eventually you end up with some of the right people.

Davin: So what about the assumption that NGO people need to be represented, civil society needs to be represented, women need to be represented. We need more theory than that 'influential' people are the right people.

Jana: NGO people will always participate. Women will participate. But the 'invisible' people, who don't want to show themselves. To get these people to participate, we need some influential convener, to motivate them through relationships. We can't motivate them by money, so we need to motivate them through personal relationships.

Davin: So do we have to resolve the corruption problem first, in order to then have legitimate 'right people', to involve in solving other problems?

Jana: You can think about it as 'harm reduction' in the sense of drug addiction. You don't want to feed the addiction (corruption), but you can still give people some opportunity to do some positive things by participating in other processes.

Davin: How do you think that time pressures and time limits impacted our work?

Jana: One limitation was that we ended up working on small problems, small projects (micro projects), instead of some of the other bigger issues.

Davin: So, ideally, we would have more time and more activities. What about during the work we did and workshops we conducted.?

Jana: During the 8 months of the workshops, we made pretty good use of our time, and did a credible amount of planning, reflecting, etc.

Davin: I think that when we had surprises and misunderstandings, it usually happened as a result of not enough time for thorough planning. We ran out of time.

Jana: I disagree. I think our improvising style is natural and usually happens in the work we do. Nodar did much of the facilitation leading in the workshops, and his style is to be intuitive and improvise. Do you think it was destructive?

Davin: Sure, there were times I didn't like the improvisations that we ended up with. I think that often we hadn't had enough time to properly plan, and we had to depend on someone to come up with an improvisation. Remember when Nodar had to go off w/ Gevork, and we planned part of a design, but you and I then weren't happy with it. So we tried to redesign it, but without Nodar. Then once we got to the workshop, we told Nodar about the new design, but we didn't have time to discuss it. That whole workshop didn't go so well, because we ran out of good team time. And, on any evening when we could be reflecting on the day, or maybe it's just time for dinner, and we run out of time.

Jana: It might be.

Davin: We did have a team trust in people's ability to improvise. And usually that went fine. Anyway, what I heard you say was that for the amount of activity we had, we did spend credible, productive team time in preparation and reflection.

Davin: How about any gender based perceptions. From your own perspective, or from the perspective of the participants.

Jana: Early on, some of the participants didn't respect me as much as the 'men'... sometimes I felt myself as though I was an assistant. But it wasn't so much because you or Nodar treated me as a 'woman', but about my confidence in the project.

Davin: There was Eka, Tsira, several other women in the project. Was there anything, from a woman's perspective, about the project, that was problematic.

Jana: No, the women were participating very well, and there was nothing regarding gender that was a problem.

We talked a little bit about the gender perspective on needs satisfaction. Are there different satisfiers for men and women, as there are different satisfiers in Zulu or French culture, or christian and islamic culture?

Jana: Interesting idea. I think there should be or could be differences.

Davin: Anything else about the project? Things I didn't ask you. Other impressions that you have?

Jana: I think we maybe needed twice as much time to do everything. If we did the workshops in 8 months, I think maybe we needed a year and a half. Everything was developing in all the right ways. We just ran out of time and money. The project was very constructive and creative. The project had much more potential than the donors gave us a chance to realize.

Davin: My frustration is that more time and slow evolutionary development is more of a development process/project. I'm trying to learn whether we can use this methodology and pick a difficult problem, and sit down and resolve it. Can't we work through the Russian military base, or the Meskhetian return issue...in weeks or months, rather than a years long effort?

Jana: Those issues require a larger scale and different people.

Davin: Sure, I understand. But if we had the right people, and we went through the problem solving cycle...? The question is still, is this an appropriate process, with needs theory and the research workshops, and the right people, to resolve conflicts?

I don't know why we have to do it as development work over years and years.

Jana: Okay...but maybe that's a new concept and different project. Short time frame, and high level participants. And some of the conflicts you are talking about need to be addressed on an inter-governmental level, not on an NGO level. If you want to work on those things, then the British gov't has to approach the Georgian gov't, and get permission to work on these international, intergovernmental issues.

Davin: I understand that. And I don't want to pretend that this project was going to address those issues.

Jana: If you think of your project as a pilot project, this methodology definitely works. It's about the scale of the problems. Each problem has its own scale, and we were working on the local, regional scale.

Davin: Maybe the last question should be the one about open space. We had this alternative framework. What role did it play in the project?

Jana: I think of it as a philosophy. While facilitating, we often use the technique of 'utilization'...which takes a negative comment or sentiment, and turns it into a positive declaration or resource. Like Aikido. So the open space framework is a tool for transforming 'negatives' into 'positives', for reflection, for

Davin: So it's an alternative framework that we use as a tool for reflection, to inspire our improvization, etc. Good one, that helps me.

Spellings for the region... Adjara, Javakheti, Samegrelo, Mingrelia.

Davin: Jana, thank you very much for all your contribution to the project, and for the interview.

Appendix M

**Interview Summaries - Regions Project
Georgian State Chancellery
Sandro Svanishvili and Irakli Brachuli**

June 2003

Georgian Regions Project Interview
Sandro Svanishvili / Irakli Brachuli
Georgian State Chancellery

June 2003

Davin Bremner
Sandro Svanishvil
Irakli Brachuli
Jana Javakhishvili (interpreting)

D: We're here in Tbilisi on the longest day of the year, June 21, 2003, to interview Sandro Svanishvili and Irakli Brachuli about the Georgian Regions Project...as a place to start...Sandro, I know the two projects, our project, and Kate Whyte's project, but I don't know if there are many more governance projects, or international NGO projects that you had to consider whether or not to participate in, or are there just the two?

S: No, there are other projects that we have been participating in, but these two projects that you mention are very different than the other projects. Since 1998 there was quite a big project of the World Bank going on, and there is the two year project of the Urban Institute, and there have been several other projects. But there is a huge difference between these two projects and the others, because in your project, the focus was on personalities. Your project and Kate Whyte's were built up on personal participation, not only on institutional participation. So the projects were more person centered. The main thing here is that if participants understand each other, then the process will go on effectively. So we appreciated your focus on personal understanding and participation.

Kate Whyte's project was focussed on partnership boards, which was her approach to dealing with problems. In her initial meetings, we were talking about problems, and the following meetings were devoted to creating mutual understanding, which was a quite reasonable process.

Even more understanding was developed in your particular project. Your method was focussed on solving conflicts, and the way of solving these conflicts was by creating a dialogue atmosphere. As soon as we saw ourselves becoming partners in this dialogue, the conflicts (were becoming clear?)

Through your process, we saw these conflicts becoming solvable, and therefore it was a special process. For example, in Likani, we several times had a dialogue or conversation about the Russian military base, and by talking about this issue, we understood much more about each other's opinions. It was very effective.

D: I want to go back to the beginning of the project for a minute, when we came to you the first time. I think that I know you had pretty low expectations. And even

some concerns. So can you tell me again, what was your view of the project, and what were you thinking the very first time we tried to explain it to you?

S: You are absolutely correct. Not only low expectations, but I had strong worries that there was a chance you could create conflict. You chose two regions, Samegrelo and Samtskhe-Javakhetia, which were two conflicted regions. It's natural that we were very cautious about your proposition, because even a little mistake in these two regions could cause big problems.

