

Conflict Analysis as Interactive Conflict Resolution?  
Assessing World Vision's "Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts" Workshops: A Comparative Analysis

by

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

In 2003, the Peacebuilding and Reconciliation team of World Vision International (WVI) held its first “Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts” (MSTC) workshop in Uganda. Since then, it has held twenty-eight similar workshops in nineteen conflict-affected countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America (Lowrey & Scott, 2010). MSTC, the conflict assessment framework (CAF) developed and utilized by World Vision, is implemented during three-and-a-half day workshops that gather local participants from World Vision and other organizations (NGO and UN representatives, academics, and government officials) to analyze their particular macro contexts and discuss implications for their work. While many development and humanitarian organizations use CAFs, World Vision’s interactive and participatory workshop methodology, which uses local knowledge as the primary resource for conflict analysis, seems to be unique.

### **Research Question**

Most organizations (World Vision included) conceptualize their CAF activities as means to an end: producing analysis that will then be used to enhance conflict-sensitive programming in relief, development, advocacy, and peacebuilding work. Conflict sensitivity involves understanding a conflict’s context and dynamics, as well as how an organization’s programs impact the context, in order to minimize the risk of exacerbating the conflict through well-intentioned projects. Here it is helpful to recognize a distinction between working ‘in conflict’ and working ‘on conflict’ (Neufeldt, 2010). Many of the organizations that use CAFs work in conflict areas, making conflict sensitivity important. But these organizations do not necessarily attempt to work ‘on conflict’ to intentionally address its issues and causes – and they certainly do not envision their CAF activities as having this potential. CAFs are used most frequently to

*inform* humanitarian and development interventions, but not intended as interventions themselves.

However, because WVI employs a unique mechanism for the *process* of conflict assessment by bringing together local stakeholders for joint analysis, the question arises of how the MSTC workshop contributes not only to conflict-sensitive programming, but also to conflict resolution and transformation directly. In the process of working ‘in conflict,’ do the MSTC workshops also work ‘on conflict’? Specifically, is the participatory, interactive MSTC workshop actually a form of Interactive Conflict Resolution (ICR)?

ICR is a social-psychological approach to conflict resolution used in unofficial meetings to focus on subjective elements of conflict, such as perceptions, misunderstandings, emotions, memories, miscommunications, mistrust, and unmet basic human needs (Fisher, 2006). ICR methods include its flagship intervention, the problem-solving workshop (PSW), dialogue, and conflict resolution training, but can the interactive MSTC conflict analysis workshop be added to this list? How does it fit (or not fit) into the field of ICR?

### **Significance of the Study**

Though WVI has been conducting MSTC workshops for seven years, only in the last year has academic scrutiny been applied to the practice through internal and external evaluations and participation in a panel (“Conflict Analysis as Intervention”) at the 2010 International Studies Association (ISA) Annual Convention. CAFs have been largely ignored by academia (as is demonstrated in the literature review), which not only indicates a disconcerting gap between theory and practice in the field of conflict resolution, but is detrimental to both arenas, as CAF practitioners seldom benefit from the research of scholars on conflict analysis and academics seldom benefit from the experience of CAF practitioners. This research project highlights a

specific practitioner tool about which little has been written and attempts to place it within the academic discourse.

That the MSTC, which was developed for a specific purpose (to enhance conflict-sensitive programming in relief, development, and advocacy), may actually have an unintended constructive impact on conflict contexts due to the *process* by which it is implemented is a fascinating consideration. Here this project relies heavily on John Paul Lederach's concept of a 'transformative platform' (Lederach, 2003, 2005), a process-structure that provides for ongoing relationship and engagement between people who have been historically divided. A transformative platform is not a solution in itself (like a negotiated settlement), but has the ability to *generate* creative solutions and sustain engaged relationship between parties in the face of ongoing episodes of conflict.

Herbert Kelman, a social psychologist known primarily for his work in the field of ICR, describes the desired outcome of ICR interventions in terms analogous to Lederach's transformative platform: "The desired relationship [between the parties] is not one devoid of conflict, but one in which mechanisms of communication and problem solving are readily available so that conflicts can be resolved before escalating and becoming mutually destructive" (Kelman, 1999a, p.204). He propounds that a pattern of cooperative interaction between groups is one of four essential components to a transformed relationship between nations or communities with a long history of conflict (Kelman, 1999b). Joint, interactive, and cooperative ventures such as World Vision's MSTC conflict analysis workshops may contribute to such a pattern of interaction, helping to create transformative platforms even as they generate conflict-sensitive programming implications. This would have implications for WVI, other organizations that conduct CAFs, and the field of ICR.

If MSTC workshops are indeed multi-tasking as both conflict analysis and ICR – contributing to the creation of transformative platforms in divided societies – there are incentives for WVI to transform ‘conflict resolution’ from an unintended and unacknowledged impact to an explicit (though perhaps always secondary) goal of the MSTC. First, it is simply wise for organizations to be aware of the ways – both positive and negative – their interventions impact the contexts in which they work. Second, without changing the primary conflict assessment purpose of the MSTC, WVI may be able to more intentionally design certain workshop processes (e.g. facilitation techniques, identity of participants, interactive activities) in order to enhance its conflict resolution potential.

Additionally, other relief and development organizations that use CAFs may have something to learn from World Vision’s model. If the MSTC process can contribute to conflict resolution as well as the development of conflict-sensitive programming, other organizations have an incentive to adopt certain aspects of the MSTC workshop methodology in order to augment the effectiveness of their own CAF activities. Some of these aspects could include involving local stakeholders in conflict assessment to a greater degree and bringing stakeholders from the various conflict parties together for joint analysis.

However, the question is not only what ICR can add to the MSTC (and potentially other CAFs), but what MSTC workshops can add to ICR. If MSTC workshops are indeed operating as a form of ICR, what do they contribute to the field? (How) does this form of conflict analysis workshop augment ICR? The MSTC could offer ICR practitioners an additional tool with which to address protracted conflict and insights into the design of ICR interventions that may enhance the quality of analysis produced.

## **Overview of the Study**

In order to explore the research questions in more depth, I have conducted a comparative case analysis of an MSTC workshop and an ICR workshop. I performed direct and participant observation as an assistant on the third party facilitation teams of a PSW on the Cyprus conflict and an MSTC workshop in India on the Maoist insurgency in the states of Jharkhand and Bihar. Through observation of the workshop methodologies, participant interactions, and third party techniques, I compare the workshops across several key variables in order to determine whether or not the MSTC shares enough similarities with the ICR intervention to be considered a form of ICR itself. I then discuss the implications of these similarities and differences for the research questions, as well as the contributions the MSTC and ICR can make to each other.

## **Limitations of the Study**

The greatest limitation of the study is that it rests on a large assumption: that ICR does indeed contribute to the resolution of conflicts. While there is certainly evidence to show that it does (see, for example, Ronald Fisher's 2005 volume, *Paving the Way*, which documents several ICR case studies and analyzes their transfer effects to the larger peace processes), evaluation remains a significant challenge for the field of ICR. Notwithstanding the difficulty of obtaining adequate funding for thorough evaluations and the ethical problems posed by standard evaluation models such as the experimental field test (Kelman, 2008), measuring the success of ICR interventions is inherently challenging given the subjective nature of the issues they attempt to address. Evaluating changed attitudes, improved relationships, and interventions' contributions to official peace processes is murky business. Consequently, most evaluation of ICR is done on the basis of case study, anecdote, and facilitator impressions (Fisher, 1993a; Rothman & Olson, 2001), and the field is not without its critics.

This study, too, is limited in scope, as it does not attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of either ICR or World Vision's MSTC workshop. While these are areas that warrant thorough exploration, they are questions much too large for this study to answer. Instead, based on the literature pointing to the effectiveness of ICR, as well as the theoretical concept of the transformative platform, this study starts from the assumption that ICR contributes directly to the resolution of conflict and asks how the MSTC fits and does not fit into the field. If the MSTC does fit the model of ICR, it will be concluded that its practice is also contributing to the resolution of conflict.

### **Outline of the Paper**

This paper consists of six chapters. The first chapter has introduced the study, stated the research questions, and described both the significance and limitations of the study. Chapter two provides a background to the main topics of the paper, namely ICR and its flagship intervention, the PSW, and CAFs (the larger context for the MSTC) and World Vision's MSTC workshop. A review of the literature around the research questions follows this background description. Chapter three explains the design of the study, the methods for data collection and analysis, and the limitations of the research design. The fourth chapter briefly describes the two workshops and presents the study's findings based on analysis and interpretation of the data, identifying similarities and differences between the workshops. Chapter five expands on the findings by exploring their implications for the research question and relating the outcomes to theory and literature in the field of International Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR). The sixth and final chapter highlights the significance of the research findings and their implications for research and practice in IPCR, concluding with recommendations for further research and practice.

## CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND & LITERATURE REVIEW

### Interactive Conflict Resolution: Background & Description

The development of ICR as a field of theory and practice is documented in Fisher's 1997 book of the same name and can be traced back to a workshop designed by John Burton in December 1965 that addressed a conflict involving Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore (Avruch, 1998). Burton's 'controlled communication' approach brings together high-level representatives from groups or states involved in violent conflict for informal discussions facilitated by a third party panel of social scientists (Fisher, 1997a). Other early contributors to the field, Leonard Doob and Herbert Kelman, took a similar informal, small group, analytical approach to conflict resolution (Fisher, 1997a). While Doob utilized human relations and sensitivity training in workshops on the conflicts in Somalia and Northern Ireland with mixed results and some degree of criticism, Kelman's 'interactive problem-solving workshop' approach, applied most notably in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict (Fisher, 1997a; Kelman, 1972), has significantly shaped the norms of theory and practice in the field of ICR.

What distinguishes ICR from more traditional conflict resolution methods such as Track-I diplomacy, negotiation, and mediation are its emphasis on exploring the underlying needs and fears of parties locked in protracted social conflict, its emphasis on addressing poor relationships between parties, its assertion that conflict can only be resolved through mutually acceptable solutions, and its unofficial, small group discussion approach (in contrast to, for example, shuttle diplomacy between official negotiators). The initial rationale behind ICR was to provide an *alternative but complementary* form of interaction to official peace processes that focus on agreements and settlement implementation (Fisher, 2005). A central assumption of ICR is that improvement in the *relationship* between the parties will facilitate resolution of the objective

elements of the conflict (Fisher, 1995). The goal of ICR, therefore, is to provide an environment for positive interaction between unofficial representatives of antagonistic parties that enables attitude change and creative problem solving, which can then feed back into official processes and contribute to lasting agreements and de-escalation and resolution of the conflict (Fisher, 1995, 2005; Kelman, 2008).

Toward a definition of ICR, Fisher offers two. First, what he calls the ‘focused’ definition: “Small-group, problem-solving discussions between unofficial representatives of identity groups or states engaged in destructive conflict that are facilitated by an impartial third party of social scientist-practitioners” (Fisher, 1997a, p.8). This focused definition most closely aligns with the models developed by Burton and Kelman and is characterized by (1) the identity of participants as highly influential in their contexts and (2) the identity of third parties as scholar-practitioners able to bring knowledge and expertise about both social conflict and group processes and the specific conflicts in which they intervene (Fisher, 2005).

The second, ‘broad’ definition of ICR is:

Facilitated face-to-face activities in communication, training, education, or consultation that promote collaborative conflict analysis and problem solving among parties engaged in protracted conflict in a manner that addresses basic human needs and promotes the building of peace, justice, and equality (Fisher, 1997a, p.8).

This definition provides for a wider set of identities and roles for both participants and third parties. Rather than only high or mid-level influentials, participants may be from any level of society from the grassroots to leadership. Likewise, the third party need not have the same knowledge of conflict etiology and dynamics as those in the focused definition, or, may have this generic knowledge of conflict but limited knowledge of the conflict from which participants in interventions come (Fisher, 2005).

Based on these definitions and the literature, several distinguishing characteristics of all ICR interventions can be drawn: (1) representatives of the parties involved in conflict must

interact face-to-face; (2) the forum for discussion about the conflict is informal, unofficial, and low-risk; (3) assistance is provided by a skilled and knowledgeable third party; and (4) objectives include individual attitude change, the generation of innovative solutions, and improvement in intergroup relationships (Fisher, 1997a).

The literature on forms of ICR centers around three primary interventions. The PSW (see, for example, Burton & Dukes, 1990; Fisher, 1989; Kelman, 2008; Kelman & Cohen, 1976) falls under the focused definition of ICR and is discussed at greater length in the next section. The broad definition encompasses dialogue (Fisher, 1997a) and conflict resolution training that brings together conflicting groups for a common learning experience even though the interaction may only minimally address the relations between the groups (Fisher, 1997b).

As mentioned in the introduction, evaluation of the effectiveness of ICR interventions is limited. Effectiveness is linked to what is called *transfer* – how changes in individuals impact the larger conflict setting and, ultimately, policy. There are two major questions inherent in the issue of transfer: Will individual changes be maintained once participants return to the conflict setting? And, if they are maintained, can those changes be transferred to policy (Kelman & Cohen, 1976)?

Fisher's 2005 volume is one of the first to seriously explore and analyze successful transfer effects in ICR, using a comparative case study method to review nine successful interventions fitting the focused ICR definition. Fisher identifies powerful interventions as those with (1) highly influential participants, (2) multiple meetings in a neutral and informal setting, and (3) third party teams with process and substantive skills. Conflicts with high receptivity to intervention are those with (1) goals that involve integration rather than segregation, (2) power balance between parties, (3) low levels of escalation and intractability, and (4) a mutually hurting

stalemate, based on ripeness theory. Finally, Fisher defines significant transfer effects as those involving (1) cognitive changes, (2) substantive products such as frameworks or proposals, (3) movement of participants into official roles, and (4) relationship changes. The findings of the comparative study tentatively indicated that powerful interventions and receptive conflicts are linked to more substantial transfer effects and resolution of the conflict (Fisher, 2005).

Though documentation and evaluation are sparse, this study takes the available data as ‘good enough’ evidence to move forward on the assumption that ICR does indeed contribute to the resolution of protracted social conflict, while acknowledging that it is a hypothesis not impenetrable to criticism.