D: So then, why did we do it? I know that I asked you the question before. But, if it was risky, and if it didn't sound like the project made too much sense, and if even a small mistake...then why take the risk?

S: You know, there is no mechanism that can prevent the international organizations from conducting programs in our regions. So we choose to participate, and by participating to prevent any possible problems, instead of not participating and letting things go as they go. So it's more of a risk not to participate than to participate.

D: I know that in the last year there have been tensions between the government and NGOs, about government control over NGOs...

S: Maybe it's even natural that the government tries to control everything in the country. Also, it's a leftover from the communist times. But, you know, there is another type of conflict. Not only when government tries to intervene in NGO activities, but when NGOs try to intervene into government activities. So it goes both ways. We have quite a developed NGO sector in Georgia, so it's impossible to control all those NGOs here, because there is a huge number of them, and nobody has any intention to control all NGO in all the things that they do. But, when some of the NGOs are...trying to do the things that are not in their competence, then the reaction from the government side is to try to control them. NGOs should not be politicized. As soon as NGOs are politicized, then there is suspicion from the side of government, and the issue of control comes up.

D: So, Eka (from the Parliament committee on Civil Integration), came to every workshop, and went back to her committee and reported back. What she said must not have been too interesting, because her boss, (Gela Kvaretskhelia) never, ever showed up to the workshop. But Irakli came to the first workshop, and he was pretty quiet the whole weekend, at the first weekend, and there was this other big guy...uhm...Alexandro...I'm curious about after the first workshop, or maybe the first two workshops, what were you hearing from your guys, your staff? What did you hear, what did they say, when they came back from the events?

S: First of all, I asked the question, 'is it going on destructively?', or something like this, because I had a concern that it could be something dangerous. But both Irakli and Alexandro told me that everything was going on properly.

D: And then...the first question was, 'is it destructive or constructive', and the answer was, 'it isn't too bad'...and then?

S: Then the main point was that dialogue was created. So, you are comparing us, and the Parliamentarians...but the point should be not to create conflict between the executive and the Parliament, because they could have another viewpoint and another style...

D: Okay, I just meant that I was always personally disappointed that we tried and tried to get Gela Kvaretskhelia to come, and he never ever came to an event, but...you know, he's a busy man.

S: Now, they have a new committee chief, so,

D: Yeah, I've met him briefly. So...I think that I remember the first time, in any case, that you came and visited us in Likani. And all the flipcharts were on the wall, all the way around. And I had this impression that you were quite surprised, maybe astonished.

S: Definitely. I did not expect this kind of 200 issues were listed on the flipcharts, and the whole room was covered...And I asked (Irakli) if you brought those pictures prepared to the workshop, or if you created them here.

D: Really? So, the surprise was that we were doing so much work, or that workshops are generally not so interesting, or, that our range of topics was so wide?

S: I was surprised, because I had a number of meetings with the same participants, and they were not so creative as I saw that day, and I could see that these personal relationships allowed a very creative atmosphere, where people could realise their opportunities.

D: I don't remember if it was before you came to Likani, or after, but I remember at one point, Nodar and I came to your office, and I was wearing my tie, because we were going to meet this really big guy, the guy one or two people above you, and there was going to be this serious meeting. And he stopped in the door, because he had to rush out to see Shevardnadze, and he staid long enough to say, 'I understand that you have a very risky project...don't make any conflict in the regions!' Then he went off.

S: He had the same worry that we had.

D: But I was really surprised by all that...so, what did he hear? What had he heard about our project? I'm just wondering if there is a story behind that story, because it was really a surprising 20 minutes for me, and left me wondering, 'what just happened?'

S: The story was that, initially, we had sent the draft of the project to Khadidze (this guy)...and Khadidze wanted to know, 'why these two regions in particular, they are dangerous regions'. So the choice of these regions was a radical choice. It was the same concern I had, and I didn't hide my attitude, that I was afraid something could happen. But when I came to Likani, I realised that everything was going on all right.

D: Just last week I was typing up my notes, from the consultation when we went to Samegrelo, and before FDHR was in the project. One of the points that people were suspicious of, was the choosing of those two regions, because there is no comparison between those two regions, the situation is so different, and so the question was 'why are you people combining them...don't be so naive...there must be a mistaken assumption, otherwise why would you pair those two regions. Really, there were three regions at first...

D: Because, it should have been obvious, that because it was a conflict resolution project, we were going to work in the regions where there were conflicts to prevent...in a conflict prevention project, of course we would go to the difficult regions. It should make sense. Anyway...

D: So, one of the things that you and I talked about in the car...you said that the framework of this project was more interesting, or more credible, or more something, than some of the other projects, and we weren't talking about Kate's project. Then I said, 'which framework? The needs framework, or the action research framework, or the problem solving circle? Then you said...'the action research framework'. I just want to hear that part of the conversation again...what you thought of the three frameworks, and why was the action research framework the one that was more important, and more credible, and more interesting to you.

S: If it was an ordinary lecturing, just 'what can create conflict', 'what can resolve conflict, and how to prevent conflict', it would be just zero, nothing effective. But my real surprise or my satisfaction, was that when I observed the process, I realised that the participants of the project were real participants. They were not just objects of the process, but subjects of the process. Sometimes you were really listening to them, and they were really telling real things, and I was surprised by this. You created an atmosphere where they felt that they could be active, that they could be creative, and they could contribute. So this was special.

D: That atmosphere, in the terminology, of International Alert, we talk about a 'safe space for dialogue'. And, there are different ways that you create a safe space for dialogue. It might be a safe space for dialogue if it's in 'secret', if it's the Oslo negotiations, and no one knows you're doing it, and if it gets ruined, then you can deny you were there. Or, it might be a safe space if a very eminent person, like Nelson Mandela, or the Pope, then it's safe because that person invited you. So, one of the things that I'm researching, and one of the things I'm trying to suggest at Alert, is the idea of research, and telling people we are bringing them together

for research, and even that 'you are the researchers', and that that should help people feel safe. So, when you say that this was your experience in the project, and that that's credible, that it made sense, and part of what made the project successful, that because we were doing research, not training, and research, not mediation, then people felt more free. Otherwise, it could have just been that Jana and Davin and Nodar are nice, friendly people, and we fed people nicely, maybe that could also have made it successful...yes?

S:

D: So, were there any significant surprises? There was that one morning, when you saw all that work on the walls. Were there any other surprises that came in the course of the project or by the end of the project, that you just didn't expect?

S: First of all, it was the easiness of the dialogue. I didn't expect that the people from Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda would talk about common problems by dialogue, and would find five or ten solutions for one particular problem.

D: When we did the questionnaire for people, we had a question about whether or not we would create new information. And we asked the question, did we just share information, or did we actually create new information. Do you have an opinion about whether or not we ended up just sharing information, or whether we actually created anything new?

S: This mutual sharing created new information, because something new was created through this sharing. It wasn't a process of me sharing what I already knew with you and are sharing what you know and I don't know. It wasn't like this.

...

D: It was interesting in the questionnaire that half the people said that no, we just shared information, and the other half said that we did create new information. But everybody said that they learned something.

S: So, the main thing was that they looked at things from other and new perspectives, and gave issues new consideration.

D: So, in the end, in fact we failed. To find funding to continue the work. And at least so far, we failed to fund the projects that were created...so if the projects were solutions to problems, we haven't solved any problems. So some time has gone by, and you must have some perceptions...it was a relative success, or, what were some of the failures...how do you think about it now, it was a relative success, it was a relative failure, and what were the shortcomings?