### **The Problem-Solving Workshop: One Specific ICR Intervention**

Though ICR includes the various methods previously listed, the PSW is certainly the most well-known and widely practiced form of ICR. Workshops take a task-oriented, analytical approach (Burton & Dukes, 1990; Kelman & Cohen, 1976) that stands in contrast to the adversarial approach of traditional negotiation and mediation. The focus is on the relationship between the parties and underlying causes of conflict rather than the settlement of specific disputes (Fisher, 1989), while the norms of the workshop require that participants engage in honest dialogue characterized by listening and seeking to understand the other (Saunders, 2000). Kelman (2008) identifies three ground rules for the PSW: (1) privacy and confidentiality of the proceedings; (2) no expectation that an agreement will be reached; and (3) equality of the parties. Participants in a PSW come as private individuals rather than official representatives but they must be influential in the context, having some connection to the decision-making process (Burton & Dukes, 1990; Fisher, 1989; Kelman & Cohen, 1976).

PSWs are always facilitated by third party teams of social scientists with knowledge of conflict dynamics and social processes (Burton & Dukes, 1990; Fisher, 1995; Kelman & Cohen, 1976). The third party role is not to propose solutions or employ leverage, but to facilitate analysis of the conflict and the development of possible solutions by inducing motivation for problem solving, improving communication between the parties, assisting in the diagnosis of the conflict, and regulating the interaction between the parties (Fisher, 1972). The third party intervenes in the workshop in three ways: (1) offering theoretical inputs about conflict theory; (2) providing content observations about what is being said; and (3) presenting process observations about the parties' interactions (Kelman & Cohen, 1976). Fisher has termed this PSW model of third party intervention 'third party consultation' (1972, 1976). It is the emphasis on the subjective elements of conflict – perceptions, attitudes, feelings, trust, commitment, communication, and orientations – that distinguishes consultation from mediation, and it is the diagnostic role – providing concepts, insights, models, and cases from conflict theory – that distinguishes consultation from pure facilitation (Fisher, 1995). This model is based on the assumptions that improvement in subjective conflict elements will facilitate a more collaborative approach to dealing with the objective side, and that those who study conflict have something more to offer in the PSW setting than facilitation skills alone.

Most workshops take place over three to five days (Fisher, 1997a). Though the agenda is not fixed, a general procedure for meetings has emerged. Rouhana (1995) distinguishes the PSW as an 'intervention model' – different from a natural group development model in that while the third party is sensitive to natural group dynamics and process, it does not allow the group to independently determine the direction and sequence of discussion. Rather, the third party leads

participants through a preset sequence of steps, using the development of group dynamics as a factor in determining the timing of transitioning from one phase to another (Rouhana, 1995).

Workshops usually begin with the sharing of views and experiences of the conflict by each participant. In this diagnostic or analysis phase, parties identify central concerns, particularly those of the other party (Fisher, 1997a; Kelman, 2008). Rouhana (1995) calls this phase ‘cognitive empathy’ – the process of each party moving from expression of its own needs to comprehension of the needs of the other. Rouhana’s second phase, ‘responsivity to the other’s needs,’ involves each party seeking reassurance that the other party is not only aware of its needs but recognizes their legitimacy and will consider them when developing solutions. The third phase of ‘joint thinking’ is a marked shift in the workshop as participants move from mutual understanding to thinking together about mutually acceptable solutions (Fisher, 1997a; Kelman, 2008; Rouhana, 1995). Participants discuss the obstacles to moving toward the solutions developed and attempt to understand the constraints of each side. In this phase, participants establish a new group identity and mode of interaction that has the most potential for creating ideas that can contribute to the resolution of the conflict (Rouhana, 1995). In the fourth and final phase, the group considers how to implement its ideas (Rouhana, 1995), thinking together about how to overcome the obstacles to possible solutions and the constraints of each side (Kelman, 2008; Saunders, 2000). Participants can process through these phases in a single workshop or over the course of several meetings, the third party having the difficult task of determining when participants are ready to move from one phase to the next (Rouhana, 1995). Rouhana also acknowledges that these phases are not entirely linear, as there is usually some cycling within a workshop or even a phase.

## **Conflict Assessment Frameworks: Background & Description**

While ICR has grown out of social psychology, is implemented largely through academic institutions, and has clear goals of contributing to the resolution of protracted social conflicts, CAFs have grown out of the practitioner world of international development and humanitarian relief and approach conflict contexts from a completely different perspective. As articulated in a report from the World Bank: “As used by most development agencies, conflict analysis is not an instrument for resolving conflict but to contribute to effective development processes” (Sardesai & Wam, 2006, p.1).

The purpose of conflict assessment for relief and development agencies is to contribute to conflict sensitivity, which is defined by International Alert & SaferWorld as the ability of an organization to “understand the context in which [it] operate[s]; understand the interaction between [its] intervention and the context; and act upon the understanding of this interaction, in order to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts” (IA/SW, 2004, p.1). The need for conflict sensitivity in development assistance and humanitarian aid is described in Mary B. Anderson’s landmark work, *Do no harm: how aid can support peace – or war* (1999), which illustrates how even the best-intentioned assistance, when lacking conflict sensitivity, can inadvertently exacerbate conflict and suffering, doing more harm than good in the end. Anderson’s work has rocked the relief and development world, making the use of conflict analysis to inform conflict sensitive programming mainstream practice in many organizations.

Such conflict analysis is operationalized through a variety of frameworks that guide analysts through exploration of specific elements of the conflict context. Though Anderson’s *Do No Harm/Local Capacities for Peace* (DNH/LCP) framework enjoys widespread use for analysis

at the project (micro) level, many organizations and institutions have developed their own CAFs for national (macro) level analysis. Examples of organizations and agencies that implement their own CAFs include the U.S. Department of State's Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS, 2008), the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID, 2002), the Forum for Early Warning and Early Response & the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (FEWER & WANEP, 2001), Germany's Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ, 2001), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency's Division for Peace and Security (SIDA, 2006), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2003), the U.S. Agency for International Development's Conflict Management and Mitigation unit (USAID, 2005), the Netherland Clingendael Institute's Conflict Research Unit (Verstegen, van de Goor, & de Zeeuw, 2005), the World Bank (WorldBank, 2005), and World Vision International (WVI, 2007).

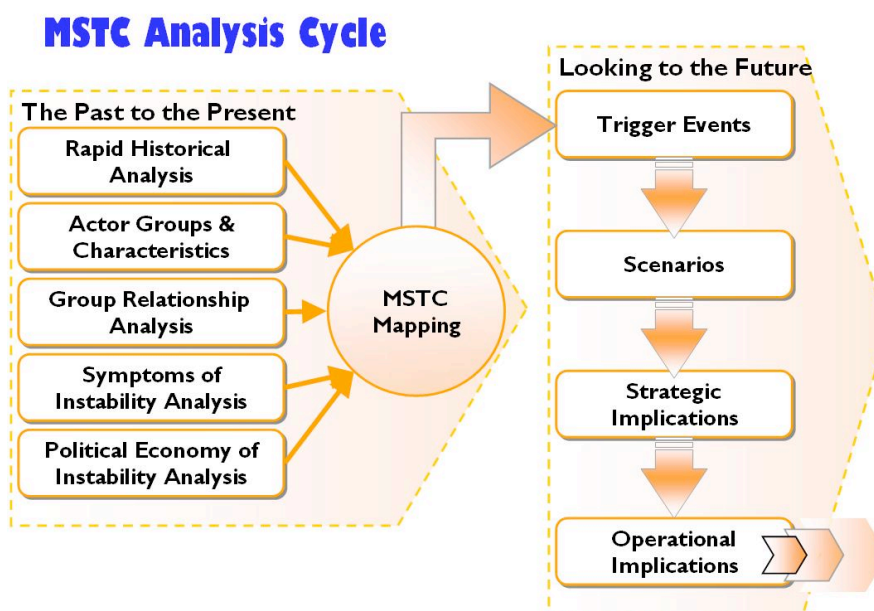
### **World Vision's "Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts" Conflict Assessment Framework**

From May to August 2009 I worked with the WVI Peacebuilding team to perform an internal review of applications of the MSTC tool. The following history and description of the tool is based on my own experience and work as a member of the team, the *MSTC Analysis Facilitator's Manual* (WVI, 2007), a brief internal document titled, "What is MSTC and why do we do it?" (Scott, 2009), and a paper on the MSTC presented by WVI Peacebuilding staff at the 2010 ISA Annual Convention (Lowrey & Scott, 2010). Citations are offered when relevant but in many cases description is given based on my own first-hand knowledge.

The development of World Vison's CAF, the MSTC, began in 2000 when senior management responded to a challenge in the article, "The political economy of war: what relief

agencies need to know” (Le Billion, 2000), which asserts that relief and development agencies operating in conflict zones often work without sufficient understanding of the context and the dynamics of turbulence. Though World Vision was integrating the DNH/LCP framework across different programming sectors, leaders recognized the need for more sophisticated tools to assist staff in analyzing and understanding the national and regional contexts in which they work, filling a macro-level analytical void. A project to develop such tools took shape under Bryant Myers, Vice President, and William O. Lowrey, Director of Peacebuilding for WVI. Myers and Lowrey engaged an independent consultant, Stephen Jackson, who worked closely with World Vision U.K.’s Siobhan Calthrop to develop the conflict assessment framework now known as the MSTC Analysis Cycle (see Figure 1) (WVI, 2007). The purpose of MSTC analysis is to ensure that World Vision staff are more conflict-sensitive practitioners, that World Vision programming at the national level considers conflict dynamics, and to equip NGO staff with the ability to analyze the contexts of ongoing political and economic instability in which they work (Scott, 2009).

**Figure 1 (taken from WVI, 2007)**



Consistent with many other organizations' CAFs, the MSTC Analysis Cycle consists of several tools, called modules, which together provide a framework for examining a particular unstable context and strategizing for the future. The first five tools look at the current situation and identify past events and triggers that have contributed to the present turbulence:

- (1) *Rapid Historical Phase Analysis* assembles three timelines of significant events that have contributed to instability either positively or negatively. The first timeline highlights national events; the second, regional and global events; and the third, World Vision and NGO events in the country. These three timelines are then aligned and phases, trends, patterns, and cycles are identified.
- (2) *Actor Groups & Characteristics Analysis* identifies up to eight actor groups (acting at various levels: local, national, regional, and international) that contribute most to the nation's turbulence either positively or negatively. Examples include government, rebel groups, civil society, and political parties, but not individuals. It then describes these groups' histories and prominent characteristics.
- (3) *Actor Group Relationships Analysis* describes the internal relationship dynamics within each actor group, as well as the relationships between each of the actor groups. The tool specifically calls for identification of either grievance or affinity between groups, the trend in the current relationship (i.e. Is an alliance strengthening? Are divisions being exacerbated?), and any trigger events that have changed the relationship in the past.
- (4) *Symptoms of Instability Analysis* identifies the most significant signs of turbulence in the context across political, economic, security, socio-cultural, infrastructure, and humanitarian sectors. Examples include food shortages, violent clashes,

environmental degradation, and displacement. The tool then describes the coverage of the symptom (throughout the nation or localized in a specific area) and whether it is worsening or improving.

(5) *Political Economy of Instability Analysis* asks a variety of questions about the political economy of the context and how these dynamics contribute to turbulence. It identifies the key resources that influence instability (positively or negatively) and connects them to economic activities and the politics of control. It then identifies those actor groups with highest interest in each resource and the winners and losers from the various economic activities, illuminating how certain resources are fueling or alleviating conflict.

At this point in the Analysis Cycle, a relationship map is constructed that gives a moment-in-time snapshot of the current situation. The map indicates the relative power of the actor groups in terms of their influence on instability and identifies conflict, alliance, formal, and informal relationships between actors. Based on this analysis of the past and present, the MSTC Analysis Cycle turns toward the future with the final three tools:

(1) *Triggers and Scenarios Analysis* is a forecasting tool that anticipates three highly likely future events that will have a high impact on the turbulent context. These events could be upcoming elections, political assassinations, new business partnerships, or any trigger that is both probable and will significantly change the current situation for better or worse. The tool then describes the scenarios that will result from these trigger events in terms of how they will change actor group relationships and power, symptoms of instability, and resource control.

(2) *Strategic Implications Analysis* looks back on the observations, trends, and conclusions from previous modules and based on this analysis, identifies the major strategic needs of the context. These needs often include good governance, equitable economic development, strengthened civil society, and peacebuilding.

(3) *Operational Implications* is the tool that calls for tangible strategies. Based on the forecast triggers and scenarios and the strategic implications of the analysis, programming implications are examined for staff in advocacy, development, humanitarian relief, and peacebuilding. Modest and achievable targets are set that incorporate MSTC analysis into World Vision's existing work.

While the MSTC tools provide a framework for thorough, holistic, and analytically rigorous context analysis (IA, 2009) that intentionally examines both greed and grievance sources of conflict (see Collier & Hoeffler, 2004), the MSTC Analysis Cycle itself does not stand out significantly from other organizations' CAFs. While World Vision's model may do better or worse at examining particular elements of conflict dynamics than those of other organizations, it is not the *content* of the framework or even necessarily the quality of analysis that makes the MSTC a potential form of ICR (not to devalue the importance of content and quality in conflict analysis, but to reiterate that these are evaluative questions this project does not address). Instead, what makes MSTC analysis unique is the *process* through which it is conducted. While many CAFs rely on more traditional methods like desk research and consultancies, WVI employs a workshop methodology through which a team of three to four facilitators guides twenty-five participants, comprised of both World Vision staff and staff from other organizations, through the Analysis Cycle. This implementation of MSTC analysis is unique in three significant ways:

- (1) *It is participatory.* MSTC analysis is not conducted by a researcher at a desk, but elicits input from those who are on the ground in the context.
- (2) *It is interactive.* While some other organizations also conduct interviews or field research as part of the conflict assessment process, WVI goes a step further in actually bringing participants in the analysis together for a three-and-a-half day workshop. Facilitators emphasize that the analysis that emerges is a *group* product, requiring a greater level of cooperation, collaboration, and consensus than participatory information gathering through interviews and observation.
- (3) *It uses local knowledge as the primary resource for analysis.* While a growing number of CAFs, such as the UNDP, the World Bank, and the Clingendael Institute are beginning to call for more participatory and even interactive methods as part of conflict assessment, WVI uniquely requires that participants in its workshops are indigenous to the context. It strives to involve a diversity of local perspectives that represents the diversity of the context, necessarily and significantly involving participants that cross lines of difference.

It is only because MSTC analysis has all three of these characteristics (participatory, interactive, involving local participants that cross lines of difference) that it may potentially be a form of ICR. In extreme cases (such as Somalia and Afghanistan), security issues have prevented WVI from conducting MSTC workshops. In these situations, the Peacebuilding team uses a Key Informant Interview (KII) strategy for working through the MSTC Analysis Cycle. Though the KII methodology is both participative and uses local knowledge as the primary resource for analysis, it is not interactive and thus clearly *not* ICR. I give this example to emphasize the importance of the workshop methodology to the essential question of this study.

MSTC workshop facilitators are selected based on three criteria: demonstrated understanding of protracted violent conflict, skill in facilitating adult education across cultures and learning styles, and ability to manage workshop planning and logistics. When possible, facilitators are chosen from the country or region where the conflict analysis takes place. Facilitators are encouraged to be aware of their biases and refrain from sharing their own perspectives. They intervene by posing questions rather than offering prescriptive advice. WVI has established a strict protocol for certifying MSTC ‘lead facilitators,’ one of which must be present at each workshop. Becoming a lead facilitator requires participation on the facilitation team at three MSTC workshops, during which the lead facilitator evaluates the ‘trainee’ on preparation, time management, improvisation, mastery of content and theory, clarity, and listening skills. The trainee must receive a grade of 80% on a formal evaluation at each of three workshops to become a certified lead facilitator (Lowrey & Scott, 2010).

## **Literature Review**

The exploration of conflict analysis as a conflict resolution intervention seems to be a new question. The recent 2010 ISA Annual Convention “Conflict Analysis as Intervention” panel on which WVI participated is one of the first forums where the topic has been discussed. There is currently almost no literature assessing the use of World Vision’s MSTC workshops, other organizations’ CAFs, or conflict analysis workshops more generally as tools of ICR. In a 2009 MSTC internal review document, I proposed as a suggestion for further research the exploration of MSTC workshops as a form of ICR, but the WVI Peacebuilding team anticipates that workshops would have to be adapted significantly in order to meet expected ICR outcomes and that adding a transformative goal to the workshop would burden facilitators and “jeopardize the usefulness of the finished product” (Lowrey & Scott, 2010, p.20). The ICR literature, which

focuses on PSWs, dialogue, and training, has nothing to say about CAFs or the MSTC workshop more specifically, but does identify conflict analysis as an important component of ICR interventions (Fisher, 1995, 1997a, 1999; Kelman, 1972; Rothman & Olson, 2001). However, Susan Allen Nan, one of the other presenters on the ISA “Conflict Analysis as Intervention” panel, reported using the S/CRS Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF) in one of a series of PSWs on the Georgia-South Ossetia conflict to supplement what she terms ‘relationship-building analysis’ (Nan, 2010). She concluded that the use of a structured framework like the ICAF adds high credibility and professionalism to the more common use of relationship-building analysis in ICR that gives participants shared agency in shaping analysis and ownership of the process and results.

The literature on conflict analysis and conflict assessment is sharply divided between academic and practitioner literature. On one hand, there is a plethora of journal articles and books written by conflict resolution scholars on what is generally termed ‘conflict analysis,’ which provides principles for analyzing such elements of conflict as stage, context, issues, parties, dynamics, and sources (see Cheldelin, Druckman, & Fast, 2008; Deutsch, 1971; Fisher, 2007; Kriesberg, 2007; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, & Miall, 2005; Sandole, 2008; Wehr, 1979). There is essentially no academic literature, however, that addresses or evaluates the CAFs developed and widely used by organizations across the globe. Two exceptions are: one article published in the journal *Conflict, Security and Development* (Buckley-Zistel, 2003) and a paper presented at the 2009 ISA Annual Convention (Izzi & Kurz, 2009). The article on conflict assessment on the *Beyond Intractability* website (Shmeuli, 2003) may also be viewed as a hybrid of scholar/practitioner literature, though it does not address CAFs specifically.

On the other hand, there is the practitioner-driven literature on CAFs and conflict-sensitive approaches to relief and development, which is found largely in the publications and reports of practitioner organizations and research centers (see Anderson, 1999; Barbolet, Goldwyn, Groenewald, & Sherriff, 2005; Bush, 1998; Gunduz & Klein, 2008; IA/SW, 2004; Lange, 2004; Leonhardt, 2003; Neufeldt et al., 2002; Sardesai & Wam, 2006). Observing this division in the literature, one wonders (1) whether or not CAF practitioners have read the conflict analysis literature and how deeply CAFs integrate conflict analysis theory into their design, and (2) how aware conflict resolution scholars are of the extensive conflict assessment work being done in the practitioner world.

CAFs seem to have sprung not so much out of conflict analysis literature, but from the Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment model of Kennedy Bush of Canada's International Development Research Centre (Bush, 1998) and from the DNH/LCP project of Mary B. Anderson of the Collaborative for Development Action (Anderson, 1999). As stated earlier, CAFs are generally conceptualized as tools to *inform* interventions, rather than as interventions themselves. They are intended to produce products (analyses) that can then be used for other purposes. But does the literature have anything to say about the inherent value of the conflict assessment *process* itself?

There seems to be agreement in the practitioner literature that there is greater value in the conflict assessment *process* when that process is *participatory*, i.e. involves local stakeholders in some fashion (interviews, field visits, observation, consultations, and occasionally workshops). Though no CAF besides the MSTC uses a participatory and interactive workshop that relies on local knowledge as the *primary* resource for analysis, there is more emphasis today on local participation and ownership of the process than in the past when there was a heavy reliance on

outside consultants (Izzi & Kurz, 2009). The UNDP, GTZ, and SIDA models for conflict assessment emphasize participatory processes: UNDP “Conflict-related Development Analysis” calls for the engagement of various stakeholders including government and civil society (UNDP, 2003); GTZ guidelines recommend a planning workshop in conjunction with a wide range of stakeholders (GTZ, 2001); and SIDA’s “Manual for Conflict Analysis” calls for workshops with a broad range of actors, noting that field staff themselves should play a central role and offering the caveat that actors directly involved in or affected by the conflict may be overly sensitive to the analysis (SIDA, 2006). Additionally, while not emphasizing participatory processes as the primary method of analysis, the World Bank and Clingendael Institute models allow for stakeholder consultation at some point in the assessment process (Verstegen et al., 2005; WorldBank, 2005).

The practitioner literature identifies several benefits to employing a participatory process. First, a participatory assessment increases the functional relevance of the end product. As Gunduz and Klein (2008) comment: “For a conflict analysis to be functionally useful for those who design and implement projects, they should be involved in the process when possible and encouraged to adapt the analytical framework to their own needs, rather than applying it rigidly” (p.5).

Second, conflict assessment can be a learning experience for participants, who are able to gain a deeper understanding of the conflict dynamics, which can be a first step toward resolving it (Izzi & Kurz, 2009; Shmeuli, 2003; SIDA, 2006). Conflict assessment can help participants clarify their interests and positions and understand the interests and positions of the other party,

promoting reflection by the stakeholders and self-discovery of the issues that are important to them (Izzi & Kurz, 2009; Shmeuli, 2003).

Third, participatory conflict assessment builds a shared body of knowledge and information about the conflict (Bush, 1998; IA/SW, 2004; Shmeuli, 2003; Verstegen et al., 2005). By allowing participants to define their own conflict (IA/SW, 2004), they are given a platform to express and address differences of opinion and build consensus around key issues (Verstegen et al., 2005).

Fourth, the assessment can be helpful in building relationships among stakeholders, between stakeholders and third parties, and between organizations working in the context (IA/SW, 2004; Shmeuli, 2003; SIDA, 2006). Engaging in a cooperative activity involving often highly contentious issues can build partnerships and coordination (IA/SW, 2004) and reframe relationships around interest- and issue-based coalitions (Shmeuli, 2003). In her presentation on the ISA “Conflict Analysis as Intervention” panel, Reina Neufeldt contended that participatory conflict analysis in two humanitarian emergency contexts in Indonesia established “what Lederach might call nascent transformational platforms” (Neufeldt, 2010) by contributing to cooperation, generating opportunities for transformative programming, and establishing networks and partnerships.

Fifth, and related to relationship-building, participatory conflict assessment can open space for dialogue on conflict issues and trends that did not previously exist (Sardesai & Wam, 2006; SIDA, 2006; Verstegen et al., 2005). In fact, the Clingendael Institute’s CAF points out that in some cases, “the dialogue and consultation process itself will prove to be the most important output” (Verstegen et al., 2005, p.19).

Finally, the benefit most extensively discussed in the literature is participatory conflict assessment's capacity to equip and empower local participants (Barbolet et al., 2005; Bush, 1998; IA/SW, 2004; Leonhardt, 2003; Sardesai & Wam, 2006; Shmeuli, 2003). Barbolet et al. (2005) eloquently express the process by which this empowerment is achieved:

A conflict-sensitive approach must engage project participants or beneficiaries – at a minimum in the analysis and implementation phases – to ensure the intervention considers and addresses conflict in all its nuances and intricacies. Through so doing, community members begin to understand that their own actions towards people from other ethnic, religious, social, economic, cultural or linguistic communities have a direct bearing on what they formerly understood as a disconnected macro political issue. Typically they react in two ways to this new understanding. First, with dismay at their own role in perpetuating violence through inadvertently supporting the structures of violence. Second, with excitement and empowerment as they understand that changing their own behaviour, and encouraging their friends and neighbours to do the same, will support peace and undermine violence. So the overall objective of conflict sensitivity is not empowerment, but empowerment can be an important and rewarding by-product of a conflict-sensitive approach (p.5).

Bush (1998) even suggests that communities can use CAFs independently to evaluate the effectiveness of outside-sponsored development activities, which can enable them to better engage with the formal development and peacebuilding process. Leonhardt (2003) proposes that conflict assessment processes can even become exercises in local conflict resolution when they offer local stakeholders the opportunity to voice their concerns about development programs' impact on the context and to jointly develop alternatives. This is the only place in the literature, to my knowledge, that links conflict assessment directly to conflict resolution.

However, there are also concerns that participatory conflict assessment processes can actually create or exacerbate conflict, be exclusionary, and do not have significant potential for empowering participants. International Alert & Safer World (2004) point out that because conflict analysis touches on highly sensitive issues, it can actually provoke conflict by surfacing these issues. These processes can therefore become a battleground for the 'right' version of history or the conflict, in which parties try to promote their own narratives (Izzi & Kurz, 2009). If facilitators are not skilled and trained in dealing with these tensions, the process can be disastrous and may need to be called off (GTZ, 2001; Izzi & Kurz, 2009). Additionally, if

facilitators do not involve a broad enough range of stakeholders, CAF exercises can actually do harm by excluding or marginalizing segments of the population and promoting a particular party's conflict narrative (Barbolet et al., 2005; Izzi & Kurz, 2009). Finally, Leonhardt (2003), directly following her comments linking conflict assessment to resolution, asserts: "Conflicts break apart communities and impose silences as people will rarely dare to openly oppose those carrying the weapons. Consequently, I regard the empowering potential of PCIA [CAFs] under the conditions of conflict as rather low" (p.64).

From the literature, it is evident that that there is some disagreement, but hints that CAFs, when employed as participatory processes as World Vision's MSTC is, have the potential to contribute to conflict resolution by promoting reflection about the conflict for stakeholders, building a shared body of knowledge, building relationships and transformative platforms, opening space for dialogue, and empowering participants. Clearly, a more precise study of this question is needed, and this study's assessment of World Vision's MSTC as a form of ICR is a first step in this direction.

## **CHAPTER THREE: DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

### **Research Design and Rationale**

This study employs a flexible research design (Robson, 2002) using a modified comparative case study approach. The cases examined are two workshops. The first is a PSW on the Cyprus conflict that was held at the George Mason Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution Point of View facility in Mason Neck, Virginia, December 1-4, 2009 (referred to as “Cyprus PSW”). The second is a World Vision MSTC workshop addressing an Indian Maoist insurgency, held at a hotel in Ranchi, Jharkhand State, India, February 8-11, 2010 (referred to as “India MSTC”). While the study does compare these two workshops, it is slightly different than a straightforward comparative case study. The first case was chosen because as a PSW it is known to fit the focused definition of ICR. Consequently, if the India MSTC is also a method of ICR, it should share many attributes with the Cyprus PSW when the two are compared. Therefore comparison of these two cases is used to determine not only similarities and differences between the workshops, but to answer the essential definitional question of this project: How does the MSTC fit (or not fit) into the field of ICR?

The case study design allows for the same unit of analysis across cases, i.e. two forms of practice. It would also have been feasible to compare the India MSTC to the ICR literature in order to determine its place in the field, but comparison of the two workshops provides a fairer and more accurate analysis, illuminating more nuances and details of workshop procedure, environment, and approach than literature alone. Additionally, since the research questions are concerned with forms of practice in the field of conflict resolution rather than primarily theoretical explorations, it makes sense that the research design is based on these methods (PSW and MSTC) in practice rather than theory.

This study also incorporates some elements of a Participatory Action Research approach (see Brydon-Miller, 1997; Dukes, 1990; Robson, 2002). While data collection and analysis were conducted solely by the author, thus limiting the participatory nature of the project, the research questions were developed in collaboration with Matthew J.O. Scott, Senior Advisor to the Peacebuilding team of WVI. It was determined that this particular inquiry would be useful to the organization as World Vision explores potentially expanding use of the MSTC. Travel to India and participation in the workshop were planned and arranged in close coordination with Mr. Scott and his colleagues at World Vision India, and progress and feedback on the research were exchanged in a casual manner throughout the duration of the study. This final paper has been shared with Mr. Scott and his colleagues in the hopes that it will be helpful in evaluating the conflict resolution potential of the MSTC.