S: On the one hand, we unfortunately didn't get funds for the continuation. However, I think that the project is already successful. The participants look at things in new ways. They found out new ways of solving their problems. Funding

is not so important as how they feel, because they saw that it is possible to solve their problems.

D: So, the perception that success is possible, and some new learning about how to solve problems would be the success of this project?

S: The solving of problems does not depend only on material resources. The main problem for our population is mentality, the passive positions and attitude of dependency. The main success of your project maybe, is that you have changed their mentality, they became active, and realized that it may be possible to change how things are going by themselves. This was a success.

D: Okay. If you can forget for a minute, just how nice Jana and Nodar, Amiran, the FDHR people are, hold that thought, but just tell me a little bit about your perception of the role of FDHR, the Georgian NGO, in terms of the project?

S: You made a perfect choice. I have relationships with lots of NGO organizations. The reason that they are the perfect choice is because of the people that they are. They are excellent professionals. You know, it's like a game. If a person doesn't know how to fulfill his duties in a professional sense, he is going to act on a superficial level. The main thing about this organization is that they are real professionals. For example, until today, I don't know what are their political thoughts, are they Shevardnadze supporters or something else. They are professionals.

D: So, non-politicized, professional...did FDHR take some risks?

S: What do you mean take risks?

D: Well your department had to take some risks to participate.

S: I still say that the risk is if we don't participate.

D: Irakli, did you have any other thoughts or additions to the comments that Sandro has made so far?

I: I enjoyed Sandro's speech.

D: I have some different questions for you, but I just wondered if you had any other thoughts about these things we've been talking about?

I: Well, your questions were so systematically set out, I'm surprised, how can you have another set of questions?

D: I just had one last one for Sandro. Is there any obvious question that I should have asked you that I haven't? Is there any perception about the project that I failed to ask you about that you want to tell me?

S: No, I don't think so.

D: Okay, Irakli...you already participated in the questionnaire that we gave to all the participants. So, I'm a little bit interested in some of your perceptions, because you are an employee of the government, in addition to being one of the workshop participants, you work for the government, which is a different perspective. And you're also an academic. So...remember that first weekend workshop. As I've said, you were pretty quiet. And I think you also had fairly low expectations. So I'm interested in, what was it, as the workshops were going on, that changed your perceptions? What did we do to capture your imagination? Can you remember the process, when you were thinking, 'well, this actually is pretty interesting'?

I: From the very beginning, I had very uncertain expectations, because I was uncertain what was going on. Also, the participants were very diverse. For example, Alexandro was a very political representative. That's why each of his words reflected the official politics. Each of his positions would reflect the different departments of the Chancellery. For me, of course the frame was a research frame, but I was the Chancellery's representative, so I was affected by my position. So it was confusing to me, this double role. There was also confusion in the sense that the common game was supposed to be held in a very diverse group. Diverse by ethnicity, diverse by position, even by gender. And I was afraid of some provocative things that could happen between different sides.

D: So you're saying that the diversity was confusing?

I: I'm saying that my expectations were uncertain, because of this diversity.

I: And another problem was the representation of an American person, or a foreigner, I had a suspicion that it would be unrealistic or not realistic.

D: Okay, that's really interesting. Tell me why? Why would an American come with an unrealistic project?

I: No, because they have a different experience. And we also have a different experience.

D: Because we can't know the Georgian context?

I: That's why. But also, we had another experience of a project that was quite unrealistic, and couldn't take into consideration the Georgian reality.

D: So, you could imagine that because we included FDHR in the project design, when Nodar came to London, and because the project was very much a partnership between Alert and FDHR, that that's how we dealt with this issue.

I: My positive attitudes were created by two factors, in terms of my expectations. The one thing was that Likani is a fantastic place with Borjomi water and

everything, and the other thing was that I knew Nodar as a good academician. Those were my initial positive attitudes about this.

D: So, I want to tell a short story, and see if you remember the moment the way I remember the moment...it was during the first workshop, and I have a very strong impression, like I remember how Sandro looked when he saw all the flipcharts...but I'm curious if you remember it the same way...it was when Alexandro was telling the Javakhetians about the Meskhetians. And he was saying, 'you don't have to worry about those Meskhetians, they're really just Georgians...they're going to present no real problem for you...and he was kind of giving the government position, 'don't worry about the Meskhetians'. And then, I think it was Norik Mgedesian, the young soldier, who said, 'Listen...we have to tell you, if you take the Russian military base away, and at the same time you bring all those Meskhetians back...you're going to have a problem!'. Do you remember it?

I: Of course.

D: So, what were you thinking in that moment, when you heard Norik talk like that?

I: So, I prevented myself from explaining my position, because I thought to myself, what is the real creative purpose of looking for a solution, so I should just be open and receive all the information that comes from this group, and think about a solution. But emotionally, of course, what do you think, I was irritated, because it is painful to hear that the Russian military base should not leave there. But, I overcame my emotions, and I was thinking about being open to another point of view.

D: I thought it was the only time in the weekend that something surprised Alexandro, that he had heard something he wasn't expecting, and that he had to stop and think for a minute. Maybe he realised that there was a dialogue, and not just a monologue, and I could see it on his face that he was a little bit shocked.

I: Yes, heh heh.

D: So there was a moment of dialogue that was interesting, even if it was difficult.

I: Yes.

D: So...I can be honest that because we avoided talking about conflict, so that we wouldn't create any, and then we always talked about problems, and our topics were so big and so wide, then I was sometimes frustrated that we weren't doing conflict prevention or conflict resolution. So...every once in awhile, we would mention a 'detonator issue', but then people would say that 'oh, it's so painful to talk about it, and then I felt like more often than not, we avoided detonator issues.

D: Of course, we did a lot of interesting work about a lot of interesting problems. But I'm interested in your perception, do you think that, on the whole, by the end, we ever took up some of these detonator issues in any substantive way...or did we really end up kind of avoiding them until the end, because they are still detonator issues, and they are still too risky to talk about?

S: You know, I think that it was (too few?) days to overcome these detonator issues. It would have been difficult to take together extreme opinions...for example extremists from Akhalkalaki, Armenians, extremists from the Georgian side who say 'Georgia for Georgians', extremists from the Centre, who think that only the Centre should decide what to do, extremists from the Centre who don't like the Centre...to get these extreme sides taken all together, it was the mandate of your workshops, but maybe this would fail.

(Tape Change...)

I: Instead, we had participants who were tolerant. Not neutral, but tolerant. Tolerant, but people who would state their opinion. These were the right people to choose for the project, and based on this choice, a tolerant atmosphere was created. It became evident that this was by intention, this choice of participants, and that this was necessary for this fundamental scientific investigations were the foundation for this kind of design. And all these people became interested in the needs theory, and adaptable to it. It was a main result of the work. Some of them consciously, some of them unconsciously, but all of them became adaptable to the needs theory.

You were saying that we failed to get funds for the new phase of our project, I don't think it's a failure. These people, by the end, became addicts (?) of the needs theory, which already indicates sustainability. Of course, if we had the opportunity to obtain funds and to develop a continuation, but...