### **Methodology and Role of the Researcher**

This study's procedure for information collection relies on a hybrid of direct and participant observation (Yin, 2003). For the Cyprus PSW, I participated as a graduate assistant to the third party team, with duties that included primarily note taking, but also assisting with immediate preparations for the workshop and logistics, supporting the third party team and workshop participants, and writing the workshop report. For the India MSTC, I participated as the documenter on the facilitation team. As the documenter, my primary responsibility was to record the products of each MSTC module in a prescribed documentation template and prepare the documentation at the end of each day for review by participants the following morning. My other duties included helping with immediate preparations for the workshop, supervising an assistant, taking photos, assisting with logistics, writing the executive summary of the workshop,

and preparing a Power Point presentation for the executive briefing to the World Vision India National Office.

As described earlier, data collection was a hybrid of both direct and participant observation. Participant observation was employed to the extent that I was a member of the third party teams for both workshops, fulfilling roles that would have existed even if I had not been conducting research. These teams were part of the subject of my research and so I was not merely a passive observer. However, my observation of participants in the workshop was from an ‘outside’ perspective. I was not participating as one of them nor experiencing the workshop as they did. My observation of workshop proceedings, interactions between participants, and interactions between facilitators and participants was more akin to direct observation. Throughout both workshops, I recorded field notes documenting the workshop proceedings and my own thoughts, observations, and questions. My observations focused on workshop processes, facilitator roles and functions, and participant interactions.

### **Procedures for Analysis and Interpretation**

In order to analyze the data collected through observation and recorded in my field notes, this study employs an interpretive, qualitative content analysis<sup>1</sup> using primarily deductive<sup>2</sup> (an already existing framework for analyzing ICR interventions), but also inductive<sup>3</sup> techniques (Berg, 2007). Because I could not obtain recordings or transcripts of the workshop proceedings due to confidentiality requirements, it was impossible to perform an accurate quantitative content analysis based on numeric coding procedures. It is also doubtful that quantitative coding, even if

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<sup>1</sup> According to Berg, interpretive approaches to content analysis allow researchers “to treat social action and human activity as *text*” (p. 304).

<sup>2</sup> Berg describes deductive content analysis as using a categorical scheme suggested by a theoretical perspective.

<sup>3</sup> Berg describes inductive content analysis as identifying themes and dimensions that seem meaningful based on the content itself, rather than applying an outside framework.

possible, would have yielded results as rich and nuanced as required to answer the research questions. Alternatively, I rely heavily on Fisher’s framework for analyzing the nature of ICR interventions used in his own comparative case study (2005), which is described in the literature review. For his study, Fisher organizes into a table a ‘Variable Checklist,’ consisting of several variables under the broad categories ‘Nature of the Conflict,’ ‘Nature of the Intervention,’ and ‘Nature of Transfer.’ His study, as mentioned previously, compares nine cases of focused ICR interventions to determine the variables that maximize transfer effects. However, for the purposes of this study, ‘Nature of the Conflict’ and ‘Nature of Transfer’ are incidental to the research questions and therefore, these categories are omitted to focus on analysis of the ‘Nature of the Intervention,’ which is of primary concern. Fisher identifies nine variables within this category based on his model of third party consultation. These variables, listed in Table 1, are used as a framework to analytically compare the Cyprus PSW and India MSTC.

**Table 1** (adapted from Fisher, 2005)

<b>1. Participants:</b>	Number per party
	Identity
	Connections
<b>2. Meetings:</b>	Number
	Duration
	Frequency
<b>3. Setting:</b>	Neutrality
	Informality
	Seclusion
<b>4. Agenda/Topics</b>	
<b>5. Third Party Team:</b>	Number
	Identity

	Knowledge
	Skills
<b>6. Third Party:</b>	Role
	Functions
<b>7. Objectives:</b>	Third Party
	Parties
<b>8. Process of Meetings:</b>	Nature of Discussions
	Necessary Conditions
<b>9. Outcome of Meetings:</b>	Effects on Participants

Data analysis takes place in two phases. In the first and most rigorous phase, I employ deductive content analysis to descriptively compare the two workshops across each of the variables in Fisher’s framework in order to determine whether the India MSTC shares enough elements with the Cyprus PSW to also qualify as a focused ICR intervention. Second, I perform inductive content analysis, commenting on similarities and differences between the two workshops across three variables I found significant that are not included in Fisher’s framework: theoretical assumptions, the type of conflict, and the proclivity of participants toward either analysis or strategy development.

### **Limitations of Research Design & Methodology**

This research design and methodology have four major limitations, one concerning the research scope and three concerning the research methodology. First, the scope of the study is necessarily small. Conclusions about the utility of the MSTC methodology as a form of ICR are based on observation and comparison of only two workshops. This is particularly limiting considering that while the PSW is the cornerstone of the field of ICR and fits the focused

definition, it is not the only method of ICR. Comparison of the Cyprus PSW and the India MSTC should reveal fairly clearly the MSTC's utility as a method of ICR according to the focused definition, but its contribution to ICR based on the broad definition is more ambiguous. Also, though MSTC workshops are performed with less diversity than ICR interventions, there is still some variation from country to country, particularly in terms of the identity of participants. Naturally, comparison of more units of practice – different types of ICR interventions and more MSTC workshops – would augment the analysis significantly. However, comparison of the two workshops still provides enough quality analysis to draw some valuable conclusions.

The second limitation of the chosen methodology consists of those drawbacks associated with participant observation. While distinctive benefits of participant observation include the researcher's ability to gain access to otherwise inaccessible events and perceive reality from an 'inside' perspective, its major problems have to do with potential biases produced and the demands of the participant role relative to the observer role, which can reduce the thoroughness and quality of observations (Yin, 2003). As a part of the third party team for both workshops, occasionally my duties relative to my role as graduate assistant/documenter (i.e. participant) demanded attention from me that impeded my ability to observe the workshops. For example, at one point during the Cyprus PSW I was asked to make a phone call that took me out of the room for part of a workshop session; on several occasions during the India MSTC my duties in preparing supplies for modules took my attention away from the workshop proceedings. However, while the occasional diversion of my attention was an inherent limitation of my participant role, the three-and-a-half days of each workshop provided ample time to observe the trends and patterns necessary to perform analysis of the variables.

A third limitation is connected to the second and concerns the lack of uniformity of data collected from the two workshops. One other problem related to participant observation occurs when the phenomenon being studied is dispersed, making it difficult for the researcher to be in the right place at the right time (Yin, 2003). While this was not an issue with the Cyprus PSW – where all sessions were held in plenary – it was a minor issue with the India MSTC, which involved a considerable amount of group work. This being the case, I was unable to observe all the discussions taking place. Though I rotated between groups and tried to observe each equally, my notes from the India MSTC read much less like a transcript than my notes from the Cyprus PSW, which generally capture all that was said. I minimize this limitation by employing interpretive, qualitative content analysis, a more appropriate method given the circumstances than quantitative coding of my field notes.

A final limitation concerns the difficulty of gathering data regarding some of the variables in Fisher's framework through observation alone. Specifically, information about the knowledge and skills of third party teams, objectives of the third parties and participants, and the effect of the workshops on participants would have been easier to ascertain through direct inquiry in the form of interviews or questionnaires. However, because time and scope did not allow me to employ these additional research methods, comparative analysis is impressionistic based on all available data and evidence from my observations. So while analysis across these three variables draws directly upon data from the workshops, it may not be as reliable as analysis across the other variables such as third party functions, which conversely, could be determined from observation more easily than through inquiry.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: OUTCOMES**

### **The Two Workshops: Brief Descriptions**

#### *Cyprus PSW*

The Cyprus PSW was held Tuesday, December 1 through Friday, December 4, 2009, at the George Mason University Point of View retreat and conference center in Mason Neck, Virginia, just south of Washington, D.C. The purpose of the workshop was to analyze the current situation in Cyprus and discuss strategies for supporting the peace process, specifically the current negotiations between Dimitris Christofias, President of the Republic of Cyprus, and Mehmet Ali Talat, President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The workshop was hosted by the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR) at George Mason University in partnership with the Peace Initiatives Project of Portland State University and the International Peace and Conflict Resolution program at American University. Faculty and graduate assistants from these three universities made up the six-person third party team for the workshop.

The workshop brought together a small group of peacebuilders from the two communities on the island. The four Turkish-Cypriot and three Greek-Cypriot participants were all active in promoting bi-communal reconciliation and supportive of negotiations and an agreement between the two leaders. The first half of the workshop (day one and the morning of day two) focused on diagnosis of the current situation vis-à-vis negotiations and included analysis of the forces supporting the peace process and those in resistance to it. The second half of the workshop (the afternoon of day two and day three) shifted toward the development of strategies for supporting negotiations given the previous analysis. The workshop was held in English (the common language of Cyprus given its British colonial past), with only occasional side conversations in Greek and Turkish. All discussions were held in plenary except for the first half of day four,

which involved some group work to synthesize themes from the previous days. On the last day of the workshop, the afternoon session was held at ICAR's Arlington, VA offices, where representatives from local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the UNDP, and the European Union (EU) heard reports from the participants on the main outcomes and policy implications of the workshop.

### *India MSTC*

The India MSTC was held Monday, February 8 through Thursday, February 11, 2010, at a hotel in Ranchi, the capital of Jharkhand State, India. The purpose of the workshop was to analyze current instability in the Indian states of Jharkhand and Bihar – specifically the instability caused by a local Maoist (Naxalite) insurgency – and to discuss the operational implications of this analysis for World Vision's programming in the two states. The workshop was hosted by the World Vision Ranchi Programme Monitoring Office (PMO) in coordination with the Peacebuilding and Reconciliation team of WVI. The five-person facilitation team consisted of a lead facilitator (Peacebuilding team staff), two co-facilitators (World Vision India, but not Ranchi PMO, staff) and two documenters (myself and a Ranchi PMO staff member).

The workshop brought together eighteen participants involved in civil society organizations (CSOs) mostly in Jharkhand state. Thirteen of the participants were World Vision staff members from the Ranchi PMO and other local Area Development Programmes throughout Jharkhand and Bihar. Five participants represented other local NGOs and CSOs working in the two states. The workshop began on the afternoon of February 8 with introductions and Rapid Historical Phase Analysis. Day two covered Actor Group Characteristics and Relationship Analysis, Symptoms of Instability Analysis, and began Political Economy of Instability Analysis. Day three finished the Political Economy module and covered Mapping and Triggers

& Scenarios Analysis. The final day shifted toward development of strategies with the Strategic and Operational Implications modules and ended with a short workshop reporting session with a local Ranchi government official.

The workshop was held in English with some informal simultaneous translation for a few participants who only spoke Hindi. Small group discussions were often conducted in Hindi and participants were encouraged to speak in Hindi if it was more comfortable for them. Participants were divided into three groups and seated at three small tables. The workshop included a significant amount of small group activities with discussions of group work held in plenary.

### **Comparison of the Two Workshops: Deductive Content Analysis**

#### *Participants*

Determining the number of participants per party in the Cyprus PSW is quite straightforward. The parties to the conflict in Cyprus are easily identified and participants were chosen based on their association with one of two identity groups in order to have equal representation from each party. Consistent with ICR theory of practice, representation at the Cyprus PSW was relatively equal, with three Greek-Cypriot participants and four Turkish-Cypriot participants. Determining the number of participants per party at the India MSTC, on the other hand, is more difficult for several reasons. First, identifying the parties to the conflict themselves is not as simple a task as in the Cyprus case. Are the parties Maoists and non-Maoists? Naxalite insurgents and the state government? The upper classes and lower classes? The conflict does not fall along clearly defined social identity lines, but rather involves a violent insurgent group, its supporters, and a diversity of other actor groups (participants identified seven that impact the turbulence). Second, participants in the India MSTC were not chosen based on their identification with a particular party to the conflict, but on other criteria for diversity

such as gender, age, organizational affiliation, sector of work (development, advocacy, humanitarian affairs, etc.), and location (particularly rural and urban). Third, participants were simply not identified in the workshop setting as representatives of parties to the conflict. Though a diversity of perspectives was represented and facilitators were confident that Maoist sympathizers were present, participants were most commonly identified not as members of a particular party, but as either ‘internal’ (World Vision employee) or ‘external’ (non-World Vision employee) participants. Therefore, though the total number of participants in the two workshops can be compared (seven in the Cyprus PSW and eighteen in the India MSTC), the number of participants per party is a variable across which comparison is more difficult.

The social identity of Cyprus PSW participants was clearly linked to a specific group, either Greek- or Turkish-Cypriot. However, despite this division, all participants supported bi-communal peacebuilding and the current Track-I negotiations. So while participants crossed a significant – and according to ICR theory of practice, the most salient – line of tension in terms of ethnic and cultural identity, identities did *not* cross the other main line of difference examined in the workshop: those either supporting or opposing current negotiations (colloquially referred to as the ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ camps by participants). The participants did represent the diversity of their respective collectivities in other ways, coming from various sectors of society with backgrounds in accounting, law, education, journalism, politics, and business, and fairly equal gender representation (three women and four men). Though India MSTC participant identities were not clearly linked to specific ethnic or cultural groups (at least, these linkages were not apparent to myself), a diversity of perspectives was represented in terms of age, geographic location, and political views. Participants did, however, lack diversity in three other areas: all participants represented CSOs rather than the diversity of sectors of society represented in the

Cyprus PSW; there was a much lower ratio of women to men than at the Cyprus PSW, with only six women participants, or one-third of the total; and perhaps most concerning, all participants in the India MSTC identified as Christians. While a Christian religious affiliation was not a requirement for participation in the MSTC and some diversity was sought (one Hindu was invited but did not attend and one Muslim came to the first day but did not return), the absence of other religious perspectives at the workshop in an area that is majority Hindu is problematic for a workshop that aims to elicit a diversity of perspectives.

The connections of participants are intimately tied to their identities. Participants in the Cyprus PSW had various connections to NGOs, academia, the media, business leaders, and the highest levels of government. Most participants fit the description of ‘influentials’ based on their connections both to leadership and public-political constituencies. The connections of participants in the India MSTC were more narrow in scope, but also more focused in terms of their ability to influence a specific leadership, namely, the leadership of World Vision and other CSOs. Though none of the participants would be considered ‘influential’ in terms of connections to government policy-makers, they maintained strong connections to decision makers within their respective organizations, many of them decision-makers themselves with the ability to shape and influence organizational strategy, programming, and operations.

### *Meetings*

The Cyprus PSW and India MSTC had similar durations, the PSW lasting four days and the MSTC three-and-a-half. The number of meetings over a longer time period within these particular interventions falls outside the scope of the research, which focused only on the two workshops as single events. However, while the India MSTC summary report recommendations call for the establishment of a Context Monitoring Team (CMT) to monitor ongoing changes in

the context (as do all summary report recommendations), the workshop itself will only happen once. While Cyprus, on the other hand, has a strong history of ICR interventions (see, for example, Broome, 1997; Diamond, 1997; Diamond & Fisher, 1995) by many of the same third party members and with many of the same participants, they have generally occurred in an *ad hoc* manner, making it a stretch to say this Cyprus PSW was one in a string of intentionally linked interventions. Whether future meetings of this kind will occur is unknown. On this point therefore it is safe to say that these interventions each consisted of one workshop, making the frequency variable irrelevant.

### *Setting*

The setting variable is one on which the two workshops vary most greatly. While they both occurred in relatively neutral settings (a retreat center and a hotel conference room), they differed remarkably in their levels of informality and seclusion. Both workshops were relaxed, informal, and off the record, with no transcripts or recordings, but at this point the similarities cease. The informality of the Cyprus PSW was consistent with ICR theory of practice in that it resembled an academic seminar discussion. Sessions were held in a comfortable yet professional meeting room in the lower level of the retreat center. Participants and the third party team (with the exception of one third party member with a primary observer role and the two graduate assistants) sat around an oblong conference table as one might find in an office conference room, with the third party team members sitting on each end. The room was equipped with a white board on one wall and flip chart paper, but was otherwise free of extraneous materials. The India MSTC was much more informal by comparison. Not at all evocative of an academic seminar, it resembled an interactive classroom or training environment, saturated with activities, colorful materials, group work, visual aids, and even humorous ‘energizers’ at the beginning of some

sessions. I can hardly imagine an energizer involving participants pretending to be the trunk and branches of a tree happening in the setting of the Cyprus PSW! Participants sat around three group tables, but were highly mobile throughout the workshop, moving from table to wall to new table for different activities.

In addition to being more formal, the Cyprus PSW was also much more secluded. Participants were not only removed from the conflict context and brought to the United States, but the retreat center itself was in a highly secluded area, removed even from the hotel where participants and the third party stayed for the duration of the workshop. Each morning participants were transported from the hotel in town to the Point of View facility – which is in a beautiful wooded area on an estuary – and each evening they were transported back to the hotel. Participants were intentionally and completely removed from the conflict context. Conversely, the India MSTC did not remove participants from the conflict context at all. The workshop was held in the capitol of Jharkhand state, right in the midst of the conflict. The India MSTC represents an extreme lack of seclusion even by MSTC standards due to the fact that it analyzed regional rather than national instability, which is the more common object of MSTC analysis. While MSTCs are almost always held in the country of focus, participants are at least usually removed from their normal environments and brought to a hotel in a central location for the duration of the workshop. However, since most of the participants in the India MSTC lived near Ranchi, many of them commuted from home to the hotel each day. Only a handful of participants came from a distance that required them to stay at the hotel. This meant many participants were returning each day to the demands of home, work, and family.

There are many reasons for choosing to hold a workshop in seclusion or not and it is beyond the scope of this paper to assess which strategy is most effective for the purposes of

frugality, efficiency, practicality, productivity, or sustainability. However, a risk of holding workshops in unstable contexts was illustrated in a tangible way at the India MSTC when the Naxalites called a *bandh* (general strike) on the eve of the workshop, shutting down activity in many parts of the state. The morning after the facilitation team arrived in Ranchi, the front page of the local newspaper featured a photo of an armed Naxalite at the train station where we had arrived the day before and the story told of searches and raids on trains throughout Jharkhand. The *bandh* and consequent lack of transportation in many areas prevented several participants (particularly those living further from the capitol) from attending the workshop. While twenty-five participants were originally expected, only eighteen either lived close enough or were able to find safe transportation into Ranchi.

#### *Agenda/Topics*

Broadly speaking, the Cyprus PSW and India MSTC covered similar ground in terms of workshop agenda and general topics of discussion. Both started with analysis of the current situation in each context and then transitioned into the development of strategies. Within the analysis, they addressed some similar topics such as actor groups and their impact on the context. This happened in the Cyprus PSW in the form of a force field analysis that detailed the relative strength of both internal and external stakeholders supporting and opposing the current negotiations. The Actor Group Characteristics, Relationships, Political Economy, and Mapping exercises produced similar analysis at the India MSTC that included characteristics and history of the major actors in Jharkhand and Bihar, the type of relationship between groups, and relative power in terms of resource control and ability to influence the turbulence. These broad similarities between the agenda and overall flow of the two workshops are notable, but beyond this they varied significantly in flexibility and structure.

The Cyprus PSW agenda was highly flexible. At the beginning of the workshop, the third party team presented a preliminary agenda that was open to review and amendment by participants. Though the workshop was divided into two main sections – diagnosis and strategies – within this, discussion flowed freely from topic to topic without much strong direction by the third party. If participants wanted to take discussion in a certain direction, the third party generally allowed them to do so. For example, during the first session, participants themselves suggested breaking down analysis of the context into two levels: the official level and civil society. The third party team supported this self-imposed structure, but did not provide it on its own. Later, during a session on developing strategies, participants became mired in a discussion of EU law and its impact on the conflict. A third party member intervened not to redirect the discussion toward strategies, but to ask if the group wanted to shift gears and do a diagnostic piece on the role of EU law. In this situation, participants were free to decide in which direction they wanted to go. On the whole, participants had significant control over the agenda of the workshop and the topics discussed. Originally, one entire day of the workshop was set apart to discuss strategies for ongoing rapprochement between the two communities on the island, but this agenda item was soon cut from the schedule when it became clear that time would not allow for it. The elimination of twenty-five percent of the original workshop agenda demonstrates its high flexibility and how loosely the preliminary schedule was held by the third party team.

In contrast, the agenda of the India MSTC was fixed with almost zero flexibility. Because the MSTC workshop agenda was originally designed to be held over five days but has been squeezed into three-and-a-half to accommodate demands on participant schedules, there is essentially no room for adjustment. Whereas agenda items and topics for discussion could be added and removed from the Cyprus PSW, all the modules in the MSTC Analysis Cycle had to

be worked through at the India MSTC. Participants could not decide to spend more time on one module and skip another. They had essentially no control over the agenda and when they tried to take the discussion in a different direction than what the agenda prescribed, they were usually not allowed to do so. For example, at the beginning of the workshop, one of the participants asked if the group could take time to discuss the keynote speaker's address, which had been somewhat controversial. One of the facilitators responded that there would be opportunity to address those issues throughout the workshop, but that they could not take the time for a discrete debriefing session at that point. On the morning of day two of the workshop, a discussion arose among participants about peacebuilding strategies at different levels of the organization, at which point a facilitator intervened to say these questions were better addressed at lunch or on breaks than during the workshop time. In all, the India MSTC third party team was significantly more directive than the Cyprus PSW team about enforcing the original workshop agenda.

The India MSTC was also much more structured than the Cyprus PSW. The modules of the MSTC Analysis Cycle provided a framework for analyzing the conflict in Jharkhand and Bihar, asking participants to answer specific questions and intentionally examine specific elements of the context. The Cyprus PSW did not have such a framework for analysis, but rather, broadly asked participants to share their perspectives of the current situation and allowed discussion to develop from there. There was little intentionality in making sure a set of predetermined elements was covered aside from the relatively small portion of the workshop spent on the force field analysis.

Beyond the general framework for analysis, the India MSTC also had a specific method for working through each activity in each module, with very specific directions. While the Cyprus PSW agenda was based on free flowing discussion, the India MSTC agenda consisted of

activities and exercises completed in specific steps in small groups. Each module asked participants to process through a similar cycle. This cycle usually involved the following steps: (1) brainstorming in small groups (i.e. who are the most important actor groups?); (2) reducing brainstormed ideas to a specific number in small groups (i.e. six actor groups per small group); (3) each group posting its results on the wall; (4) consolidating these results and reducing to a specific number in the large group (i.e. maximum eight actor groups total); (5) dividing the reduced results among small groups for analysis (i.e. each small group describes the history and characteristics of two or three actor groups); (6) each group posting its analysis on the wall in a matrix (i.e. actor groups in rows, history and characteristics in columns); and finally, (7) large group discussion of the matrix and observations of patterns and trends (i.e. most actor groups are characterized by greed for power). Even within this cycle, each step came with precise instructions. As an example of the specificity with which instructions were given at the India MSTC, when participants were given their very first task (to create a name tag), they were given directions to (1) fill the entire paper, (2) write with marker not ball point pen, and (3) write with arms not fingers. In contrast, the Cyprus PSW discussions were highly unstructured. For example, during strategy formulation, participants weaved in and out of discussion about the benefits of federation to the two communities on the island for several hours. Ideas were shared, and then conversation would sidetrack into other topics before cycling back around to benefits of federation again. In the end, a participant took control of the discussion and synthesized in a helpful list the benefits of federation for the Greek-Cypriot community, but without this intervention, many of the ideas expressed in the session may have been lost.

The inflexible and highly structured agenda of the India MSTC necessitated a strict adherence to the posted workshop schedule. Every day started on time and every module was

allotted a specific number of minutes. With no built in ‘buffer time,’ every extra minute used on one activity meant a minute that had to be taken from another activity. On day two, a facilitator asked permission from participants to take forty-five minutes for lunch rather than an hour in order to make up some lost time, but with this exception, the time limits of breaks and lunches were strictly observed. In contrast, the schedule of the Cyprus PSW was very malleable. Sessions started when participants had gotten their coffee and taken their seats, rather than precisely at the target start time. Fifteen-minute breaks often turned into twenty or thirty-minute breaks and it was not uncommon for hour lunches to extend for ninety minutes. The third party members were generally unconcerned with enforcing prompt starts and finishes. This analysis shows that while agenda and topics are broadly similar in the two workshops, the Cyprus PSW and India MSTC actually represent opposite ends of the spectrum across variables of agenda flexibility, structure, and facilitator directiveness over the topics discussed.

### *Third Party Team*

The third party teams for the two workshops were almost exactly the same in number. The Cyprus PSW team had six members: three primary facilitators, one facilitator in an observer role, and two graduate assistants. The India MSTC team had five members: one lead facilitator, two co-facilitators, and two documenters. Both workshops had three third party members directly involved in facilitating workshop sessions and in both workshops these three primary facilitators were men. Characteristics and roles of only these primary facilitators are compared in the next two sections.

All members of the Cyprus PSW team held doctoral degrees and were university professors of peace and conflict resolution. One member of the team was a Greek-Cypriot and though he maintained impartiality and was accepted by the participants, he contributed to the

discussion much more substantively than the other team members, fulfilling a kind of dual facilitator-participant role. For example, he offered suggestions for how civil society in Cyprus can prepare for an agreement between the leaders, proposed roles for Greece and Turkey in influencing public opinion in Cyprus, expressed his opinion of Cyprus as an anomaly in the EU, and contributed specific points to discussions on the benefits of federation to the Greek-Cypriot side and the island as a whole. In contrast, none of the facilitators of the India MSTC held doctoral degrees or taught at universities. All were World Vision employees and practitioners of relief, development, advocacy, and/or peacebuilding. The two co-facilitators were Indian, but not from the specific context (Jharkhand and Bihar states) under examination at the workshop. They did not take up the dual facilitator-participant role the Greek-Cypriot third party team member employed, but rather operated solely as facilitators.

It bears repeating that the knowledge and skills of the third party teams are two variables that were particularly difficult to assess through participant and direct observation. With this in mind, the following analysis is offered based on researcher impressions rather than direct inquiry into the background and training of the third party team members. ICR theory of practice states that third party teams should have (1) knowledge of general conflict theory and dynamics (as well as group processes) and (2) understanding of the specific conflict being analyzed. The third party team for the Cyprus PSW possessed knowledge in both these areas as scholars of conflict resolution and practitioners having worked in Cyprus and/or on the Cyprus conflict for many years. The lead facilitator of the India MSTC was knowledgeable about general conflict processes, but not to the same extent as those on the Cyprus PSW team. It is unclear whether or not the two co-facilitators had any formal training in conflict processes or resolution. However, the two co-facilitators were more knowledgeable about the conflict in Jharkhand and Bihar than

the lead facilitator. All were briefed on the conflict history and context through a short report prepared by an intern on the WVI Peacebuilding team, but on the whole, the India MSTC team possessed less knowledge in both key areas than did the Cyprus PSW team. The expertise of the India MSTC third party team seemed to lie more in international development processes than conflict-specific issues.

All the members of the Cyprus PSW team were experienced PSW facilitators, conflict resolution trainers, and adult educators, demonstrating empathic listening, capacity to manage intergroup interactions, and ability to paraphrase, summarize, and synthesize themes. The lead facilitator of the India MSTC was also a highly skilled and experienced facilitator, possessing impressive acumen about group dynamics, capacity to manage interactions amongst a much larger group, and ability to elicit the viewpoints of less vocal participants. However, the India MSTC included a facilitation training component that was not part of the Cyprus PSW. Though the two co-facilitators were experienced in facilitating other adult education processes, such as DNH/LCP trainings, neither of them had facilitated an MSTC before and were being trained to become lead MSTC facilitators. This necessarily meant the skill level on the India MSTC team was unbalanced, a reality clearly illuminated on the third day of the workshop when the lead facilitator was ill and unable to be present for many of the sessions. The co-facilitators rose to the challenge and coped with this unexpected setback admirably, but their inexperience nonetheless impacted the quality of the facilitation. For example, during Political Economy of Instability Analysis when a few participants were dominating the discussion, the facilitators either did not notice or did not possess the skills to elicit other views. Later in the day, during the development of Trigger Events & Scenarios, the facilitators seemed to lose track of time and left only fifteen minutes (an insufficient amount) for report-back and discussion of the small group work. In

general, the co-facilitators were not as directive of activities as the lead facilitator and had less control over the group, which allowed discussion to sometimes devolve into argument and irrelevant details.