D: So let me go back...as a conflict resolution guy, I still want to believe that if we had the people whose responsibility it is going to be, to resolve the Meskhetian return issue, for example, or either of the conflicts with Abkhazia or Ossetia, for example, or the environmental conflict with BP over the pipeline in Borjomi...I want to think that if we had the people who have to resolve those conflicts, that these problem solving research workshops would be an adequate tool to really resolve some conflicts. But I want to know if he thinks that's credible, or not really credible. I'm just trying to ask if it's an adequate tool, a credible tool, for really resolving some conflicts?

I: I think that it's credible, or maybe very effective, in ethnic conflicts. So, I learned that when it is ethnic conflict, all ethnic conflicts have a similar structure. If the sides in these ethnic conflicts would understand that they are similar (have similar needs) to each other, then they would keep distance between each other. So there are four factors going on. There is the religious factor. One side thinks that his religion is higher than the other. The cultural factor, one side thinks that it's culture is higher than the other; the moral factor, and the historical...(???)...how

can you solve it when each side is saying exactly the same things to the other? What can you do to push out these religion, ethnical, cultural, historical issues? I'm not interested in this conversation. Let's think about fundamental human needs, and it will be quite more effective.

I was in Gali two weeks ago. My mother in-law lives there, and she died, and I had a meeting with a famous Abkhaz combatant, who is the governor of Gali region. He knew about me, that I am from the Chancellery, and I knew he was the Gali governor. For me, he's the criminal who did the ethnic cleansing, so he's a typical war criminal to me.

I told him that (...) was Georgian imperialism, that was oppressing the Abkhazian people. So we were sitting there next to each other, and we didn't know what to talk about. About the country, the history... We talked about human needs, and it was friendly then. And we left the conversation as though we were kind of friends with each other. We could include him in our seminars, he would be a perfect participant. It's an idea.

S: About the BP conflict in Borjomi. This is an ecological conflict. But...(back to your methodology)...about interethnic conflicts, it's very effective.

D: So, Irakli, by the end of the project, you started playing a more facilitative role, and even becoming part of the facilitation team, in effect.

I: Heh, heh, I will make an excellent career out of it.

D: I know that the human needs framework, that everybody internalized it to a greater or lesser degree. So one of the dissertation questions is, 'when we're designing a workshop, whether or not to make the Max-Neef matrix explicit, and use it the way we tried to, or whether to have it in the background, in our facilitator's heads, and not use it explicitly, just to have it implicit. Because it confused some people, I think. So I want your opinion, if we were designing the workshops again, should we try to improve on the way we use the matrix, or should we keep the matrix out of it, because it's too complicated?

I: It's difficult. I don't know what is better.

D: I don't know either. Heh heh.

I: Because the team was so strong and professional, it was probably okay. If we had as good a team, we should feel free to use it and do anything. But if not, I'm suspicious about using the matrix.

D: Okay, so maybe the last question. To be honest, I don't think it's credible to me that we would be able to institutionalize the tools and the framework, if we only have weekend workshops, through NGOs, small project...it would take too long and we can't go to that many workshops. So I'm interested in knowing, do you have any imagination about how we could, if not through this kind of project, start

to find opportunities to institutionalize, into the work that you guys do every day, into your existing structures the use of these tools and frameworks. How could we do that?

I: Even in Gali, I used them in my conversation with the governor there, so of course we are using them.

D: Yeah, but that's you as a person. I want to know if there is an opportunity to institutionalize it, and make it part of the structures.

I: The Chancellery?

D: Sure. Or the decision making structures in Georgia.

(Everybody talking as once...no idea what they said...

D: Same question as I asked Sandro...is there anything I should have asked and didn't? Do you have anything burning to say?

I: We should recommend to make a 'needs book'...we have the potential and the interest, so how could we make a book (in Georgian).

D: That's interesting, because the South Africans created a 'Human Scale Development Network', and created a whole NGO structure around human scale development.

I: In the whole South Africa?

D: Yeah,

I: We should make a Caucasian project, in the entire Caucasus.

D: We would need to have one more Human Needs Conference, and shape it for the creation of a Network.

I: You know, there might be 5 or 9 or 1 basic needs, I don't know how many, but if you used just one need, and focussed on it, then it would be easier to conduct the project...

D: Sandro, Irakli, Jana, thank you very, very much for your time, and for your participation in the project. I hope we get to work together again in the future. Can I use your names in the interview in my paper.

S: Our pleasure.

D: My dissertation isn't going to be best selling book. My mother might read it, but she might get bored. But I really thank you...

Appendix N

Regions Project Evaluation Questionnaire and Results

November 2001

**Georgian Regions Project
Evaluation Questionnaire
November 2001**

Questions / Options	Total	Samtskhe-Javakheti	Samegrelo
Question 1: What do you think of the overall process of the Georgian Regions Project, from the first consultations, through to the final action planning workshops?	24 Responses	12 Responses	12 Responses
Very successful	17	7	10
Not very successful	2	2	
Don't know			
Very interesting	22	10	12
Not very interesting			
Don't know			

Comments offered:

Samtskhe-Javakheti workshops:

"The project was conducted in the way it was initially planned."

"The group accomplished the goals."

"The contemporary and original method of investigation was interesting, as was the fact that absolutely different types of participants established mutual understanding and co-operation."

"The entire process of the workshops was successful since the main goal of the project was achieved. We learned how to regulate the conflict situation. The method used by the project authors was new for the participants."

Samegrelo workshops:

"Not only very interesting, but very necessary. This series of meetings got us closer to each other and gives us a possibility to view problems in a real way."

"From the beginning until now, we are on the way of treating problems in a practical way."

"The topics were interesting for me because they reflected the problems of my region."

"The results we have today are higher than we expected, although if the project would be implemented a second time, it will go much better, and then it would be VERY successful."

"It would be better if influential people from the governmental structures would participate, people who have some duties and responsibilities or a least more competency on the issues discussed by the group."

"I think the project was designed in a very interesting and professional manner and thus it encouraged active participation and growth of the group members."

Question 2: What do you think about the results of the Regions Project?	Total	Samtskhe-Javakheti	Samegrelo
Good results	17	9	8
Not so good			
Too early to say	6	2	4
Don't know			

Comments offered:

Samtskhe-Javakheti workshops:

"The effectiveness of the project I evaluated by two criteria: the process of the work and the concrete projects created in the process. In total, there are good results."

"The problems are better understood as a result of the project. But for having practical results we have to work on realization of the action plans. In this regard we have to continue serious work."

"It was helpful for the different regions to learn each others problems - it's useful for solving them."

"Practically speaking, everything is worked out just half-way."

"The result is that a small group was created with the capacity to deal with conflict, through appropriate knowledge." "The project is interesting for me first of all because I met many interesting persons there. And secondly, because the actual problems of the region were discussed."

"It's too early to conclude."

"It's over my expectancies!"

"If these projects become successful, the results will be good."

"A mobile and 'action-able' small group in the field of conflictology was formed."

"Many things became more clear."

Samegrelo workshops:

"The results are okay, but it's a bit early to evaluate."

"The fact that our teams produced concrete projects to be offered to donors is already a good result.!"

"Today, our perspective is that the results are good, but it's really a little early to evaluate."

"It's early to say."

"The project now has a very serious and interesting 'face', and this was not clear from the beginning.

step by step the positive results are approached."

"It's early to say".

"The project helped us see problems in our region not only in a frame of our organizations mission, but also in a wider context. The project helped us to work in co-operation with the other NGOs, to share our experience."

Question 3: Have you felt involved so far, and do you feel committed in the future to the Project?	Total	Samtskhe-Javakheti	Samegrelo
Very involved	20	8	12
Not very involved	1	1	
Not sure			
Committed in the future	20	10	10
Not committed	1	1	
Not sure	1	1	

Comments offered:

Samtskhe-Javakheti workshops:

"I felt very involved in the project and it's natural. I feel myself committed in the future (as much as my time-resources will allow me)."

"I could not say whether I do feel committed or not. But I am definitely interested in results of each of the planned projects, and I wish them good success."

"I don't feel committed."

"I participated in all stages of project implementation for Samtskhi-Javakheti region and I feel myself responsible for the final results of the project - on their fruitfulness and sustainability."

"I am so interested in the project, I think it will accomplish its goals and I will contribute as much as possible."

"The project is so interesting and useful for our region that I feel myself responsible to make a personal contribution to it."

"I wish that our project will make some constructive changes."

"I was involved in all stages and will take part in the process of preparing the final documents."

"I have a strong desire to be involved. If I would am involved in these activities, of course I feel myself responsible to contribute to it."

"I clearly felt how close these problems are to me."

Samegrelo workshops:

"Working as a team was very interesting for me, after each meeting I felt myself more and more committed."

"At first, I don't look so involved, but in fact I'm always involved, I pay attention to the process, I make notes which I use for the following analysis. I absolutely feel responsibility, because in the organization and the future project my role is clearly defined."

"From the beginning I was very involved. In the last meeting not so much, however I made a contribution there as well."

"I feel myself so committed that I skipped a very important training in financial management in Tbilisi to participate in the last Tskhaltubo (Samegrelo region venue) meeting. So, you can judge how committed I am."

Question 4: The regions project has the assumption that the 'right people' for solving the relationship problems between the Center and the Regions are: 1) representatives from the 'Center' including the State Chancellery and the Parliament, 2) representatives from local governing authorities including gameoba and sakrebulo, 3) NGOs and other representatives of civil society. Has this assumption been validated during the work of the Project?	Total	Samtskhe-Javakheti	Samegrelo
These are the right people	17	11	6
Not necessarily the right people			
Those might be the right groups, but we didn't have the right individuals with us	6		6
Depends on which problem	5	2	3

Samtskhe-Javakheti workshops:

- "These are exactly the right people, but it would be better if the attendance of the local governance structures representatives had been more stable."
- "The real effect would come from the joint efforts of the representatives of these three group. Uniting them worked on the theoretical and training level. For making practical steps it is necessary to elaborate concrete mechanisms for their interaction."
- "There is no doubt that the involvement of three subject - the Center, NGOs, and regional representatives was the right way to do the work in the project. It's necessary to sustain this balance in the future."
- "Those are the proper people, though it depends on which kind of problem."
- "The approach Center-region-NGO seems to be correct."
- "It's impossible to solve the problem without participation of three sides involved in it - every side contributes to it. The points of view of all participants were taken into consideration in the project."
- "Based on the participation of these people we will have good results."
- "The approach Center-region-NGO was proved to be appropriate."
- "There are a number of problems that NGOs are more effective in solving, and it would be good if the Government will help the NGOs in this."

Samegrelo workshops:

- "Those are the right people, but we didn't have them in the meetings. It would have been better to have more people from the local self-governance structures"
- "There are a number of problems where co-ordination between the Center and region is necessary. But there are also problems which could be solved without such mutual involvement. I think that to make some extreme conclusions (always jointly or always separately) is a mistake."
- "Maybe they are the right people, but we didn't have them with us in the project."
- "These people should participate because for each of them it is necessary to develop a sense of responsibility."
- "These might have been the right groups, but they have not come."
- "The influential persons from the local governance structures did not come, they just sent their representatives, who do not have any weight here."

Question 5: The Regions Project has the assumption that the 'Human Needs Theory' would be helpful for analysing the situation in Georgia, and structuring the problem solving activities. Do you think that the human needs framework was helpful and appropriate?	Total	Samtskhe-Javakheti	Samegrelo
Needs theory was helpful	20	10	10
Needs theory wasn't so helpful			
Don't know			
Needs theory was clear	11	5	6
Needs theory was confusing	4	1	3
Don't know			

Comments offered:

Samtskhe-Javakheti workshops:

"This theoretical-conceptual basis was extremely useful in our work."

"It was very useful for analyzing the problems of the Center and region. It was very clear from the beginning and now the practical use of it is possible for particular groups."

"The needs theory was not so clear"

"We took the roles of the independent experts, who represented the interests of all the parts of the community."

"If we hadn't used this theory, the effectiveness of the project would be suspicious."

"I think it is necessary to study the problems in order to work on solving them."

"The theory is fruitful because it has a practical influence on the subject."

Samegrelo workshops:

"Not only did it help, but it also made the work easier for us."

"I think it was helpful, because the beneficiaries of every single project are ordinary human beings with their human needs, so taking into consideration these needs will create possibilities and a framework for each project to work properly on their satisfaction."

"The needs theory was helpful, but confusing."

"It was helpful in defining problems and prioritising them."

"Although it helped us, many things were confusing there. Some points which I thought were necessary then became ambiguous. It caused the re-evaluation of some values. It was interesting to me."

"The needs theory stimulated us to look in a different way at the problems of the region."

Question 6: The Regions Project assumes that in this series of 'research' workshops, we would create 'new information' by working together as action researchers. Do you feel that new information was created, and did you personally learn anything new?	Total	Samtskhe-Javakheti	Samegrelo
Yes, we created new information	11	7	4
No, we shared existing information	10	3	7
Don't know			
I learned new things	19	8	11
I didn't learn much that was new			

Comments offered:

Samtskhe-Javakheti workshops:

"I gained new information about the region and gained the knowledge about conflictology and the use of this particular approach."

"I learned about how to build relationships with people."

"I think I'm informed enough about this region."

"The group produced a new analysis, new qualitative information on the region. On my personal level, it was a new method of analysis, interesting to influence the subject and object of the analysis at the same time, for the purpose of developing their personal resources."

"Of course, our work was based on collecting and analysing the existing information. But the joint discussion and analysis of these problems gave all of us something new to learn."

"Yes, we created new information of high quality."

Samegrelo workshops:

"Each meeting was a real field of learning. We gained new friends with whom we will continue contact; we gained new information on each others working activities. The most important may have been our meeting with the Samtskhe-Javakheti group and our joint work with them. Now we perceive their problems in a new way. Also, we discovered after that meeting that we have a lot of common problems, while we did not realise that before we'd met - our knowledge before was very superficial."

"I think we shared with each other the existing information and enriched each other by this mutual sharing, thus creating the whole picture of certain problems. Relationships with people, discussing problems and ways of dealing with them is always enriching and always brings something new to us."

"Each training gives us an opportunity to gain what we think is a right thing to gain."

"I more clearly understand now the local problems, the attitude towards the Centre, the results of co-operation."

"It's possible that we elaborated new information, but it was so little and general that I don't think I would say that."

"As about new information, we did not elaborate it. What we did was comparing and grouping already existing information."