### *Third Party*

ICR theory of practice indicates that the third party role should be noncoercive, nonjudgmental, nonevaluative, and nondirective over outcomes. Both the Cyprus PSW and India MSTC third party teams follow this model, although it could be argued that while the India MSTC facilitators were nondirective over the *content* of outcomes, they were in fact quite directive over the types of outcomes participants were expected to produce. The Cyprus PSW team fulfilled both the facilitative and diagnostic roles prescribed by Fisher's model of third party consultation, but the India MSTC team was purely facilitative and not diagnostic.

The third party teams from the two workshops performed three similar functions: (1) managing logistics, (2) introducing sessions, and (3) regulating interactions. Naturally, not only do workshops such as these require skilled facilitators, but capable event organizers. Both third party teams were responsible for arranging logistics prior to the workshops such as reserving workshop facilities, making hotel reservations, ordering meals, setting up rooms, and procuring necessary materials. During the workshops, they explained the schedule and agenda, made announcements, and prepared materials for future sessions. Making sure the workshops ran smoothly was a primary function of both third party teams.

Another principle function of both teams was introducing workshop sessions, although the India MSTC team performed this function more formally than the Cyprus PSW team. For each module and activity, a designated facilitator led participants through a Power Point presentation that reviewed the MSTC Analysis Cycle, described the next module, gave

instructions for the analysis activity, and provided a worked example of the activity from a previous workshop. For example, one of the most complex activities of the workshop – part of the Political Economy of Instability Analysis module – required participants to produce a matrix listing the major economic resources in the context, their associated economic activities, the legality of the activities, actor groups with interest in the activities, winners and losers from each activity, at which level the activity took place (micro, meso, macro), and the impact of the activity on the turbulence. Prior to beginning the module, a facilitator explained each of the variables to be analyzed and provided an example of what the final product would look like. This type of session introduction was the norm for each module. The Cyprus PSW team introduced sessions more formally at the beginning of the workshop when the agenda, norms, and ground rules were explained, but less formally as time went on. Session introductions were brief and generally only occurred when the third party wanted to shift the discussion and when discussions were resumed after breaks.

Regulating group interactions was also an important function of both teams, though the type of regulation needed varied between the workshops. At the Cyprus PSW, regulation consisted largely of monitoring and controlling interruptions and going back to elicit the views of participants who had been cut off by others. A few times during the workshop, a topic caused an outburst with many participants talking at the same time. When this happened, a third party member intervened to remind participants to speak one at a time and not interrupt each other. On the morning of day two, one of the team members noted a pattern of interruptions during day one and in addition to reminding participants of the ground rules, asked them to intentionally reflect and listen more before speaking. The type of regulation needed most at the India MSTC was preventing the most vocal participants from dominating large group discussions. To do this,

facilitators intentionally and frequently elicited the perspectives of quieter participants who were less assertive in expressing their opinions. Ensuring that all viewpoints were voiced and heard was an important facilitator function. Sometimes, the facilitator specifically asked those who had not spoken in a particular discussion to share, sometimes he noted for the group that discussion was being monopolized by two or three people, sometimes he called on specific individuals to contribute, and on several occasions the facilitator encouraged participants to speak in Hindi if they were more comfortable and specifically asked for input from Hindi-only speakers. This type of regulation was most likely unnecessary at the Cyprus PSW because of the significantly smaller participant group. With only seven participants, it was relatively easy for each to contribute equally without third party intervention, but with eighteen participants at the India MSTC, facilitator awareness of large group discussion dynamics was required to guard against the marginalization of more introverted participants.

In addition to these three functions, the Cyprus PSW third party team performed three other functions not performed by the India MSTC team: (1) providing substantive input, (2) directing the flow of discussions, and (3) improving communication between participants. Providing substantive input was a function that set the Cyprus PSW third party team apart from the India MSTC team in terms of the diagnostic role. On a few occasions the Cyprus PSW team made observations in the context of participant discussion based on conflict theory and cognitive psychology; for example, intervening once to observe that there are two sides to conflict – the cost-benefit side and the emotional and identity side – and another time to explain that research shows people value losses more than gains in negotiations. At another point, one of the third party members made a semi-formal presentation on different levels of coordination between groups and organizations. The team also brought physical content into the workshop for

participants to reflect on: an article written by a third party member on Cyprus as the EU anomaly and a report on Cyprus from International Crisis Group. Additionally, the third party team incorporated relevant examples from other conflicts. The roles of Britain and Ireland in the Northern Ireland peace process were presented as a model for Greece and Turkey in Cyprus; Canada was used as an example of a federation; presidential candidates in the United States reaching out to political independents was used to illustrate the importance of reaching moderates in Cyprus; and the coordinated statements of Mandela and de Klerk following apartheid in South Africa were offered as a model for the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot leaders. Contributing substantively to discussions was seen as value added rather than compromising neutrality or impartiality.

As its second unique function, the Cyprus PSW team sought to give direction to discussions, an important facilitator role. It did this frequently through asking questions of participants, such as, “What can civil society do to help leadership break out of the box?” and, “What about the implications of federation for the relationships with Greece and Turkey?” These questions asked participants to think about something new and/or probed further into participants’ previous statements. The third party also directed discussions by reminding participants to stay on the general topic. This involved preventing the group from moving too early into strategy development (during the analysis phase), but more often, urging participants to focus on strategies rather than slipping back into diagnosis, which happened frequently during the second half of the workshop. Third party members had to repeatedly redirect participants to think about strategies. Because this direction function required improvisation, it sometimes seemed that different third party members were trying to guide discussion in different directions, e.g. one member would ask a question but before participants were able to fully explore it,

another third party member would ask a different question. At times, this contributed to unfocused discussion.

The Cyprus PSW team's third unique function, improving communication between participants, was implemented in a few different ways. Third party members effectively summarized and paraphrased participants to bring clarity throughout the workshop. They also asked questions to clarify participants' statements and views, such as, "Are you speaking about leadership or civil society?" and, "Is Cyprus that important to Turkey?" These questions differed from directional questions in that they did not ask participants to think about something new, but to elucidate ideas previously expressed. The third party team also regularly identified main ideas and themes from the discussions, sometimes in an *ad hoc* manner in the midst of discussion when a clear theme emerged and sometimes deliberately at the beginning or end of sessions to review main ideas from previous discussion. On the morning of day two, the afternoon of day two, the end of day two, and the afternoon of day three, the third party set time aside to summarize themes from previous workshop sessions.

The India MSTC facilitation team performed four functions not performed by the Cyprus PSW team: (1) answering questions and explaining tasks, (2) monitoring time, (3) assisting participants in identifying themes, and (4) training and evaluating co-facilitators (lead facilitator function). In addition to formally introducing sessions and activities, facilitators were also available to answer participants' questions and provide further direction about small group work. After session introductions, it was common practice for each facilitator to go to a different small group, clarify the instructions for the activity, and help the group should it encounter any difficulties – much as a teacher would do in a classroom. If a question or misunderstanding came up more than once, a facilitator made a clarifying announcement for the whole group. For

example, during Actor Group Analysis, a facilitator reminded participants to only consider those groups active in the context in the present time; during Symptoms of Instability Analysis, a facilitator reminded participants to consider symptoms from different sectors of society. Facilitators did not participate in the group work, but helped groups complete work correctly and thoroughly.

The second important India MSTC facilitator function was keeping track of time and clearly communicating the time allotted for the task at hand. Because of the highly structured and inflexible workshop agenda, it was essential that facilitators were cognizant of the time and urged participants to complete tasks quickly. The MSTC employs *rapid* analysis, meaning facilitators are willing to sacrifice ten to twenty percent of accuracy for more content in shorter periods of time. Analysis was not meandering and relaxed as in the Cyprus PSW. Each session introduction included the time participants had to complete the activity: twenty minutes for Rapid Historical Phase Analysis brainstorming, fifteen minutes for Actor Group Characteristics & History Analysis, seventy minutes for Relationship Analysis, ten minutes for Symptoms of Instability brainstorming, etc. Facilitators gave small groups constant reminders of how much time was left for an activity and sometimes even told groups the rate at which they needed to work in order to finish on time, i.e. seventy minutes for Relationship Analysis meant each group analyzing one relationship every ten minutes. Time keeping was an essential function for facilitators during the India MSTC in order to keep participants focused and engaged.

Identifying themes and trends in the detailed content of analysis was one of the most important outputs of the India MSTC, making it vital for the facilitation team to ensure illuminating patterns was the focus of large group discussions of small group work. However, unlike the Cyprus PSW third party team, which itself summarized and identified themes from

discussions, the India MSTC team assisted participants in identifying themes themselves. Completed matrices were often very complex; for example, the Relationship Analysis matrix displayed seven rows of actor groups by seven columns of actor groups with details about the internal and inter-group relationship between each of the groups. Because small groups were assigned only portions of the matrices to complete, seeing a matrix posted on the wall was the first time groups saw the complete picture of the analysis. While facilitators always gave time for participants to read the entire matrix and offer suggestions for corrections of major and clear errors, it was important that they did not allow discussion to become mired in details. Facilitators assisted participants in identifying themes by redirecting discussion when it became focused on minutiae. They also asked questions to help participants think in terms of patterns, such as: Are there trigger events common to several groups? Are there groups that have many alliances? Which actors are most isolated? Are there resources that no one seems to be interested in? Without this type of facilitation, participants inevitably focused on details that usually did not help in understanding the broader picture of the context.

The final function of training and evaluating fell to the lead facilitator on the India MSTC team. As mentioned previously, the two co-facilitators on the team had never facilitated an MSTC before and their participation on the team was part of their training to become lead facilitators. This meant an additional function for the lead facilitator, as he had to balance his own facilitation responsibilities with observing and assisting others. When a co-facilitator was having difficulty keeping participants focused on trends and patterns during Rapid Historical Phase Analysis, the lead facilitator intervened to redirect the group. Other times when intervention was necessary, such as during Symptoms of Instability Analysis, the lead facilitator spoke with the co-facilitator separately, offering suggestions for how to proceed. Following the

workshop each day, the facilitation team debriefed the day's sessions and the lead facilitator provided feedback to the co-facilitators on their performance. The lead facilitator was also responsible for administering a formal facilitator training session prior to the workshop and completing formal written evaluations for each of the co-facilitators following the workshop.

In sum, while half of the functions of the Cyprus PSW third party team involved adding content to the workshop (providing substantive input, directing discussions, identifying themes and main ideas), the India MSTC facilitation team was deliberate in refraining from contributing substantive content, as it saw this as compromising its neutrality. This distinction separates the role of the Cyprus PSW team as both diagnostic *and* facilitative from the purely facilitative role of the India MSTC team.

### *Objectives*

The objectives of the third party teams represent another area of divergence between the two workshops. These differences are not surprising considering ICR was conceived as a method of conflict resolution, while CAFs were never intended to contribute as such. Before delving into this discussion, it bears repeating that I did not ask the third parties and participants directly about their objectives; rather, this analysis is based on observations and informal discussions. The immediate objectives of the Cyprus PSW team were to analyze the current situation in Cyprus – particularly the forces supporting and opposing negotiations and an agreement – and to develop constructive strategies for supporting the negotiations and building support for an agreement should the leaders arrive at one. The team's broader objectives included resolution of the Cyprus conflict and improved intergroup relationship and attitudes between the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot communities. Improved relationships and attitudes between individual participants in the workshop seemed to be less of an objective since many of them already knew

each other and were ‘on the same side’ in terms of supporting the negotiations and bi-communal peacebuilding generally. Diverging from ICR norms and theory of practice, the relationships between participants meant workshop objectives were tied more to problem solving than addressing subjective elements of the conflict. The objectives of the participants themselves seemed to align closely with those of the third party, though it is possible the third party would have preferred to develop more concrete strategies while participants were more apt to focus on analysis.

The immediate objectives of the India MSTC third party were for participants to better understand the conflict context of Jharkhand and Bihar and for this understanding to help shape organizational strategy and programming in tangible ways through the development of operational implications. The broader objectives included participants becoming more conflict-sensitive practitioners and gaining greater understanding of other participants’ perspectives and views. Though this last objective indicates a desire for changed interpersonal attitudes and perhaps relationships, resolution of the conflict itself was not an objective and neither were improved intergroup relationships and attitudes – the converse of Cyprus PSW third party objectives in nearly every way. Participant expectations – which were elicited on the first day of the workshop – contained similar elements, mostly revolving around gaining greater understanding of the context and learning how to deliver programs that ‘do no harm.’

### *Process of Meetings*

ICR theory of practice calls for discussions that induce analytical, non-adversarial, and honest interaction. Both the Cyprus PSW and the India MSTC follow this model, as in neither workshop was there ever an atmosphere of animosity or hostility that prevented participants from productively engaging analysis and problem solving. This environment was made possible by the

workshops' neutral, informal settings and the skill of the third party teams in fulfilling their facilitative roles and enforcing basic ground rules. Because the nature of discussions and these necessary conditions have been described in great depth in sections on *Setting, Agenda/Topics,* and *Third Party,* they are not given further direct attention here.