Question 7: What expectations did you have for the Regions Project, and have they been met?	Total	Samtskhe-Javakheti	Samegrelo
I had high expectations	7	3	4
I had low expectations	11	5	6
My expectations got higher	15	6	9
My expectations got lower	2	2	
My expectations have been well met	8	3	5
My expectations have not been met	2	1	1
Don't know	2	1	1

Samtskhe-Javakheti workshops:

"I had low expectations which increased."

"In the initial stage of our work it was difficult for me to imagine the final result. Today it is clear that we are going towards practical results. The realization of at least one project will be proof of it."

"At the beginning of the project I had a fear that instead of regulating conflict the project would escalate it. With the process of implementation this attitude has naturally changed."

"I had high expectations regarding the high level of professionalism of Professor Sarjveladze and his colleagues from abroad. The results fit these expectations."

"I'm full of optimism."

"My expectations were high, but they became lower. This was influenced by the problem of attendance, especially of people from Ninotsminda and Akhalkalaki."

"Previously my attitude towards the project was quite sceptical, but the results are higher than my expectations."

Samegrelo workshops:

"In the first meeting I viewed the project in sceptical way. Now I think our efforts will lead us to results."

"My imagination about workshops was different and I did not think that they would be so useful. But the integration event in Tbilisi showed me the real purposes of the project and my expectations increased."

"It depends on what will follow from our project."

"For me it was a surprise how participants were well aware of their problems and how enthusiastic they were to contribute to the process of dealing with these problems."

"I had high expectations and they did not change. My expectations were not well enough met. I had even more high expectations than was necessary. And by telling that they were not well met, I'm declaring here my (and not the project's) problem."

"From the beginning I did not have high expectations, but then step by step in the meetings concrete tasks contributed to satisfying my expectations and hopes."

"From the beginning I had low expectations and low responsibility (which I chose to increase later in the process of project implementation."

Question 8: From your participation in the Regions Project, have your attitudes changed? About the 'Center' if you are from a Region, if you are from the Center, about NGOs?	Total	Samtskhe-Javakhetia	Samegrelo
I feel I represent : The region	6	3	3
: NGOs	9	3	6
: The center	5	4	1
My attitude has has changed about : The region	4	3	1
: NGOs	5	5	
: The center	11	5	6
I feel more positive	16	10	6
I feel less positive			
I understand more about them	18	9	9
I understand more less them			
I'm confused about them			

Samtskhe-Javakheti workshops:

"I represent the Centre. Now I understand more about the potency of the NGOs, and about their possibilities in the regions. I now have a more positive attitude regarding them."

"The relationships between the region and NGO representatives (in the context of the project) show that we have much more in common, than differences while working on solving our problems."

"The multiple stage-by-stage meetings and joint analytical research caused the changing of my attitudes regarding them in a positive way."

"The discussions of problems were exhaustive thanks to participation of the representatives of the different groups."

Samegrelo workshops:

"I realise now that the joint work of the Centre, region and NGOs is not only possible, but necessary as well."

"I represent the Region. My attitudes towards the centre are changed, I understand more about them now."

Question 9: How do you feel about the atmosphere and the interpersonal relationships during the research workshop?	Total	Samtskhe-Javakheti	Samegrelo
Very positive	22	11	11
Not so positive	1	1	
Don't know			

Comments offered:

Samtskhe-Javakheti workshops:

"The atmosphere in the meetings was extremely positive and relationships between the participants were friendly, and that contributed to the success of the project."

"The atmosphere was extremely 'workful', and based on basic kindness."

"The meetings were very interesting, it was not wasting of time, the participants 'community' was oriented towards work. As it was a new experience for me (I am a beginner), I focussed my attention on friendly relationships, which I noticed here a lot."

"Relationships, are one of the necessary things for society."

"Was interesting, friendly, working."

"It was a positive, 'working' psychological atmosphere."

Samegrelo workshops:

"The attitude, which organisers of the meeting 'transmitted' to us, was feelable in each meeting - the warmth, attention, and what is the most important: it was possible for us to express our own opinions freely, and that was helpful in getting us closer to each other."

"The atmosphere was positive and at the same time businesslike, the relations were very friendly. The humour that accompanied our work added some positive stimulation to us."

"I am personally interested in establishing warm relationships with the people."

"Very positive and indigenous (?) relationships between participants."

"It was fantastic. I'd like more."

"It was an excellent atmosphere."

"Very, very pleasant atmosphere. I am always happy to attend the seminars organized by FDHR, they always manage to create the special atmosphere. Mrs. Vanessa contributed by her attendance much to this atmosphere, and of course, Mr. Davin contributed a lot to it."

Question 10: How do you feel about the quality of the workshop facilitation and leadership of the Regions Project?	Total	Samtskhe-Javakheti	Samegrelo
Very positive	24	12	12
Not so positive			
Don't know			

Comments offered:

Samtskhe-Javakheti workshops:

"Mr. Davin led the meetings with a high level of professionalism, deeply understood the opinions of each of us, and always managed to emphasize the main point. We are all impressed by his talent of giving toasts. In a very intellectual and professional manner, Mr. Nodar and Mrs. Jana were leading the sessions. The warmth and the special aura of Mrs. Jana created a special atmosphere in those sessions."

"The facilitation and project-management were conducted in at a highly professional level."

"The high psychoanalytical and social-organizational capacities of the facilitators became a guarantee of the success."

"You are the best facilitators among those I know."

"I think everything was clearly and properly scheduled."

"Very competent, high level of professionalism."

"They are high level professionals."

Samegrelo workshops:

"If they were not good leaders, we would not be so tied during the whole process."

"The facilitation always was excellent and was really facilitating and helping the small group activities to be effective."

"I am sure you are excellent professionals and conducted the workshops in an excellent way."

"They managed to create an atmosphere of mutual trust, understanding, working."

"Even more fantastic."

"Jana, Nodar and you all are the real professionals."

"While working, we felt ourselves as real investigators. All the conditions were created for us to feel comfortable to express and share our opinions, thoughts, to perform as well as was possible."

Question 11: How do you feel about the experience that you have gained, or your learning during the Regions Project?	Total	Samtskhe-Javakheti	Samegrelo
Very valuable	22	10	12
Not so valuable			
Don't know	2	2	

Comments offered:

Samtskhe-Javakheti workshops:

"I gained experience regarding the forming of small social groups. Also, regarding forming of dialogue zones for neutralization of conflict situations."

"It was an experience which I will use in my future work and for improving my life. Even a tiny little experience helps me to organize my life."

"I don't know, I attended just the last meeting."

"It will be very useful in my job and in my life in general."

"Very useful for me."

Samegrelo workshops:

"One always needs new information and experiences."

"I observed a great example of how to establish relationships with people, how to get experience."

"I can tell that half of my opinions are refreshed in as a result of participation in this project."

"I actively use the experience gained from the workshops in my life."

"I gained an experience of how to view the problem from different points of view, how to define it, etc."

Question 12: How do you feel about the possibility of positive impacts and concrete results based on the work of the Regions Project?	Total	Samtskhe-Javakheti	Samegrelo
I think there will be positive results	24	12	12
I think there could be negative results			
Don't know			

Comments offered:

Samtskhe-Javakheti workshops:

"I mainly think that the results will be positive."

"It depends on us."

"There will be concrete results. We created groups of people who would know how to move from conflict to dialogue zones."

"I hope our projects and ideas will be realized in life at least partly."

"In any case, the hope is huge."

"The elaborated projects will win."

Samegrelo workshops:

"The potential is huge, the main thing is to use it, and then the results will be positive."

"The potential really exists."

"I think the results will be positive, or at least I hope so."

"Some concrete projects will be implemented."

"The results will be positive, as the foundation is prepared for co-operation of the Centre and regional structures, between regional NGOs, etc."

Question 13: Do you think it will be possible to involve more representatives of the region, or your constituency, or other stakeholders in future activities based on the Regions Project?	Total	Samtskhe-Javakheti	Samegrelo
It should be possible, I can imagine it	22	11	11
I'm not sure, I doubt it	1		1
Don't know	1	1	

Comments offered:

Samtskhe-Javakheti workshops:

"It's possible and necessary at the same time."

"I think in the future it would be useful to increase the number of participants. At the same time, the balance: Centre-NGO-Regions should be kept."

Samegrelo workshops:

"Not only possible, but even necessary."

"I think that for the future project development, it would be better if the representatives from the centre will be very competent and legitimate in different issues."

"I'm suspicious."

"The maximum number of participants should not be more than 16-20. If more, the results will be under threat."

"Participation of different NGOs, Centre, different regional structures is necessary."

"It will be more effective."

"The amount is of a secondary importance. The main thing is WHO will be involved. I'd like to emphasize once more that not all people involved in our project were so competent in a number of questions."

"It would be better if in the future while choosing the regional NGOs you try to find different NGOs which work on different issues. Because each of us were mainly declaring just the problems associated with our field of work. Having a wider range of NGOs will compensate that."

Question 14: Would you recommend that the Regions Project be extended to work in other regions of Georgia?	Total	Samtskhe-Javakheti	Samegrelo
I do recommend it	22	11	11
I don't recommend it			
Don't know	2	1	1

Comments offered:

Samtskhe-Javakheti workshops:

"Yes, I recommend it, especially in the regions of high risk."

"It will be necessary to extend the project in other regions of Georgia. This experience should be used."

"I think it will be good to publish a large scale monograph on the materials obtained in the project."

"It will be helpful for the regions to discuss together with the Centre their specific problems, which are not so well known. NGOs will play their uniting and coordinating role in this process."

"I think that at these kind of meetings, as many people should be invited as possible, who are representatives of the regions, who are competent in the problems of the regions, and also, the representatives of the governmental structures of the regions."

"It is necessary to publish the project experience. This will be for experts and the people who are interested in our themes."

"It's necessary, the results in this case would be better."

Samegrelo workshops:

"Of course, it will be interesting to spread the project into other Georgian regions and then to organize a joint meeting of all the regions (if it would be possible.) I feel satisfied and positively stimulated as a result of these meetings. Our participants' warm relationships made me sure that in spite of the problems in the regions, it is possible to solve them."

"It will be good, because other regions of Georgia have problems in their relationships with the Centre. Especially since you've already established this tradition. And, you can also make your work even more sophisticated based on this project experience."

"It think it is very necessary."

"It depends on the region and the time (I mean the political-social situation)."

"Since the project went on here in a very effective way, it would be useful for other regions to spread its positive potential."

"Especially if you would choose another region isolated from the Centre."

Additional comments:

"I think the project was successful. We gained much. But I have several recommendations: in the future it will be good to choose the organizations carefully according to their activities. The amount of participants: not more than 19-20 persons. At the very beginning of the project the goal should be defined clearly and concretely and not in a general or theoretical way. It will be good if the responsibility for the process of each participant will be increased. It will be good if from the very beginning the joyful games we had at the last workshop would be employed. It will help to deal with the tension emerging in the processes of the work. An any way, everything was great. Thank you very much to all."

"I am happy that I had an opportunity to participate in this project and I wish this project to be continued in the direction of implementing the projects we've created. I would be happy to make my modest contribution to this."

"Thank you very much for everything, I am happy with the project. I think that the project was designed in a professional manner. The project already has many good results. As about me, e.g. I will use the information obtained through our group work as a personal action plan. It was very interesting for me to view the problems in the framework of needs theory and conflict prevention. It was new for me. If such a procedure would always be conducted before any project's funding, it would significantly increase the effectiveness of projects in general."

Appendix O

Georgian Regions Project Participants Proposal Summaries

December 2001

**Georgian Regions Project
Participant Proposal Summaries
December 2001**

Introduction: The summaries below describe 7 projects derived from problem solving research workshops held in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Samegrelo during 2001. Each workshop had representation from the Georgian Government, both State Chancellery and the Parliament, from some local governance structures, and from local, regional, or national NGOs. All the projects have a component of cooperation between 'the region' and 'the Center', and all the projects are linked in some way to improving the satisfaction of 'human needs' such as identity, security, participation, understanding, development, and in doing so, the projects once realized should contribute to conflict prevention, and the development of civil society.

Project Name: Co-operation of Government and Public Institutions for Mutual Development

Region: Samtskhe-Javakheti and Samegrelo

Implementing Agency: Human Resources Development Fund

Partnership: State Chancellery, local governance structures and NGOs

Contact Person: Mamuka Shengelia, 51 Iosebidge St., Tbilisi; Tel: 38-41-32

1 Year Budget: \$68,400

Brief Description: This project envisions the creation of a special agency dedicated to improving communication, information sharing, and problem solving through co-ordinated activities between the Central government, local governance structures, and representatives of civil society.

Project Name: Intensive Courses in Georgian Language for Teachers and Public Servants in Samtskhe-Javakheti

Region: Samtskhe-Javakheti

Implementing Agency: NGO 'Tolerant'

Partnership: NGO Tolerance, Center for Regional Policy and Management, Committee on Civil Integration and Interethnic Relations of the Georgian Parliament

Contact Person: Ucha Bluashvili; 6 Tsikvadze St., Akhaltsikhe; Tel: 2-14-75

1 Year Budget: \$25,440

Brief Description: The purpose of the project is to develop an Intensive Course in Georgian Language; train language teachers in the methodology; conduct Georgian language courses throughout the region; and establish a Georgian Language Skills certification process.

Project Name: Creation of a Business Centre in Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda (Javakheti)

Region: Javakheti

Implementing Agency: Regional Civil Initiatives for Democracy Promotion in Samtskhe-Javakheti

Partnership: Regional Civil Initiatives, and the State Chancellery Department of Regions of Georgia

Contact Persons: Armen Mgdesyan, Levon Levanyan; 14 Charents St. Akhalkalaki; Tel:

1 Year Budget: 14,352

Brief Description: The purpose of the project is to collect and make available information on economic conditions and opportunities in the Javakheti region; to provide training in small business development; and to contribute to a stable, growing, and healthy local economy in the Javakheti.

Project Name: Legal Assistance and Legal Rights in Samtskhe-Javakheti

Region: Samtskhe-Javakheti

Implementing Agency: Union of Meskhetian Democrats

Partnership: Union of Meskhetian Democrats, State Chancellery, Young Lawyers Association

Contact Person: Amiran Meskheli

1 Year Budget: \$76,870

Brief Description: The purpose of this project is to provide people living in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region with legal services and resources, thereby contributing to the protection of human and civil rights.