### *Outcome of Meetings*

The outcomes of the meetings are difficult to assess. The relatively short lapse of time since the meetings occurred makes discussion of the impact of the workshops on their larger contexts little more than guesswork and ascertaining the workshops' effects on participants was difficult through observation alone. However, outcomes of the meetings in terms of their immediate and tangible outputs are comparable. The Cyprus PSW resulted in suggestions for leadership, civil society, and external stakeholders for how to support the current peace process. Participants also developed a general vision for Cyprus revolving around the idea of federation. On the logistical side, the facilitation team produced a brief two-page summary of the workshop and a ten-page report that described the workshop process in more detail. Participants at the India MSTC developed five strategic needs for Jharkhand and Bihar and four thorough operational implications (one each for World Vision advocacy, development, and humanitarian emergency affairs, and another for inter-agency cooperation). The facilitation team produced a three-page executive summary of the workshop, a Power Point presentation for the executive briefing at the World Vision India National Office, and a twelve-page summary report describing the workshop in greater depth. These reports included several recommendations based on the operational implications developed by participants and suggestions of the facilitation team.

## **Comparison of the Two Workshops: Inductive Content Analysis**

### *Theoretical Assumptions*

The Cyprus PSW and India MSTC were clearly shaped by different theoretical assumptions about the sources of conflict. I call them assumptions because they were not articulated, but seemed to be taken for granted in the design and process of the workshops. ICR, as a social-psychological approach to conflict resolution, assumes destructive intergroup relationships and interactions are at the core of conflict and that improvement in relationships between parties will facilitate resolution of the more tangible conflict issues. The Cyprus PSW carried this assumption with it: that the fundamental problem in Cyprus is the long-standing poor relationship between Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot communities. Therefore the workshop did not focus on how to change structures, but on how to build bi-communal support for current negotiations, including significant discussion about how to communicate the needs, fears, and constraints of each side (which must be taken into consideration when making structural changes).

The India MSTC was clearly shaped by a view that sees structures as the primary source of conflict, due in no small part to the fact that World Vision's mandate is relief, development, and advocacy with a clear focus on changing and developing systems, not relationships. During the workshop introduction, a facilitator used the iceberg illustration to explain World Vision's view of conflict and turbulence, which described the deepest layer – why the conflict has been happening – as that of structures, forces, and pressures. In fact, relationships are not specifically included at any layer of the 'iceberg.' This theoretical assumption came out even more clearly later in the workshop with the presentation of World Vision's "Durable Peace Framework," which consists of National Capacities, Political Economy, Good Governance, Vibrant Civil

Society, and Transforming Leadership. It is revealing that relationships are not part of the framework at all. Considering this strong emphasis on structures that shaped the design and process of the workshop, it is not surprising that four of the five strategic implications participants developed for Jharkhand and Bihar addressed structural needs like education, civil society, governance, and economic controls (the fifth concerned multi-sector dialogue).

### *Type of Conflict*

It is also clear that the Cyprus PSW and India MSTC addressed two different types of conflict. Cyprus is experiencing a protracted social conflict between two clear identity groups, and while there is polarization between the two communities on the island, it has not seen collective violence for many years. Jharkhand and Bihar, however, are dealing with long-standing low-level violent conflict at the hands of a Maoist insurgency whose violent actions are much more akin to terrorism or vandalism than civil warfare. The Naxalites rely on the poor tribal population for support, but the conflict is not between ethnic identity groups and society is not easily nor primarily divided between pro-Maoist and anti-Maoist groups. In light of these differences in conflict type and the fact that intergroup relations seem to be more salient in Cyprus than Jharkhand and Bihar, it is understandable and perhaps even appropriate that the workshops applied divergent approaches to analysis with regard to their focus on either relationships or structures.

### *Proclivity of Participants*

A final comparison between the two workshops sprung from observations about participants' tendencies to either slip back into analysis or jump forward to strategies. At the Cyprus PSW, participants spent half a day longer on the diagnostic phase than the preliminary

agenda outlined (one-and-a-half days on analysis rather than just one). And once the group finally did move into strategy development, discussion repeatedly returned to analysis of the situation, the third party continually forced to redirect participants to focus on strategies. It was much easier and more natural for participants to talk about problems than to put focused energy into developing specific solutions. I observed this proclivity but assumed it to be a natural human tendency until my participation in the India MSTC, where participants displayed exactly the opposite affinity. Participants were immediately and primarily concerned with understanding how the analysis would be relevant for their work, and they brought up questions about strategies – Would there be strategies? When would there be strategies? What are we going to do with this analysis? – throughout the workshop. Facilitators had to consistently restrain participants from strategizing too early and assure them that the analysis would be worthwhile. When the time came to develop operational implications on the last day, participants engaged the module with enthusiasm and developed several detailed plans for moving forward.

There could be several reasons for the divergent proclivities. For one, participants in the Cyprus PSW came to the workshop as busy people from different sectors of society with their own jobs and ongoing projects. They had to leave their work and commitments at home in order to participate in the workshop. Perhaps given the demands on their time, they were hesitant to develop and commit to any new projects or initiatives. Additionally, the workshop itself possessed no mandate or funding to implement the strategies developed. India MSTC participants, on the other hand, came to the workshop as *part* of their jobs and their supervisor was also present as a workshop participant. With the exception of the five external participants, they all came from the same organization, which possessed a mandate and funding to implement

the strategies developed at the workshop. These factors provided incentives to focus on strategies that were not available to Cyprus PSW participants.

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

### Summary of Outcomes

While World Vision's MSTC workshop model initially showed potential as a form of ICR due to its participatory and interactive approach to conflict analysis, comparison of the India MSTC and Cyprus PSW does not clearly support this hypothesis. There are some areas of similarity: the workshops were held for similar lengths of time, covered a broadly similar agenda, and were facilitated by third party teams of similar size and with some similar skills, knowledge, and functions. However, the differences seem to outweigh the areas of convergence. Some of these differences, such as in stated objectives, were already known to exist and are part of what made the research questions interesting. Others are merely stylistic, such as levels of informality and the flexibility and structure of the agendas. I say 'merely stylistic' not because these differences are insignificant. Indeed, these stylistic differences in many ways highlight most clearly the variation between the workshops, causing one to question whether two interventions with such divergent characteristics can really be forms of the same type of intervention. But in the end, the fact that a workshop employs energizers, uses colorful materials, mandates small group work, and prescribes a highly structured framework for analysis does not violate the essential definitional nature of ICR.

Other aspects of the India MSTC, however, *do* seem to diverge not just from ICR norms of practice but also from the essence of what defines ICR – beginning with its theoretical assumptions about the sources of conflict. ICR interventions are predicated upon the perspective that at the epicenter of intergroup conflicts are destructive intergroup relationships and interactions. ICR seeks the resolution of conflict through improvements in intergroup relationships and attitudes. The fact that the MSTC approaches conflict from the assumption that

structures are at its source indicates a divergent strategy for dealing with conflict – one that attempts to change social, political, and economic structures without primary concern for the relationship aspect so important in ICR.

Beyond theory, significant differences exist across several other variables including the number of participants. ICR by definition is a small group approach, with an ideal workshop size of about twelve to fifteen including the third party team. So can eighteen participants (plus three facilitators) – three times the number at the Cyprus PSW and actually on the low end for an MSTC – be considered a ‘small group’? The large number of participants limits facilitators’ ability to establish consensus on all details of analysis (which is why eighty- to ninety-percent accuracy is considered sufficient for engaging the more important task of identifying trends and patterns), it impacts group discussion dynamics, it demands facilitator skill in eliciting views from less verbal participants and moderating the contributions of those who tend to dominate, and it most certainly increases the amount and detail of analysis produced through allowing for task differentiation in table groups. Each table group at the India MSTC consisted of six participants, almost the size of the total participant group at the Cyprus PSW. Perhaps the MSTC model is simply not a ‘small enough’ group approach compared to the prescriptions of ICR.

The focused ICR definition is very clear that participants should be highly influential individuals with social identities clearly linked to group or country, but also representing the diversity of the collectivity. While the identities of Cyprus PSW participants have these characteristics, once again the India MSTC diverges. Participants would not be regarded as influential unless their connections to decision makers within their organizations are considered. Their social identities were not clearly linked to conflict party – although this was probably less appropriate in the context of Jharkhand and Bihar than in Cyprus – and it is questionable whether

the participants at the workshop crossed enough significant lines of difference (religion, gender, Maoist/non-Maoist sympathizers) for the interactive and collaborative activities to be useful in building a transformative platform and contributing to conflict resolution.

The India MSTC's lack of seclusion might also violate an essential component of ICR. If the social-psychological processes of ICR necessitate that participants are removed from their conflict context, these processes could clearly not be achieved under the circumstances of an MSTC in which participants remain in the midst of their instability and even sometimes return to home and work at the end of each workshop day. The impact of the *bandh* declared in Jharkhand during the India MSTC illustrates one reason ICR theory of practice calls for seclusion.

Finally, the differences in the third party teams – one of the most important and theoretically developed components of ICR – reveal an insurmountable hurdle to embracing the MSTC as a focused ICR intervention. The identity, functions, and roles of an ICR third party consultation team are linked: identity as skilled social scientists with knowledge of both conflict dynamics and the specific conflict context enables third party members to employ functions that provide not only direction and moderation to the interaction but also substantive input, creating a role that is diagnostic *and* facilitative. While the Cyprus PSW team followed this model precisely, the India MSTC team, due to skill sets and a knowledge base not primarily in the field of conflict resolution *and* on principle (seeing substantive inputs as compromising neutrality), did not engage functions that allowed for the diagnostic role essential to the ICR model of third party consultation.

Any of these differences in isolation may not have prohibited including the MSTC as a form of ICR, but the combined and considerable differences between the Cyprus PSW and India MSTC across the participants, setting, and third party variables, as well as their divergent

assumptions about the sources of conflict, indicate that World Vision's MSTC workshop model is not a form of ICR according to the focused definition. However, because ICR broadly defined allows for greater variety in the identities and roles of both participants and third parties, the MSTC may still be encompassed by the broad ICR definition along with dialogue and conflict resolution training. In this case, participants in the workshop would not need to be influential, but would still need to cross enough lines of tension to align with the first and most important characteristic of ICR – that representatives of the parties involved in conflict must interact face-to-face. Whether the lack of seclusion and the facilitative-only role of the third party would continue to distinguish MSTC workshops from ICR is a question for future research.

### **Potential Contributions of ICR to MSTC Workshops**

At this point it should be made clear that lacking some essential components of ICR does *not* indicate any failure or delinquency in the MSTC workshop model. The MSTC was not designed, nor does it claim, to contribute to conflict resolution or transformation. Its objectives are to produce conflict analysis, enhance conflict-sensitive programming, and train participants to be more conflict-sensitive practitioners. Any evaluation of the MSTC should be according to its effectiveness in achieving these objectives and not burden it with objectives beyond its stated mandate. Nevertheless, the field of ICR has valuable insights to offer MSTC practitioners that would not require changing its primary objectives or adding a transformative element that would burden facilitators. Just as the MSTC does not seek to change the mandate of relief, development, and advocacy programs, but simply asks them to do what they are already doing in a more conflict-sensitive manner, learning from ICR would not require changing or expanding the mandate of the MSTC, but doing what it already does in a way more likely to contribute to conflict transformation.

The simplest and most valuable adaptation World Vision can make to MSTC workshops is to enhance the diversity of its participants, particularly in terms of gender, religious affiliation, and the social identities most relevant to the conflict (ethnic group, class, political party, etc.). The workshop itself requires high levels of cooperation, interaction, and joint decision-making on countless details concerning the conflict context. If workshop participants cross enough lines of difference – and the right lines of difference – the intervention would provide a constructive environment for conflict parties to practice cooperation and working in teams without changing the workshop agenda or primary objectives. Notwithstanding this transformative element, more diverse participant groups would also produce more accurate and thorough analyses, ameliorating one of the dangers of participatory conflict analysis identified in the literature: doing harm by excluding and marginalizing segments of the population and thereby inadvertently endorsing a particular conflict narrative.

A second lesson World Vision can learn from ICR is the value of a third party team with thorough knowledge of conflict theory and dynamics. I do not suggest making training or education in conflict resolution a prerequisite for MSTC facilitators, as the WVI Peacebuilding team is already overburdened with demands to conduct more MSTC workshops than is possible with the limited number of trained facilitators currently available. But, where feasible, a deeper level of engagement on the part of facilitators with the field of conflict resolution and the conflict analysis literature could be helpful. Perhaps MSTC facilitation teams will oppose a diagnostic role on principle, but greater knowledge about conflict theory and dynamics would allow for general substantive input on these topics that could benefit participants and analysis even as facilitators refrain from contributing substantively to the *content* of analysis. Greater knowledge of group processes and conflict resolution methods would also aid MSTC facilitators in dealing

with tensions that inevitably arise between workshop participants. These skills would be useful in light of the observation in the literature that participatory conflict analysis processes can become battlegrounds for promoting the ‘right’ version of a conflict. If facilitators are unable to deal with these tensions, participatory processes can actually do more harm than good.

Finally, the MSTC workshop might benefit from allowing more flexibility in its agenda. Understanding the time constraints and highly valuing the structured framework for analysis, I recognize that incorporating flexibility could be incredibly difficult. Still, just a little bit of flexibility would allow for an even more elicitive approach – one that elicits not only the content of analysis but some elements for analysis as well. If given the opportunity, participants might suggest elements not included in the MSTC Analysis Cycle but especially salient to the specific conflict context. More flexibility would also allow participants to spend more time on modules with greater relevance to the context and less on others. A possible way to incorporate flexibility is to set aside one or two hours at the beginning of the workshop to ask participants broadly to share their perspectives of the conflict and then identify themes from what is shared. This type of activity would incorporate some of the benefits of the ‘relationship-building analysis’ used in ICR interventions, such as giving participants shared agency in shaping analysis. There are observable advantages to both highly structured and relationship-building approaches to conflict analysis, and while different interventions may emphasize one over the other, some hybrid of the two would incorporate the benefits of each.

### **Potential Contributions of MSTC Workshops to ICR**

The type of sharing resulting from this analysis need not be one-directional. While the MSTC workshop may not fit in the field as a focused ICR intervention, it still has valuable contributions to make to ICR, particularly given the important role of conflict analysis in ICR

interventions. The India MSTC illustrates the value of using a framework for conflict analysis. While flexibility has advantages, a framework forces participants to examine elements of a conflict they may not naturally think through on their own. Asking specific questions and intentionally working through specific aspects of a conflict enhances the thoroughness of analysis and provides needed direction to participants who are often not practiced in analyzing conflicts. While the specific MSTC Analysis Cycle may not be a fit for use in every ICR intervention, working through a predetermined set of questions or modules could help ensure participants approach their conflict through a variety of analytical lenses and could illuminate dynamics of the conflict about which they may have previously been unaware. As discussed in the literature review, use of a framework would also add credibility and professionalism to ICR conflict analysis.

The MSTC workshop model also illustrates how highly directive facilitators and highly structured activities can lead to efficiency and productiveness in a workshop setting. While the detailed and specific directions given at the India MSTC may seem overly intense, this method was highly effective in keeping participants on task producing enormous amounts of detailed analysis in a very short time. The unstructured Cyprus PSW agenda, on the other hand – which gave participants great latitude to determine topics for analysis – allowed for unfocused discussions, frequent recycling of topics, and the formulation of nascent thoughts and ideas that were often not brought to completion. Employing some of the structure and inflexibility of the MSTC through specific analysis activities and directions could help ICR third party teams and participants use their valuable time more efficiently.

One of three critical development issues identified by Fisher as a challenge in the field of ICR is training for new practitioners (Fisher, 1993a). There is little organized effort directed

toward training in the face of a great need for apprenticeship and quality control in the field. In this key area, ICR may be able to learn from the training program World Vision has developed for MSTC facilitators. Because ICR is not an institutionalized field, it would be difficult to implement the same training, evaluation, and certification process World Vision uses for its MSTC facilitators, but ICR practitioners can emulate aspects of the MSTC model by incorporating a third party consultation training component into actual interventions. This would involve including at least one inexperienced member on each ICR third party team – not just as a graduate assistant or observer, but as an active member of the main facilitation team (of course, experienced practitioners would be free to require that such ‘trainees’ have observed or assisted beforehand). Like the India MSTC, the training program could involve a separate third party consultation training prior to the intervention and should definitely include both formal and informal evaluation and feedback for trainees based on their performance during the intervention. By adopting these measures, the field of ICR can help to ensure it will have skilled and knowledgeable consultants in the future.

### **The Study’s Relevance for the Field of International Peace & Conflict Resolution**

It goes without saying that conflict analysis is a bedrock of the field of IPCR. The works of Azar (1990), Cheldelin, Druckman & Fast (2008), Collier, Hoeffler & Rohner (2008), Deutsch (1971), Fisher (1993b), Gurr (1993), Kriesberg (2007), Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall (2005), Wehr (1979), and more, have contributed tools and approaches for conflict analysis that, when employed, help scholars and practitioners better understand specific conflicts and their dynamics. World Vision’s MSTC – as one of many CAFs in use today – illustrates how conflict analysis principles are being integrated into practical models for regular and systematic implementation. It also shows how these conflict analysis principles from the field of IPCR are

valuable and useful not only to peacebuilding and conflict resolution practitioners, but also to practitioners of international relief, development, and advocacy. Conflict analysis is helping the many different types of organizations working ‘in conflict’ do their work better through greater understanding of the environment in which they implement projects and programs.

The two types of workshops compared in this paper also illustrate a fundamental debate in the field of IPCR about conflict’s primary source(s). McCandless (2001) frames the debate as between those who see relationships as the primary source of conflict and those who see social, economic, and political structures as its primary source, although there are many who consider both sources important. This debate has clear implications for praxis, as proponents of the former prefer relational, psycho-social approaches while proponents of the latter prefer approaches that seek to change systems (McCandless, 2001). ICR and the MSTC workshop are examples of interventions shaped by these different theoretical assumptions about the sources of conflict. ICR, though acknowledging that structural injustices impact relationships, seeks the resolution of conflict through interventions designed first and foremost to improve intergroup relationships and attitudes. The MSTC, on the other hand, is clearly shaped by a structure-as-primary source view, with World Vision’s “Durable Peace Framework” implying that changed social systems will mitigate conflict even without efforts to improve relationships between groups.

Lederach’s concept of a transformative platform (Lederach, 2003, 2005) bridges these two perspectives. Lederach sees destructive relationships at the epicenter of violent conflict, but also emphasized the importance of just structures and the dynamic impact both structures and relationships have on each other (Lederach, 2001). He describes transformative platforms as process-structures – institutions, mechanisms, or a combination of several – that provide space for ongoing and engaged relationship. While the MSTC does not seem to be operating as a form

of ICR, it may still contribute to the construction of a transformative platform simply by providing a space – through the activity of conflict analysis – for conflict parties to engage each other and cooperate. Where Context Monitoring Teams (CMTs) are established, this engagement can be ongoing, but even the workshop as a singular event may have the potential – in combination with other initiatives, institutions, and mechanisms – to establish transformative platforms. This theory reinforces the CAF practitioner literature’s suggestion that participatory conflict analysis processes like MSTC workshops can contribute to conflict resolution by promoting reflection about the conflict for stakeholders, building a shared body of knowledge, building relationships, opening space for dialogue, and empowering participants.

ICR and the MSTC also fit into the discussion in the field of IPCR about intergroup reconciliation. Here, Nadler & Schnabel (2008) offer a useful distinction between instrumental and socioemotional reconciliation. Focused ICR interventions can operate as means for socioemotional reconciliation, which involves working through emotions and threats to identity that are the consequence of the pain and humiliation parties inflict on each other. It aims to remove feelings of guilt and victimhood, driven by the idea that the key to reconciliation is confrontation of the past. ICR, with its focus on the subjective elements of conflict, fits this path to reconciliation nicely. MSTC workshops clearly do not, as they do not explore participant emotions or attempt to deal with the pain and injustice of the past. But they could be a means of instrumental reconciliation, which is based on the contact hypothesis and proposes that cooperative efforts to achieve instrumental goals important to both parties (such as analysis of conflict and development of operational implications) under optimal conditions can contribute to the building of trust, positive perceptions of the other, and a reconciled future without directly confronting the past or addressing painful emotions.

ICR is fairly well situated within the field of IPCR, but World Vision's MSTC workshops and CAFs in general have thus far remained in the periphery. It has been one intention of this study to place the MSTC within the academic discourse on peace and conflict resolution, and even though the research seems to show it does not have its place in the field of ICR, the MSTC workshop method intersects the larger field of IPCR in its discussions of applied conflict analysis, conflict sources, conflict transformation, and intergroup reconciliation.

## **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION**

### **Significance of Research Findings**

Despite the fact that this study has found World Vision's MSTC workshops do not appear to be functioning as a form of ICR according to the focused definition, the research and its findings contribute valuable insights in several areas. First of all, this study calls the attention of the IPCR field to the substantial conflict analysis work being performed in other arenas, such as international relief and development. Rather than the continued perception of this work as an outlier to the field, this research has begun the process of bringing CAF and their implementation processes into mainstream conflict resolution discussion. Greater engagement with these processes will benefit both CAF practitioners and theory and practice in the field of conflict resolution as they learn from each other.

Secondly, the study has helped to sharpen the definition of ICR, clarifying those elements that make up the essence of the field. Though Fisher has performed comparative analysis of different focused ICR interventions, this is the first study that has compared an ICR intervention to a different, but in some ways similar, workshop intervention. This comparison identified similarities, but also highlighted the stark differences between the two, solidifying an understanding of those essential elements of focused ICR interventions such as influential participants with identities clearly linked to social group or country, secluded setting, and the diagnostic role of third party consultants. Observing the absence of these elements in the India MSTC reinforced their importance to ICR.

Finally, this comparative case study offers the field of ICR and the WVI Peacebuilding team a chance to learn from each other ways to improve their own practice without changing their basic objectives and purposes. As previously described, ICR could consider employing a

framework for conflict analysis, adopting a more structured and directed approach, and more systematically incorporating third party consultant training into its interventions. The WVI Peacebuilding team could go to greater lengths to ensure the diversity of participants in its workshops, consider incorporating more flexibility into the MSTC agenda, and engage more with theory and literature on conflict and its dynamics. These lessons are just a few examples of the cross-fertilization that can occur when two disparate but related practices are analyzed side-by-side.

## **Implications & Recommendations for Future Research and Practice**

### *Recommendations for Future Research*

This study shows that MSTC workshops lack several elements essential to focused ICR interventions, but has *not* clearly shown whether MSTC workshops might be a form of ICR according to the broad definition. The greater flexibility in identities for both participants and third party members may be broad enough to include the MSTC along with other forms of ICR such as dialogue and conflict resolution training. To explore this question further, I suggest a study that compares an MSTC workshop to an ICR conflict resolution training workshop. In his chapter in *The Psychology of Resolving Global Conflicts: From War to Peace*, Fisher (2006) states: “Training that involves members of communities in conflict becomes an intervention in that conflict” (p.53). Could, then, conflict analysis that involves members of communities in conflict become an intervention in that conflict, and thus, be a form of ICR under the broad definition? Conflict resolution training workshops differ from PSWs in some key areas that are actually more similar to MSTC workshops and therefore, perhaps a better unit for comparison. First of all, the primary objective of ICR conflict resolution trainings is not conflict resolution itself, but to transfer skills and knowledge. Trainings are not primarily designed to address

relationships between groups in conflict, directly engage the issues of the specific conflict, or develop strategies and solutions. Rather, participants engage in an interactive activity that increases their skills and capacity in conflict analysis and resolution. In this way, insofar as ICR conflict resolution trainings improve intergroup relationships and attitudes, they do so more through instrumental than socioemotional paths to reconciliation, like the MSTC model. Therefore, comparison between ICR conflict resolution training workshops and the MSTC may illuminate greater similarity than that between the India MSTC and the Cyprus PSW.

Even if further studies show MSTC workshops are not a form of ICR at all, this does not mean they lack potential to contribute to conflict transformation. Further study of this potential could involve exploration of how participatory processes in conflict analysis (and other areas) contribute to the resolution of conflicts, how MSTC workshops may help build transformative platforms in divided societies, or evaluation of the MSTC as a path toward instrumental reconciliation. Research could look specifically at those countries that established a CMT after the MSTC workshop, and examine whether or not these teams provided a mechanism for ongoing engagement between conflict parties. Each of these would be an appropriate and illuminating topic to research in greater depth.

Additionally, more studies that evaluate the effectiveness of both ICR and the MSTC in achieving their respective objectives are needed. Other issues emerging from this study's analysis that would inform topics for instructive future research are: (1) What is the effect of seclusion on a conflict resolution intervention? Does it make the intervention more effective or less so? (2) Does a diagnostic role for third party members compromise neutrality or impartiality? Does it add value to an intervention that facilitation alone cannot add? (3) Which type of analysis produces more accurate and thorough results: Conflict analysis according to a

highly structured framework or analysis that gives participants freedom to discuss the elements they deem most important?

### *Recommendations for Future Practice*

Several recommendations for practice for both MSTC workshops and ICR are offered in previous sections. Here, I highlight the one suggestion for each intervention I most strongly want to emphasize and add a final recommendation for CAF practitioners working at other organizations.

For the World Vision Peacebuilding team & MSTC Facilitators: *Ensure that participants in workshops cross significant lines of difference.* Even if enhancing the conflict resolution potential of the workshops is an unimportant goal, more diversity will assuredly engender better analysis and the development of better strategies and operational implications. Not only can a lack of diversity prevent the production of valid and comprehensive conflict analysis, but can also serve to further marginalize and silence certain perspectives of the conflict. Increase the number of women participants in workshops and strive to involve participants from various faith backgrounds, particularly where Christians are not the majority in the context. Endeavor to involve participants that cross the most salient lines of tension in the context, identifying whether tensions are primarily linked to ethnic, religious, political, socioeconomic, or other social identity. Diversification of participants is the simplest and most significant modification that can be made to MSTC workshops to both increase the quality of analysis and the conflict resolution potential of the intervention.

For ICR Practitioners: *Take advantage of the numerous CAFs developed by other organizations to add more structure to ICR conflict analysis.* There is value in allowing participants to define and diagnose the conflict on their own, but time is wasted when they cycle

through the same issues over and over again while not addressing others. Considering that participants are often not experts in conflict dynamics, a framework for analysis would provide direction and assist them in examining elements of conflict they may not initially think important. More structure during the analysis phase of interventions would increase the likelihood of ideas being explored fully rather than many ideas started and not brought to completion. A more structured analysis would also allow more time for the development of strategies, which would enhance the effectiveness and productiveness of interventions, particularly when, in cases like the Cyprus PSW, interpersonal relationship and attitude change are less of a concern.

To Organizations Using CAFs: *Use participatory and interactive processes that rely on local knowledge as the primary resource for conflict analysis.* When faced with limited time and resources, desk research is often the quickest and cheapest way to perform conflict analysis. However, preliminary research shows there are substantial benefits to employing participatory processes, both for the quality of analysis and the potential to contribute to the resolution of conflict. It is also much more likely that recommendations from analyses will be successfully implemented if local implementing partners are involved in the analysis and formulation of strategies. While interviews and field research are a step up from desk research, World Vision's MSTC workshop model offers an example for an interactive conflict analysis process – one that brings participants from different sides of the conflict together – that is worth emulating.

### *Conclusion*

The two workshops described in this paper, while exhibiting convergence across some variables, actually diverge on those that are most essential. The determination that World Vision's MSTC workshops are not a form of ICR according to the focused definition is a step

forward in identifying how the MSTC as currently practiced and CAFs more generally fit in the field of IPCR. With further research, and consideration of what both the field of ICR and MSTC workshops can add to each other, both areas can continue developing interventions that contribute to the resolution and transformation of conflict in divided societies across the globe.

## **APPENDIX A: ACRONYM LIST**

CAF	Conflict Assessment Framework
CMT	Context Monitoring Team
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DNH/LCP	Do No Harm/Local Capacities for Peace
EU	European Union
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
ICAF	Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework
ICAR	Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution
ICR	Interactive Conflict Resolution
IPCR	International Peace and Conflict Resolution
ISA	International Studies Association
MSTC	Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PMO	Programme Monitoring Office
PSW	Problem-Solving Workshop
S/CRS	U.S. State Department Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WVI	World Vision International

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