Project Name: Civil Education and Information Center

Region: Samegrelo

Implementing Agency: Public Interest Protection League

Contact Person: Mzevinar Jojua, 3 Bamarjveba Street, Zugdidi; Tel: (77) 45-70-10

1 Year Budget: \$20,289; nb. Proposal request is \$12,236

Brief Description: The project is designed to provide multiple resources and methods for the sharing and dissemination of information relevant to the development of civil society, and improving relationships between the governance and NGO sectors.

Project Name: Strengthening of Local Self-Governance Systems in Zugdidi

Region: Samegrelo

Implementing Agency: Euro-Caucasian Cooperation Association

Partnership: Euro-Caucasian Cooperation Association, State Chancellery, Cultural Educational Center, Foundation for Development of Human Resources

Contact Person: Emzhar Pazhava, 2 Agmashenebly; Tel: 2-64-91

1 Year Budget: \$19,039

Brief Description: The purpose of this project is to strengthen the capacity of local governance, specifically the Sakrebulo in Zugdidi, by providing information and training to locally elected officials.

Project Name: Establishment of a Samegrelo Region Business Center

Region: Samegrelo

Implementing Agency: Vocational Training and Job Center

Partnership: Vocational Training and Job Center, State Chancellery,

Contact Person: Irma Kortua, 89 Rustaveli, Zugdidi; Tel: 2-76-63

1 Year Budget: \$29,000

Brief Description: The project is designed to assist small and medium sized businesses develop in Samegrelo through a program of research, information dissemination, and training.

Appendix P

Georgian Regions Project Complete List of Activities and Events

April 2000 - December 2002

Georgian Regions Project Events / Dates

19 April 2000 – First public presentation of Regions Project, in Tbilisi, to what we then called the IA ‘braintrust’ – respected colleagues and contacts in Georgia. About 20 participants.

12 – 25 May 2000 – Consultations in Georgia, including British Embassy and DFID, American Embassy, Georgian Parliament; international NGOs including OCSE, UNV, Caucasus NGO Forum; and Georgian NGOs including ICCN, CIPDD, Caucasus Links, Assist Yourself.

10 - 20 June 2000 – Consultations in Georgia, including Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Georgian Governance and Civil Society Project (GOSCISP); UNV. First consultation trip to the ‘regions’ of Poti and Zugdidi meeting Zugdidi NGOs Atinatia and Public Interest Protection League (PIPL); and Poti based NGOs, including Poti Youth Alliance.

17 – 20 October 2000 – Joint workshop in Javakhetia, with UNV. Albertine Smit facilitated 2 days of Alternatives to Violence (ATV), and Davin Bremner facilitated 2 days of ‘Negotiation as a Life Skill’. About 25 participants.

24 October 2000 – One day seminar in Zugdidi, presenting the framework for the Georgian Regions Project to about 15 local NGOs and local governance structures.

22 – 24 November 2000 – Julia Jacoby and Malchaz Chemia consultation visit to Samegrelo, with meetings in Poti and Zugdidi.

7 December 2000 – One day seminar in Poti, presenting the framework for the Georgian Regions Project to about 20 local NGOs and local governance structures and individuals, including the mayor of Poti.

1 – 12 December 2000 – Consultation visit to Tbilisi, Ninotsminda, Alkhalkalaki, and Akhaltsikhe. Meetings with Parliamentary Committee on Civil Integration, UNV, OSCE, GOCISP, Foundation for Development of Human Resources (FDHR). In Samtskhe – Javakhetia we met with local NGOs and local governance representatives, and the staff person of the President’s Special Representative in Akhaltsikhe.

9-11 April 2001 – First London Design Workshop, Dr. Nodar Sarjveladze and IA colleagues.

18 – 21 April 2001 – Analysis workshop for Samtskhe – Javakhetia, in Likani. About 20 participants.

25 – 28 April 2001 – Analysis workshop for Samegrelo, in Tskhaltubo. About 18 participants.

30 May – 2 June 2001 – Problem solving workshop for Samtskhe – Javakhetia, in Likani.

6 – 9 June 2001 – Problem solving workshop for Samegrelo, in Tskhaltubo.

13 – 15 August 2001 – Workshop on Inter-regional Communication, Interethnic understanding and Tolerance in Georgia. Sponsored and facilitated by Multi-national Georgia and International Alert, in Kabuleti. About 20 participants.

10 – 12 September 2001 – Second design workshop in London. FDHR team plus IA colleagues. 11 September 2001 tragedies in America.

3 – 6 October 2001 – Georgian Regions Project Integration Seminar in Tbilisi. All workshop participants from Samtskhe – Javakhetia, and Samegrelo, the Center, as well as additional participants from Tbilisi and international NGOs. About 50 participants.

8 October 2001 – Consultation meeting with Tbilisi based “experts”, reprisal of the original ‘braintrust’ group, including OSCE, UNV, GOSCISP, IOM, CIPDD, Young Lawyers Association, Georgian Parliament, Assist Yourself, Caucasus House. About 20 participants.

20 – 21 October 2001 – Georgian Regions Project / Multi – National Georgia workshop on “Inter-regional Communications, Interethnic Understanding and Tolerance, in Tbilisi. Davin Bremner as co-facilitator, about 20 participants.

24 – 27 October 2001 – Action Planning Workshop for Samtskhe – Javakhetia, in Likani.

31 October – 3 November 2001 – Action Planning Workshop for Samegrelo, in Tskhaltubo

7 November 2001 – Georgian Regions Project and FDHR co-convened a meeting for coordination of organizations working in Samtskhe – Javakhetia. Organizations represented included FDHR, IA, OSCE, Multi-National Georgia, CIPDD, IOM, Mercy Corps, GOSCISP, and UNV.

11 December 2001 – Georgian Regions Project convened ‘donor meeting’ to present project developed in the framework of the problem solving research workshops. Participants included Georgian State Chancellery, IRIS Georgia, Mercy Corps, Georgian Parliament, Eurasia Foundation, OSCE, UNDP/UNV, Poti Youth State Department, Union of Democratic Meskhs, Poti Youth Alliance, NGO Tolerance from Alkhaltsikhe, PIPL, Euro-Caucasian Cooperation Association, British Council, USAID, FINCA, IOM, Horizonti Foundation. Meeting opened by British Ambassador Deborah Barnes – Jones.

19 – 21 March 2002 – Negotiation as a life skill, training for the Poti Youth Alliance and other NGOs and local governance participants, in Poti. About 20 participants.

17 – 19 April 2002 – Problem solving research workshops on ‘Local Governance in Alkhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki and Aspindza, convened by State Chancellery, FDHR, and Georgian Regions Project. Held in Likani. About 15 participants.

23 – 27 April 2002 – Jana Javakhishvili (FDHR) presents on Georgia, and the Georgian Regions Project, at the XI Jornadas, International Conference on Peace Culture and Reconciliation, in Gernika, Basque country of Spain. Davin Bremner

presents on Georgian Regions Project, and also on the role of conflict resolution, 'post September 11'.

9 – 11 May 2002 – Second Local Governance workshop, in Likani. 15 participants.

12 – 14 June 2002 – Davin Bremner and Nodar Sarjveladze present on the Georgian Regions Project, at the 8th International 'Workshop on Achievement and Motivation' Psychology conference, in Moscow, Russia.

20 – 21 November 2002 – 2 day seminar on 'Basic Human Needs and Institutional Development in Georgia', in Tbilisi. 40 Participants. Seminar opened by British Ambassador Deborah Barnes – Jones.